

Can Do Canine

March, 2017

Official Publication of the Missouri Canine Companion Association

Companion of The Month

March Can Do Canine:
Tucker, 6-year-old Golden Retriever
Owner: Sgt. Joshua Crawford
Fort Leonard Wood, Mo.

"It is hard for me to put into words how much Tucker means to me. I'm sure if you ask any service member who has been in combat to define how they feel about their Battle Buddy who has been there to cover their "six" and keep them alive, they would be hard-pressed to express in words their gratitude and appreciation. When people ask me about Tucker, what it's like to have him, I always reply he is a force multiplier. He picks me up when I'm feeling down, and is just what the doctor ordered when I'm feeling ill. Eventually I'll need to have my left hip replaced as the shrapnel that sits on it causes me pain when the weather gets cold and damp. It's on those days Tucker will come up to me, rest his head on my lap and look at me waiting to say "Okay, jump." And he jumps on me and lays right on top of my left thigh and my hip, causing the burning, aching pain to subside, and allowing me actually fall asleep. There is so much more I can write, but I would say it's great to have a friend who loves me unconditionally and is always there for me."

Sgt. Crawford is pictured here with his "Battle Buddy" and faithful companion animal, Tucker.



2017 Woofaroo Set For April

The Missouri Companion Animal Association will host its 29th annual Can Do Woofaroo on Saturday, April 15, in Jefferson City on the grounds of the State Capitol. Proceeds raised at the event will be used to help provide service dogs for autistic kids. The demand for this type of companion dog is growing rapidly both in this country and around the world.

The Can Do Canines Fundraiser, started in 1987, has over the years provided thousands of dollars to raise, train, and pair more than 500 assistance animals with people in need.

The recipients pay nothing for their new working companion. But that's not to say the dogs aren't expensive. Taking a puppy and training it into an assistance dog

typically costs \$25,000 per animal. Since the organization started there have been more people being added to the wait list than trained dogs ready to be placed. Kids with autism today make up the fastest growing need. In Missouri alone it is expected that more than 250 Autistic companion animals will be needed in 2017.

This year's event will consist of a one-mile dog walk, assistance dog demonstrations, where canines demonstrate their talents, as well as hands-on seminars, educational programs, food vendors, entertainment, and much more.

Admission is free and open to the public. Pets are welcome, but must be on a leash. For more information log on to the Woofaroo website at www.2017Woofaroo.org.

How To Become a Dog Trainer

Do you love dogs and want to know how to become a dog trainer so you can work with dogs all the time? Perhaps you have one or more of your own and love them to pieces, and you love the idea of actually making a living from spending time with dogs. There are no formal qualifications or training you need to set yourself up as a dog trainer. However, that does not mean you can start marketing yourself as a dog trainer tomorrow. Shelters or training schools are likely to ask for what relevant experience you have, and saying you have a dog at home is not likely to cut mustard. However, don't be put off. So long as you are willing to put some work in, then you could have a very convincing resume in 4 easy steps.

1 - Read as Many Books as Possible on the Subject

The first and easiest step is to read books on how to become a dog trainer. There really is no limit to the number of books you should read and, in reality, you should keep on reading as many books as you can on the subject, even once you have secured a job.

2 - Volunteer, Call Your Local Shelter

OK, so you may get on famously with your four-legged friend at home, but this is your dog who knows you are its owner, and

loves you unconditionally. However, people who would look for dog trainers are likely to be having some sort of issue with their dog. Perhaps their dog howls all night not allowing them to sleep. Perhaps their dog refuses to sleep in his own bed and want to be in the bedroom. Perhaps their dog is very friendly, but simply won't learn basic commands such as sit, down or heel. Their dog may even be showing aggressive tendencies, either to other dogs or humans. Clients are unlikely to look for a dog trainer's help when nothing is wrong.

3 - Find a Dog Training Class in Your Area

Nothing beats seeing a professional doing the job that you want to do. You can take your dog, or ask to simply sit and watch the trainer. We recommend you do both; having your pet with you is great as you get a chance to see how it feels to be a client, which is valuable information if in the future you would also want to hold your own dog training classes. However, when participating in a class, you may miss certain techniques and teaching styles on how to become a dog trainer as you are engaged with your dog.

Service Animal, Companion Animal - What's the Difference?

Service Animal - The federal government defines a service animal as one that is trained specifically to perform tasks on behalf of a disabled individual, and the American Disabilities Act (ADA) defines a disability as follows: "A mental or physical condition which substantially limits a major life activity such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning and working."

The term "service animal" includes a wide range of animals highly trained for specific types of needs, such as signal dogs (for the deaf) or seeing eye dogs (for the blind). In a key distinction from other types of animals, federal law does not consider these or other service animals pets; they are viewed as equipment necessary for disabled people to manage the basic tasks of daily living.

Because they are protected under the ADA, service animals are accorded broad access to accompany disabled individuals everywhere they need to go, including on public transportation, in private places of business, workplaces, residential complexes and other environments or situations where pets are not typically permitted. However, the ADA neither legally requires service animals to be certified nor has a certification standard. While this gives disabled individuals latitude to have their animal trained to address their specific disability, it invites abuse and diminishes the needs of those with real, serious and legitimate disabilities.

Performance standards are high and they're called upon to undertake fairly complex tasks. A successful canine candidate must have the right combination of temperament, size, life expectancy, activity level, strength and other characteristics, depending upon the service for which it's being trained.

