

National Assistance Dog Week Kicks Off

Dedication honors canines who serve as helpers and companions.

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For the support that service dogs provide to people with disabilities, one week in August has been designated as National Assistance Dog Week.

The more than 20,000 trained service dogs who help people travel, go shopping, attend classes, or pursue employment will be honored from Aug. 10 to 16. Since the early 1920s, assistance dogs have helped open opportunities for their partners.

Service dogs are specially trained for the needs of each recipient. They perform tasks such as opening doors, picking up dropped objects, helping a person with mobility issues, retrieving keys, or taking clothes out of the dryer. Success stories of service dog recipients include the experience of Marcie Davis of New Mexico, a three-time service dog recipient.

Her dog enabled her to pursue a career as president of Davis Innovations, a consulting firm specializing in health and human services. "All of a sudden the impossible seems possible," she said. "Virtually every area in your personal and professional life can be expanded and explored."