



2011 Annual Report

National Service Dog Training Centre Inc.

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Accredited Members of:



CANADIAN
 ASSOCIATION
 OF GUIDE &
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Charitable Registration: #898029228 RR0001

2011 Governance Report - A Message from the President

Throughout the past year, National Service Dogs' Board of Directors has continued to pursue a transition towards governance. The goal is to create a structure that will enable the Executive Director to lead and manage, while providing the board of directors with sufficient control in order to satisfy its due diligence requirements. A critical component of the framework is to ensure National Service Dogs continues to serve our defined purpose of enriching the quality of life and enhancing the independence of children and families living with autism and special needs by providing them with specially trained Labrador and Golden Retrievers.

A considerable portion of the six Board meetings held in 2011 were dedicated to progressing the transition to a governance model. Key accomplishments included:

- Updated and approved the **Terms of Reference** for the Risk Management, Human Resources & Governance, and Nominations Committees;
- **Overall policy review** - resulting in many board policies being created, updated and approved, including the development of a Whistleblower policy and complaint process being published;
- Establishment of a **board calendar** that formalized the board of directors receiving strategic presentations on NSD activities in the area of: Human Resource practices, Animal Care practices and Environmental Challenges;
- Enhancements were made to the **Executive Director performance evaluation** and objective setting process; and
- Refinement of our **director candidate recruitment** and application processes, including taking the step to articulate the skills/expertise we were looking for to further strengthen the board of directors.

National Service Dogs' Board of Directors is comprised of eight volunteer members and one honorary member who are united in their core commitment to animal welfare. We share the passion for the work done by the Executive Director, staff and volunteers at NSD, and understand the commitment required to overcome challenges and achieve objectives to successfully serve current and future clients of NSD. We are truly grateful for their efforts.

I look ahead to fiscal 2012 and beyond with great confidence and optimism! National Service Dogs' Board of Directors is confident that the work completed over the past year positions us well to finalize the transition to a governance role and continue stewarding the organization towards the dream of a successful Capital Campaign for our new Training Center.

We look forward to serving our stakeholders in the upcoming year!



Gina McDonnell
Board Chair

2011 Board of Directors

- Gina McDonnell, *President*
- Alison Archambault, *Vice President*
- Joyce Barlow, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Directors:

- Julie Warren
- Keri Beu
- Ron Cribbs
- Keith Lewis
- George Harper
- Maureen Butler-Morin, *Honorary Member*

A Message from the Executive Director



In the summer of 2011, National Service Dogs celebrated its 15th Anniversary and graduated its 250th client. NSD was able to reach this milestone thanks to the hard work and dedication of 10 staff, over 400 volunteers, and thousands of generous donors.

National Service Dogs was thrilled to have the opportunity to work in partnership with Nestle Purina, Milk-Bone, Novartis, TD Employee's, Petland, Screenco, President's Choice Children's Charity, The Hog Jog Committee of OPIC, Kiwanis, Optimists, Masons, Knights of Columbus and The Order of the Eastern Star over the course of the year.

With the support of all of NSD's stakeholders, we were able to place 17 Certified Service Dogs with children with autism across Ontario. We were also very proud to see our first two Skilled Companion Dogs for Veterans with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder matched and successfully placed in southern Ontario. In addition, NSD formalized the Companion Dog Program and successfully matched 17 dogs with individuals with a broad spectrum of challenges, including: Aspergers, MS, CP, Downs Syndrome and Angelman's Syndrome.

Enhancing how NSD communicates with volunteers and donors is an on-going focus and in 2011, NSD achieved the goal of attracting over 1000 Facebook fans and increased our reach by 100%! NSD's official newsletter, The Scoop, has been very well received and continues to evolve to meet the needs of our stakeholders. With daily and monthly updates now available on-line, everyone has the opportunity to get involved, stay informed, and follow the organization's successes throughout the year.

www.nsd.on.ca Web Traffic

	Aug 23 to Dec 31, 2010	Aug 23 to Dec 31, 2011	Change
Site Visits	10,601	12,876	21%
Page Views	30,392	36,257	19%
Pages per Visit	2.9	2.8	-3%

In August 2010, we began tracking our website visits as a way of gauging the effectiveness of our increase in communication efforts. The table to the right indicates a 20% increase in traffic from August to December 2010 to the same time frame in 2011. This growth shows that we have been able to engage more individuals over the last year. We expect to see these numbers continue to increase as our online presence is enhanced through an updated website and the launch of the National Service Dog blog in the coming months.

On behalf of the entire organization, I wish to thank our donors for their hard work and generosity. Your continued support is changing the lives of children and families across Canada every single day.

A very special thank you goes out to our staff. Their extraordinary efforts and dedication to our dogs and our clients is greatly appreciated by all who have had the opportunity to work with them.