Companion Animal - A companion animal is just another word for a family pet. Think Fido and Fluffy. While companion animals have the capacity to deliver many wonderful physical and emotional health benefits, they have no legal access to places where pets are normally not permitted. Despite their lack of legal access, companion pets can have life-changing - even life-saving - impacts on people, including veterans. Through companion pet adoption, many veterans coping with PTSD, depression and other psychological challenges tell us that their pets give them a renewed sense of purpose, a reason to live. They are more able to re-establish healthy relationships with family and friends, and even forge new and positive relationships.



In 4 Steps

4 - Become an Apprentice

As there are very few dog training courses out there, the best way to learn how to become a dog trainer is to be on the job. Contact dog trainers in your area and ask if they would take you on as an apprentice and will show you how to become a dog trainer. Again, this likely to be unpaid, but this will give you the opportunity to take the experience you've already gained up a notch. Apprentices will generally assist the dog trainer in the classes until the dog trainer feels that you are capable enough to lead a class by yourself whilst under their supervision.

Conclusion -

And there you go – how to become a dog trainer! It's not difficult, but it will take up some of your time, and it is all likely to be unpaid. If this puts you off, then ask yourself whether you really want to be a dog trainer. Considering that a lot of other careers involve spending money on expensive courses and qualifications, to be a dog trainer, following the above steps should not cost you anything but travel expenses and your time. Once you have followed the above steps, it's time to find yourself a job. Contact as many animal shelters and training schools as you can in your area to see if they are hiring. Get out there and make your dream career a reality!



Caring For Your Canine



Dogs can be good at masking health problems. When a beloved pet seems a bit “off,” it might be more than just a bad day; it could be a sign of mild sickness or a more serious illness. Keep in mind that animals will generally attempt to mask signs of illness. This behavior is a natural instinct that is used for protection in the wild, where any animal showing signs of weakness is likely to be shunned by its own kind or attacked by predators.

Symptoms that indicate an emergency include the inability to urinate, a bloated hard abdomen, excessive vomiting or diarrhea, seizures, and the inability to stand up.

Once you have taken a sick pet to your veterinarian, you may need to continue medical care at home in the form of medication, special foods or supportive physical care.

Be sure to finish all medications as prescribed by your veterinarian and take your pet back to your veterinarian for any recommended re-check exams or diagnostic tests. Even if your pet seems completely better to you, it is very important that you adhere to your veterinarian's instructions. Even if your pet does not look or act sick anymore, there could still be an underlying illness that could recur if you don't follow through on all of your veterinarian's recommendations.

Grooming Tips for Your Dog

Just as humans require good grooming habits, so do our dogs. When you and your puppy are learning how to groom, come armed with a great attitude, lots of patience, and in the beginning, lots of treats. Always start slowly and add more as your puppy accepts what you're doing. If you start getting frustrated, stop and come back to it later. Remember to keep it positive and fun.

Bathing

Unless your dog has gotten into something smelly or dirty, she will need to be bathed only every two to four months. Bathing her too frequently will dry out her skin and strip the natural oils from her coat. Make sure to use a shampoo that's made for dogs. Human shampoo can be too harsh for your puppy's skin and coat. Put a non-slip surface, such as a bath mat or towel, in the bottom of your tub (or sink, kiddie pool, or wherever you are doing your bathing). Lather up the coat, and then rinse thoroughly. Be sure to rinse completely or the shampoo will leave a dull residue on puppy's fur. Avoid getting shampoo and water directly in the eyes, mouth and inside the ears.

Brushing

Regular brushing is great, regardless of the length of your dog's coat, because it removes dead hair, distributes the natural oils for a clean and healthy coat, stimulates the surface of the skin, sloughs off dead and dry skin, and helps you become very familiar with your dog's body. You should brush your dog every couple of days no matter what the length of the coat. Sometimes your brushing can have a specific purpose, such as removing hair mats or helping them shed their seasonal coat, but most often you'll just be doing a general purpose brushing or combing.

Feet

Keeping your dog's feet trimmed up nice and neat is beneficial, not only because it looks nice, but because it will help reduce the amount of tar, stickers, rocks, iceballs, salt, etc. that will get caught in the feet, all of which can be uncomfortable for your dog. Use a scissors to trim over the top of your dog's foot and even with the pads on the bottom of the foot. Do not try to trim in between the toes or the pads of the foot.

Nails

Since dog's nails grow in a curve, allowing them to get too long will cause the "fingers" and "toes" to splay or twist when the dog walks. This can be very uncomfortable and can ultimately lead to broken fingers and toes. Nails should be checked and clipped approximately every two weeks. They are probably too long if you can hear them "click" as your dog walks across the floor.

Ears

Keeping the inside surfaces of your dog's ears clean will not only feel good to your dog, but is good way to help prevent ear infections. Examining the outside surface will also alert you to the presence of wood ticks, fleas, or anything else unusual. Clean your dog's ears about once a week.

Teeth

Dogs can suffer from many of the same dental problems as humans (i.e., cavities, gum disease, tartar buildup, etc.) Bacteria from gum disease can also get in your dog's bloodstream causing other health problems. Regular teeth cleaning will save you vet expenses and eliminate the stress of having your dog anesthetized for the cleaning procedures. Clean your dog's teeth two to three times per week.

Caring for your dog is an act of love that will pay big dividends for you both for years to come. For more tips on caring for your canine companions contact your local veterinarian.



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The Can Do Canine is the official Publication of the Missouri Canine Companion Association. The MCCA is dedicated to building an awareness and appreciation for the valuable service companion Dogs play in our world. Opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the organization or its members.

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