



SUMMIT ASSISTANCE DOGS

Empowering people with disabilities to greater heights

September/October 2009

UK Traveler Stops at Summit on Worldwide Tour

August was an exciting month for Summit as we played host to Rebekah Barr, a hearing dog trainer from the UK. For two weeks we enjoyed her company while exchanging information about our program and what she had learned from other organizations along her travels so far. Please read her story below.

Submitted by Rebekah Barr

For two weeks in August I visited Summit Assistance Dogs as part of a world trip I had organised to visit assistance dog organisations. I was a trainer for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People UK for 2 1/2 years. Although this was my ideal job, I couldn't help but think what it would be like to travel overseas and see how it is done at other programs. In October 2008, I decided to take a chance and go away and live what I'd wanted to do for the last year. I went on the Assistance Dogs International website, emailed lots of people and waited for responses. With a lot of planning and organising, I was leaving for Belgium in April 2009 to visit a hearing dog program. The next week I was flying to Japan to visit two more Hearing Dog programs. In Taiwan, I visited a university for a month and helped them set up a new Hearing Dog program which they are running alongside their guide dog program. Next I visited Assistance Dogs Australia in Sydney, and after that, I went to Hearing Dogs for Deaf People in beautiful New Zealand for five weeks where I volunteered my services selecting dogs, training, visiting recipients and puppy raisers and placing dogs. This then took me to the final country on my list - America. Summit Assistance Dogs was my first port of call where I was watching training, puppy classes, helping with publicity events and much more. I had such a wonderful time and it was all thanks to everyone at Summit. Sue was very trusting and let me look after her house, dogs and sheep whilst she went on holiday, and all the staff at Summit made me feel exceptionally welcome. I learnt so much about the training of mobility assist dogs, and I hope I was able to teach as much about hearing dogs. Wendy's dog Whitney made a fantastic model to demonstrate UK Hearing Dogs techniques. I am continuing my travelling until Christmas this year, when I will return to the UK and hopefully return to assistance dog training.



Microsoft Employees Spend Day At Summit

Friday, Sept. 11, was Microsoft's annual Day of Caring. Employees could choose to donate their day volunteering for a non-profit organization. Summit was the lucky recipient of approximately 45 employees' time. One group was hosted at our Anacortes facility and the other at Summit Board Member Scottie Kuper's home in Issaquah.

Both locations kept the employees busy bathing dogs, cleaning crates, cleaning the van, washing windows, working on book-marks, cards and scrapbooks. The employees learned more about Summit by watching dog demonstrations and meeting graduates. We are very grateful for their help on the 11th and their continued support of Summit's efforts.

We'd like to say a huge thank you to the Microsoft employees who spent their day with us. Also, thank you to the following for their assistance in making the day such a success: Scottie Kuper for hosting the Issaquah location; graduates Melody, Taysen & Jackson, Grant & Joey, Chris & Ben; and the Blue Cow Carwash for donating the dog baths in Anacortes.



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Young Applicants Set Summit Apart from Some Other Organizations

While many service dog organizations won't accept applicants under the age of 18, Summit welcomes young applicants. Cool kids like R.J. Barker of Freeland, WA. R.J. and his family applied to Summit in September 2007, and he's anxious to get a dog that will help him gain greater independence and open doors both physically and socially. R.J. is one of four young applicants, ranging in age from 6 to 17, on Summit's current list of 28 people waiting for service dogs.



You'll find photos and bios of the young people we have placed with service dogs since our founding in March 2000 on our website at www.summitdogs.org.

Your support can help us continue this trend of changing lives four paws at a time for very special young people. Please consider donating today or designating us if your company has an employee giving campaign coming up. Your support would be greatly appreciated by all of our applicants, graduates and staff.

Graduate News

If you are a Summit graduate and have any news about yourself or your dog, we would love to hear from you. Please contact Susan Levin at 360-293-5609 or susan@summitdogs.org.



