

Canine Companions for Independence Puppyraiser Workshop Tips for Presentations

Chances are that sometime in your career as a Canine Companions for Independence puppyraiser, you will be asked to talk about your experiences and about the Canine Companions mission. It might be a formal presentation in front of an enthusiastic audience, or an intrigued person who encounters you with your darling pup in the produce section of your local supermarket. Either way, you have an opportunity to educate the public about assistance dogs and to gain support for CCI! Even those of us with incurable stage fright can make a lasting positive impression if we plan the message we want to send. Following are some tips, which were the result of the Presentation Workshop conducted in Atlanta in January 1997.

Goals of a Presentation

It is important to understand that presentations have different goals depending upon the audience. Some of the possibilities are:

- General public awareness - what are service dogs, how do the access laws work, what does Canine Companions do
- Fundraising, donations
- Member recruiting, volunteers
- Puppyraiser recruiting
- Graduate recruiting (candidates)

Type of audience

It's a good idea to find out ahead of time what kind of audience is expected. Tailoring the presentation for the audience means that your message will have more impact for the goals you are trying to achieve. Typically we give CCI presentations for:

- General public (mall, booth at fair)
- Dog people (puppyraiser recruiting, pet fair)
- Corporate sponsors (fundraising)
- Children (education, PR at schools)
- Disability support groups (possible candidates)

CCI facts and resources

There are many "props" and information packets that can be brought to distribute at a presentation. To get these items, contact your local Presentation Coordinator (in Atlanta, Kevin Ugan: (770) 939-6828), or the Southeast Regional Office: (407) 834-2555. Some of the items that are available are:

- Southeast and National fact sheets
- Brochures and tri-folds
- Videos
- Coloring sheets
- Stickers and pins
- T shirts, sweatshirts (can be purchased - contact Santa Rosa office)
- CCI World Wide Web Site: <http://www.caninecompanions.org>

Borrowing or Lending a CCI Puppy

Suggested Presentation Outlines

We broke into four groups that planned and performed short presentations for different types of audiences. Here are the suggested outlines from our groups:

The 1st grade class at Montgomery elementary school

Children are a special audience that can delight in learning about CCI and service dogs in general. The main focus here is education, so here are some possibilities for this type of presentation:

- Get children involved in the presentation. What is it like to have a disability? Put socks on the children's hands and ask them to tie a knot in a string. Talk about children with disabilities and how they like to do things that all children like to do, such as play, and go to school, and learn.
- Talk about all types of assistance dogs - guide dogs, hearing dogs, service dogs.
- Show a SHORT video (there are videos in the collection that are appropriate for children).
- Focus on how CCI dogs help their partners. Show some of the skills that you are teaching your puppy and talk about how they will be used to teach advanced skills later.
- Make sure to mention that assistance dogs are working and that they should never be petted. (Children really retain this knowledge!)
- Talk briefly about the puppyraising process and how we raise and train the puppies. Mention the team training process and we match graduates with their dogs.
- Pass out coloring sheets and CCI brochures with contact info for the children to take home to their parents. Pins and stickers are also very popular with the children. (Make sure the children are old enough to handle pins - check with the teacher before passing these out.)

Lunch N Learn series at HBO

We often present to corporations for fundraising and also to recruit new volunteers and puppyraisers. Some considerations for this type of group:

- Fun break - interesting lunchtime activity for employees, tone should be upbeat.
- Wear business attire to match group corporate culture
- A video would be effective - especially if the group is eating lunch, let them watch it while you set up for your presentation.
- Talk about CCI history (briefly), puppyraising program, advanced training, team training, how dogs help graduates.
- What kinds of volunteers are needed? Talk about Champions group and puppyraising.
- Mention the Web site for more information
- Hand out CCI brochures and information on your local Champions group if you have one.
- Leave time for a Question and Answer session at the end.

The West Point, GA Lion's Club

The goal of presenting to a service organization is generally to enlist help in fundraising. Here are some pointers for this type of organization:

- Show a video (“Heart of a Hero” is excellent and poignant)
- Talk about the history of the organization and its current training centers and locations
- Talk about CCI’s mission to provide service dogs, free of charge, to help people with disabilities.
- Mention the kinds of dogs CCI trains - service, social, facility, and hearing.
- Briefly outline the breeding and puppyraising process, advanced training, and team training. The cost to raise and train a CCI puppy is approximately \$12,000 or higher, all funded by donations and volunteers.
- The cost of a team training is approximately \$15,000. An organization can sponsor a dog or a team training session.

Students with Disabilities group at Georgia Tech (with an interpreter)

Presenting to a group of potential candidates is an exciting and rewarding experience and is usually greeted enthusiastically from the audience. Here are some ideas for this kind of audience:

- Talk briefly about CCI’s history and how it came to exist.
- Focus on the partnership between dog and human, and the kinds of assistance that the dogs can provide. Describe service, social, facility, and hearing placements.
- Mention the team training process and the commitments that the graduates make to the continued training and care of the dogs.
- Describe the skills that the dogs are trained to do (60 commands) plus the possibility of creating customized commands for individual needs. Show the skills your puppy already knows and how they will transition into advanced skills later.
- Talk about the application process and the waiting list.
- Describe the followup process that CCI provides, and that as a national organization we can serve our graduates anywhere in the United States.
- Bring information on the types and locations of training centers.
- Bring CCI candidate application forms and brochures.
- If you are speaking with a sign language interpreter, speak slowly and clearly so he/she can keep up with you.
- If you are speaking to an audience containing people who are blind, be sure to describe the scene if you are giving a skills demonstration. (“I have asked Eggbert to shake and he has handed me his paw, which is our accepted greeting behavior”.)

Following up on a presentation

It is important that you let the Southeast Regional office know when you have made a presentation for two reasons:

1. Contacts can be tracked and coordinated in order to best use our resources.
2. Southeast can brag on the wonderful job you did to National!

Presentation followup forms are available from the Southeast Office - send them to Renee Baker when completed.