

# SDT Training News



**SERVICE DOG  
TRAINING**

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## Young Diggers Dog Squad programme



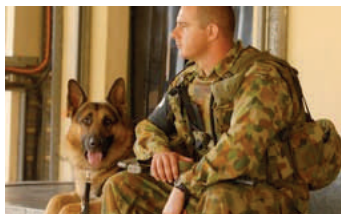
John Jarrett, President of [Young Diggers](#) (YD) is proud to announce [The Dog Squad programme](#), an initiative involving ServiceDog Training who will coach serving and ex-serving military personnel suffering PTSD, or related illnesses, to train their own service dog.

We are deeply moved by the number of diggers experiencing mental illness and we want to do something about it. As many SDT clients know, the difficulties with everyday tasks that most of us take for granted are quite insurmountable when facing life with a disability. Time after time, a service dog has proven to be the "I can do" catalyst in helping achieve a better level of mobility, independence and self-confidence. Sufferers can rediscover the joy of living with a service dog..



Unknown circumstances can be scary and humans are notorious for avoiding situations where they don't know what to do or how to act. A service dog helps to bridge that uncomfortable barrier. Some may feel inhibited to ask how a person deals with their disability, but comfortably 'break the ice' by showing an interest in the dog and how it helps. This increased social interaction greatly lessens the isolation and feelings of aloneness that someone with a disability must cope with every day. As one partner once said; 'my dog makes my wheelchair disappear'.

The programme, to start towards the end of the year, includes companion dog training with weekly sessions built in a tiered fashion. In order for a service dog programme to succeed, there must be a "super-glue" like bond between Young Digger and Four Paws Trainee. A dog doesn't care about disabilities or challenges, it is non-biased, non discriminatory but it will only excel if it has respect for its handler. This first level seals that respect between the YD pair.



The programme then moves into service dog training., geared around the issues the Young Digger identified in the original application, This could be anything from helping to get out of bed in the morning, to giving encouragement to walk up the street to actual 'assistance type' activities such as help with dressing, opening doors and cupboards, picking up dropped items etc. This part of the programme is loosely geared around the US TeamWork programme, the basis of ServiceDog Training methodology.

Hans believes that SDT's contribution to this special programme will change the lives of Young Diggers suffering PTSD and other related illnesses.

**SDT has become accredited under the Queensland Guide, Hearing and Assistance Dogs Act 2009. Legislation is pending to make a national accreditation system. It is hoped that this will soon become a national recognition in due course.**

## Toby's start @ TAFE

Toby and Claire have been exploring in public for 5 or 6 months now and Claire recently 43ceived permission for Toby to accompany her to TAFE after some considerable time trying. She firstly approached all class tutors to see what they thought of the idea. She got a host of questions about why she needed Toby with her, which is because he alerts to a fall. The safety benefits of this really helped convince them that she needed him with her particularly as it isn't something a human can do instead. Next she talked to the year coordinator who had similar questions but it just so happens that she loves dogs.

After this enthusiasm, Claire spoke to the person at the DLO responsible for people with a disability. She was even more enthusiastic because she had seen first hand how much independence and confidence it had given several blind students over years. Armed with all the positive responses, Claire saw the centre manager who e-mailed OH&S dept, all other centre managers and the board. Unanimously and resoundingly, the response was yes!

### Keys to Success:

#### Be confident

*When questioned about why the dog needs to be with you, focus on tasks he does that increase safety and things that people can't do for you*

#### Be polite but persistent

*Claire was also prepared initially not to have Toby there full time . Show your preparedness to go through a probation period it may help alleviate fears about him misbehaving*

*Well done Claire & Toby - this is a good lesson to learn!*

## UPDATE Various

We are honoured, and a little overwhelmed to be given the opportunity to help our Young Diggers return to a balanced and happy civilian life following their overseas postings, including Iraq and peace missions in which the Australian Defence Force is involved. Many are doing it tough and we look forward to working with them. YDA is a charity founded by Diggers for Diggers and where such great work is done. A visit to the [website](#) is worth it!

We have plenty of other projects in the pipeline and hope that this type of special programme will benefit others who need a service dog; help them to train their own service dog.

Susan, will take on the very active role of coordinator of The Dog Squad programme, and she looks forward to the added workload!

If you are [considering getting a service dog](#), please read the document on our website. It really does enlighten in an honest and frank fashion, forcing people to consider the implications carefully. This great paper was prepared by [CUSP](#) with input from SDT. Please read it

I recently attended an RSPCA initiated program on 'Working together to improve animal welfare' and talked to many in the welfare field about accessing suitable dogs to become service dogs and got a great reaction.

*Hans van Heesbeen*

NB: Office closed 19/9-16/10 due to family reasons

### COOKIE'S TIP:



Sometimes mum needs me to do a 'Paws Up' on her lap so she can reach me to put on my collar or saddle, or so I can put something on her lap. She just held up a treat so I had to jump up to get it, every time I did she said 'Paws Up'.