



Ability Dogs 4 Young People



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The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

t: 01983 216246 e: info@abilitydogs4yp.org.uk www.abilitydogs4yp.org.uk

NEWS UPDATE SEPTEMBER 2023

Are we a Charity heading for Crisis?

Surviving a tough year with slow fundraising and low volunteer numbers

The Vicar of Dibley PCC suggested a headline "Are we a Village in Crisis" with the answer "No". The Vicar asked why, and they replied, "It got their attention".

Are we a Charity in crisis? No, but financially we are certainly having the toughest year yet. Having coped with the last three years reasonably well, the extra worries about the cost of living increases have hit everyone hard. This is reflected in our slow fundraising and, strangely, the low numbers of new volunteers.

As an Island Charity, we have always been supported by a very wide range of people. Our funds are donated by individuals and groups, companies and trusts, including monthly giving and legacies. We raise funds by selling donated items in our Charity Shops, and from tombola style games on our stands at fetes across the Island.

Every donation makes a difference; the pennies saved by a child from their pocket money, the coins given in a collection pot, the adopt a puppy giving at £3 monthly... All these add up and we are extremely grateful.



Join our Team of Volunteers

Our Puppy Parents and Fosters help love and train our puppies. You will be fully supported and can enjoy the fun of watching each puppy grow and learn what it takes to be a fully trained Ability Dog. We provide food and equipment, and cover the costs of vet bills.

Pat: "Volunteering is very enjoyable and enriches my life. I get out and about and have made genuine new friends."

Can you help in one of our three thriving Charity Shops in Shanklin and Newport, or at our Training Centre? We always need help with admin, gardening and general maintenance.

No experience is necessary and you will be part of a friendly team.

**Please get in touch on 01983 216246
Email: info@abilitydogs4yp.org.uk**

We are still supported by everyone, but things have slowed down. Grants are harder to get, group activities are only just restarting and volunteers are thin on the ground.



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Ability Dogs 4 Young People IoW A Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
Registered Charity No. 1154896 Patron: Charlotte Corney



A Busy and Fulfilling Year

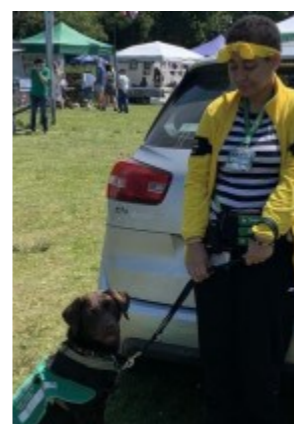
We feel like we are getting back on track and up to speed again this year. We are fully covering all aspects of our charitable work: Training Ability Dogs and Own Trained Ability Dogs, running Paws 4 U sessions for our waiting list Recipients, and Dog Phobia sessions.

Everything has increased significantly, with record numbers of Ability Dogs placed and Own Trained recipients have doubled. Our waiting list is longer than ever, with new applications every week. As the word has got round that we help with Dog Phobia, we have started helping more children learn that dogs are not as scary as they thought. Our Therapy Dogs are also helping young people cope with their hospital appointments (and visit shoe shops).



Ability Dogs

We have successfully completed the Recipient training and placed ten Ability Dogs, bringing our working total to 44. Mini Minx and Tasha were placed in January. Louis, Ollie and Jamie have diabetic and seizure alert roles. Rosie, Wendy, Ady, Bonnie and Caddie are helping with autism and other complex disabilities.



Rosie is helping Ciara as she starts her second year at Portsmouth University. As part of their training we visited the University where all the staff have been exceptionally helpful and accommodating. Rosie has settled very quickly in with Ciara at her halls of residence.

Jack, who has helped Jasper for 2 years at Christ the King 6th Form, has started at Solent University this term. A very big step for Jasper as it involves travelling by bus and ferry. However Jack takes it all in his stride. Before they left school, Jasper and Jack were jointly awarded the Head Teacher's Award.

Own Trained Ability Dogs



We have 46 on our Own Trained Ability Dogs scheme, of which 10 have gained a full working Jacket and 11 have In Training jackets.

It is interesting to see the different breeds coming along to the Tuesday Training Classes. Quite a

mix, with lots of doodles, of course.

As the numbers have grown significantly, we have formalised the levels and qualification paperwork. All dogs and puppies need to pass an initial probationary test to ensure they are suitable to carry on. They must be friendly and happy, not nervous or too bouncy. After that they can start working towards their In Training jackets.

We are seeing some great results.

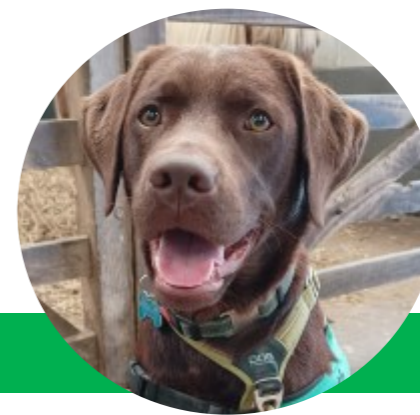


Training assistance dogs for disabled young people on the Isle of Wight



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Ability Dog Puppies in Training

We have twenty young dogs and puppies at various stages of their training. This year we have taken on eight new Ability Dog puppies for training, although we are still limited by volunteer numbers. (our target is twelve a year).

Five young dogs, Tasmin, Lizzie, Coko, Teddy and Neddie are just starting their Advanced Training with a Trainer. Lizzie and Coko are matched and their Recipients have started their training which will take three to four months. We are looking forward to seeing these five as they start working early next year.

