

WONDERFUL LESSON IN SERVICE DOGGING FROM BELLA'S MOM

So someone had asked about what we do for our service dog. You know we never had considered a service dog for Bella before seeing a mobility dog in action. It was a long year of us driving 30 minutes to Service Dog Project at least once a week to volunteer. Bella helped change waters, feed, brush, scoop poop, clean kennels, sweep, fluff fluffies and give pats with treats to many dogs over that year long period.

The more you can be there helping out the better chance of a dog choosing you just like George chose Bella. Is it always easy? Nope. It takes a lot of planning. With crutches there was no thinking involved. Bella could get up and dressed and then crutch to school or to a Dr. appointment. No worries.

But when you add a service dog into the mix it takes more planning. "Bella did George go pee and poop this morning? Did George have breakfast? Do you have his vest/chain? Did he have 5 minutes to run? Do you have his coat if it's cold?" It's a lot to plan every time you leave the house. Then planning for the unexpected such as keeping a container in the car with water/ food bowls, treats, food, fluffies, and water.

Does Bella always do 100% of his care? No of course not but she does 95+% of his care. She will happily take him to the bathroom, feed him, brush him, scoop his poop, and of course keep treats nearby.

Would we change anything? No way. Seeing the improvements have been amazing. Bella is so much stronger. But when you have a service dog you have to remember this is a 24/7/365 day job. Bella doesn't decide when she wants to use George or when she wants to use crutches. George doesn't stay home alone. He is always with us including overnights at the hospital.

Has it changed anything? Of course it has. Are their places we don't go? Yup. Does it draw attention? Yes, at times Bella doesn't feel like saying Hi but she has to because she isn't allowed to be rude. So before you think of getting a service dog remember they require a lot of work, training, even after you think they are trained there is always more they need to learn, love, time and attention. Are crutches easier? Yup but we have adjusted our lives to include George and wouldn't change it for anything. It's not an option to give up on him and decide one day we don't want to put forth the extra effort.

It is a lot of effort but he gave Bella her life back so we will do whatever we can to make him happy!

But look at that face? What's not to love?

Love Bella and George