Danielle Forbes
Executive Director/Co-Founder

NSD Staff

- Danielle Forbes, *Executive Director*
- Lindsay Havlin, *Communications & Stakeholder Relations Manager*
- Laura Scott, *Fund Development Manager*
- Garry Stephenson, *Puppy Program & Breeding Manager*
- Cathy Jurchuk, *Senior Trainer*
- Janine Brubacher, *Senior Trainer*
- Jillian Petty, *Apprentice Trainer*
- Vicki Zettler, *Apprentice Trainer*
- Tamara Leniew, *Client Services Coordinator*
- Chris McArthur, *Puppy Program Coordinator*
- Stephanie Cherri, *Volunteer Coordinator*
- Margie Rolston, *Book keeper*

Certified Service Dog for Autism Program

Servicing the autism community has been National Service Dogs' (NSD) specialty since 1996. Over the past 15 years, National Service Dogs has placed over 250 Certified Service Dogs with children and families living with autism.

NSD provides two weeks of intensive training for parents whose children are receiving a service dog, facilitates school placements, and provides follow-up support and re-certification testing throughout the dog's working life.

Certified Service Dogs for Autism are valued at \$30,000 over their eight to ten year working life and are provided to approved clients at no charge.

In 2011, National Service Dogs' waiting period for receiving a Certified Service Dog decreased from three years to two. The hope is to further decrease the wait period to 18 to 24 months.

National Service Dogs has proven that properly trained and certified service dogs for autism can:

- 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 behaviour skills
- Create freedoms for the child and family members to go out of the house safely and confidently
- Expand a child's capabilities to experience more of life and to grow
- Suppress behavioural outbursts in children, thereby giving them an increased attention span and a greater aptitude for learning

For more information on the Certified Service Dog for Autism Program, visit www.nsd.on.ca.

Fall Team Training Graduating Class 2011



"The first time Braydon saw Whoopi, he was not impressed. He ran out of the house screaming and crying; however, the placement is going much better now and Braydon's bond with Whoopi grows stronger each day. Just

two days after bringing her home, my son was having a total meltdown in the bath and my husband decided to bring Whoopi into the room. Like magic, Braydon's behaviour changed." Braydon's Mom



"The true sign for us that the wait was worth every minute, was when another parent came up to us and

said 'I have never seen you relaxed out in the community. You have always looked stressed. For the first time, I see you at ease, happy and enjoying being out with your family, and it is Bogart that is the difference!' As parents, we knew we were stressed but we didn't realize everyone else could see it too." Alex's Mom

Companion Dog Programs

Skilled Companion Dog for Veterans Program

In 2010, National Service Dogs expanded its services to include Skilled Companion Dogs for Canadian Soldiers diagnosed with long-term Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. In 2011, the organization placed two dogs with veterans.



Juno, NSD's first Skilled Companion Dog

NSD's Skilled Companion Dog for Veterans Program provides mental health care professionals with access to more diverse forms of treatment for their patients. Additionally, the dogs:

Promote Integration and Activity

Having the responsibility of another being that is a consistent caring companion helps build ties to the future. The dogs are active and force the veteran to get out and exercise. The care of the dog brings routine back into their life.

"I was told one time by a trainer with NSD that we are no longer people with a problem, we are people with a dog. Such an easy fix for such a complex problem." Diane, a Skilled Companion Dog Client

Suppress Hyper Vigilance

Hyper vigilance creates constant tension and paranoia. Veterans often require more personal space than the average individual. The dogs are trained to create a physical barrier that keeps the public at a comfortable distance.

Provide Reality Affirmation and Redirection

The dogs are trained to recognize the veterans anxious behaviour and physically redirect them to more positive

activities i.e. petting the dog. In addition, for those experiencing nightmares or flashbacks, the dogs can provide vitally important reality affirmation with their persistent nudges and calm disposition. Often the fact that the dog is not reacting allows the veteran to feel safe in their environment.

For more information on the Skilled Companion Dog for Veterans program, visit www.nsd.on.ca.

Companion Dog Program

National Service Dogs recognizes the special bonds that develop between dogs and their families. The therapeutic value of pets is well documented and many people have experienced:

- **Decreased** stress and **anxiety**
- **Increased** psychological **wellbeing**
- **Increased** opportunities for **exercise**
- **Increased** opportunities for **social interaction**

As a result, NSD launched their Companion Dog Program in 2009. These dogs are placed with children, adults and seniors with various disabilities and do not have public access.



Kate with NSD Companion Dog, Reebok

In 2011, a lot of focus was put on promoting this program and its many benefits for the organization and clients. The program has allowed NSD to utilize over 85% of its dogs; thereby, helping more families in need. 17 Companion Dogs were placed in 2011.

For more information or to apply for a Companion Dog application, visit www.nsd.on.ca.

"Chester brings a sense of calm to our lives that we all need and appreciate. He has a great sense of humour and seems to 'just know' when we need some love. Not a day goes by that we don't thank NSD for bringing this wonderful family member into our lives." A Companion Dog Client

Fundraising Update

National Service Dogs receives no government funding and relies entirely on funding from the general public, community service clubs, corporate sponsors and community based foundations and fundraising events. With the generous support of community members and volunteers, NSD is able to place close to 20 Certified Service Dogs annually, while also placing Skilled Companion and Companion Dogs with families in need.

