



Nineteen dogs and their owners graduated last week from dog obedience classes. Alice Scott was the instructor and said about 80 per cent of the dog's owners were having discipline problems before the course. Three levels, Kindergarten and puppy training, basic, and advanced basic were taught which included teaching dogs to sit, down, stay, come, heel and don't touch. An advanced course will be taught near the end of August. Scott said the course is a good way to promote bonding between owners and their pets. Above, graduates stand with their sitting dogs. Photo by Dave Chmara

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Dogs can reduce stress and lead to life of independence

By Alice Scott

Approximately 10,000 to 15,000 years ago, man and the dog became companions.

The next few columns will be dedicated to the dogs who are more than companions to their owners.

These dogs are the eyes, ears and hands of their owners. They are the protector, friends and workers of many strangers.

Psychologists agree that a strong bond exists between animals and humans. Every year, thousands of seniors must give up their devoted companions because they must move into Senior Citizen homes, apartments or chronic care units!

In the past few years, Pet Therapy has become an important part of many elderly's weekly routine.

Most major cities in the U.S. and Canada now have dedicated volunteers who bring their pets to hospitals, Senior homes and chronic care homes.

These pets help the people receive some of the companionship and love that they used to receive from their own pets.

It has also been proven that an animal can help reduce stress and lower your blood pressure.

There is nothing that can replace the feeling you receive when you are helping others.

I have seen people cry with joy, because they can pet and talk to a dog. More people are lobbying to let seniors keep their pets

when they enter Senior Citizen apartments. Hopefully it will help change people's attitudes.

There is a new type of dog available, they are CCI dogs.

Canine Companions for Independence was started in Santa Rosa, California. These dogs are the hands and independence for their owners.

They receive a two year rigorous training program. At seven weeks they are placed in a foster home.

For 18 months the foster owners take these pups to weekly training courses, feed and care for them and love them. Then they must give them back to CCI.

For the next three months the dogs are taught over 40 commands such as turning on and off

lights, fetching items, pressing elevator buttons, opening doors, and pulling wheel chairs through snow, mud and crowds.

It costs approximately \$8,000 to train these dogs but the handicapped owners pay only \$125 for their dog.

These dogs are not only responsible for the independence that the handicapped owners need but give love and emotional help as well.

For more information on CCI contact

Executive offices: CCI
1221 Sebastopol Rd.
P.O. Box 446
Santa Rosa, California
95402-0446

Next week - "K-9 forces dogs and Police dogs."

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ENGAGEMENT

Mr. & Mrs. William Miller announce the engagement of their only daughter, Rhonda Joyce to Mr. Neil William O'Conner. The wedding is to take place on Saturday, July 15 at 6:30 p.m. in St. Andrew's United Church, Schreiber.

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