

# Lions support 'Paws for Hunter' Dogs for Autism

If there's a need in the community, the Hickson and District Lions Club can be counted on to come up with a helping hand.

Last year a Lions member was made aware of a young man in an extended Hickson family with Autism who had just been paired with a National Service Dog (NSD).

Hunter Fishback, 8-year-old son of Adam and Debi Fishback of Kitchener, is also the grandson of Gail and Rick Fishback of Hickson.

Hunter is a fun loving, energetic and happy boy who was diagnosed with Autism when he was 2-1/2 years old. Hunter is non-verbal, therefore uses his iPad and some sign language to communicate. Hunter enjoys playing with his big sister Kaylee, jumping on the trampoline, swimming, watching movies, playing on his iPad and spending time with his grandparents. He also has a love for monster trucks and farm animals, especially cows.

Unfortunately, Hunter has no sense of danger and will bolt at any given time into unsafe situations. The family's answer to a more



Hunter Fishback with his National Service Dog, Nestle.  
*Tav. Gaz. p. 2 June 18 2014*

independent and safe life for Hunter came when Hunter was matched with NSD Nestle in October 2013. "Nestle has been the answer to our hopes and wishes for Hunter," his mother said "and has allowed our family to participate in stress-free, fun-filled family events outside of our home and most importantly they are best forever friends!"

"Our family can't thank you enough for your support. Without friends and family like you, this journey that we have been on, and will continue, would be much more difficult," she added.

The Lions immediately indicated their support for Hunter and his dog, Nestle, with a \$1,000 donation. Another \$550 was raised by the Club during their annual Lions Daze breakfast last July.

On Sunday, June 8, 2014, the Club raised additional funds with a Brunch in the Hickson Park followed by entertainment by the Oxford Lions Comedy Show. About 110 people attended the brunch and

with most of the food services donated and Lions volunteer labour, the Club managed to post a reasonable profit to dominate to the cause - NSD's Paws for Hunter.

NSD's Certified Service Dogs are valued at \$30,000 over their eight to ten-year working life; however, each dog is provided free of charge to approved clients. NSD receives no government funding and relies entirely on donations from the general public, corporate sponsors, fundraising events, and community supporters. Clients are not obligated to fundraise, and fundraising efforts are in no way tied to when and if they receive

their service dog; however, many of them assist by asking for donations from friends and family or hosting their own fundraiser. NSD also has many third party fundraisers that host events in support of our working dog teams.

The actual direct cost of the Certified Service Dog to the family is an application fee of \$50, an equipment fee of \$250, and the cost of travel, accommodations and food for the week of Team Training in Cambridge. All food and veterinary costs are borne by the recipient once the dog has been placed with the family.

Since 1996, National Service Dogs (NSD) has

been training Labrador and Golden Retrievers to assist children and families living with autism. NSD is proud to be the first school in the world to provide this service to families with children who have autism. Over the last 16 years, NSD has placed over 250 Certified Service Dogs across Canada and has helped various training schools around the world develop their own autism programs.

If you would like to support the Fishback family, you can make a donation through any Lions member, Geraldine Claessens 519-655-2098 or at the NSD website at <http://www.nsd.on.ca>.



## Buy local soup

Princess Elizabeth Women's Institute members serve their 'Comfort Soup' at the 'Buy Local Soup' competition held Saturday afternoon at the Fair.

Rosemarie's Restaurant was judged the best overall soup and the People's Choice was the Tavistock Opti-Mrs.  
*Tav. Gaz. p. 2 Sept. 10 2014*  
BILL GLADDING / TAVISTOCK GAZETTE