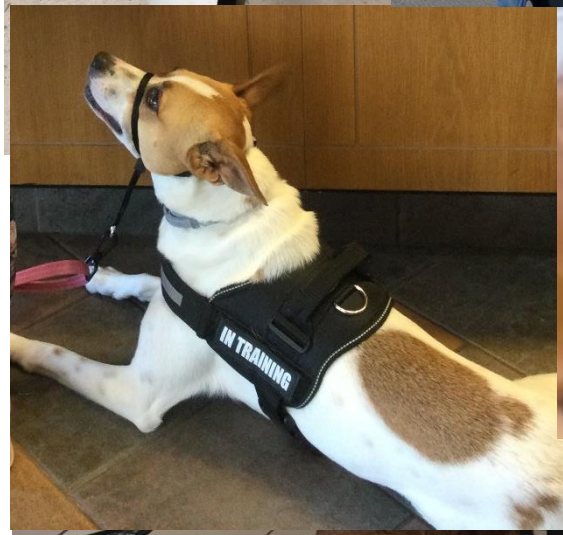
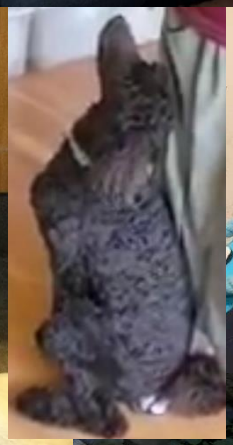
Are You Ready to Train Your SERVICE DOG?

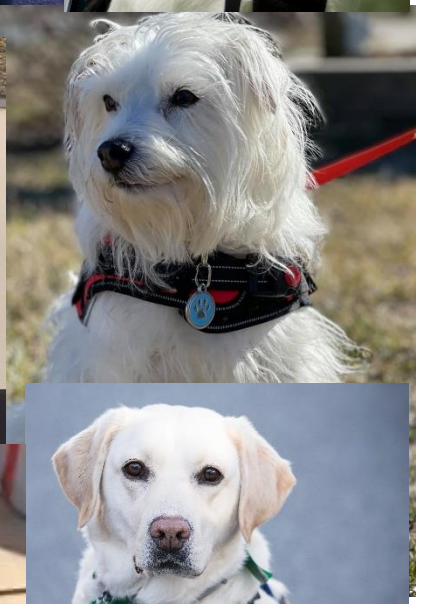
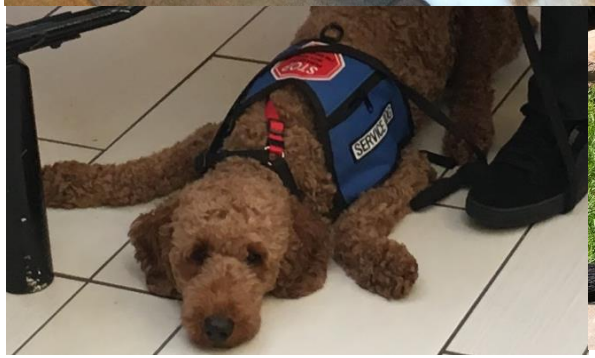
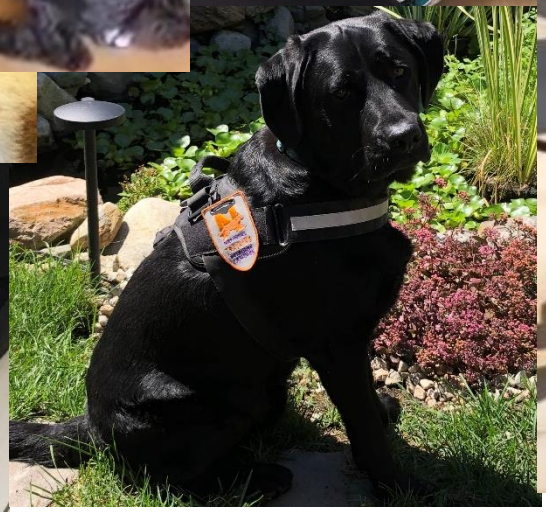
Sharon Wachsler

