

Spring/Summer 2023



New!

# Superpower

Autism Dogs Charity Official Magazine

“ Autism Dogs  
Charity helped us to  
**HOPE AGAIN** ”

FEATURING REAL  
STORIES FROM OUR  
ASSISTANCE DOG  
PARTNERSHIPS!

**SPECIAL  
CORONATION  
EDITION**

MEET OUR  
ROYAL TRIBUTE  
PUPPIES!

# Superpower

Autism Dogs CIC Official Magazine

## IN THIS ISSUE

### INSIDE AUTISM DOGS CHARITY

**03** EDITOR'S NOTE

**04** WHAT'S NEW AT AUTISM DOGS

**15** TEAM BLU

**18** WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DOG MAKES

**21** WATSON THE WONDERDOG

**24** UNDERSTANDING

**32** ROSE AND RAFF

**33** CHASING DREAMS

**41** RUBY, MY PRECIOUS FRIEND



**09** A ROYAL TRIBUTE



**13**  
WINSTON THE  
WINNER



**11**  
WORKING AT  
AUTISM DOGS  
CHARITY



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## IN THIS ISSUE

### INSIDE AUTISM DOGS CHARITY

44 MILO AND MOO

50 PAWSOME PICTURES

56 PAWSOME CREATIONS

59 AMBASSADOR INSIGHTS

61 WORDSEARCH



**36** BUDDY GOES TO DISNEYWORLD



**29** FLASH FORWARD



**46** AWESOME SAUCE

### FEATURE WRITERS

Abigail Short  
Amy Starr  
Caroline Preston  
Cesca Huff  
Charlie Withers  
Charlotte Smeed  
Craig Broe  
Flash Rushworth  
Gail Massey  
Holly Pratt  
Jac Boyce  
Millie O'Sullivan  
Ruth King  
Sally Chapman  
Steve Bibby

# EDITOR'S NOTE



Even after six years as an Assistance Dog handler and ambassador for Autism Dogs Charity, I continue to be surprised and thrilled by the stories of what our teams achieve together!

From walks in their local park to running in a triathlon; using public transport to visiting Disneyland - every milestone and adventure mentioned in this magazine was made possible by the work of our dedicated team of professionals, volunteers, and supporters.

Each contribution in this magazine was created by an autistic handler or family member; and each story gives a first-hand account of the increased freedom, independence and happiness an Assistance Dog can bring.

I am delighted to share these uplifting stories with you, and would like to take the opportunity to express my gratitude for your support of Autism Dogs Charity. With your help, we can train even more amazing and life-transforming superdogs!

Best wishes and happy reading!

*Ruth King*



*Charlie*

**W**elcome to this very special Coronation edition of *Superpower* - The official magazine of Autism Dogs Charity!

Community lies at the heart of our organisation - and as many members of our team are themselves autistic, we have first-hand experience of the talents, enthusiasm and beautiful uniqueness that autistic people bring to their communities. A community shines a little brighter when its autistic members are not only accepted, but understood, valued and celebrated.

As the nation prepares to commemorate the Coronation of King Charles, our autistic handlers will also be looking forward to enjoying the street parties, family gatherings, and lasting memories that the occasion will bring - all because of the freedom, confidence and practical support provided by their Autism Dogs Charity Assistance Dogs!

As we look to the future, our thoughts also turn to the next generation of Autism Charity Assistance Dogs, including beautiful puppy "Charlie" who, along with his siblings, bears a name inspired by the royal family! The puppies will join our ever increasing number of Assistance Dogs who are providing hope, loyal love and practical support to autistic people across the UK.

# WHAT'S NEW AT AUTISM DOGS?



Abigail Short, General Manager



## CHRIST-MUTT FAIR

In December we held our second large fundraiser – our 'Christ-mutt' Fair!

The day was great fun with so many gorgeous dogs having a blast, and lots of our working Assistance Dog teams taking part too!

There was lots of fun to be had, with activities including a Santa's Grotto, 'Christ-mutt' Markets, a bake sale, raffle, chocolate tombola, and brass bands!



## Support Us

You can help us to raise vital funds to help us to change even more lives!

Keep an eye out throughout the magazine for ways you can support our charity!



# WHAT'S NEW AT AUTISM DOGS?



*Abigail Short, General Manager*

## NEW CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Starting small with a big dream, the Autism Dogs Charity story started in 2016 with the Preston family – who are all still involved in the charity today! Now with Tate as the Chair of Trustees, Caroline as our CEO, and Andrew as our Managing Director!

It's our great pleasure to share that Tate has taken up the new appointment of our Trustee Chair! Tate has a huge amount of experience of our organisation, our families, autism, and our wonderful Assistance Dogs! Not only that but Tate is also a Veterinary Surgeon, so is always on hand to ensure that our dogs receive the best healthcare!

We've delighted to have Tate take the helm, representing the Preston family on the Board of Trustees!



*Tate Preston*

## NEW TRUSTEES

Recently we have appointed two new Trustees to our Board – Victoria and Alison!

Victoria has experience as a senior associate in a large national law firm, while Alison has more than 30 years of experience in HR!

We're thrilled to welcome both ladies on board!

*Left: Alison Hurlstone*

*Right: Victoria Culclough*



# WHAT'S NEW AT AUTISM DOGS?



*Abigail Short, General Manager*

## EXCITING UPDATES TO OUR OPERATIONAL TEAM

We're delighted to welcome Cameron, Tegan, and Mel to our Animal Care team! Our Animal Care operatives are at the heart of our organisation, being directly responsible for the high level of love and care all of our amazing dogs enjoy whilst living at the farm!

Mel started out as one of our fosterers, and has now transitioned to looking after even more of our lifechanging dogs!

We're also delighted to announce the promotion of Heidi to 'Team Leader' of Saturdays! Heidi has been a part of the team for a couple of years now, and this promotion recognises her hard work and skill in animal care!



*Above: Heidi*

*Left: Cameron and Tegan*

*Right: Mel*



# WHAT'S NEW AT AUTISM DOGS?



Abigail Short, General Manager

## OUR TRAINING TEAM

Our Training Team has also evolved! Charlie, who has been a valued member of the team for a couple of years, has now been promoted to the role of Training Manager! During her time with us, she has showcased her training skills and has completed her university course in Canine Behaviour along the way!

Her background knowledge and practical skills are invaluable, enabling her to train our dogs to have the skills to change the lives of our autistic clients!

One of our Founders and Managing Director, Andrew Preston, says:

*"Charlie has shown great enthusiasm and passion in working with our Autism Assistance Dogs and our other trainers. Her leadership skills and ability to adapt quickly to training schedules and technical improvement warranted a formal recognition and advancement of her role."*

*We are looking forward to advancing all of our skills over the next year, and I thank Charlie for her continued support to our organisation."*



Charlie

Our Training Team has also grown, including a promotion to Trainer and two Trainee Trainers!



Autism Dogs Charity's Training Team

A big thank you to KeyFund for awarding us with funding that has enabled some of these changes!





# WHAT'S NEW AT AUTISM DOGS?



*Caroline Preston, Founder and CEO*

## OUR GENERAL MANAGER

Six years ago, we met with Abigail and her family who enrolled her as a client shortly afterwards. She was living a very isolated and fearful life, with no relationships outside of her immediate family.

That changed with the help of her Autism Dogs Charity Assistance Dog Breeze. Abigail soon gained the confidence to go back to college and not long after joined our team at the farm as work experience amongst our animal welfare department.

That was in 2018 and since then Abigail has never looked back!

She secured herself a permanent paid role on the team, passed her driving test, and bought a car. She met the man of her dreams, and this year they are looking forward to moving into their own home.

It quickly became obvious that Abigail was highly intelligent and very capable. After gaining her level 3 in Animal Welfare she began to focus on growing her commercial skills and spending more time working with the company Directors.



Abigail has great operational skills, and her ability to create informed policies and procedures assisted the organisation to achieve its accreditation with the NAS and ADI.

When I look over the last 6 years of Abigail's life, she has grown into the person she always dreamt of being. With the support of her Assistance Dog, Abigail has conquered many fears and barriers and has become a person that our team rely on for advice, support, steer, and reassurance.

The quality of the work she produces and her commitment has played a vital role in the ongoing success of our organisation, and as our General Manager she represents a very safe pair of hands for our future!



# A ROYAL TRIBUTE

On 19th September 2022, the nation joined in mourning the death of our beloved Queen Elizabeth II.

On that very same day, Autism Dogs Charity welcomed a beautiful litter of puppies into the world - and they received royal themed names as a tribute to Her Majesty.

Charlie, Diana, Lilibet, Queenie and Lottie are currently learning basic obedience, and enjoying their puppyhood under the care of their fosterers. This lays a crucial foundation for the skills, experience and socialisation the puppies will need as they embark on the next stage of their journey to become Assistance Dogs!

**Top: Diana**

**Right: Charlie**



# A ROYAL TRIBUTE



Top left: Lottie and Queenie

Top right: Lilibet

Left: Trainer Adam with Charlie

# WORKING AT AUTISM DOGS CHARITY

## An interview with our Training Manager Charlie Withers

*What is your role at Autism Dogs Charity?*

I manage the training of the Assistance Dogs and help run a team of three people who help me complete the training.

*How long have you worked as an Assistance Dog trainer?*

I've trained here for around two years, but have worked in the industry for around eight years. I have also completed a degree in Canine Behaviour and Training, and a top up in Canine Clinical Behaviour.

