

Working Dogs

Service Dogs, Emotional Support Dogs, and Therapy Dogs

By Sophia Darden



[Read to a Dog Event with Therapy Dogs at Santa Clarita Library. Golden Retriever.]

Working dogs aren't called working dogs because they get a paycheck, unfortunately, but they are called working dogs because they perform specific tasks for each individual owner or handler. We need working dogs because if someone has a serious illness like epilepsy and they start to have a seizure with no one around to help, that could be very bad, as they could swallow their saliva, choke, and die. However, if they had a service dog, then the dog could either: bark to get help, go up to a person and have them follow the dog to help the person, or do a specific task that can help the person having the seizure. Working dogs are dogs that fit into several different groups that include: service dogs, guide dogs, emotional support dogs, and therapy dogs.

Service dogs are dogs that perform medical/mental tasks for a handler. These dogs can help with conditions like: autism, epilepsy, anxiety disorders, and even more. Service dogs play a very important role in their handler's life. Any type of dog can be a service dog but there are specific breeds that work best and/or are more suitable for the tasks that they would need to perform. Some preferred breeds include: labrador retrievers, golden retrievers, german shepherd, poodles, border collies, etc. One important category of service dogs include guide dogs. If you don't know what they are don't worry! I will teach you! Guide dogs help the visually impaired. Visually impaired basically means blind or unable to see. These dogs help to lead the way!

Emotional support dogs can help people who have a mental disorder such as depression or mild anxiety. These dogs are great and amazing dogs to have around! Now, you might be thinking, "Oh! I can maybe get one to take around with me!" and that is a BIG no. These dogs do NOT have public access nor should they be in stores, as they are not trained like service dogs. Emotional support dogs usually have training like a normal dog, but a little more advanced to focus on providing emotional support. These dogs can perform multiple tasks to help a handler which include: giving the handler a hug, being there for the handler, and snuggling, etc.

Therapy dogs, another type of working dog, are just so awesome! They are able to go to hospitals and events such as read to a dog at a library! When they go to hospitals, they can lay down with the kids who are sick and be there for them kinda like an emotional support dog. Anyone can use a therapy dog! Well, as long as you are respectful to the dog. It also depends where the dog is. If a dog is at a hospital doing therapy, then unless you're a patient, you probably can't see them. But if you go to a public event such as "read to a dog," then you can see the therapy dog and you can even read to him!

When you see a working dog, but especially

a service dog, PLEASE do NOT approach the dog, or even stare at it. When you see a working dog you can look at it for a second, then look away and continue doing whatever you were doing. Now, if you really want to pet the dog, go up to the handler and ask first. Don't just reach out and pet the dog. If you need to ask the handler something go ahead and ask, just don't stare at the dog at all costs because it can distract the dog. If the handler has a condition like diabetes and their blood pressure drops the dog will be only focused on you. If the handler says no to petting the dog, just say something like "Okay, I understand" and walk away. You can look for more information on working dogs through the [service dog section](#) of the ADA (Americans With Disabilities Act) law or any service dog webpage, but don't use wikipedia, wikipedia can be edited by anyone so any person could be editing it at any time. Working dogs are very important to every handler, people rely on service dogs to help them live their everyday lives feeling more confident and independent.

Sophia Darden is a sixth-grade learner at SCVi. She enjoys ice skating and playing video games. Sophia also loves reading and learning about animals. She has two guinea pigs, Mayo and Baby, and a cat named Sushi.



[Read to a Dog Event with Therapy Dogs at Santa Clarita Library. Black Poodle.]

Bernie's Mittens

By Hutch Siegen

79 year old Senator Bernie Sanders was memorable at the presidential inauguration, where his breathtaking mittens captured our hearts. These homemade mittens have been memed by people on the internet, and have been a running gag online since their inauguration day debut. The mittens even have their very own twitter account ([@BerniesMittens](#)). The country has been smitten with the mittens! The mittens look amazing and are said to be super cozy, so cozy Senator Bernie Sanders liked them enough to wear them to a presidential inauguration. Most people who attend presidential inaugurations wear fancy clothing by famous designers, but not Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders. It appears he prefers to be warm, sensible and environmentally friendly.

These handmade mittens were made by a 42 year old woman named Jen Ellis. Jen Ellis is a school teacher and she and her friend made mittens like these as a side job. According to the Washington Post, Jen Ellis said "when Senator Sanders lost the bid for the Democratic nominations in 2016, I was really heartbroken for him because I felt like he probably wouldn't run again." So she thought it would be nice to give him some of her homemade mittens. She makes all of her mittens out of older and used sweaters, often with tears or moth holes, and then recycles them, and the fibers of fleece. The inside of the mittens are made out of recycled water bottles. She delivered the mittens to Bernie via an inside source, his daughter in-law.

Ms. Ellis has had over 1600 emails requesting a pair of those comfy mittens since they went viral on inauguration day. She cannot fulfill so many orders. She has however, according to NBC News, made three more pairs of mittens. One pair she donated to [Outright Vermont](#), an



LGBTQ youth organization, and another to [Passion 4 Paws](#), a dog rescue in Vermont. Jenn Ellis is said to be using eBay to auction off the third pair of mittens. The money that is made from that sale will be put directly into her 5-year old daughter's college fund.

So, how would one go about getting a pair of these truly one of a kind mittens? There is good news and bad news. The bad news is Jen Ellis no longer makes these mittens, and creating over 1600 pairs of mittens to fulfil all of the email requests would be quite a large task to undertake. The good news is that this Vermont native has partnered with a place called the [Vermont Teddy Bear Company](#). They will together make "Vermont Swittens" (or sweater-mittens). A portion of the proceeds will benefit [Make a Wish Vermont](#).

She has also partnered with [Darn Tough Vermont](#) to make socks inspired by the mittens Senator Sanders wore. One hundred percent of the proceeds will go directly to the Vermont Foodbank. It will be great for so many people to not only own a pair of mittens similar to the ones Bernie Sanders wore, but to know that charities will benefit from this one simple act of purchasing these mittens.

Vermont has been famous for many things such as cheese, the setting for the movie White Christmas, and Bernie Sanders. Now, thanks to Bernie Sanders and school teacher/part time mitten maker, Jen Ellis, Vermont is a little more famous. Famous for cozy, warm, fun and environmentally friendly mittens. So chic they can be worn on inauguration day, and so simple. Ms. Ellis' smallest act of kindness, giving a gift of mittens, has and will keep on giving. #Gift #Kindness