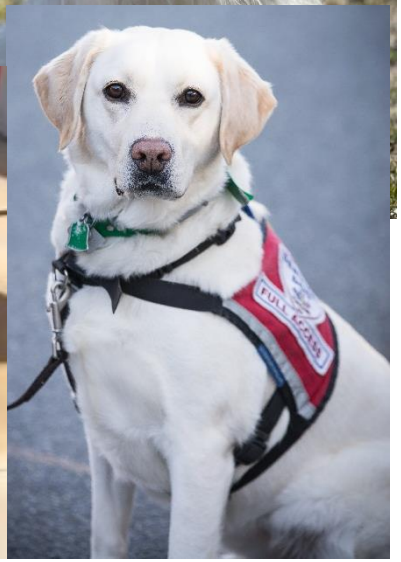
AtYourServiceDogTraining.com

Expert Service Dog Training for life-changing results

- Over 30 years of combined owner-training service dog experience
- Hundreds of owner-training teams
- Personal experience with owner-training
- Help your dog reach their potential, avoid expensive mistakes, and have fun!


IN TRAINING




You'll learn…

- Legal definition (clarity on laws and terms)
- The training process
- What you need to train a service dog
  - How to assess your dog
  - How to find a dog
- Next steps

Sharon coaches Alex on training SDiT Hitch at a class in the ER in 2017

What is a Service Animal?

Legal Definition
under Americans with Disabilities Act

- Dog only (exception for miniature horses)
- Individually trained to do work or perform tasks
- Directly related to handler's disability

“Disability” under ADA

- A physical or mental impairment
- Substantially limits one or more major life activities
- e.g., self-care, manual tasks, see, hear, eat, sleep, walk, stand, speak, breath, learn, read, concentrate, think, communicate, work

Trained Tasks Examples

- Guide around obstacles or to car or exit
- Alert to stove timer or alarm clock
- Retrieve dropped items
- Nudge alert to symptoms or medication reminder
- Provide deep pressure during panic attack

Service Animal BEHAVIOR for public access under ADA…

- House trained
- Under handler control
- Tether, leash, harness*
- Does NOT constitute “undue burden” for employer or “fundamentally alter the nature of the service” for business….
- www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html

What differentiates…?

- **Service dog**
- Emotional support animal (ESA)
- Therapy dog
- Service-dog-in-training (SDiT)

Lee & Shadow, SD & Crisis Response Canine

Emotional Support Animal

Service Animal definition from the ADA:

"The crime deterrent effects of an animal's presence and the provision of emotional support, well-being, comfort, or companionship **do not constitute work or tasks** for the purposes of this definition." (Emphasis added.)

Emotional Support Animal

- FHA includes both ESAs and service dogs as “assistance animal”
- Domesticated pet of any species allowed as a “reasonable accommodation to a disability” in “no pets” **housing** (FHA)
- https://www.hud.gov/sites/dfiles/PA/documents/HUDAsstAnimalNC1-28-2020.pdf
- *ESA does NOT applying to flying anymore*

Air Travel

- ACAA now follows same definition for service animal as the ADA
- ESAs are no longer granted access on planes
- Dog must be task trained
- Attestation forms – house training & health, behavior & training (contact info for trainer)
- https://www.transportation.gov/individuals/aviation-consumer-protection/service-animals

Therapy Dog

- Handler and dog together provide comfort, support, therapeutic benefit
- May be volunteers or professional in the field
- To a variety of people
- Certain settings
- Handler need not be disabled

Kiran Asher & therapy dog, Runa

Rights of public access?

- ESA (Emotional support animal) - NO
- Therapy Dog - NO
- Handlers of SDs have public access rights - YES
- Trainers with SDiT – DEPENDS

Community Standards

Behavior

- Quiet, unobtrusive
- No scavenging, sniffing people, snorfling merch
- Focused on handler
- Obedient, professional, mannerly
- Don’t know it’s there