*What does your daily routine look like?*

My daily routine consists of Basic Training, Public Access and Advanced Training. I ensure that I prioritise the dogs properly, which means that some may have more training than others that day. I may also have to visit existing clients or pick up dogs in foster to train.



*What's your favourite thing about your role?*

I enjoy being able to see the dogs learn new skills, and I love being part of the process from start to finish. I see the dogs blossom as they transition from a dog in training to an Assistance Dog.

*Tell us about a time a dog made you smile.*

It's difficult to pick one time as they can be so silly at times - they make me laugh every day!

# WORKING AT AUTISM DOGS CHARITY

## *What do you like to do in your spare time?*

I like to chill out when I get home, and also try cooking new things regularly for me and my other half. We live in a close-knit community, so on the weekends I like to go out and spend time with friends.

## *What qualities do you look for in an Assistance Dog - and are there any reasons why a dog might fail that assessment?*

Desired qualities in an Assistance Dog include confidence, stability, a willingness to learn and engage, and enjoyment of the work and the training. Dogs may fail on assessment if they are overly nervous or fearful of other people, dogs or various other stimuli, or if they have too much 'high energy' to be suitable for the life of an Assistance Dog.

## *You have helped to create so many incredible Assistance Dog partnerships. What are some of the key steps that help to set a dog up for success?*

I think some of the key steps start with ensuring that the 'dog' side of things is fully understood by the clients. This helps to prepare them for things the dog may do that might not have been thought about beforehand.

It's also important that the dog is prepared for their life with the client through Advanced Training tasks and visiting places chosen by the client when they are matched. This can include trains, cinemas, shops and a variety of other places.

## *What is special about Autism Dog's Charity's approach and ethos?*

I think the advanced part of the training is really special because of how in-depth and bespoke it is. It is also practiced very often so that the dog learns to respond very quickly and efficiently.





# WINSTON THE WINNER

**A**utism Assistance Dogs help their handlers to stride towards new goals and finish lines. For Matthew and Assistance Dog Winston, this phrase has a very literal meaning!

Inspired by the enthusiasm of his sporty siblings and filled to the brim with determination, Matthew undertook the challenge of completing his first ever triathlon!

Winston and Matthew's mum jogged along the poolside with pride as they watched Matthew complete his first ever length of the swimming pool, and Winston provided direct support as he transitioned to the cycling portion of the event.

Matthew's mum was thrilled to see them working together as a team. Instead of appearing overwhelmed, Matthew was running past a crowd with the resounding cheer of "Come on Winnie! Keep Going! Keep running! You're doing really well Winnie!"

Athletic Winston was truly in his element as he ran next to Matthew and his dad Ioannis in the final event! They became the first ever Assistance Dog partnership to compete and cross the finish line at the Bodmin Triathlon, and even made the front page of *IntoTri's* coverage of the event!

But that's not all!

Matthew, Thomas and Jennifer were able to raise over £1200 in sponsorship for Autism Dogs Charity! The kindness of the family and all of their sponsors will help us to train even more Assistance Dogs like Winston!

Thank you to the amazing organisers of the Bodmin Triathlon, whose welcoming and inclusive support helped to make this incredible achievement possible! 🐾





**Autism Dogs  
Charity**

# SUPPORT OUR WORK

A life-changing Autism Assistance Dog takes months to train with the family and the dog. It takes our specialist team of over 30 people to help train, support and take care of the welfare of the animal before and even after the qualified Assistance Dog is delivered to their new handler.

It takes a lot of time and money... In fact, it takes an average of £22,000 to fully train a family and their bespoke Autism Assistance Dog.

We rely heavily on volunteers, and sometimes our families will contribute to the costs of our programmes - but not everyone can.

You can help our services to become more accessible for more autistic people in need by raising funds for us. Look out throughout the magazine for ways you could help us, and email us at [CoY@autismdogs.co.uk](mailto:CoY@autismdogs.co.uk) for a fundraising pack with more information!



**With your help, we will be  
able to change more lives.**





## TEAM BLU

*Gail Massey*

**I** am mum to five children, and I can say that out of all my children it has always been Dylan whom I have worried about the most.

I just didn't really know the reason why until he was seventeen and diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. He went all the way through nursery, primary school and secondary school without any professional realising, or being suspicious that he might have autism.

Both myself and my husband didn't know either due to lack of knowledge and lack of awareness - nobody really tells you about these things! But then as a teaching assistant in a primary school, I received some training about ASD and finally I realised that this might be my son: that he might actually be autistic.

**With diagnosis came the understanding why Dylan finds it difficult to interact and communicate with other people.**

It helped us to understand why he doesn't know what to say and why he would rather be on his own in his bedroom. Throughout his teenage years, I strongly felt like he was slipping away from us. He wouldn't talk to us, he wouldn't interact with us or with the rest of the family. He rarely saw his friends or went out with them.



He was coping with school and getting good results in tests and exams; his teachers had no issues with him at all and said he worked hard. Their only comments at parents' evenings were that he rarely put his hand up to answer questions in class and he was generally very quiet. But we knew he was different.

As his mum, all I have ever wanted for my son (and indeed for all of my children) was for him to get the best out of life and to be the best he can be.

Despite having no support throughout school, he managed to pass his GCSEs and stay on into sixth form to do A levels. He got amazing grades in his A levels and so we encouraged him to apply for university, and he secured a place on the film studies course at the University of Salford.

However, with the Covid 19 pandemic leading to lockdowns and consequently on-line learning, Dylan was not able to transition to normal university life.

Then when face to face lectures slowly began again, it was clearly evident that he was not going to cope living away from home. He had lost all confidence in going out and meeting new people, and making new friends. Being away from home caused him extreme anxiety and meltdowns.

We started to research Autism Assistance Dogs during the lockdown, and we couldn't believe our luck when we learned that they are based in our own home town!

In September 2020, we were introduced to Blu - it was a match! And oh my goodness, what a difference he has made to Dylan's life in the last two years!





As his mum, I noticed a difference immediately and since that moment when boy and dog first connected, Dylan's confidence in going out in public has increased unbelievably.

He is able to access university in ways that just astound us. Blu has allowed this because he is with Dylan every step of the way.

Dylan has an accessible room in the student accommodation so Blu can stay with him. It has given Dylan the confidence to slowly access the kitchen and living area of his shared flat, whereas when he first started at the university he wouldn't go in there at all!

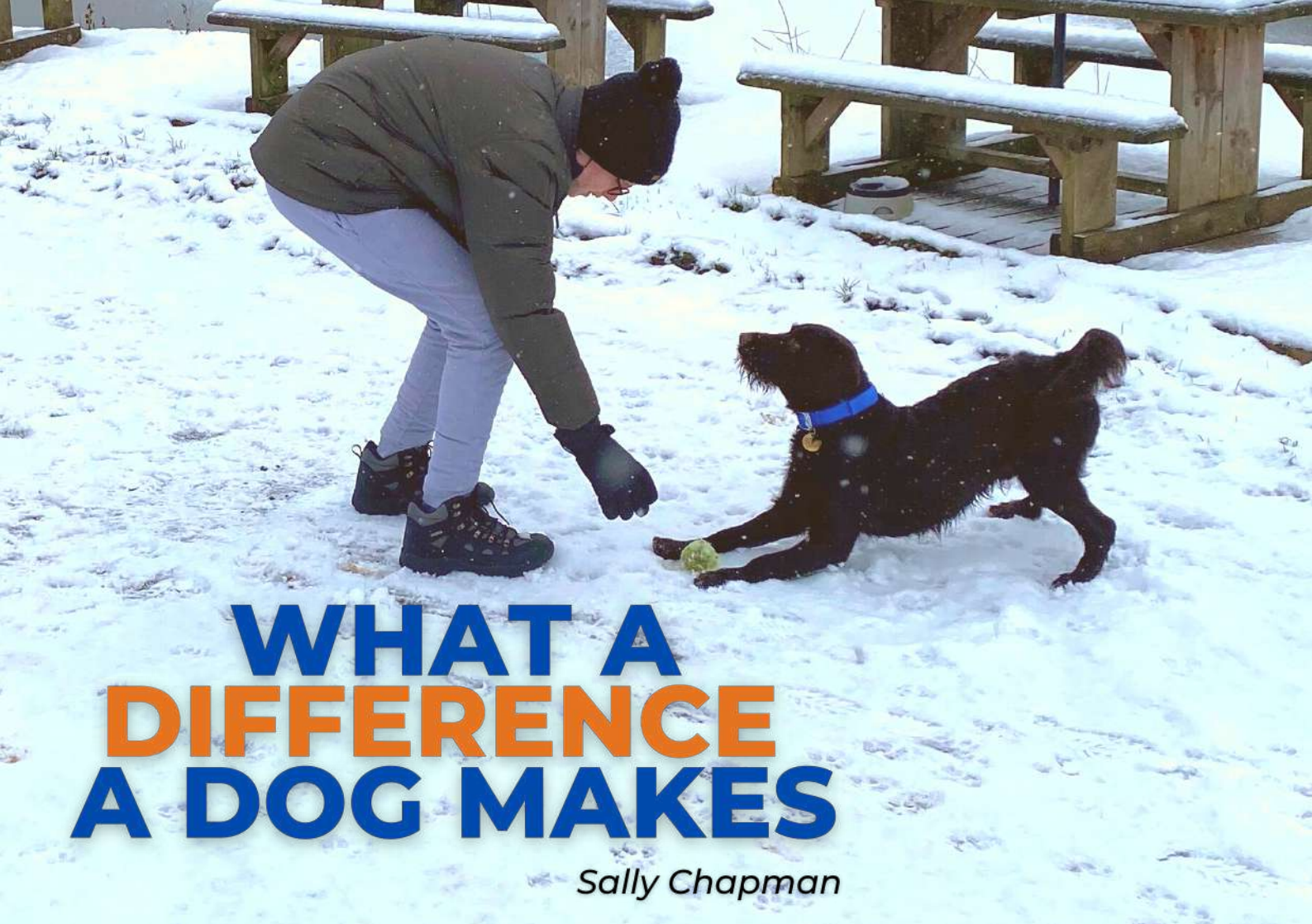
Dylan's lectures and seminars are all based at Media City in Salford Quays, so he must take a bus ride there to attend them. Blu had specialist training to go on bus and train journeys, and he quietly and confidently keeps Dylan from having a meltdown. This has made it possible for Dylan to travel without any additional support!