Taysen Langstraat was the darling of our Spring 2009 Team Training, when he was paired with Jackson, his therapy dog. Taysen had hoped to start school this Fall, but his mother Melodie says they are keeping him out for one more year because of swine flu concerns. But, that doesn't mean he's not learning new things. In fact, he's working with Jackson to practice some of the service dog skills he observed during Team Training, things a therapy dog usually does not do. You can see for yourself in a video of the two of them on our Facebook page ([link](#)). Melodie reports that Jackson is enjoying his job going to weekly physical therapy appointments with Taysen and made his first visit to Children's Hospital in Seattle last month. "He did great," she said. "More recently, he went with us to get cast for a new back brace, and he showed off his skills by opening the door when Taysen gave him the 'button' command."

Peggy, Eric and Apollo Overbey recently relocated to Ocala, FL from Lynnwood, WA. Apollo blogged along the way with the assistance of Peggy. You can check out their adventure at www.overbeysgoingtoflorida.blogspot.com. It sure was interesting to experience their journey through the eyes of a service dog! He got to experience really hot weather and didn't like it very much at all. He was also disappointed that they weren't able to stop in Memphis to explore Graceland because he is a fan of Elvis. Meeting lots of Peggy's relatives along the way was a real treat for him and now settling into a home with a pool is pretty exciting! Please don't think that just because we're separated by a couple thousand miles that Peggy isn't willing to keep Summit's website current. No indeed! She assures us that everything can be done from a distance so Summit is thrilled that she will still be a vital part of our organization. We wish them all the best in their new home but sure will miss seeing them around the office.



Eight Is Enough



Summit has eight new puppies, the F litter. Mom Teton gave birth on Tuesday, Sept. 22 to eight healthy, hungry and noisy puppies. Each one weighed in around 1.2 lbs and looks just like the B, D and E litters - black with some white. Teton did a great job and is being the model mother. However, we are pretty sure she is glad it is all over as she was looking pretty ready the week before.

A huge thank you to caretaker Barb Clark for whelping the puppies and all she will do over the next 7-8 weeks until they go to their volunteer puppy raisers.





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Happy Tails

Here's another happy ending for one of our career change dogs. Meet Shaggy.

When Shaggy came to Summit, he had already spent much of his life in shelters. Black dogs are often overlooked at shelters, especially black dogs with no training or social skills. He was literally running out of time in a shelter when Canine Connections, an at-risk youth program in Snoqualmie, accepted him into their therapeutic pet program and gave him a second chance. After 6 weeks training at Canine Connections, Shaggy's sweet nature and willingness to learn new things caught Summit's eye and he was brought to us for evaluation as a service dog.



As sweet and smart as Shaggy was, we found he had a difficult time adjusting to new environments and situations and it was very stressful for him. So, it was decided that the service dog life was not the right career choice.

While waiting for his forever home, Shaggy stayed with Summit staff and continued to work on basic manners, car rides, walks in the neighborhood, hikes and lots of playing! We learned that he had boundless energy and would need an active home and a family that would include him in their activities.

When Mike and Kate started looking for a new family pet, they had some pretty tough criteria. They needed a dog that would be gentle with their two small children. They needed an active dog that enjoyed playing in the snow, jogging, biking and hiking. Their dog would have to be friendly to everyone, including the many dogs in their neighborhood.



They had seen Shaggy's listing in the past, but it was a picture of him playing in last winter's snow that made them take a second look. On their way from Spokane to Whidbey Island for the holidays, they made a stop to meet Shaggy.

It was love at first sight! He was gentle and affectionate with the children and the look on mom and dad's face made it apparent that this was their new dog.

Today Shaggy is loving life in Spokane with Mike, Kate, Charlotte & Bridget. He goes to the park often and Kate says she can't believe the number of "what a great dog he is" comments they get on a weekly basis! He has become a great mountain biking and hiking companion and doesn't even mind when the girls dress him up and put barrettes in his hair.



Shaggy has a bright future ahead of him. Kate hopes to work with Shaggy to get him certified as a Therapy Dog so he can visit the local children's hospitals around Spokane. Until then, he is busy hanging out with his family, swimming, camping, biking and chasing the ducks that come to "his" pond. Congratulations Shaggy!

"The Whole Pup" Is Our Home Away From Home

Summit trainer Lisa Freshour holds training classes every other week for our puppy raisers and graduates in the Seattle metro area at The Whole Pup, a doggie day care and boarding facility in Edmonds. We are most grateful to owner Cindi Howell for donating the training space for us. Check out the facility at www.thewholepup.com.