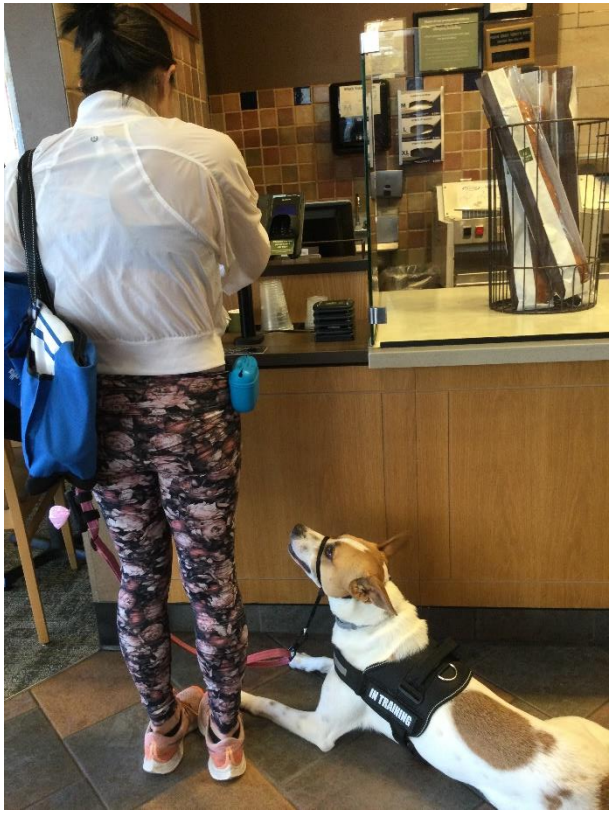
Sadie (ESA, therapy dog, occasional SD)

Service dog certification in U.S.

Programs or trainers may certify your dog has achieved their standards, e.g., our DISC program.

No LEGAL weight. **Paper or registration number from a websites is a waste of money.**

What makes a “legal” SD?



M. & Lula at Panera

- **Legal standard**: House trained, under handler’s control’s, reliably trained to perform tasks
- **Community standard**: Unobtrusive, clean, obedient, mannerly
- **Recommended**: Public access evaluation from your trainer

Benefits of Training a Service Dog

Dog Ownership

- Unconditional relationship & acceptance
- Walking, exercise, getting out
- Providing structure/schedule for day
- ↑ socialization (dog is + source of conversation)
- Petting, cuddling, hugging → sensory grounding & tactile connection (regulation)
- Often ↑ sleep, ↑ mood

Owner Service Dog Training Benefits

- Canine companionship from Day One
- Eventually – benefits of a trained service dog
- Training itself may be therapeutic
- Spread expenses out over time
- More choice (breed, types of tasks)
- Empowerment, pride, special bond
- Journey & learning (become a training geek)

Essentials to train a service dog

Beasley (golden retriever service dog)

- **Appropriate** dog
- Great **commitment**
- **Time** (so much time!)
- **Finances** (min $6-8K)
- **Love dog training**
- Abilities, support, resources

With **enough training** can any dog be a PA service dog?