With Blu at his side, Dylan is able to access lectures, seminars, tutorials and workshops; he is now able to talk to his course tutors and he has even made a couple of friends - something we could only ever have dreamed of for him. He is even able to stay over in Salford three nights a week and negotiate his way round the railway station to come home on the train once a week. His routine in Salford also includes taking Dylan to the local park for fresh air and exercise, which means Dylan is also getting fresh air and exercise too - something he was never able to do on his own before Blu became his best friend.

It is really quite remarkable the difference that Blu has made to not only Dylan's life but to our family life too. I truly feel that I have got my son back again. I think that what Blu has done is given us hope again - hope that Dylan does have a bright, prospective, and more independent future ahead of him.

We are forever grateful to Autism Dogs, as without their help, support and understanding, we wouldn't have that hope.

Thank you to all of the team - you have made such a difference to us! 🐾



# WHAT A DIFFERENCE A DOG MAKES

*Sally Chapman*

**T**wo years ago, I would never have dreamt that we would be where we are now, and it's all because of a new dream team made possible by Autism Dogs Charity!

**Tom was struggling to function and finding everything overwhelming.**

Getting him into school took a lot of support to manage his anxiety levels. When out of school, he would cocoon himself in his room and find solace in his computer games. His medication levels kept increasing, he would chew his skin until it bled and his weight kept decreasing as he was too anxious to eat and keep food down.

Lockdown proved even more challenging as Tom's normal routines were thrown completely out of the window. There was no distinct separation between school and home time, he hated online lessons and struggled to plan doing work at home rather than school.

As a parent, I felt heartbroken that I couldn't fix some of these issues for him, despite using every means at my disposal to do so. He still continued to spiral downhill at an alarming rate.

It was then that I researched about Autism Dogs and began to wonder if this could be the answer for Tom to try and halt the downward spiral he was in. I hoped that this would be the start of him building some confidence and bringing hope back into his life.

The application and selection process was very thorough, and Tom was involved at each step. This was so important for him as through this inclusion, I began to see some hope and happiness begin to return! He would spend hours looking at the photos of the dogs on the website wondering which dog he would end up with.

We had the strange process of being matched through lockdown, so only a brief outdoor matching appointment and no family training as this was cancelled last minute due to a further lockdown - it meant a 3 hour drive on New Year's Eve to a snowy Congleton just so Tom could spend one cold hour with Marley outside!

Fast forward to delivery day and Tom's anxiety levels were through the roof, but the delivery team were fantastic at tailoring the day to meet his needs. His anxiety remained sky high for a few weeks after delivery as Tom and Marley began to properly get to know each other. They were beginning to build that special bond that only an Assistance Dog and their handler can share.



We began to see an amazing change in Tom. Tom would hold Marley's lead and walk him, which gave him daily exercise and a dose of fresh air which he wasn't getting before.

He was also going into school and coping better with his studies - he was even getting on the school bus some days which was a real breakthrough!

At home, he was beginning to become brighter and more positive. The bond with Marley really flourished. We were able to go out as a family for the first time for many years as Tom had his team mate with him. His medication levels were now stable and his self harming reduced.

However, what amazes me each day is that the positive effects this special bond has continues to result in positive changes to Tom's life. He slowly began to go on the odd social event with school friends and he also expressed a wish for the first time to go to university to study maths. This was a complete u-turn from his previous position of wanting to leave education at the earliest opportunity.

Fast forward to this summer and we were delighted that Tom secured the grades he needed to go to our local university in Cardiff! Seeing Tom and Marley get ready for that first day was incredible and something I never thought we would see.

The university were also great, undertaking familiarisation visits, and speaking to all students about how they should behave around an assistance dog to name just a few. Whilst Tom still needed the support of us at the coffee shop next door to his lecture building, this only lasted two days, whereupon he was confident that he and Marley were fine to get the bus in and go to lectures on their own!

## **But the amazing changes and achievements don't end there!**

Tom now has a nice little group of friends at Uni that he goes out with once a week and has even decided he may do a placement year as part of his course. Who knows what else the future holds. our dogs are life changing, life affirming and life inspiring. Nothing is out of reach for our teams if they want to achieve it! 🐾





# WATSON THE WONDER DOG

*Amy Starr*

**T**he day we had all been waiting for had finally arrived - Watson was coming to live with us! The delivery training went far better than expected. Edie accepted Caroline into our home and really engaged and got involved with everything over those few days.

Since Watson's arrival, things have changed so much for us. I think one of the biggest differences we have experienced is Edie's Sleep. Edie, for the last 3 years has co-slept with me in my room, whilst my poor husband has been residing in the spare bedroom. We prepared for Watson's arrival by decorating Edie's room. We bought a new bed and made a big deal about Watson sleeping there with her. It was to be "their room".

For the first few weeks, I slept in her room on a camp bed, and Watson took up his position on the bed next to Edie. That has remained constant. Now, Edie sleeps in her own room, in her own bed with just Watson for company.

She used to wake several times a night, even when sleeping with me and needed some reassurance to settle her. With Watson by her side, she will sleep through, not all but most nights. I think before Watson arrived; she had slept through maybe 10 times in her life. I must add we have had a little regression with her sleep at the time of writing this, which we think is due to the change of routine during the Christmas holidays and anxiety building towards returning to school. She is still far more settled in bed though and its lovely to see her snuggled with Watson!

Watson has encouraged Edie to get back outside more. Edie loves the outdoors but had become a little reluctant to go for walks. She will now walk Watson at least once on the weekend and its great seeing her splashing in puddles, squelching in the mud and exploring the woods. With the daylight hours extending we have also started taking Watson for a short walk after school, its so great to see Edie back out rather than glued to a tv screen. Watson has given her a purpose. Watson trots around behind her and it's a joy to watch.

Previously, Edie had developed a real fear of rain. We couldn't ever get her outside if it was raining, and even in the house she would shut the curtains and become distressed. If it started raining whilst we were driving, she would put something over her head and hide from it. It was a problem; especially given we live in the UK! I cannot believe the difference, now, she doesn't even mention it! She puts her coat on and heads outside! This is without doubt Watson's influence.

Travelling in the car would be challenging. Edie was very aware of cars around us and would get so distressed and upset about cars behind us that it would often result in a meltdown! It was obviously extremely distracting and difficult to drive with this going on. For every car journey with Watson on board, there has been absolutely no distress or even mention of the vehicles.

## **Edie's confidence has grown considerably!**



Previous challenges of people visiting our home are no longer an issue. Edie would literally slam doors in people's faces, and even scream when family members or close friends came to our home. Edie will now happily welcome people, even opening the door for them and saying hello. The staff at her school have commented on how much better she is about working with staff that aren't in her class. She talks to more people and even other children in different classes. In fact, she even did her first after school club! This is something she would never ever consider before!

Edie always enjoyed a trip to our local pub for food, the difference with Watson by her side means the visits are so much more relaxed. On a visit just last week, Edie, whilst waiting for her food (a period of time which would always be stressful), just sat on the floor and played with Watson, she had him lie across her legs and the expression on her face was pure joy.

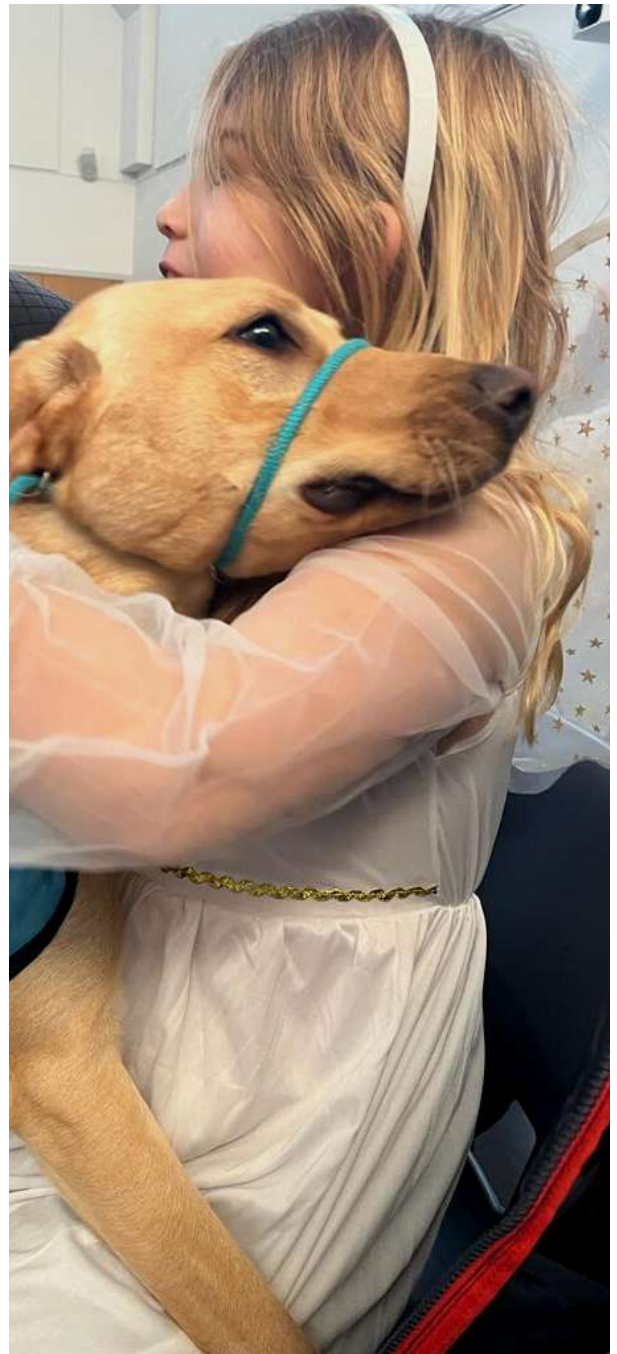
I think one of the highlights for me was our pre-Christmas trip to Longleat Festival of Light. Going out would always be a challenge. It would mean convincing Edie to get out of the car, spending so much time encouraging her that it was safe and that it would be fun. On this occasion she just got out, got Watson and off we went! Edie was striding ahead with real confidence, and it meant all of us could really enjoy the experience. It was so special.

