



Dogs at Work

Finding the Right Dog for the Job

by Sandra Murphy

Every dog needs a meaningful job. Like us, some need help figuring out what they want to be when they grow up; others choose their own specialty. With imagination and experimentation, even a problem pooch can become an unexpected blessing.

Comforting Companions

A 7-year-old hound and canine-style Houdini named Gumbly was adopted seven times, surrendered to the shelter eight times and thrice became a stray. An unprecedented 11 return trips to the Charleston Animal Society, in South Carolina, convinced the staff he prefers shelter life. Now his self-appointed job is comforting and helping new arrivals adjust to their temporary home.

Dentist April Patterson owns Dr. Patty's Dental Boutique and Spa, in Fort Lauderdale. After attending a local Humane Society fashion show, she returned to her office with Oliver, a four-pound Pomeranian mix of undetermined age. This cutie's job is to steady nervous patients. "It wasn't planned," says Patterson. "Oliver will bark nonstop when left alone, but being one of the staff makes him happy. Meeting Oliver is part of our hiring process."

Dory, a yellow Labrador certified therapy dog, is approved by the San Diego district attorney's office to offer aid in court when a victim or witness testifies in front of the defendant. "Dory was the first court support dog

in California and the city's first of five dog and handler teams," says Kathleen Lam, a retired attorney and dog handler. "The dogs undergo rigorous testing to demonstrate good behavior in court. Handlers work on long downs and stays, including hand signals." Dory recently accompanied an 8-year-old girl testifying against her father; he had killed his wife in front of her two years before.

Public Ambassadors

Deemed "too large to sell," Bert, a chocolate Pomeranian, wound up in an Oklahoma shelter. Kathy Grayson, owner of The Hole, a New York City art gallery, saw his photo on *Petfinder.com* and fell in love. She immediately traveled to

adopt him. Bert, whom she characterizes as quiet, refined and perfectly suited to the art world, loves being at the gallery and has attended art fairs in major U.S. cities. Follow Bert's adventures via [Instagram.com/bertiebertthepom](https://www.instagram.com/bertiebertthepom).

"Eddie, a boxer mix puppy, started training as an assistance dog, but her personality proved better suited to the hospitality industry," says Julie Abramovic Kunes, public relations manager for the Fairmont Hotel, in Berkeley, California. Kunes' Eddie was hired by the Fairmont Pittsburgh Hotel in 2011, before making the career move west with her in 2017. A former shelter dog, Eddie greets visitors as a community ambassador.

courtesy of Kathleen Lam



Dory, the first court support dog in California.

Special Rescue Teams

Mas, a water-loving Newfoundland, redefines "rescue dog". The *Scuola Italiana Cani Salvataggio*, or Italian School of Rescue Dogs, is the largest national

organization in Italy to train dogs and handlers for water rescue. Helicopters can often reach a swimmer in distress more quickly than a boat. The dog jumps out to circle the victim until they

can grab her harness before swimming to shore or a human partner. Mas, the first certified water rescue operative recognized by Italy, France and Switzerland port authorities and coast guards, went on to train her successors.

Bloodhounds are renowned for their super sniffers. Lou, a nine-year K9 veteran, on Pennsylvania's West York Borough Police Department force, ultimately applied for retirement, passing the harness to Prince, a 3-month-old bloodhound. Prince was sworn in by District Judge Jennifer J.P. Clancy in her Spring Garden Township courtroom. The ceremony emphasizes a K9's status in the community and within law enforcement. Paired with Officer Scott Musselman for eight months of training, the duo will work with the Missing Child Task Force.

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