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SPOTLIGHT VOLUNTEER NEED

Foster Homes

Summit has an ongoing need for foster homes, both long-term or short-term. One of our current needs is for foster homes without other dogs. We bring in dogs from shelters or rescue programs and it's helpful to have a place for them to stay without other dogs so they can be taken care of for a week or two before we introduce them to our other dogs.

If you'd like to become a foster home please contact Wendy at 360-293-5609 or wendy@summitdogs.org.

SPOTLIGHT "NEEDS" OF THE MONTH

Summit always has the following ongoing needs:

Kirkland brand Lamb & Rice dog food

Kirkland brand dog biscuits

Copier/printer paper

NOTE: Value of donated items is tax deductible.

Thanks

Summit would like to thank the following businesses for displaying our brochures:

Shelter Bay Office

LaCrema Coffee House

PetCo in Mount Vernon

PetSmart, Burlington

Roots Beauty Salon, Burlington

Natural Health Clinic, Bellingham

Dr. Jennifer McAfee's Office,

Bellingham



Volunteer Central

Thank you to the following volunteers for their assistance during the months of August and September.

For Providing Respite Care:

Lara Mirkovich, Nancy Ptacek, Lori Sprague, Kelly Straight

For Assisting with Microsoft Meeting:

Christine Coco Brown, Scottie Kuper & Denali, Deborah Robinson & Yukon
Adinah Wyle & Wesley, Barb Clark & Teton

For Hosting the Lopez Island Farmers Market Booth:

Vicki Corliss, Ginger Lowell, Marlene & Jack Giedd-Clark, Rebekah Barr

For Assisting with the Starbucks Meeting:

Randall Beck, Kathleen Phillips, Judy Brown, Lara Mirkovich

For Putting Ribbon on Bookmarks:

Nancy Killingsworth

For Providing Trainer Assistance:

Noel Blair, Mckenzie Harrison, Nina Mann
Dawnelle Bomer, Nancy Ptacek,

For the Lopez Island Library Reading Program:

Vicki Corliss & Daisy

For Cleaning the Facility Prior to the Open House:

Dawnelle Bomer

For Removing Signs:

Jerry Cooper, Jerry Hemme

For Whelping Puppies and Assisting:

Barb & John Clark, Jan Hemme

For Making Phone Calls:

Abby Sale, Deborah Robinson, Eric Voetberg, Jan Gruber

For Baking Dog Cookies:

Dawnelle Bomer

For Relabeling Cards:

Kathleen Fournier

For Installing Electrical Outlets:

Jerry Cooper

For Hosting the Harbor Hounds Booth:

Donna Vaquer, Andrea Crispin, Dick From

For All Their Efforts on Microsoft Events:

Kelly Straight, Victoria Mulholland, Deborah Robinson,
Jeanne Richardson, Christine Coco Brown, Donnell Baker, Scottie Kuper,
Donna Sellers and various behind-the-scenes volunteers

We apologize if we inadvertently missed anyone.

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We Rely On Our Donors

It is only through the generous support of our donors that we are able to continue to do our important work of changing lives four paws at a time. To make a donation, you may send a check to our mailing address at P. O. Box 699, Anacortes, WA 98221 or on-line at our website www.summitdogs.org/donate.

Summit also welcomes stocks, bonds and mutual funds, as well as vehicle donations. You might consider naming Summit in your will. Your bequest can make a difference in the lives of others for years to come. Please contact us for details.

You can also help raise money for Summit by using Goodsearch.com for your on-line searches or Goodsearch.com/goodshop.aspx for your on-line shopping needs.

Upcoming Events

Summit Open House

12549 Christianson Rd.
Anacortes, WA
Wednesday, October 7
1-4 p.m.
Stop by to see what we're all about.

Bellevue Arthritis Walk

Bellevue, WA
Saturday, October 10
8:30 a.m. - 12 p.m.
Summit will have a booth.

Graduation

Redmond Senior Center
Redmond, WA
Sunday, December 6
4 p.m.



Photo Gallery



Graduates Garrett & Bergy visit & meet the E litter pups.



Graduates Hayden & Apollo spend time together before Apollo moves to FL.



Whistler gets a bath.



Volunteer Cara & golden puppy.



Yukon while on a camping trip.



Graduate Daisy listens to Juniper read at the Lopez Island library.

More Microsoft Day of Caring Pictures