Watson has already brought so many 'firsts' for Edie and us as a family. He has only been with us for just over 3 months, and there are a lot more smiles! We are definitely finding more enjoyment in our life as a family.

I believe Edie has more confidence in the outside world with Watson. She is desperate to get out and do things. She wants to go to the shops nearly every day (I sometimes have to tell her they are closed!)

I'm so excited to see what the year ahead brings for us all, now we have wonder dog Watson as a part of the family.

Autism Dogs Charity has truly changed our lives and we will be forever grateful to the entire Autism Dogs team. 🐾







# UNDERSTANDING

*Ruth King*

**L**ike many other autistic people who encounter Autism Dogs Charity, my Assistance Dog was introduced at a time when my confidence, mental health and hope was at its lowest ebb.

Autism Dogs Charity was the steady, compassionate and reassuring hand that helped to pull me out of that seemingly hopeless situation. By training my Assistance Dog 'Ryder', they have enabled me to grow in confidence, become more social, and live a happier and less anxious life.

**Autism Dogs Charity understands me and values me**

This all-encompassing transformation was brought about by a team whose expertise is not confined to the realm of dog training. They emanate warmth and compassion; they want to see autistic people thrive, and their individualised approach continues to make this goal a reality for an ever-growing number of autistic people and their families.

I believe that Autism Dogs Charity is set apart by their understanding of the importance of 'understanding' itself. Their work is successful because it is built on the foundation of expert knowledge and experience of both autism, and canine psychology. They are driven by a desire to learn and grow in their understanding, and they are also committed to furthering understanding of autism in wider society.

The programme produces attentive and emotionally intelligent dogs whose tasks are based on their ability to listen. Likewise, the success of the trainers is based on their ability to listen to, and interpret, the behavioural cues that dogs use to express their feelings and desires. The entire training process hangs on the happiness of the dogs - to the extent that the team will withdraw any dog who does not show an eagerness and genuine enjoyment of the work. They do not expect, nor seek to create, a shut-down creature of robotic obedience - Instead, the programme celebrates and utilises the incredible intuition, unique character, and profound intelligence that each dog possesses.

It is of course paramount that this level of care and respect is maintained throughout the dog's career. This is why every applicant is not only assessed on potential to benefit from the introduction of an Assistance Dog, but on their ability to give their dog a happy and fulfilling life. During the family training phase of the programme, each client is invited to visit the farm and learn from our incredible animal care and training teams.

Topics include why and how the 'five freedoms' of animal welfare should be fulfilled, how to understand canine body language, and the practical requirements of handling an Assistance Dog. Great emphasis is placed on the importance of consistency - providing the routine, recognised body signals and verbal commands necessary for the dog to understand what is required of them. Of equal importance is the handler's realistic understanding of the abilities and limitations of their new best friend.

## Understanding the canine code

Autism Dogs Charity's training methods are built around 'positive reinforcement.' This means that they reward, and thereby encourage certain behaviours. As with any good and fruitful relationship, the conversation between the dog and trainer cannot and shouldn't be driven by the use of force and fear. It is built on patience, kindness, and a willingness to please the other;

**Our dogs delight in us because we first delight in them.**



## A heart for autistic people

The organisation is motivated by the drive to help more autistic people to gain greater independence, freedom and happiness. The team has a deep appreciation and respect for autistic people, and genuinely loves to see them succeed. Many members of the staff team are autistic, and are able to offer first-hand understanding of the unique challenges that autism can present.

The full package of services is designed with autistic people in mind, and each client's journey is as unique and special as they are! The extensive assessment process helps the team to match each applicant with the perfect dog, and even helps them to determine which breed or type, personality, and size will suit the applicant best. Along the way, the team take the applicant's emotional and physical needs into account, as well as any communication difficulties that they may have.

## A truly bespoke programme

Each Assistance Dog will be trained to perform at least three tasks to mitigate their handler's challenges by the time they qualify. These tasks are individually selected in accordance with the practical and emotional needs of the handler. Examples of these tasks include Deep Pressure Therapy, item retrieval and self-harm interruption.

Autism Dogs Charity understands the importance of preparing each individual dog for the unique routine, environments and activities that they will experience in their working life. They expose the dogs to a variety of environments that their handler frequents, or would like to visit in the future. They even accompany the new partnership to some of these selected locations during the delivery training in order to provide tailored support as they embark on their exciting new journey together!

In addition to the core training programme, the team also provides aftercare services, a delivery panel, and a community Facebook group which is made available to all handlers and their families. This is the perfect platform to share stories, information and questions with other people who truly understand the reality of autism and Assistance Dog ownership.



Meeting Ryder for the first time

# Increasing acceptance and Understanding

Autism Dogs Charity envisions a world where every autistic person is accepted, understood, and given the support they need to thrive.

Their resources help to increase awareness of Autism Assistance Dogs, and provide helpful guides for businesses and information for the general public. They also educate the public about autism itself - in a way that draws attention to both the challenges and the profound strengths of autistic people.

In publications such as *Superpower* magazine, Autism Dogs Charity actively ensures that autistic voices are heard, opinions are valued and understood, and creative ability is put on display for all the world to see and appreciate.

And how does this affect the individual?

As an autistic creative, I can testify to the incredible difference that Autism Dogs Charity's sincere support has had on my confidence and willingness to share my work with others.

It is the wholehearted approach that makes Autism Dogs Charity so special. The team nurtures bonds which are based on mutual understanding; They believe in, and see the unique beauty every dog and every person that they encounter; They go above and beyond the requirements of Assistance Dog training to provide a long-lasting and comprehensive support system for autistic people and their families.

For autistic people, daily challenges and distant aspirations can feel like unclimbable mountains. With the support of our task-trained Assistance Dogs, Autism Dogs Charity help to provide the tools, steadiness and motivation we need to ascend and overcome even the most difficult terrain.

And all of our adventures begin, and find their sustenance in the kindness, respect, patience, and understanding that we express to all of the dogs and people we meet along the way.

From the first hesitant steps in public places to the long nights in hospital; from intervening in times of terrible anxiety to sharing in the joy of my wedding day - Ryder has been a constant source of practical support, reassurance and steadfast love - and that is all thanks to the Autism Dogs Charity team. 🐾



Getting married with Ryder at my side



## **My shadow**

My cup was empty; my heart was frail  
And I counted the beats for all was done.  
My life-sapped strength could not avail.  
I had no shadow; there was no sun.

To my surprise, a shadow turned to me  
And by my side, he chose to stay.  
Though voiceless, it's through him I speak  
He has taught me joyful words to say.

Though oftentimes my heart had cried,  
My shadow reached to stop my fall;  
Though the light had brought him to my side,  
The shadow was not mine at all.

And when I trod the sorrowful road  
And had nothing but a mournful prayer,  
I found his cup had overflowed  
With joy enough for me to share.

He too climbs every hill I tread;  
His comfort calms the loneliest night,  
And through it all, his love has said  
"Your shadow is here; and so is the light!"

*Ruth King*



# FLASH FORWARD

*Flash Rushworth*

**H**ello! My name is Flash Labrador, and I will be two years old in May. I used to live on a farm in Congleton, but since September 2022 I have lived in Oxford with my new pack leader Jennifer. We also live with a man and a cat.

I like Jennifer. I'm always at her feet or walking to heel or cuddling on the sofa, and we always sleep together at night, with my whole body draped over her legs or behind her knees. I follow her wherever she goes. When she has a meltdown, and usually even when she is irritated or frustrated, I distract her by giving Deep Pressure Therapy, bringing her a toy, or sometimes just giving her a hug. She doesn't even need to ask!

During university term time, we will travel to London twice a week. We go to a big university campus in Bloomsbury where we work!

I like working, but I also like going for walks and to play ball in Regent's Park. Jennifer gives lectures and seminars to students from all around the world, and I focus on finding the most comfortable position under the desk or lectern.

It's surprising to me that the students don't pay more attention to me, but they know that my job is to keep Jennifer happy and safe and not to distract me.

You may be surprised to discover that we travel up to four hours a day on public transport. I'm fond of trains because Autism Dogs Charity trained me to get on and off and to sit quietly, even when the train is loud or overcrowded. I'm getting to know some of the people at the ticket office and the gateline so we always get prompt attention and care.

