



## **“SO YOU WANT TO BE A PUPPY RAISER!”**

### **Puppy Raising Orientation**

### **National Service Dogs**

### **Mission Statement**

**“To enrich the quality of life and enhance the independence of children and families living with autism and special needs.”**

### **WHY DOES NSD NEED PUPPY RAISERS?**

The National Service Dogs puppy raiser program is one of the most important steps in an assistance dog’s training. During the first 12-18 months of the National Service Dog puppy’s life, it will need to grow and mature physically and psychologically, in such a way that it will be able to properly cope with the pressures and responsibilities of being an assistance dog. The home of a puppy raiser is best suited to achieving this objective. The puppies will be working within our society; therefore it is necessary for the puppy raiser to socialize the puppies in situations that they will encounter as a certified assistance dog. While in the care of a puppy raiser, the puppy will be exposed to the sights, sounds and smells of our busy world.

Another important part of a puppy’s socialization is the way the puppy conducts itself in public. Sniffing, barking and personal grooming are all undesirable behaviours when in public and the puppy will need to be constantly reminded of what is expected of it. The puppy must learn to look to you for guidance and direction while learning the rules for living in a human-oriented society.

Years ago the norm was for service dogs to grow up in the kennel, being socialized by trainers. When the dogs were ready to work they weren’t accustomed to home environments. For an Autism Service Dog that will be working with a child in a family home this is not good. We look to the raisers to give the puppies the opportunity of growing up and becoming accustomed to home environments. That way it is one less thing for them to adapt to when they start working.

### **DO I NEED EXPERIENCE WITH DOGS TO BE A PUPPY RAISER?**

Previous experience in understanding and working with dogs would be considered an asset, but it is not required. As a National Service Dog’s puppy raiser, you will “learn by experience” on how to raise the puppy. A manual and training staff will guide you through the process of understanding the puppy and teaching it the basic commands it will need to know. You will be given the necessary instructions on where to obtain the necessary resources in your

community and how to use them. To help you gain more experience, puppy raisers are required to attend scheduled obedience classes with an approved NSD instructor.

### **WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES AS A PUPPY RAISER FOR NSD?**

As a National Service Dog's puppy raiser, there are several areas that you will be responsible for: Basic obedience, socialization and public etiquette training are very important to your puppy's acceptance to advanced training. Seen through the eyes of an instructor, the ideal assistance dog candidate demonstrates the following qualities:

- Walks by your side on a loose leash, following your stride
- Remains calm and confident in all public situations, including those with distractions
- Does not eat food off the floor or beg for food
- Toilets on command, on or off leash, at home or away
- Remains calm when introduced to strangers, either adults or children
- Does not "protect" toys, food, home or handlers
- Is not aggressive towards other animals or people
- Is trustworthy and comfortable when left alone for short periods of time
- Is well groomed and healthy, i.e. not too fat or thin, has a healthy coat, short nails, clean teeth and clean ears
- Is willing to work
- Is friendly and seeks direction from his handler, in all social situations.

- **NOTE:** All dogs are different and some will be easier to train than others. You will need to follow instructions from the trainers, practice obedience lessons between classes and give a consistent 100% effort in executing those instructions. If you have any questions or concerns the Manager of Breeding and Puppy Program or the Puppy Program Coordinator will be available to assist you. Contact [CathyKleinNSD@gmail.com](mailto:CathyKleinNSD@gmail.com) for more information.

### **"PUPPY PROOFING" YOUR HOME**

For your peace of mind, and the puppy's safety, it is very important that you remove any items that the puppy should not have. This would include areas inside and outside the house. Common items inside the house would include shoes, socks, pantyhose, underwear, clothing, important papers, telephone, computer and electrical cords, household chemicals, cat litter boxes, cat and dog food. You will want to make sure your garbage is not accessible too. Outside the house you should remove from reach: hoses, sprinklers, outdoor furniture cushions, barbecue tools, gardening equipment, fertilizers, pesticides, antifreeze and other poisonous chemicals. ***Puppies love to chew things.*** Set yourself up for success by removing all of the temptations from the puppy's reach. Store anything you do not want chewed above the puppy's reach.

