

Building Confidence for Children with Autism

There was a time when Dawson spent his school day with a teaching assistant constantly at his side, guiding him through the halls and to classes. No one thought he was capable of moving around the school safely by himself.

Then, in 2006, things changed. Roscoe, a National Service Dog, came into Dawson's life. With his new companion by his side, he gained a whole new level of independence and self confidence. At school, Roscoe became the focal point of Dawson's education, facilitating reading and comprehension, and giving his teachers a window into his thoughts. More importantly, his family, teachers and friends grew confident that Dawson could behave like every other kid heading off to class, the library or the gym.

The magical bond between one boy and his dog opened up a whole new world.

Together, Dawson and Roscoe joined the track and field team. At the year-end meet, they competed in everything from the 3km cross-country run, to the long jump and even the 400 metre dash.

Although there is no cure for autism, with the support of trained service dogs, more individuals like Dawson can lead happier, more independent and confident lives.



**NATIONAL
SERVICE DOGS**

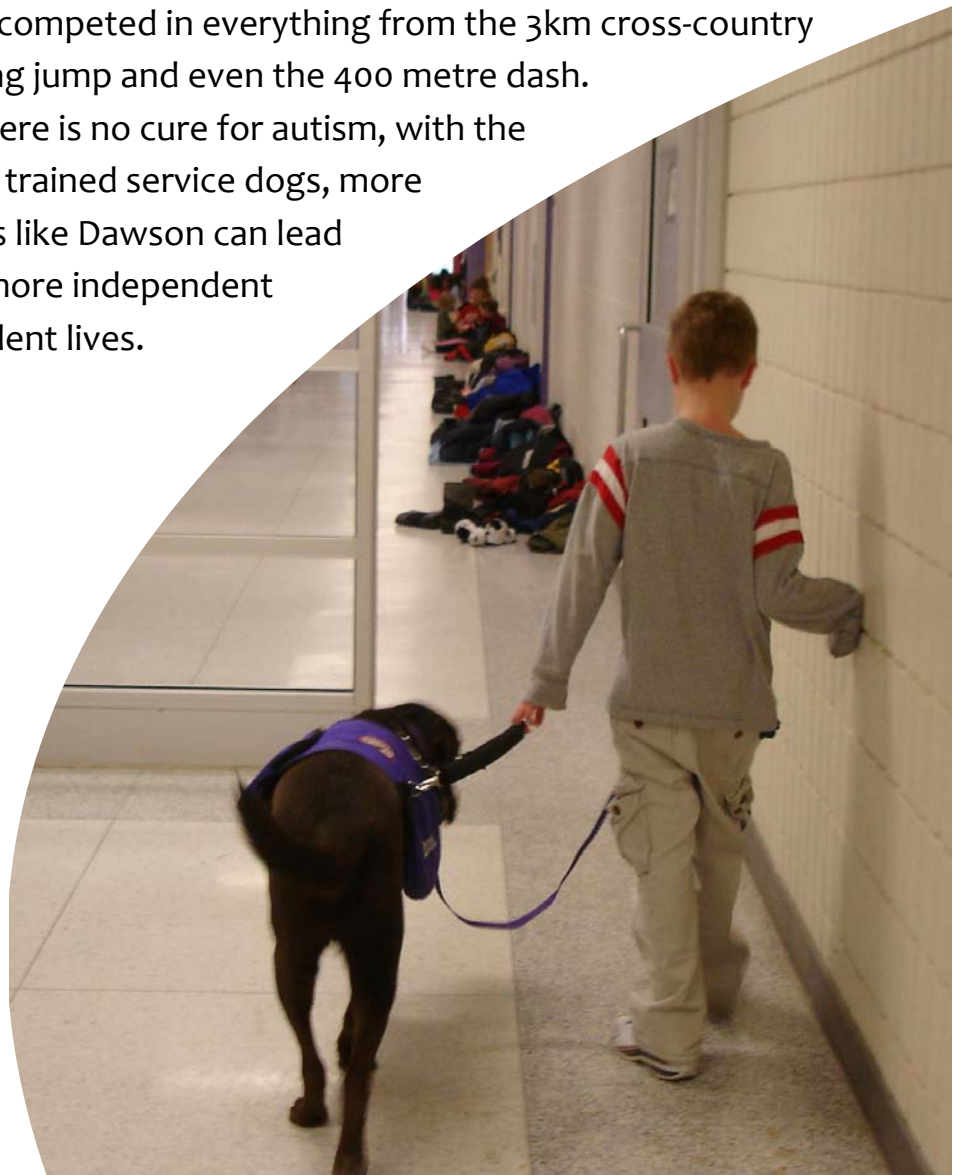
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Confidence is Created...

one Child, one Dog, one Life at a Time.