A Day in the Life of Neddie

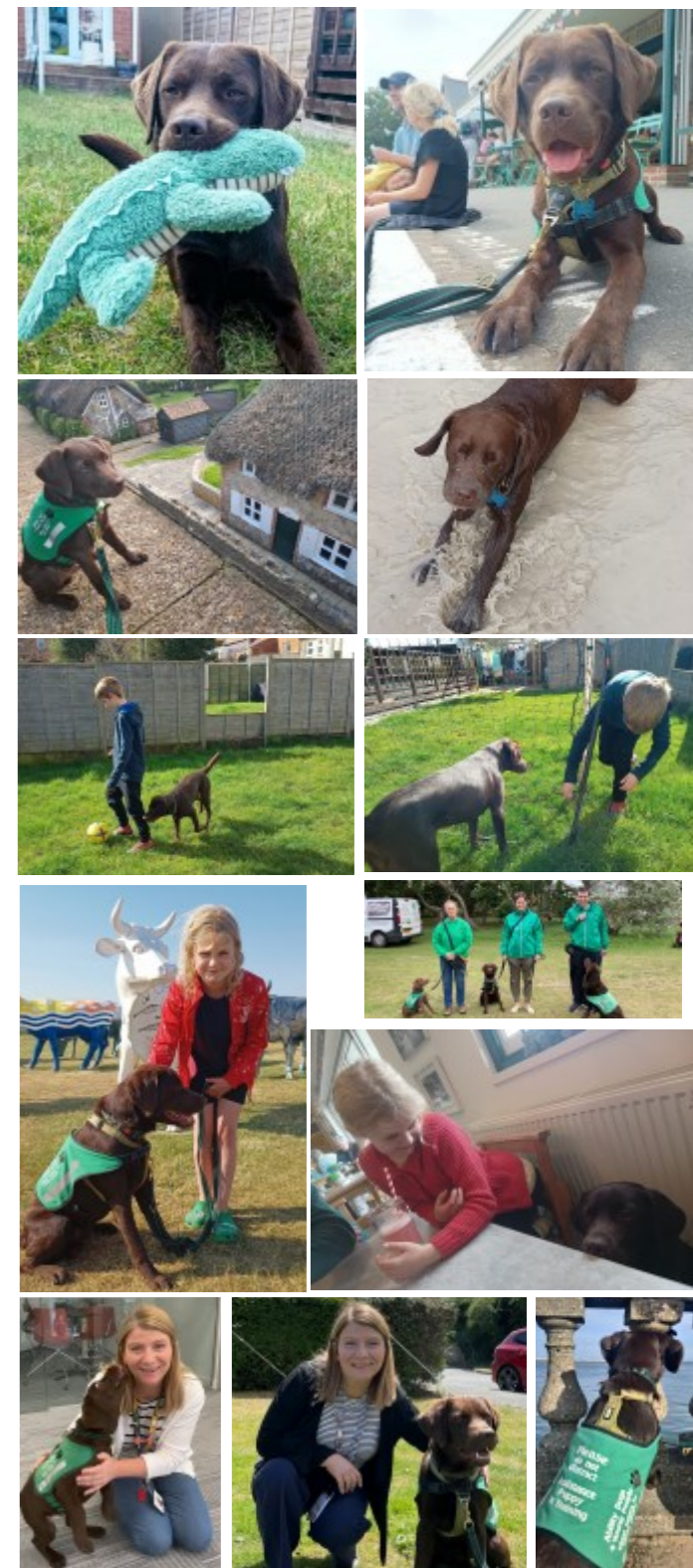
"Hi, I am a 14 month old chocolate Labrador puppy called Neddie, I am adored by all as I am very handsome! I am a privileged pooch and when I am grown up I expect I will still have lots of admirers and I know will be loved by everyone.

I get to go shopping, out for meals, to the cinema, rides on buses, trains and boats. I have plenty of company and live life almost like a human, going to lots of interesting places. I have even been to Godshill's model village and Tapnell Farm! I am weighed often to make sure I don't eat too much or too little, a doggie version of Weight Watchers! I have regular health check-ups with the vet and chiropractor to keep me in tip top shape.

But most importantly, I will be a special helper to a human young person or child so I am learning special skills all the time. My life will be a mixture of work and play all day every day, how cool is that! Very soon I will start my 'Advanced Training' with a Trainer and I will be introduced to my matched recipient.

I have lived with a few families along the way. My current Puppy Parent is Catherine. I join in with her children's activities and we are very busy. I love watching football practice and running on the beach.

Like all the other Ability Dog puppies, I have been named and sponsored by lovely supporters. My sponsor is Fidelity. I met them when I was very little and again quite recently. They couldn't believe how handsome I have grown. I just love showing off!"



School Therapy Ability Dogs

Our School Therapy programme has gone from strength to strength. We are supporting ten schools including Broadlea Primary School who have just started their journey with a little puppy called Nessy.

Dougal, the Charity's School Therapy Dog, is making a huge difference at St Catherine's School. He loves being there and showed his excitement when he restarted after the holiday. He is particularly good at helping the students in their one-to-one sessions.

Along with the other students' awards, Dougal received his full School Therapy Ability Dog jacket and certificate at the end of year assembly.

Dog Phobia

This year we have seen an increase in applications for our Dog Phobia scheme. We start with one-to-one sessions, introducing them to a Therapy Dog very slowly. We work at their pace and build their trust - so no surprises.

Once they are confident to walk next to a dog on lead, we start showing them how the dog will respond to their requests of 'sit' and 'lie down'. Feeling in control is important, and it is this we build on. We teach them 'what to do if', for example, 'what to do if a dog comes running towards them'.

Taking into consideration the different ways children learn, we are also introducing other fun activities and games including colouring and learning facts about dogs around the world.

Part-Time Volunteering:

If you don't have the time to be a Puppy Parent, we also need Foster Puppy Parents for our Ability Dogs and puppies to stay with for short breaks.