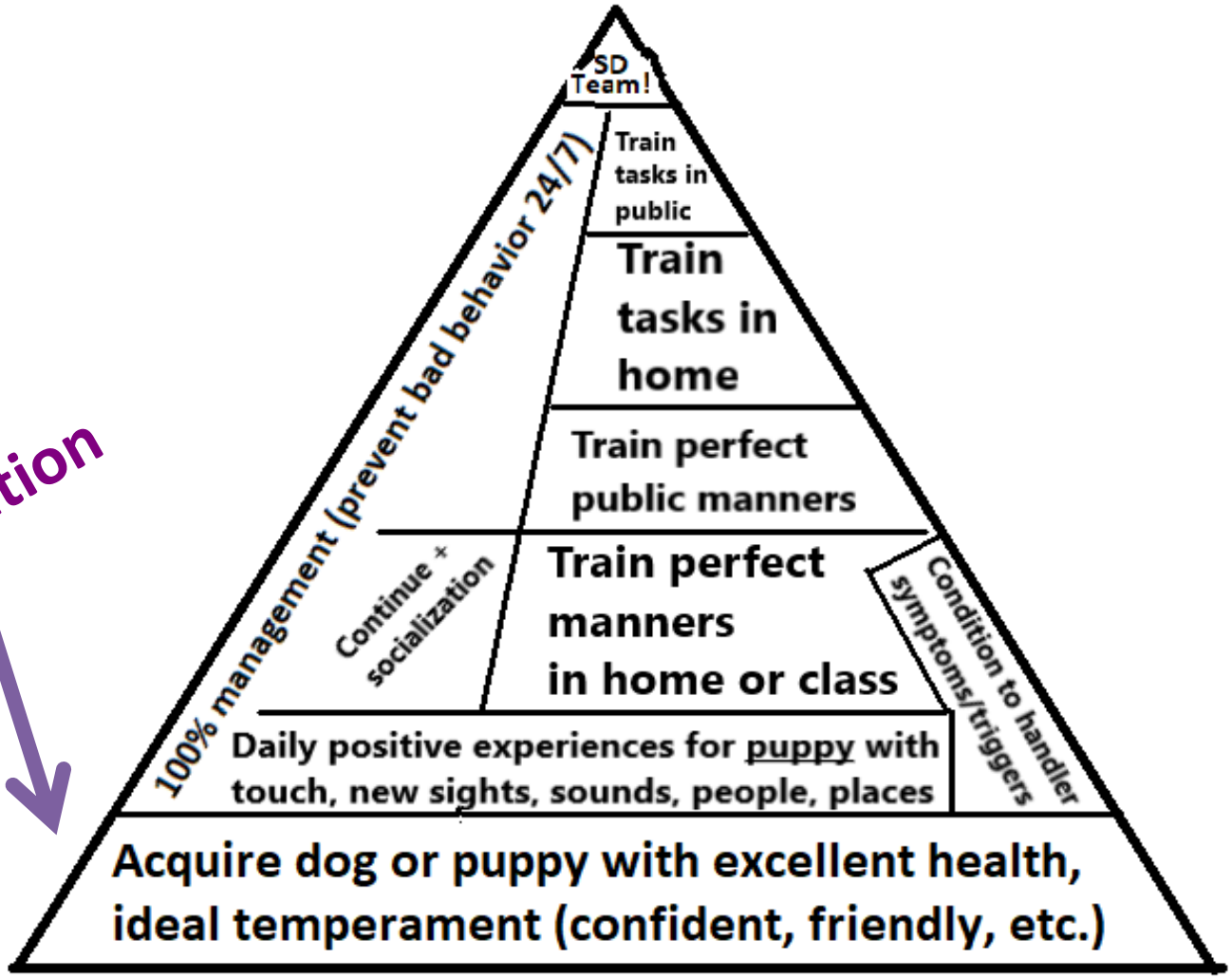
Service Dogs are the Training Elite!

How to Get to Olympics?

- Train, train, train (hard work)
- Motivation (love of the sport)
- Luck
- **Innate talents & strengths**

Service Dog Training Process

Begin at bottom and level up

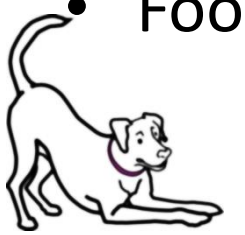


Foundation

Adult Dog Aptitude for PA

(temperament/personality – not training)

- **Highly sociable (loves or comfortable with everyone)**
- **Comfort with novelty (newness)**
- **Confident, easy-going (happy-go-lucky/surfer dude)**
- **Not noise sensitive (loud/unexpected sounds OK)**
- **Not reactive or aggressive (tries all other options first)**
- **Healthy (no chronic health issues, pain, etc.)**
- **Friendly or unconcerned with other dogs**
- Low prey/chase drive
- On/off switch (moderate energy, can relax anywhere)
- Food drive (more interest in treats than anything else)



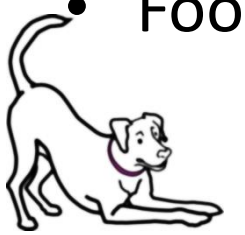
Score Your Dog's Public Access Aptitude

- In previous slide, will show again, ask yourself, "Is this my dog?" for each question
- For each "Definitely yes," add 1 point
- For each "No," give no points (zero)
- Tally score
- Note number of points in **red** or **yellow** zones

Adult Dog Aptitude for PA

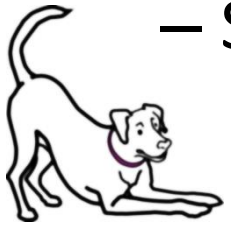
(temperament/personality – not training)