Annual Fundraising Events

NSD hosts three annual events, which include:

- **Easter Egg Hunt for Dogs:** Raised \$90,000 in 2011
- **Ride for Autism & Veterans:** Raised over \$6,800 in 2011
- **Mantracking:** Raised \$8,300 in 2011



Third-Party Fundraising Events

Various companies, service clubs and clients continued to show their support through fundraising events for NSD. In 2011, the organization had the pleasure of working with the Ontario Pork Industry Council in planning their Hog Jog which raised over \$30,000 for NSD.



Corporate Sponsors

NSD continued to strengthen on-going partnerships with

Milk-Bone, Purina, TD Employee's, Petland, Screenco and President's Choice Children's Charity in 2011.



The above corporations supported NSD through general and gift in kind donations, sponsorships, payroll deductions, and volunteer time. Purina, continued as NSD's official food sponsor, while Milk-Bone continued as their official treat sponsor while also sponsoring multiple Certified Service Dog Teams.

Community Service Clubs

NSD continued to strengthen on-going partnerships with service clubs, such as Kiwanis, Optimists, Masons, Knights of Columbus and The Order of the Eastern Star.

Service Clubs support NSD by selecting the organization as their charity of choice and donating their proceeds from designated events to the charity.

Support from the General Public

In 2011, individuals continued to support NSD through general and gift in kind donations, Commemorative Giving and Planned Gifts, donations In Memoriam to honour a recently departed loved one, donations in lieu of gifts for birthdays and anniversaries, and various sponsorships.

"It was great to work with National Service Dogs as they provided a full service support for our charity event. NSD's guidance, advice and dedication were invaluable and helped to make the Hog Jog a huge success. We wouldn't hesitate for a second to work with NSD again." OPIC Hog Jog Chair

Sponsorship Opportunities

NSD has various sponsorship levels which are supported by corporate sponsors, service clubs and the general public. These sponsorship opportunities include:

- **Puppy Sponsorship:** \$1,000
- **Kennel Sponsorship:** \$2,000
- **Companion Dog Team Sponsorship:** \$5,000
- **Litter Sponsorship:** \$6,000 to \$10,000
- **Team Training Class Sponsorship:** \$10,000
- **Skilled Companion Dog Team Sponsorship:** \$10,000
- **Certified Service Dog Team Sponsorship:** \$30,000

Volunteer Update

With only ten staff members, NSD relies heavily on their volunteer base to keep the organization running. In fact, 561,400 volunteer hours were donated in 2011. These hours represent what would have been worked by 270 full time employees.

Volunteers assist in all areas of the organization so there are numerous opportunities for individuals to get involved.

Volunteer Opportunities

Some areas in which support is required include:

- **Puppy Raising:** Volunteers help socialize and train puppies-in-training by welcoming one into their home for approximately 16 months
- **Kennel Enrichment Program:** Volunteers help run our Advanced Training Dogs in our leash free area, groom and massage them
- **Weekend Sitting:** Volunteers help provide a relaxing weekend for a dog in Advanced Training
- **Fundraising:** Volunteers work with NSD staff to ensure the success of various fundraising events
- **Building Maintenance:** Volunteers assist with general painting and repairs, including building kennels, completing electrical work and plumbing, mowing and gardening

The Words of a Puppy Raiser

"The best part of raising a future service dog, was the overall experience. We did not wish to own a dog so this worked out very well. Once the puppies had grown, the best part was, and still is, hearing from the families. How the service dog has impacted their lives with every thing from getting a full nights sleep, to seeing the child get invited to her first birthday party - dog and all!" Kevin & Jean Cahill

Kennel Enrichment Program

In the fall of 2011, NSD implemented the Read and Relax Program. This program was designed by the ASPCA to help relieve kennel stress in shelter dogs by training them to be calm and relaxed in a kennel environment. The current group of dogs in Advanced Training have gone through this process and the outcome has been very encouraging.

In addition, evening volunteers bring small groups of

three to four dogs into the red room each evening for grooming and massage to further relax the dogs.

The dogs also receive a free run in the NSD leash free park each evening. This allows them to expend excess energy and relax prior to spending the night in the kennel. Training staff also free run the dogs each morning as time permits.

In the spring of 2012, "play" stations such as, hoops, tunnels and platforms, will be added to the leash free park in order to engage the dogs in more meaningful play activities

2011 Volunteer Awards

Every August, NSD recognizes the outstanding dedication of all their volunteers and pay special tribute to the winners of their volunteer awards. In 2011, Brodie Morin won the Shade Volunteer of the Year

Award, Matt Pickowski won the Heather Fowler Award, Petland won the Danielle Forbes Award, Tracy Elston won the Chris Fowler Award, and Emily Keeley won the Brodie Morin Youth Award.



2011 Volunteer Report

In 2011, NSD welcomed many new supporters and volunteer retention remained high. The following table provides a break down of NSD's volunteer base.

2011 Active Volunteers		
Role	Volunteers	Hours
Puppy Raiser/ Breeder Caretaker	125	547,500
Kennel & Weekend Sitting	173	6,00
Administrative	6	1,300
Fundraising & Events	125	6,200
Board	10	500
Total Volunteers	438	561,400