We travel with all the important commuters to London, on the Underground, and on some London buses. And when there are problems with the trains, or when the important commuters are being too loud, I keep Jennifer occupied and safe.

I'm quite glad that the Great Western Railway helps to remind people that Assistance Dogs shouldn't be sat on! The first time we went to work in London together, my friend Charlie from Autism Dogs came with us, all the way from Cheshire.



## National Rail's Assistance Dog Travel Scheme

In October 2022, National Rail introduced the Assistance Dog Travel Scheme. The scheme includes the production of reusable "Assistance Dog under seat" cards which can be delivered to an Assistance Dog handler's home, or downloaded and printed.

These cards are designed to slot into a standard seat reservation holder on top of the seat. They help other service users to recognise that Assistance Dog teams need extra space.

This scheme is supported by ADUK, and is available to all Assistance Dog handlers, including people with dogs trained by other organisations, and owner trained teams.



For a dog, I also spend a surprising amount of time in church. That's because Jennifer sings in the parish choir, and another member of our pack is a priest. I have my own place in the choir stalls where I can doze through the sermons. You'd think they were trying to distract me, with all their incense, bells, and loud organ playing, but Jennifer and I just sit there until it's time to sing (though I myself never join in with the music). Although she likes the consistency of the services themselves, Jennifer sometimes finds the post-service coffee overwhelming, and I (as such a beautiful and clever dog) act as a focus for people's attention, which helps her to feel less self-conscious.

We live in a quiet part of Oxford and it's a short walk to the canal towpath and to a great floodplain where we go for wonderful walks every day. Jennifer loves to be out in the natural world, first thing in the morning, whatever the weather. We also live near a sports ground which we visit most days. I think Jennifer likes playing ball at least as much as I do, and it's a way of making sure she takes breaks from her work (she can be awfully focused when she sets her mind to something, and I try to remind her that there's more to life than the computer screen or mobile phone).

Things weren't always so straightforward for Jennifer. She is easily overwhelmed, can become very anxious in unfamiliar, uncomfortable, or socially challenging situations, and before I arrived she was very reclusive and prone to meltdowns. Lockdown made things particularly difficult for her.

By the time of my arrival, Jennifer hadn't been to work regularly in person for over two years, and the circle of people she lived around had become very small. Together, though, we go out and about and do more things; we even went to a wedding in Wales last autumn and afterwards I got to splash in the sea!

As the Coronation approaches, I've heard a lot about our King who will live out his days in the service of others. I understand that my life is now committed to service too, serving someone who needs me. I'm thankful that Autism Dogs has given me such a good preparation for life with Jennifer. Autism Dogs does what it says on the tin: they have serious expertise in both autism and canine behaviour, and Jennifer and I both feel as if we have found a partner for life who will care for us and always be there. 🐾





Rose and Raff have been a team now for over four years and they are the very best of friends. Raff gives Rose practical and emotional support, and helps her to take an active part in life.

Like many people on the autistic spectrum, Rose can easily find her senses become overloaded, particularly when in busy places or where noises and lights can be unpredictable. Raff acts as a comfort for Rose if she feels unsure about her surroundings, she can cuddle up to him and he is trained to distract her if she is in danger of developing a panic attack.

A typical day starts with Raff nuzzling Rose awake and reminding her that it is breakfast time (for him as well as her!) and also that he needs letting out for his toileting. Rose takes responsibility for Raff's feeding and he knows that she is the one to be near when the food is being prepared.

Before Raff's arrival, Rose struggled to go to school, finding things difficult and the school environment often quite overwhelming, but these days, Raff escorts Rose to her college placement and sits at her feet during the day. He has become perhaps the most popular member of the class, but he knows that his loyalties lie with Rose. They can even be found together heading down to MacDonalds for lunch, a place that would be outside of Rose's comfort zone in the past.

The progress that Rose has made since Raff joined us has been incredible. Rose passed her GCSEs in the summer and she has started an apprenticeship in Child Care, working three days a week in a local children's nursery. Rose really enjoys this, her boss says that she is doing very well and the children love having her there.



## ROSE & RAFF

*Steve Bibby*



Raff is a healthy, fit dog and loves his walks and playtimes in the park. His favourite activity is chasing his ball and he helps the whole family to get daily fresh air and exercise. Raff has added structure to our lives and has helped Rose structure her day and ensure that his needs are met.

As bedtime approaches, Raff likes to settle down on Rose's bed with her. Rose likes his weight pressing against her and he has significantly reduced her bedtime anxieties and helped her sleeping patterns.

Raff has been a much valued addition to the family and we can't quite remember how life was without him! 🐾



# CHASING DREAMS

Craig Broe

**M**ainstream education was a real struggle for Aoife, and in 2018 it came to a head with her withdrawing from any real social interaction.

At this point we didn't know that Aoife was autistic. Aoife's withdrawal from school kickstarted a chain of events which, while it hasn't been easy, has resulted in Aoife getting a lot more support for her to achieve her full potential

**We know that Aoife's potential holds no bounds!**

Aoife was home educated from this point, and she started to build her confidence back towards learning. Slowly but surely, her levels of engagement started to improve. During each lesson, she was accompanied by Pip - our Bichon Frise x Shih Tzu. Aoife always loved animals, and it was so obvious that the company of Pip made a significant positive impact during lesson time.

During this period, Aoife was attending sessions with CAMHs, the referral was made to the Umbrella Pathway for her autism diagnosis and her diagnosis was confirmed in January 2021.

We had been made aware of a new educational setting that was being started. It was very different to anything we had seen before; much more homely, and they also had Cindy their therapy dog on site. This coincided with Aoife's growing confidence in her own ability, growing understanding of her own diagnosis, and growing desire to engage more with others in a similar situation to herself. Aoife began attending gradually on a part-time basis.

It was very obvious that the presence of Cindy was a real driving factor for Aoife to consider attending the school full-time, but she needed the direct one to one support that an Assistance Dog could provide. We were aware that the amazing Cindy had been trained by Autism Dogs, and we made an enquiry for their residential programme.

Some time passed, and in early 2022, an email was received which invited us to progress the application further. Aoife was delighted, and so were we! We visited the farm for the first time and met some of the dogs and the amazing team.

It felt like an eternity to the next visit, but the wait was worthwhile, as Aoife was matched with her lovely boy, Chase.

It has only been a few months that they have been together, but it is clear to see the pairing has been very successful. Their bond is very strong already and it is strengthening every day! We have seen a positive change with Aoife so quickly. It has been a big change for her to adjust to, but it was one that she was ready for; one that she needed to help her move forward.





Chase has had a very calming influence on the whole family, perhaps because of how much more settled Aoife has been. It has been nothing short of amazing having him around. It has been a big adjustment to integrate Chase into Aoife's life, but it has been a very worthwhile adjustment and the rewards are already paying off.

Aoife's exercise levels have significantly improved. Hail, rain or shine; she is up and ready to take Chase for a walk.

Previously it was a struggle to get her out of the house. A trip to the supermarket was unheard of, but now she is actively looking to go.

Chase's company completely changes the dynamic for her, as she has a different focus point. It is still early days but her engagement has improved in school.

We are so excited to see their bond grow and to see what the future holds for Aoife & Chase! 🐾

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# BUDDY GOES TO DISNEYWORLD

Millie O'Sullivan

**W**hen Buddy arrived in our lives just over a year ago, I don't think any of us really believed that the dream we had of returning to Disney World in Florida would become a reality!

Frequent trips into London showed us that my bouncy and loving Black Labrador coped really well in busy places, so the planning commenced!

Caroline at Autism Dogs liaised with British Airways so we were able to arrange our flights. In order to fly, Buddy needed to have a fit to fly certificate and receive a rabies vaccine at least 21 days before flying. We got the certificate from a travel vets beside Heathrow Airport.

Buddy's first exposure to planes went really well. He was understandably a little confused at first but he soon settled and focused on me which made me feel confident that he would cope with the loud noises during take off and landing.

We followed all of the advice given by Autism Dogs Charity, and even adapted his feeding patterns in the week before the flight to help him prepare.

I was quite stressed on the day of the flight because I had to go through a separate wheelchair accessible security checkpoint, and Buddy picked up on that immediately.

