

Precedent Setting Legal Battle Sees Service Dog in Training Returned to National Service Dogs

Cambridge, Ontario

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The Small Claims Court of Ontario has returned custody of a service dog in training to National Service Dogs.

For the past 2 years National Service Dogs (NSD) has been involved in precedent setting legal proceedings to regain custody of NSD Gabby, a service dog in training, after a volunteer puppy raiser refused to return her for assessment, training and placement into one of NSD's four key programs.

"National Service Dogs places the health and wellbeing of all of our service dogs in training as a top priority," says Executive Director, Danielle Forbes.

"We are extremely relieved to have NSD Gabby back in our custody and this unfortunate situation concluded so that she can begin her important life of service as a Companion Dog. Dogs in our Companion Program provide increased psychological wellbeing, increased opportunities for exercise and social interaction; as well as, decreased stress and anxiety for individuals with special needs"

National Service Dogs, a registered Canadian charity, has been a member of Assistance Dogs International since 2000 and an accredited member since 2008. NSD has an internationally recognized breeding program that produces high quality Labrador and Golden Retrievers and relies on volunteer puppy raisers to raise, socialize and teach basic obedience to future service dogs. Under a signed agreement, puppy raisers care for the dogs for 12-16 months, with NSD providing all puppy classes, food and veterinary care. Upon request puppy raisers return the dogs to the NSD Training Centre for assessment and advanced training. NSD relies on hundreds of volunteers to honour the terms of the agreement in order to fulfill our mission to enrich the quality of life and enhance the independence of children, adults and families living with autism, PTSD and other special circumstances.

National Service Dogs has been an innovator and international pioneer in the field of Service Dog intervention for nearly twenty years. Founded in 1996 as a response to the increasing need for effective interventions in the treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder, NSD was the first organization in the world to develop a Service Dog program for children with autism. Over our 18 year history NSD has continued to respond to the needs of a greater majority of individuals living with physical, mental and emotional challenges. We are proud to be the only accredited organization in Canada providing Service Dogs to veterans and non-veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD); the first in Ontario to establish a Canine Assisted Intervention program for children and adults recovering from abuse, trauma, and stroke; and a leader in Companion Dog services. For more information contact www.nsd.on.ca