Since 1996, National Service Dogs has been building confidence by enriching the quality of life and enhancing the independence of children and families living with autism. What began as a small volunteer run organization, has grown into an internationally recognized leader in pioneering effective service dog training programs and services.

Autism is a developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life. Autistic individuals have difficulty with verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions, sensory behaviour and leisure or play activities. Children with autism sometimes injure themselves, have unpredictable mood swings and can bolt without warning.

Autism Service Dogs:

- increase safety levels and alleviate the bolting behaviours common in children with autism by acting as an anchor when tethered to the child
- improve a child's socialization and behavioural skills
- create freedoms for the child and family members to go out of the house safely and confidently
- suppress behavioural outbursts in children, giving them an increased attention span and a greater aptitude for learning

“Haley is a remarkably gentle companion to Gillian, whether it's playing a game of tag in the backyard or just being used as a foot rest underneath the dinner table. She has enhanced Gillian's life in so many ways...we are truly fortunate that NSD provided our daughter a perfect friend and protector.”



NSD Programs

Breeding and Puppy-raising

NSD operates its own breeding program and has produced 6 generations of quality service dogs. During their first year, puppies are cared for and trained by volunteers.

Advanced Training

During an intensive 5-month training process, dogs are specially trained to work with a child who has autism. They are assessed for compatibility, temperament and energy level so they can be properly matched with a child on our waiting list.

Team Training

This program is designed to provide support for the parents of a child who will receive a service dog. They learn how to handle the dog, maintain training and manage the dog's health. Part of the training is done in-home.

Train the Trainer

Recognized around the world for its positive and proven training methodology, NSD is approached by individuals and organizations seeking advice and support. The program provides the knowledge and skills the need to succeed.

Volunteer Program

NSD began as a volunteer organization and today it continues to rely on caring individuals. We provide training, support and help to organize the efforts of approximately 170 volunteers.

Building Confidence



As the number of people living with autism in Canada and around the world has increased from 1 in 150 to 1 in 100, the demand for service dogs to assist children and their families is growing. It is anticipated that over the next five years, NSD's capacity to place autism service dogs must double. To meet this demand, NSD has acquired a 7 acre property in Cambridge, Ontario. Here we will build a larger, more accessible training and education centre that will be able to meet current and future needs.

The new Centre will provide enough room to dramatically increase the number of service dogs that we can train and place with families each year. With our own

dedicated space, we will no longer have to rent facilities and the number and size of training sessions will go up while our costs go down. With more dogs in the system, we will be able to reduce the amount of time families wait for placement by half. The added capacity will allow us to share NSD's methodologies and experiences on a global basis.

The Centre will be the heart of our organization and set the stage for successful and positive working relationships with our partners, volunteers and clients.



“You have changed our lives, but most importantly, you have made it possible for a ten year old girl to open her eyes and face the big, scary world with the help and companionship of her dog, her best friend.”

Planning a Confident Future

With your help, National Service Dogs can build a better future for children and families living with autism. To achieve our goal, we plan to launch a three phase campaign to help raise the funds necessary to cover the cost of developing our new home. The total cost of the project is just over \$4.8 million. These costs include design, construction, landscaping, furnishings and re-payment of land acquisition cost.

PHASE ONE

Puppy Development Centre **\$ 880,000**

This new facility will provide enough space to start the next generation of service dogs off on the right foot. Puppies will be born and cared for in a controlled and safe environment, with staff on hand to handle difficult births and provide constant care. Heated floors and an independent ventilation system will ensure unvaccinated puppies are not exposed to the general population where the risk of infection is greater. The space will also accommodate the Early Learning Program for Puppies.



PHASE TWO

Advanced Training Centre **\$ 2,238,000**

The Training Centre will provide kennel space for mature dogs and can accommodate 60 service dogs at a time. Each kennel will be equipped with heated floors, dog beds, access to natural lighting and a proper ventilation system to ensure a healthy environment for dogs, staff and volunteers. With nearly 9300 square feet of space, the Training Centre will have enough room for the advanced training programs. Here, staff and volunteers will be trained to work with the dogs, the dogs will receive specialized service training and families will participate in the Team Training program.

PHASE THREE

Community Education Centre **\$ 1,707,000**

A multi-purpose building will contain our administrative offices and provide space for meetings and training sessions. The building will focus on providing community education with enough room to host lectures and offer programming for school groups, community service clubs and others. We look forward to working with external agencies in developing relevant programs for individuals that have special needs and a desire to work with dogs.



“Licorice stopped Amanda from taking off at Disneyland so many times we lost count. When they would stop or wait, Amanda was not screaming or upset. She was comfortable just hanging out with her dog. Licorice went on most of the rides with his tail wagging the whole time!”