

KIDS AND CANINES

An Assistance Dog Training Program

3215 Nundy Road, Tampa, FL 33618 813-558-5406 813-975-7355

What type of service dogs are provided by the Kids and Canines Program?

Wheelchair assistance dogs are the primary focus, with some therapy dogs also available. We DO NOT furnish “Seeing Eye” dogs or seizure dogs.

What can your dogs do to assist a person in a wheelchair?

Our dogs are trained for 16-18 months and perform over 50 commands upon graduating from the program. They perform a myriad of tasks, ranging from turning on and off light switches, opening and closing doors, picking up and retrieving items, and removing clothing from the dryers, to assisting in grocery shopping by placing items on the checkout counter and giving payment to the clerk.

How can I acquire a service dog from the Kids and Canines Program?

Step one is to call the kids and Canines office at Dorothy Thomas School. You can reach them at 813-558-5406 or 813-975-7355. Jennifer Wise (the Program Director) or Mary Maas (the Assistant Program Director) will ask you some questions about your disability and your need and if you fit our criteria they will mail you a preliminary application. The application process is a multi-level one and this will be explained during your conversation with Jennifer or Mary.

Are there guidelines for the type of disabilities you can and cannot assist?

Since the recipient needs to be able to control the dog, it is important that you have at least partial use of your hands. The dogs are taught verbal commands, so the recipient must be able to communicate verbally with a dog. Some allowances and special adaptations can be made in certain situations and since each case is different, you are encouraged to contact the program with your questions and concerns.

What is the cost of a service dog?

The cost of one of our assistance dogs is \$2500. Many insurance companies cover the cost of a service dog. Service organizations (Women’s clubs, church groups, Kiwanis, Lions, etc.) and social clubs often assist recipients in raising money. There are also charitable foundations that can be contacted for grant money to provide service animals. We have some limited funding for Scholarships. Contact the Kids and Canines Program for more information.