### **EXPECTATIONS OF NSD PUPPY RAISERS**

- Attend puppy classes consistently
- Work with your puppy a minimum of 1 hour per day implementing the lessons outlined in the Puppy Manual and during classes

- Consistently take 4-5 pictures/videos of your puppy and submit them to [CathyKleinNSD@gmail.com](mailto:CathyKleinNSD@gmail.com) at a minimum of once time per month
- Attend specialized one on one training as requested
- Permit in home visits by NSD Puppy Program staff member as requested

### **Frequently asked NSD Puppy Questions:**

#### **How old will the puppy be when I receive it?**

Typically the puppy is 8 weeks old but occasionally we have older pups whose raisers can no longer continue.

#### **Can I Puppy Raise with a roommate or boyfriend?**

Yes but we review these situations on a case by case basis. Both parties sign a puppy raisers contract and must attend puppy classes.

#### **How long will I have the NSD puppy in my care?**

Until the pup enters the kennel for Advanced Training. This can be anywhere from 18 to 24 months old.

#### **Can I be a puppy raiser and volunteer in other areas of NSD?**

You may certainly volunteer in all other areas. We often look for puppy raisers to help at mall or trade shows answering questions. This is an excellent opportunity to really get the dog used to being in public and meeting people. For first time puppy raisers there is no visiting for the first month once the dog enters the kennel.

#### **Can I have other Pets:**

The home the puppy will be working in may have other dogs, cats or various other pets. Decisions about puppy raising in homes with multiple animals (and more than 2 dogs) are made on a case by case basis. Please contact [CathyKleinNSD@gmail.com](mailto:CathyKleinNSD@gmail.com) for more information. The commitment to training is very important so you'll have to decide if you have the time with the other pet responsibilities in the home.

#### **Are small children OK with raising a service dog:**

You will need to commit to at least 4 outings a week with the dog where it will have ALL of your attention. Your puppy will require 2 leash walks and free play time daily. You will also need to ensure the puppy is not getting any dropped or easily accessible people food. A household with children under 5 is going to face a lot of challenges. We suggest you try weekend sitting for a bit if you're not sure before making a full year or more commitment.

#### **What does NSD supply?**

- A very cute puppy
- Lots of support to help with any problems and ongoing puppy classes
- Puppy Jackets for public access
- First leash and collar as well as head harness if required
- All health care supplies and vet care
- All food

### **What supplies am I responsible for as a puppy raiser?**

- Large size crate for dog up to 90lbs
- Toys - see attached sheet
- Treats
- Your time and love

### **If I cannot continue to care for the puppy what happens?**

We completely understand situations change and we would rather find a new home for the puppy than have you continue with a responsibility you are struggling to fulfill. You will be kept posted as to your puppy's progress and you may find other areas of volunteering with NSD a better fit.

### **Who does the grooming of the puppy?**

- You are responsible for grooming- nail trims, combing, brushing, ear cleaning, and handling of the puppy
- The Puppy Program Coordinator and volunteer trainers will help you with this at the puppy classes if you need assistance

### **When do I take the puppy to the vets and who arranges the appointments?**

- Please text or call Garry Stephenson at 519 504-0502 if you have a question or puppy emergency. All vet visits require Garry's approval prior to vet visit.
- Once you have spoken to Garry and received permission, oftentimes we ask you to call the vet to arrange the appointment and take the puppy to the appointment
- We have discounts arranged with specific Vets so you must use one of the preapproved vets in Kitchener, Cambridge, St Mary's or London.

### **How does the billing work at the vet clinic?**

The cost of vaccines, and spay/neuter of the puppy will be directly billed to NSD  
Any additional vet care that the pup may require **MUST** be pre-approved by either the Garry Stephenson the Program Manager or Danielle Forbes The Executive Director.

### **Can I take the puppy to my own veterinarian?**

No, you must use approved NSD veterinarians only.

### **What if there is an emergency?**

In case of emergency call Garry Stephenson (519) 623-4188 Ext 22 or cell (519) 504-0502.

