

Canine Partners for Life, continued ...

Situated on a 45-acre property in Cochranville, Canine Partners for Life is one of the leaders in the assistance dog industry and one of the first to be accredited by Assistance Dogs International. Since they began, they have placed close to 750 service dogs and companion dogs in 45 states.

The organization's service dogs go through an intense two-year training program and learn advanced obedience and social skills, as well as techniques to help people with disabilities meet challenges of daily living. During the second year of training, each dog is paired with a human partner and the remainder of the training is tailored to meet the needs of that partner. Service dogs are considered for people 12 years and older and who are functioning on a 6th grade level or above. These dogs may provide alerts for seizures, cardiac conditions and diabetes.

"The training is intense, but the process guarantees we're making the right matches," Guy said. "After applicants are interviewed, they're placed on a waiting list, which is typically two to four years for service dogs, and one to two years for home companion dogs."

The home companion dogs are placed with individuals who would benefit from a well-trained companion but would have difficulty raising and training a dog on their own. Their main job is to provide comfort, encouragement and joy to their human partners

Although insurance companies haven't covered the cost of these specially trained canines, averaging about \$30,000 for a service dog, Guy says the organization doesn't charge a fee, but does ask for a donation. "There isn't a penalty if someone can't make a donation, but applicants do need to have the financial ability to care for the dogs," she said.

Find out more about Canine Partners for Life at the website. www.k94life.org.