- **Highly sociable (loves or comfortable with everyone)**
- **Comfort with novelty (newness)**
- **Confident, easy-going (happy-go-lucky/surfer dude)**
- **Not noise sensitive (loud/unexpected sounds OK)**
- **Not reactive or aggressive (tries all other options first)**
- **Healthy (no chronic health issues, pain, etc.)**
- **Friendly or unconcerned with other dogs**
- Low prey/chase drive
- On/off switch (moderate energy, can relax anywhere)
- Food drive (more interest in treats than anything else)



Your dog's public access aptitude

- "Will my dog be happy working in public?" It's not a measure of how wonderful your dog is!
- **The higher the score,** the greater the public access potential. **10 = ideal candidate!**
- Dogs unlikely to be happy as full-time PA SDs
  - Did not get all 5 points in **red** zone
  - Usually also needs 2 points in **yellow** zone
  - Score 7 or below



Puppy Personality (2-6 months)

- "Typical" puppy: not timid, fearful or early signs of reactivity
- Strangers: Generally wants to greet
- Dogs: May greet eagerly or some initial caution
- New places or situations: Interested, curious, some initial caution with some new things, or distracted/excited, but still interested in treats
- Low to moderate prey drive (may want to chase a squirrel or bunny, but not every car or bird; becomes less interested with maturation)

Time Commitment

- **A full-time job for 2+ years**
- Do you have ample spare time every day?
- More time to devote = more likely success
- Train high level manners, then train in every environment, then finish task training
- Also *mental commitment*: preventing problem behaviors, daily management & enrichment

SDiT Sample Morning
(before 10:30 AM appointment)

- 7:30 AM -- Wake up: Take dog out to potty
- Crate/pen/tether with a chew toy while you shower & make breakfast
- Train dog for half their breakfast (20 mins)
- Play tug to reduce hyper energy pre-walk (20 min)
- Take dog for training walk for 2nd ½ of meal (30 min)
- Crate while you finish getting ready
- Groom dog's coat, teeth, nails (15 mins)
- 9:50 AM -- Final potty before crating

Do you LOVE **training** animals?

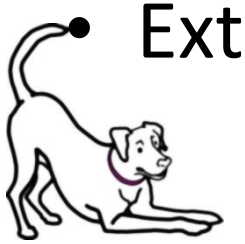
Passionate interest in the slow process of changing behavior?

- Repetitive, slow, diligent
- Mechanical/physical skill (coordination, timing)
- Mental skill (observe, follow instructions, read, keep notes)
- Emotional capacity

Leicia loves training Ahsoka!

During first 2-3 years…
Additional owner-trainer SD costs

- **Pet** expenses start at **$500-3,000/year**
- **Training** (books, videos, private & group classes) $1-20K (**expect min $6-8K**)
- Training **treats and toys** (chews, feeder toys, retrieve items, bazillion treats) $400-2000
- **Service dog gear** (harness, leash, vest, pack, cart, head halter, etc.)$150-1200
- Extra **vet** and **grooming** time & costs $75-1700



Annual Service Dog in Training Costs

During first 2-3 years…

$6,000 to $40,000 per year

Typical overall training price tag:

$10,000-25,000*

Recommend budgeting > $7-10 K

**Maimes Scholarship fund may help*

Lower-Cost Options

- **Personal fundraisers**, e.g., GoFundMe. Gifts from friends, family, community. Dedicated account (escrow, trust).
- **State agencies or VA.** Voc rehab (MRC), DPH, victim assistance, Dept of Developmental Services, Veterans Administration
- **Natan Maimes & Travel Service Dog Scholarship Fund** – discounts for eligible teams from At Your Service Dog Training

Frankie & Maizie (board & train scholarship recipients)

SDiT handlers need support!

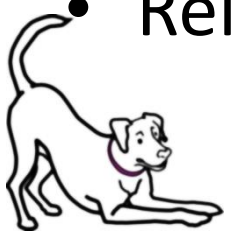
- Training may last for the first 1.5 - 3 years
- Emotional and physical effort
- May not help with disabilities/needs yet
- Friends, family, therapist, etc., in your DAILY life who will offer support?
- ALL household members on board?

