There is no need for those winter blues, y’all. Summertime is finally here! As the days begin to get longer and the temperatures start to climb you are in the process of planning your upcoming club projects.

Canine Companions for Independence is our partner with CSP Home Life. Have you thought about what you will do to help spread the word during International Assistance Dog Week August 4-10, 2019?

I look forward to seeing a lot of you in Austin, Texas at the 128th GFWC International Convention. I’m super excited about the workshop “Grand Slam for the Grand Initiatives” with CSP International Outreach Chairman Mary Beth Williams and Public Issues Chairman Celene Post. I’m eager to get some great ideas to share with everyone.

Here are a few ideas to share with your members:
Are you getting enough Vitamin D?

Our bodies need vitamin D to help keep our bones healthy. Vitamin D helps children build strong bones and prevent the bone disease rickets. It helps adults avoid conditions including osteoporosis that weakens bones and can cause them to break.

People can get vitamin D from their diet, from supplements, and from the sun. However, excessive sun exposure increases the risk of certain skin cancers so it's important to be aware. For a smart approach to vitamin D visit www.cancer.org/healthy/eat

June 29th Camera Day-Say CHEESE!

Camera Day is best celebrated with pictures. Pictures are invaluable memories of our lives and of the world. They tell stories. With digital technology using a camera has never been easier. Cameras are now built into cell phones so you can always be ready to record the moments of your life. Be sure to take lots of pictures at convention and share with members.

July 3rd Stay out of the Sun Day:

Stay Out of the Sun Day encourages us to stay cool in the shade and to give our skin a rest from the hot, damaging sun.

We’re in the middle of summer when the temperatures are the hottest and the sun is the brightest. It’s not a bad day to take a break from catching all of those rays and stay out of the sun.

Here’s a great fun and relaxing way to stay out the sun- string a hammock between two shady trees. It sure sounds like a great way to go to me!

September marks Childhood Cancer Awareness Month. Each year, approximately 15,000 U.S. children and adolescents under twenty years old receive a cancer diagnosis. Leukemia, brain tumors, and lymphoma are the most common types of cancers that affect this age group.

A gold ribbon marks awareness to Childhood Cancer. During the month of September display gold ribbons around town to help spread awareness.
Imagine going in for a routine surgery and waking up as a quadruple amputee, fighting for your life. This nightmare was a reality for Annette Ramirez. Instantly, the dedicated wife, employee, and mother was completely dependent on others for daily living. That is, until Canine Companions for Independence® assistance dog Patch entered the picture.

“My life was shattered after surgery,” says Annette. “I had been deeply involved in my community, family and work for over 25 years. Now I have Patch to help me do things that would be impossible as a quadruple amputee. He opens doors, picks up anything I drop and helps pay at the store.” Service Dog Patch has given Annette the confidence and companionship to experience everyday life both inside and outside of her home.

Assistance dogs like Patch are being recognized August 4-10, 2019 during International Assistance Dog Week for the devotion and hard work they do to mitigate the effects of disabilities for people like Annette. The week acknowledges the heroic deeds of assistance dogs in the community and the thousands of dedicated volunteer puppy raisers and professional trainers of assistance dogs.

Canine Companions for Independence created the concept of a highly-skilled assistance dog for people with physical disabilities, provided entirely free of charge to recipients. Trained in over 40 commands, independence and quality of life can improve greatly for an assistance dog team.

- 1 in 5 people in the U.S. have a disability
- 3.8 million veterans have a service-connected disability
- 8% of American children under age 15 have a disability
- 91% of adults who received a Canine Companions service dog report increased independence
- In 2018, Canine Companions placed 337 teams and since its founding has placed nearly 6,200 teams including over 300 with veterans. Currently, there are over 2,400 active teams nationwide.
Over 3,000 volunteers and 41 volunteer chapters help raise funds and awareness through timeless hours of volunteer work

Over 400 people are on the waitlist to receive an assistance dog

“We get the rare opportunity to come to work and make people like Annette’s lives better,” says Canine Companions Instructor Becky Miller. “We help people reclaim their independence, and often, redefine their sense of self through partnership with a dog like Patch.”

Help spread the word on International Assistance Dog Week by celebrating with Canine Companions. Here are some ways to get involved: Are you on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn or other social media networks? Use social media to spread the word. Tweet or post to your friends and ask them to like or follow Canine Companions or share our posts.

Do you have a great story about your Canine Companions assistance dog? Share your story here.

Make a Donation. You can honor International Assistance Dog Week by making a donation in honor of a dog or person that has changed your life at cci.org/donate.

Have other ideas on how to help spread the word on assistance dogs during International Assistance Dog Week? Let us know at info@cci.org.

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Zari’s First Birthday!
by Zari

What a year it’s been! Zari recently celebrated her first birthday, attended her first play and had a party with her favorite canine friends!

Zari and her puppy raiser have been working hard on training over the past year, and Zari now performs an impressive 30+ commands! Her favorite commands include “back,” (the puppy walks backward) “under” (the puppy crawls under something like a table or bench and lie down) and “up” (the puppy put its front paws on a counter or table).
Happy Birthday Dear Zari

The “under” command came in handy when Zari’s puppy raiser took her to her first play, along with a few other Canine Companions puppies and their raisers. They saw “West Side Story,” and Zari stayed quietly under her puppy raiser’s chair for the whole show. After the show, the talented young cast even sang “Happy Birthday” to Zari and her brother Zoom! It was a wonderful outing for the puppies as it included great training and socialization opportunities. After all, it’s not every day a puppy gets serenaded by a choir for their birthday!

Zari’s puppy raiser also hosted a birthday party for her, which included 12 canine friends, including fellow birthday boy Zoom. The dogs were given the “release” command, where they are free to do as they wish, and they played for hours. They practiced appropriate play and enjoyed splashing around in a puppy pool. Of course, the humans wanted a group photo of the pooches, which is more difficult for younger puppies, but they eventually stayed for the photos. To top it all off, the group was thrilled to get carrots as birthday treats! Yum!

Zari has learned so much and been to so many amazing places in her first year. From Tahoe to Disneyland, and San Francisco to Sedona, Sacramento Kings games, Canine Companions graduations and more, Zari has just about done it all! We can’t wait to see what’s in store for her in the coming months. Happy birthday, Zari.

Don’t forget to stop by our Canine Companions for Independence booth during convention and say hello to my fellow Canine Companions
I look forward to the next newsletter. I’ll share information from Austin, Texas at the GFWC 128th Annual International Convention. Stay safe.

In the meantime please do not hesitate to call or email me if you have any questions.

**Carolyn Forbes, GFWC Home Life Chairman**

Living the Volunteer Spirit

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