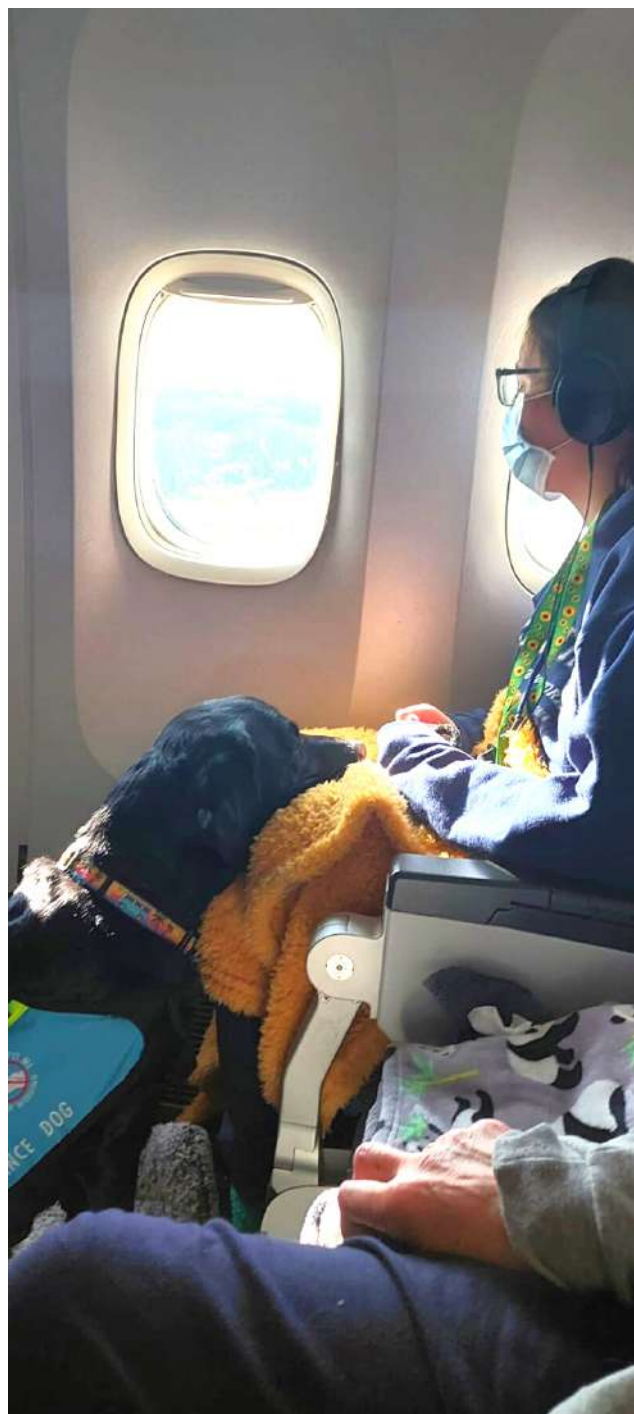
We were allowed to board the plane first and were able to get settled before the rest of the passengers got on. Buddy had been assigned his own seat as we needed to secure his seat belt harness during the flight. We were in the front row bulk head seats so he had plenty of space. We put down a bed for him, along with some blankets that he used a lot at home to make him as relaxed as possible.

He was completely settled during take off and landing. We gave him lots of treats throughout the flight and his first meal shortly before landing. The cabin crew kindly supplied us with plenty of ice cubes for him, so he was well-hydrated. After we landed, we were fast tracked through immigration, then immediately took Buddy outside so he could go to the toilet - he'd lasted over 12 hours!

We had brought different bedding for my bed at the villa to ensure Buddy could sleep on the bed as he does at home. He was very tired so fell asleep quite quickly after having a good explore round the entire villa. He woke up very early the following morning due to the time difference but he settled into the daily routine very quickly.

The US has different rules regarding dogs being off leads, in Florida they aren't allowed off lead in any public parks. In the villa community we were staying at, there was a fenced area for dogs - so Buddy was still able to have a good run after his tennis ball every morning and evening (his favourite parts of the day!)

At the theme parks, Buddy was allowed on some of the rides (if they didn't have a height requirement). He was very well behaved on the rides and enjoyed the break in air conditioning!



My mum doesn't like going on a lot of the rides so she stayed with Buddy for most of them. When we all wanted to go on a ride that Buddy wasn't allowed on, we used the 'rider swap' service. The staff at the theme parks were very accommodating and were clearly very used to having assistance dogs at the parks. We even saw a couple of staff members with assistance dogs!

At the parks, Buddy wore shoes to protect his paws from the hot ground, whenever I take Buddy to London he wears them as well to protect him from glass. They're also very useful for use on escalators when there isn't a lift available. A lot of the time Buddy was on my lap in the wheelchair, this enabled him to do Deep Pressure Therapy, but also allowed him to rest his legs. Unfortunately lots of people tried to reach out and pet him, so I had to tell them not to distract him.

However, we did have some really good experiences with some park guests. Lots of people with autistic family members spoke to us and were really interested and impressed by the way Buddy has been able to help me. The costume characters were also very fond of him, and very careful when interacting!

## Do not distract!

There's no denying that Assistance Dogs are amazing and beautiful animals! Have you ever been tempted to say "hello" or pet an Assistance Dog?

Assistance Dogs are auxiliary aids. They have been specially trained to mitigate the challenges of their disabled handler. Distracting an Assistance Dog could put the handler in danger, or could make them feel anxious and uncomfortable.

It's important to avoid touching, staring or talking to a working Assistance Dog. You must obtain consent from the handler before interacting with their Assistance Dog, or allowing your pet to approach them.

## Buddy met some characters at breakfast - including Pluto and Winnie the Pooh!



As Buddy has an EU pet passport the procedure was a lot easier to return home, we just need to visit a vet in Orlando for his tape worm treatment. The airport was significantly more stressful on the way back as Tampa didn't have a separate disability access queue and they weren't communicative about what they wanted us to do. One major plus of Tampa Airport though was that they have a service dog relief area after security by the departure gates. It was a small indoor area with artificial grass meaning Buddy could go to the toilet immediately before boarding.!

Once we boarded, Buddy settled straight away, and he slept for most of the flight. When the other passengers were leaving the plane many commented that they had no idea he had been on the plane! Once we got home he settled back into our routine very quickly.

Before this trip, Buddy and I already had a good bond, but I really can't believe how much stronger it is now.

**I am becoming more independent. I find it easier to interact with people, and I am even getting ready to go to university in September!**

I cannot thank Autism Dogs enough for training Buddy I'm so grateful that he is in my life, and I cannot wait to see what else we are able to achieve together! 🐾





# SUPPORT US AS YOU SHOP



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# RUBY MY PRECIOUS FRIEND

*Holly Pratt*



**H** Hi I'm Holly, I'm 17 years old and Ruby is my Autism Assistance Dog. She is an 18 month old German Wirehaired Pointer with bundles of energy and so much love to give!

After 4 years on the waiting list, I was finally diagnosed with autism when I was 16. I was also diagnosed with Tourettes Syndrome at 15 and Functional Neurological Disorder at the age of 17. Before Ruby came into my life, I was pretty closed off. I wouldn't talk to many people at school, I never hung out with friends, and I stayed in my room when I was home. I never thought life would get any better. Then I found Autism Dogs!

I met Ruby in February 2022 and there was an immediate connection. She came into the room and jumped straight on the sofa to give me cuddles. I looked forward to every visit for months until she finally came to live with us in that August. Ruby settled straight in and was loved by friends and family. The cats weren't too happy but eventually they got over it. That first night I slept better than I ever have before. Having Ruby by my side made a huge difference.

**We were building  
a special bond**

After only 3 weeks of having her, we went to an Autism Dogs meet up and it was amazing! I got to meet people who were like me and had already been where I was then. All of the other handlers and teams were so encouraging as we did public access together. I even went off without my mum! This was something I never thought would be possible, but with Ruby by my side I knew I was safe even when I didn't feel like it.

My mum Toni graduated university earlier this year and thanks to Ruby, I was able to go to her graduation ceremony at the Barbican Centre in London. This is something we had been talking about for months before we got Ruby, and every time I ended up crying because I wanted to go but I just couldn't. After getting Ruby we overcame so many obstacles together that I decided to try and go. And I did it! It was really hard but I actually went. Ruby was incredible. She was so well behaved and she was constantly looking over to me to make sure I was ok.

**I am so grateful for Ruby and Autism Dogs! Without them, I wouldn't have been able to see the day my mum worked so hard for.**

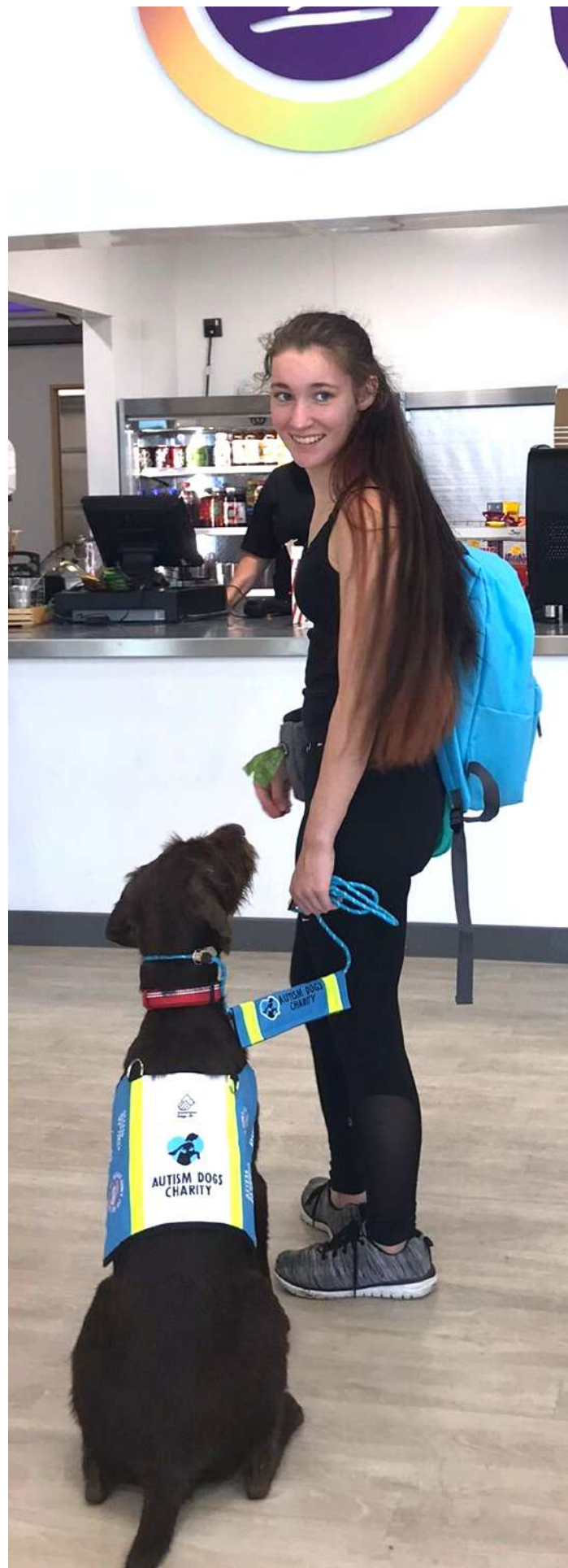


After 3 or 4 months, Ruby started coming to college with me. All of my teachers have said how much of a difference there is between when I come with Ruby and when I go on my own.

