
RELEASE

National Service Dogs unwraps \$50,000 holiday gift from Canada Life

Insurance company employees select charity as seasonal gift recipient, name two puppies-in-training

London, ON, December 11, 2019. . . Today, staff and clients from National Service Dogs - flanked by a pack of certified service dogs and puppies-in-training - received a \$50,000 holiday gift from Canada Life. The insurance company's employees chose to support the charity's breeding, training and placement program for certified intervention, companion and service dogs.

"The holidays are a special time of year, and at Canada Life, we believe it's a time when we can make a big impact in our community through charitable giving. Each year, our employees across Canada choose among three national charities to select our seasonal gift recipient," says Jeff Macoun, President and Chief Operating Officer at Canada Life. "We do this because we believe a single large sum donation to one organization helps create ripples of positive change in our community and beyond throughout the year. We're proud to support National Service Dogs' important work in providing trained, certified canines to help improve Canadians' independence and quality of life."

Danielle Forbes, Executive Director of National Service Dogs (NSD) and the Tucker family who use a trained service dog, NSD Birdie, accepted an oversized cheque at Canada Life's office on Dufferin Ave.

"It was a fantastic surprise to hear Canada Life employees chose us as their seasonal gift recipient. We're very grateful to Canada Life for their generosity," said Danielle Forbes. "Breeding, training, certifying and matching service dogs with families is an intensive process that requires comprehensive obedience lessons and specialized training to serve people with autism and PTSD. This significant financial gift will help train more dogs to help Canadians around the country."

As part of the gift, NSD offered Canada Life employees the opportunity to name two puppies: Opal and Oakley. Both puppies have already started their training to serve an NSD client in the future.

"Speaking from personal experience, having a trained, certified service dog has been positively life-changing for my son Graham and our family," said Susan Tucker, Graham's mother, of his autism service dog. "NSD Birdie has helped make life easier at home and in public. We can always count on the dog to be a calming influence; boosting Graham's confidence. Birdie is a loyal companion and beloved member of our family."

NSD trains dogs to help keep children with autism safe and calm or assist veterans with PTSD in transitioning into society after duty. Other canines may work as part of a canine intervention team in healthcare and community settings or find a home with people with disabilities as a special companion.

This is the first seasonal gift the insurance company is donating under the new Canada Life brand.

About Great-West Life, London Life and Canada Life

Great-West Life, together with London Life and Canada Life, are leading Canadian insurers focused on improving the financial, physical and mental well-being of Canadians. Under the new Canada Life brand, we help Canadians achieve their potential, every day. Our customers across Canada have trusted us to provide for their financial security needs and deliver on the promises we have made. Together, we serve the financial security needs of more than 13 million people across Canada and are leading providers of a wide range of insurance and wealth management products and services for individuals, families and business owners, from coast to coast to coast.

About National Service Dogs

In 1996, National Service Dogs (NSD) pioneered the program of breeding, training and placing certified service dogs with children with autism. Over the last 23 years, NSD has graduated over 400 Certified Service Dog Teams, helped many service dog organizations around the world start their own autism programs, and has started three new programs: Certified Service Dogs for PTSD, Canine Assisted Intervention and Companion Dog Services. NSD aims to be Canada's premiere service dog provider, empowering people to live to their fullest potential with the help of trained, certified service dogs.

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