### **What are some of the qualities/requirements of a puppy raiser?**

- Patience
- Consistency
- Willing to follow instructions
- Active and able to spend at least an hour a day walking and exercising the puppy
- Devoted to NSD program
- A person who is home part of the day
- A person who has the freedom in their schedule to attend training classes
- A person who has able to make regular public outings with the puppy (min. 3 per week)
- A person who has experience with dogs or a willingness to learn
- A person who is committed to train & raise the puppy
- A person who can invest time in socializing the puppy

### **Where do I get food?**

Food is available at the kennel. You must arrange to pick it up and sign the takeout sheet provided. For London Puppy raisers food is available at the kennel, puppy classes, or from Garry.

### **If I plan a vacation and the puppy is not able to come along, where will the puppy go?**

- NSD has a list of short term volunteer homes that may be able to take the puppy for a short time
- It is your responsibility to find a temporary home for the puppy until you return. NSD can provide a potential puppy sitter list if required.
- Advance notice of sitter arrangements must be given to the Puppy Program Assistant Cathy Klein CathyKleinNSD@gmail.com.

### **How much exercise does the puppy need?**

A tired puppy is a good puppy

The duration and frequency of the walks will change with the puppy's age but count on investing at least 1 hour per day for walks and play time. At 8 weeks they will only be able to handle short walks but they will need them much more frequently. By 5 or 6 months they can go for an hour or more twice daily plus free play with another dog.

### **Who arranges the training classes?**

- NSD will contact you with the dates/times
- The training classes are free of charge
- Attendance is mandatory for all puppies (unless the puppy is in heat or ill)

### **What do I bring to Training Classes?**

- treats for the pup
- Plastic bag in case of accidents
- Paper towels in case of accidents
- leash
- puppy jacket

### **Where does the puppy sleep?**

Inside the crate, until it is reliably house trained and does not need to be supervised throughout the night or while you are away

### **When do I receive the jackets for my puppy?**

When you pick up the puppy from NSD you will receive a puppy jacket. As your puppy grows you will receive a larger jacket upon return of clean small jacket.

### **How Often Should I take the Puppy on Outings?**

Once the puppy is reliably house broken, you may begin to gradually introduce it to public places where dogs are not normally allowed to enter (stores, restaurants, libraries etc...) Be sure to start slowly, in quiet locations & for short periods of time. Gradually increase the amount of time at outings and slowly increase the intensity level. Your puppy will need a minimum of 4 weekly public outings and 2 leash walks daily and free play time daily.

### What CAN the NSD puppy do while in the puppy raisers care?

- go to work with you if your employer approves
- go to your kids games
- play with children while supervised-no rough housing on floor -no ball playing
- be a part of the family

### Where can I take my puppy?

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| -Libraries      | -Stores          |
| -Parks          | -Schools/Yards   |
| -Museums        | -Church          |
| -Grocery Stores | -Sporting events |
| -Post Offices   | -Buses           |
| -Banks          | -Planes          |
| -Malls          | -Trains          |
| -Movie Theatres | -Cars            |
| -Restaurants    | -Elevators       |
| -Open stairs    |                  |

### Are there things that the NSD puppy Cannot Do?

- get up on the bed/couches
- eat people food
- go to leash free parks
- attend fireworks displays
- go on escalators
- be off leash outside of a fenced area

### Is the puppy able to be greeted by strangers?

- Yes, NSD encourages you to allow the public to greet your puppy in the manner we instruct.
- It gives you the opportunity to educate the public about NSD, recruit a puppy raiser or donor (we rely on public donations, and receive no government funding!)
- It is also very beneficial to the puppy to become comfortable in public surrounded by new people
- The puppy must "sit" while being greeted

### What house training method is recommended?

- Relieve your puppy in your yard in the same area for the first week.
- As you see your puppy starting to circle or squat ask your puppy to "HURRY UP" and give the puppy lots of praise (verbal and treat) when she/he is finished with his/her business and starts to walk away.
- After a few days you can start giving the command as soon as you get to the relieve area. Allow your puppy lots of time to do his/her thing and then take the puppy for a walk or let her play off leash in a **FENCED IN** area.
- Puppies generally need to go out after they awake from sleep, finish a play session, and immediately after they eat or leave the crate. Also if they've been outside playing for sometime they may forget to go and then need to go as soon as you get in the house. If they know the command you will want to do a "hurry up" before going back inside.