Last year, I was so behind on all my assignments, having meltdowns and panic attacks almost everyday; but this year, I have been able to keep on top of all my work and most of it has actually been submitted by the due date which is an actual miracle!

Ruby has helped me more than I ever could have imagined. Thanks to her, I am living as close to a normal life as possible. She's the best dog I could ask for and I can't wait to see where we go next.

Thank you Ruby for saving my life! 🐾





# MILO & MOO (AND THE REST OF US TOO!)

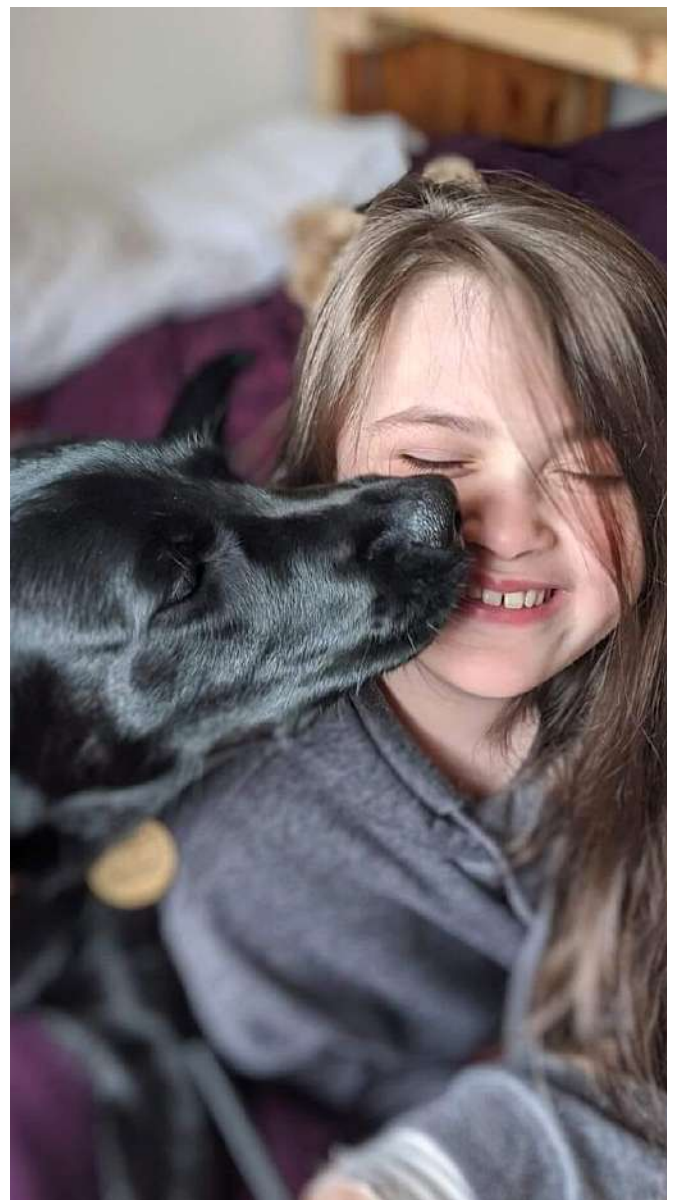
*Charlotte Smeed*

I am so happy to be able to contribute to this very special Coronation edition of the magazine!

I wanted to chat about our year gone by and our year to come. I am a little stuck though. What I would like to do is tell you of the many adventures that Milo and Molly got up to last year. Of the fears conquered and the blazes they trailed! I want to inspire you with the places they have been and dazzle you with some exotic pictures. But the simple truth is that I can't. Molly has a complex health background. At the beginning of 2022 she added Crohn's Disease to the list of diagnoses that she has collected over the years.

Whether it has been the Crohn's itself or simply that Crohn's was the straw that broke the camels back, she has been floored this year. Exhausted - most days getting into her wheelchair in the house seems like a huge deal.

There have been no tales of daring do. Milo and Molly's space at school has stayed empty. There has been no trail blazing to be had.



In some ways I feel a bit of a fraud for even writing an article – so little to inspire and excite you. And yet I wanted to because Milo has a role that has been so important this past year it felt like it was worth sharing.

You see, Molly's life is very insular. With her world revolving so much around home. But it is not just that. The diagnoses that Molly has means that she very often needs to manage complex pain that is difficult to treat, unpleasant tests that she finds intrusive, unpleasant medication choices. It is a difficult road for anyone to have to travel and for Molly it has been her life for far too long.

And yet.....

And yet she has Milo.

He is the light in her life. A crazy, mischievous bundle. Bouncy as your springiest Springer Spaniel, friendly as your warmest Labrador. With floppy ears and the waggiest tale he has been the joy in Molly's life the past 12 months.

Sometimes when I check on Molly at night, she and Milo are so nestled together it would be hard for me to see where one of them ends and the other begins.

And so, this is what I wanted to share. Molly's assistance dog is so much more than public access. He is so much more than being able to navigate a scary and unpredictable outside world (as amazing and life changing as that is).

He really is Molly's whole life.

**He is the laughter,  
the delight, the  
bright light on  
the dreary days. He  
is the cuddles, the  
snuggles, the deep  
trust and loyalty.**

He is, quite simply, completely indispensable inside the house and out. Trained to give deep pressure to provide reassurance and comfort. Trained to bring the remote control, phone or sock she has dropped. But also, ultimately, being a wonderful companion through dark times and long nights.

And this being the Coronation edition, it is important to note that change and celebration are on the way this year for the country. And though I am not sure what that means for Molly. Of what her year will look like. I do know that she can face whatever is ahead with her incredibly trusty sidekick by her side.

And, I suppose, there is the potential that even without an exciting trail blazing tale to regal you with the simple telling of our story, of true joy and deep contentment, can maybe be just as powerful a one to share.

Until next time,

*Charlotte* 🐾

# AWESOME SAUCE

Ruth King



**A**utism Assistance Dogs like awesome "Sauce" can bring light, friendship, and hope to autistic people with an array of comorbid conditions.

For Sauce's handler and best friend Kearyn, who is affectionally known as Kicky, these challenges are presented by a number of diagnoses. Among these are Neurofibromitoses - a rare genetic condition which causes tumours to grow throughout the body, as well as nerve damage caused by advanced glaucoma.

**Kicky suffers from progressive sight loss**

When Kicky's family reached out to Autism Dogs, he was struggling with unbearable anxiety. His speech was also very limited, which made it difficult for him to express his thoughts and emotions. He dreaded going outdoors, and suffered from frequent meltdowns which included self-harming behaviours.

After seeing the therapeutic impact that family members' pet dogs had on Kearyn, the family reached out to Autism Dogs Charity to seek a specially trained Autism Assistance Dog to help reduce the intensity his anxiety and meltdowns, and to give him the confidence to go outdoors.

They were introduced to a beautiful yellow Labrador, to whom Kicky gave the name "Sauce". The Autism Dogs Charity training team equipped Sauce with a range of bespoke tasks to mitigate the difficulties related to autism and Kicky's comorbid conditions. Sauce was taught to walk calmly beside his wheelchair, respond and intervene when meltdowns occurred, and provide soothing Deep Pressure Therapy and sensory regulation. This has had an incredible impact on Kicky's confidence and willingness to leave the house! The pair can often be found playing fetch in a local field.

The introduction of an Assistance Dog can mark a massive turning point for the family of an autistic child; as though a new, better, and wholly unrecognisable chapter has begun.

For Kicky's family, the evidence for this new chapter was felt during a trip to a local McDonald's. A loud and overwhelming incident involving fire alarms and an argument between a group of strangers had previously left Kicky feeling far too anxious to walk close to the door. Just imagine his family's shock and joy when walking past led not to a meltdown, but to their son happily asking to go inside the restaurant with his faithful best friend!

Shopping trips have also become much less stressful, as stroking Sauce's head provides sensory regulation for Kicky, and Sauce will lay across his legs to provide Deep Pressure Therapy when needed.

**Sauce always  
knows how to help  
Kearyn feel better**



Kicky often suffers with pain and discomfort, and Sauce can always be found at his side when his symptoms are particularly severe. The family continue to be amazed by Sauce's intuition and ability to fetch them whenever Kicky is unwell, injured or crying during the night.

Kicky continues to struggle with meltdowns and is finding it more difficult to safely navigate his environment as his sight deteriorates. Sauce knows exactly what to do! Bringing a tennis ball to Kicky helps him to redirect his thoughts and encourages therapeutic play. Licks, hugs and pressure provide tactile stimulation and leave Kicky giggling with happiness!



Increased medical needs also result in more frequent medical appointments and procedures, and Sauce has proved to have an incredible impact on Kicky's ability to handle these times of increased discomfort and anxiety. Engaging in play with Sauce helps to manage Kicky's sensory regulation and lower his anxiety both prior to, and in the immediate aftermath of hospital appointments and procedures. These play times also have a positive impact on his daily routine, including times of separation from Sauce. Kicky can now return from school with knowing that Sauce will be ready to welcome him with kisses and a very waggy tail!

