

Hi,

I am Liane Weber, CEO of The LifeLine Canada Foundation and Companion Paws Canada. I just wanted to take this opportunity to Congratulate you on your acceptance and approval into TLC's Companion Paws Therapy Dog Adoption Program and to welcome you to the Companion Paws Family!

During the wait for your right match, we ask that you make it a priority to educate yourself on becoming a new adopter. There are many books to read and videos online to watch. This is very important to do even if this is not your first dog or there is already another dog in the home.

As you know, approved Companion Paws Therapy dogs come temperament assessed according to our guidelines, but are NOT trained dogs. They are a beautiful open canvas that you get to start from scratch with. This is a perfect opportunity to bond with this dog and create a loving connection between you both that will last a lifetime, but one must be authentic with the training. This means that your regular daily schedule will be interrupted and sacrifices of time and conveniences will have to be made for training to be successful. Training your dog is therapy in itself and a very beneficial part of additional treatment. It is not easy and may feel tough at times, but with dedication, commitment and consistency, you will get through every obstacle.

We cannot encourage enough that you make two appointments with your mental health treatment provider, for both a week before and during the first week that the dog is placed into your home. This is a major event for the family. It is like bringing a baby into the home and comes with most of the associated challenges. Once your match is found and placement is scheduled, you can call your treatment provider to schedule both appointments.

It is extremely important that an adopter and family put in the training time, do so with the required consistency, and be genuine in the training needed to be successful. Just adopting the dog and expecting it to learn through occasional instruction when you have the time will not lead to success. There are a lot of training resources that come with the adoption of a dog through Companion Paws: Online courses, Phone and Zoom calls with the Training Manager, Group lessons, Private Lessons etc. Please feel free to use every resource that we provide.

Family Involvement and Commitment

It is of the utmost importance that everyone in the household be on board with the adoption of a new dog. Like humans, dogs are very attuned to the vibe and tone in a home. If there is stress among the people in the home it will manifest itself in the dog's behaviour. If there is yelling and screaming and fighting in the home, a dog will likely react in scared and destructive ways. If one member does not bond with the dog, the dog may behave differently to that person and problems could develop.

It is very important that all members of the household connect with and bond with the new adopted dog in order for it to feel comfortable and safe. Everyone in the home must be consistent with the training being done. If you have never had a dog in your home, you are about to enter a wonderful world of dog adoption, one that you will never look back from, a world of happiness that will last the lifetime of your dog. It is important to manage your expectations. Dogs are very complex, emotional, living things and each have their own likes, dislikes, personalities and foibles. Your job as a dog owner is to try to understand your dog's needs without the benefit of language. If you look closely, pay attention and begin to understand your dog, you will develop a connection and bond that is beyond belief.

Again, welcome to the family. We look forward to working with you, and our team of experts across Canada are standing by to be of service when needed.

Please don't hesitate to ask any questions you have, any time.

Looking forward,

Liane Weber
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