## **Crate Training**

The puppy **MUST** be crate trained, and confined to the crate when left UNSUPERVISED. It will prevent the puppy from chewing, soiling in your home, and any other unwanted behaviour. The puppy needs to be comfortable in the crate, because upon returning to NSD the puppy will be living in a kennel. The puppy will need to be in the crate a night, and when you are not able to supervise. For the puppy this will be their "Den".

### **Introducing the crate:**

- leave the crate door open when you arrive home
- throw some kibble into the crate
- allow the puppy to explore the crate at his leisure
- feed your puppy in the crate until he is comfortable in the crate
- the crate should be comfy for the pup- blanket or towel (as long as he does not chew these). Do not leave anything in crate unless its part of the "Approved Toy list"
- eventually close the door on the pup and when he settles and quiet open the door.
- do not make a fuss when the pup goes into the crate or comes out of it
- Place the crate far away from your bedroom at night- a whining puppy should never be "removed from crate or cuddled", he will eventually quiet after 10-15 mins.
- Never, never, never let a whining, howling puppy out of the crate, you have just taught them if they make enough noise they can get out.
- consider covering a wire crate with a blanket, turning on a radio close by the crate

\*Remember to make sure the crate is introduced in a positive manner! Make the crate available to your puppy at all times, he will eventually view it as his safe comfortable den.

### **How soon after I receive the puppy can I begin training?**

- You begin training the puppy **immediately**.
- The first thing you do when you get home is show the puppy where to go to the bathroom
- The Puppy Program will contact you with dates/times for the training classes

## **Questions Regarding the Return of the Puppy for Advanced Training-**

### **Is it difficult for the puppy raiser to give the puppy back to NSD at the end of puppy raising?**

Yes, but keep in mind that you are raising the puppy to help improve the life of another.

### **What happens if the puppy I raise does not make a suitable service dog?**

- The puppy is first considered for all programs (PTSD, Canine Assisted Intervention, Skilled Companion Dog). If the puppy is career changed out of all of these programs, the Puppy Raiser will then have the option of adopting the puppy (for a donation to National Service Dogs)
- NSD will find a suitable, loving home if you do not want to adopt the puppy

### **Where does the puppy go when I turn it into NSD?**

The puppy comes to the NSD Training Centre for Advanced Training. It will live in a kennel with another puppy for 4-6 months prior to being placed as a Service Dog. This is when the puppy's specialized training will begin.

**Can I visit the puppy while he is in Advanced Training?**

You must contact the volunteer co-ordinator to arrange a time to visit with the puppy. Note no visits will be allowed for the first month after the pup has returned to NSD.

**Can I weekend sit the puppy while he is in Advance Training?**

First time raisers have the option to weekend their dog on long weekends that fall during the time it is in Advanced Training, and the weekend leading up to graduation. On occasion you might have the opportunity for an extra weekend if we are short of weekend sitters. Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator for more information.

**Can I still keep in touch with the puppy after he graduates?**

You may contact the puppy program co-ordinator for updates on the puppy's progress while the pup is in advance training.

Once the puppy goes out to work you may contact the trainers for updates on the puppy.

**Final Note**

Throughout this package and the duration of your volunteer experience, you are bound to encounter questions or perhaps concerns. There may be times when you are curious about a procedure or are unsure about a policy and feel you need clarification or a demonstration. We highly encourage you to ask rather than guess; our staff members would be delighted to help you. Your first contact person is encouraged to be [CathyKleinNSD@gmail.com](mailto:CathyKleinNSD@gmail.com)

We at National Service Dogs hope you enjoy your volunteer time with us. As a non-profit volunteer based organization we realize our strength is in our volunteers.

Thank you.