What comes next??...

Yes, I have the right dog	I need to find the right dog
Next step: **Start Training Your Service Dog!**	**Next step:** **Find the Right Dog to Train as Your Service Dog!**

Who is a Qualified Pet Trainer?

- Certifications from science-based, objective certifying body (e.g., CPDT or CDBC from ccpdt.org) that have passed a comprehensive, valid, reliable knowledge assessment
- Certification from reputable, science-based vocational trainer course (KPA-CTP or CTC)
- Positive reinforcement (reward-based)
- Knows dog body language
- Relationship = trust, comfort, respect



A Qualified Service Dog Trainer

Understands SERVICE DOG…

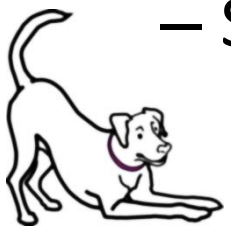
- Legalities and community standards
- Training path (pyramid)
- Public access training
- Task training
- Your disability and its impacts (life & training)
- Experience with many SD teams
- Behavior assessment selection/progressing dogs

Why Start Your Journey with a Qualified Service Dog Trainer?

- Finding the right dog requires expertise
- Maximize your puppy's early development
- Develop training and handling skills for the rest of your dog's life (and your next dog!)
- Someone who gets YOUR dog because they've worked with hundreds (or thousands) of dogs
- SD trainer covers what to train AND how to train it for future service dog needs (tasks, PA, etc.)

Benefits of a **Qualified** Trainer

- **Confidence and support from the beginning**
  - Raising your puppy right reduces stress
- **Efficient, effective, reward-based**
  - Achieve long-term results, save money
  - Prevent future training problems
- **Clear pathway & training plan – no surprises**
- Support, information, resources
  - Sounding board & reality check



Find the Right Service Dog

- "Finding the Right Service Dog" webinar series & materials
- Consult
- Search support

https://atyourservicedogtraining.com/find-a-dog-to-train/

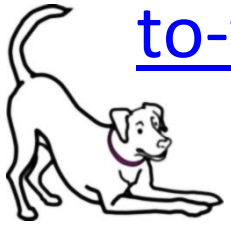
(We helped Ethan's mom to find Sydney)

Find Your Dog 1st step: Webinar

- Webinar, handouts, Q & A
- https://shorturl.at/dgjwL
- Will help you choose the best option for you and your family
- Program vs. owner-training
- Pros & cons of puppy vs. adult
- Breeder vs. rescue
- How to assess breeders
- The most important traits in a dog

Find Your Dog
2nd Step: Individual Support

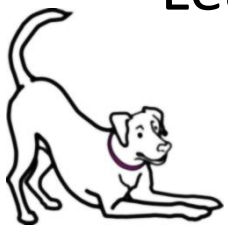
- Guidance on best dog for YOU
- Where & how to find likely candidates
- List of potential sources of dogs for you
- Help assessing breeders, rescue organizations
- Temperament testing & selection
- Answers to your questions
- https://atyourservicedogtraining.com/find-a-dog-to-train/



Start Training Your Puppy or New Dog

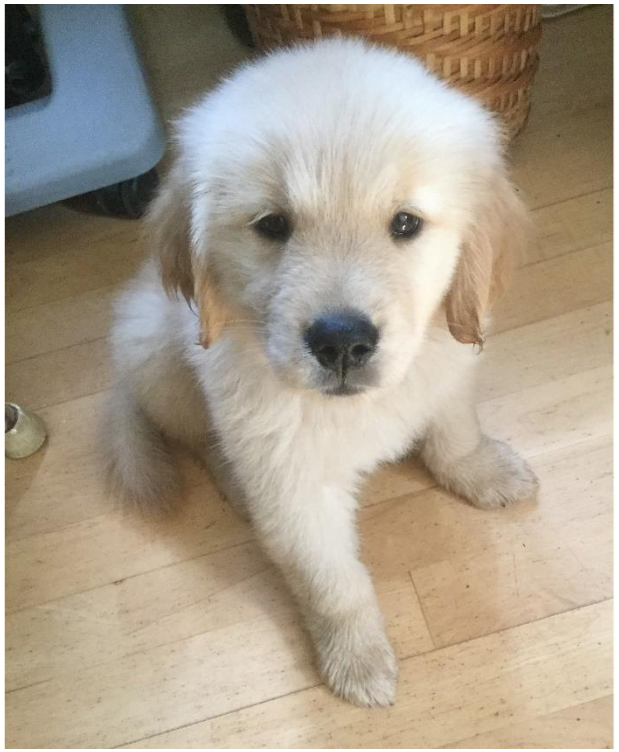
- Dogs In Service Certification (DISC) courses
- Geared to owner-trainers
- PEARL geared to puppies
- Also appropriate for adults