But the benefits don't stop there! Kicky's family have observed a marked improvement in his speech; demonstrating the extraordinary impact our dogs can have on an autistic person's confidence and ability to interact with those around them.



*"We can never thank Autism dogs enough for when they have done. The truly improved Kicky's life so much!"*

Sauce truly is a friend who loves at all times, whether those be times of difficulty or times of joy. He is there through all of the highs and lows in Kearyn's life and the difference he has made is nothing short of remarkable. 🌍

## Why do some autistic people find hospitals overwhelming?



Machines beep and whir, patients may cry out and talk in crowded waiting rooms. They may feel like they can't escape from the noise.



They may have a lower or higher pain tolerance. The sensation, texture and pressure from equipment such as blood pressure monitors may cause extreme discomfort.



Lights may be uncomfortably bright, and scents may be strong and unfamiliar. Sensory overload can feel frightening and painful.



An autistic person may be non-verbal or find it difficult to interpret what a medical professional is telling them. It can be difficult for them to express their pain.



Autistic people often struggle to process and cope with unexpected events and changes to their routine. Emergency appointments and admissions with an uncertain duration can be particularly anxiety-inducing.

# HELP US TO CHANGE LIVES



With your help, we can change the lives of more autistic people like Kicky!

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# PAWSOME PICTURES



**Monty (Top) loves his adventures in the forest!**

**Chutney (Left) is a confident and happy swimmer!**

# PAWSOME PICTURES



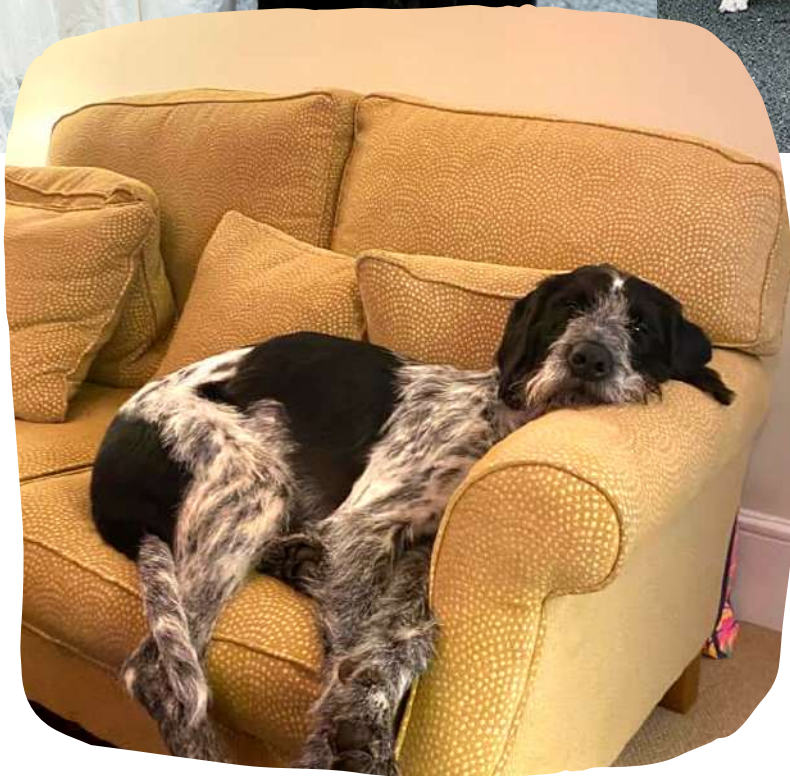
**Noodle loves to help his handler as she shops for sweets!**

# PAWSOME PICTURES



**Dave has such a special bond with his best friend!**

# PAWSOME PICTURES



**Assistance Dog "Ryder" supported his handler on her wedding day! He sat alongside Assistance Dog "Aisha", whose handler was the bridesmaid!**

**Bruce (Left) LOVES to chill!**

# PAWSOME PICTURES



**Assistance Dogs "Monty" (Top right) and "Noodle" supported their handlers at Crufts! They had an amazing time!**



# PAWSOME PICTURES



**Watson enjoys relaxing in the  
sunshine with his best friend!**

# PAWSOME CREATIONS

SHOWCASING THE CREATIVE  
TALENTS, HOBBIES,  
INTERESTS AND SKILLS OF  
AUTISTIC PEOPLE

Aoife is the handler of  
Autism Dogs Charity  
Assistance Dog "Chase". She  
created this amazing  
crocheted dinosaur!





A XANDER ROSS FILM

# EXPIRATION DATE

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR TIME RUNS OUT?

Xander Ross has written and directed a short film! This “zero-budget” feature was shot over the course of a day. Xander then spent several months tweaking and refining the film. The props were created by Gabe Ross, who spent weeks working tirelessly to create the custom laser gun used in the video.

The short film has been submitted into a variety of film festivals, and accepted into the Lift-Off Sessions at Pinewood Studios!

CLICK THE BUTTON BELOW TO WATCH FOR FREE





# Chutney's Kitchen

VEGETARIAN DOG SNACKS

Francesca Huff is handler of Autism Dogs Charity Assistance Dog "Chutney". She is also the founder and Chief Baker at *Chutney's Kitchen* - A small business producing high quality and nutritious vegetarian dog snacks!

CLICK THE ICON BELOW TO VIEW THE FULL RANGE OF PRODUCTS!





# AMBASSADOR INSIGHTS

## THE CORONATION



The streets being decorated with red, white and blue bunting is one of my earliest, and fondest, memories. It was for the Queens jubilee and I was three. I remember the feeling of joy and unity in the street. In just a few short months our King will be crown. Once again the streets will be full of hope and celebration as we welcome the new monarch. Noodle will sit with us as we make the bunting. Prior to Noodle each triangle would need to be perfect. Tears of frustration and meltdown would be the main theme of the day. Now, each triangle threaded on is an achievement. Yes, we could buy it but we would lose the opportunity to sit and discuss the Royals and how they link our heritage past, present and future. We talk about tales from relatives who are no longer with us as we remember their tales from history. My children are watching the young royals grow and will one day recount tales of making bunting as they celebrate their milestones and royal duties. I write this with Diana resting on my knee. A foster puppy that will go on and help her special person navigate life with autism.

*Jac Boyce*





# AMBASSADOR INSIGHTS

## THE CORONATION



As an autistic person, I struggle a lot with change, but since the Queen has died, I have found all the changes such as singing 'God save the King' and the King's speech at Christmas really interesting. When the Coronation happens, I think there will be a lot of changes like with the bank notes, coins and stamps. I am looking forward to watching the Coronation on TV with my Assistance Dog 'Chutney', and seeing this once in a lifetime event!

*Cesca Huff*

**Wanting to host a fundraising event in aid of us in your local area?**

**There are so many different events that you could host depending upon your skills and interests!**

**Ideas include a bake sale, car wash, coffee morning, quiz, talent show, auction, cream tea, bingo, comedy night or a dog wash!**



# WORDSEARCH

S	R	A	J	B	R	Y	G	G	W	N	L	B	F	V	L	B	E	M	Q
Y	K	W	D	G	D	N	T	U	R	A	B	B	G	E	L	D	O	O	N
M	N	G	K	Y	R	L	G	R	A	N	A	I	D	R	Y	S	L	Z	G
F	O	O	R	S	Q	Q	B	B	U	R	H	G	G	W	A	Q	L	R	P
D	W	Z	B	V	I	Z	W	F	E	B	G	B	Z	Z	K	Q	A	D	D
V	V	B	M	E	P	X	T	I	K	T	Y	T	D	G	Q	X	B	V	S
C	Y	D	B	A	N	O	I	T	A	N	O	R	O	C	P	I	E	W	L
K	D	A	R	X	C	D	N	D	G	P	P	T	N	F	T	Q	A	B	O
G	K	K	S	M	H	L	G	S	P	X	S	U	W	X	K	P	I	G	U
F	P	V	T	S	X	K	A	Z	F	M	V	C	I	H	E	X	H	F	M
W	J	H	T	Q	M	U	L	B	B	P	B	R	Z	D	S	H	A	K	A
G	E	V	H	H	C	J	P	K	Z	Z	U	O	P	Y	A	C	F	F	P
U	Z	A	V	E	F	R	R	K	X	L	Z	W	G	L	H	V	A	L	G
Q	Y	W	F	F	U	M	Z	H	C	L	Q	N	A	A	Q	X	P	Q	T
N	Y	X	S	C	Q	Q	L	K	A	Y	T	I	R	Q	X	V	E	B	J
N	S	U	M	M	T	T	F	I	N	D	P	L	X	E	T	B	R	I	I
R	X	B	D	Y	P	I	N	N	I	T	I	S	Q	E	D	U	T	Z	J
M	Y	G	P	A	R	T	Y	G	N	E	N	R	O	A	C	Y	F	O	F
I	P	J	S	W	T	S	C	K	E	W	M	L	N	E	B	A	R	L	J
X	Y	Q	U	Y	L	V	C	W	U	F	I	O	R	A	O	K	J	L	A

Can you find all of these hidden words and Assistance Dog names?



Dog  
King  
Ruby  
Paws  
Bruce  
Diana  
Park  
Charlie  
Party  
Sauce  
Ball  
Crown  
Ryder  
Canine  
Noodle  
Coronation

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- 35%** MINIMUM FRESHLY PREPARED SALMON

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*Developed by Andrew Preston,  
Founder of Autism Dogs Charity*