  PEARL (Pup Engaged, Attentive, Relaxed & Learning)



Start Training Your Puppy or New Dog with PEARL DISC

- 10-week course
- Puppy raising essentials
- Advance handler/trainer skill
- PA & task foundations
- +Basics for the good life!
- Assessment to earn Discs & level up



DISC Helps Your Puppy or New Dog Get Started Right!

- Convenient – train your pup from anywhere
- Individual LIVE COACHING with your trainer every week (not just recordings); no “cookie cutter lessons”
- Start NOW – open enrollment classes
- Service dog specialists train your pup from GO

Advanced Training: PA or Tasks Private Consultations

- Better understanding of your dog's trajectory
- Your disability and training/task needs
- Create your dog's individual training plan
- Answers to your questions
- Efficient, effective, positive training
- Ongoing support

Private Training Options to fit your needs

Regional or National

- Online coaching
- Hybrid – online & on-site (regional)
- Board-and-train
- Team training (national)
- Combination (online group and private; private & B&T)

Local

- In-home, in-public, on-site, or online
- Coaching sessions
- Day training
- Part-time board-and-train
- Hybrid (online & on-site)
- Combination (group & day training, etc.)

Team Training

Your Service Dog Trainer

- DISC Courses
- PEARL (puppy+basic+beyond)
  - Learn lifetime handling and training skills
  - Get puppy off to right start for tasks and PA
- Bronze (intermediate+beyond)
- Private PA & task training
- Public Access Evaluation
- Attestation letter, cards, badge
- Solutions when disability affects training

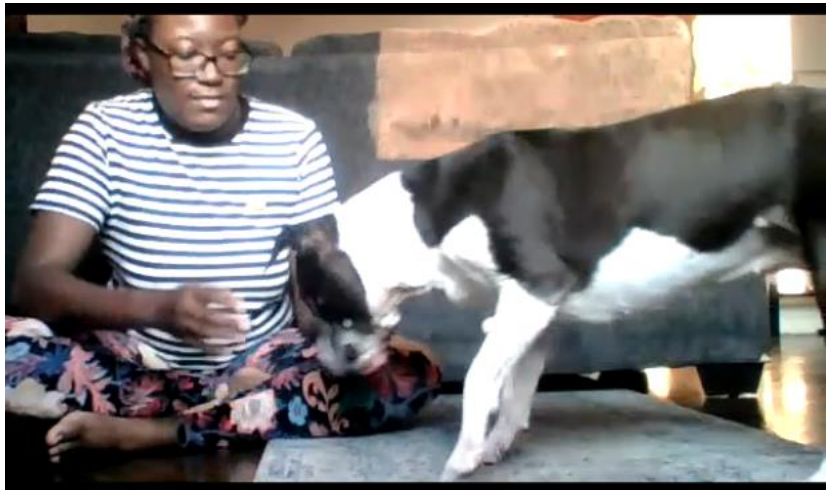
Your Local Pet Trainer

- Puppy kindergarten or puppy day training
  - Proper socialization
  - Local skilled eyes on pup's interaction with novelty
- Bronze assessment
- If needed, additional in-person classes or lessons, coordinated with service dog trainer

Are you a professional trainer
with service dog questions?

At Your Service offers

- Tandem & On-Tap consults
- Mentoring (learn the biz from the inside)
- Workshops, webinars, seminars



Dasha Morrison, Trainer/Mentee

https://atyourservicedogtraining.com/services/train-the-trainer/

Get started on your rewarding journey to a better life with your service dog by your side

atyourservicedogtraining.com