

# Allen FFA Volunteer Puppy Raising Program

*for Canine Companions for Independence* ®



**CANINE COMPANIONS**  
FOR INDEPENDENCE®

 **Baylor Scott & White** HEALTH  
KINKEADE CAMPUS

**Sponsors:**  
**Stacy Schertz**  
**Blair Benter**

## About the Program

Canine Companions for Independence is a non-profit organization that breeds, raises, and trains assistance dogs to enhance the lives of individuals with a variety of disabilities. The organization relies on volunteers to raise the dogs from a young age in order to teach them basic commands and experience socialization in addition to providing them with a safe and loving home. The headquarters of Canine Companions® is located in Santa Rosa, California, and there is a local training center and chapter that operate out of North Texas. The Allen ISD CTE Department and Allen Agricultural Science Department have partnered with this organization to provide volunteer puppy raisers who are students at Allen High School and members of the Allen FFA chapter.

The activity of raising an assistance dog serves as a FFA Supervised Agricultural Experience (SAE). In addition to fulfilling the requirements of Canine Companions, one must be a paid Allen FFA member and thus also enrolled in agricultural science courses at Allen High School. Due to a high volume of interested students, there is a rigorous application and screening process through both the Allen FFA chapter and Canine Companions for Independence.



## Requirements

As a volunteer puppy raiser, you must agree to the following:

- Provide a safe environment for a puppy who will be the only dog under one year old in the house
- Work closely with Canine Companions and the AHS program sponsors (Mrs. Schertz and Ms. Benter) while monitoring the puppy's progress and submitting monthly reports
- Attend Canine Companions approved obedience classes at the training facility (7710 Las Colinas Ridge, Irving, TX 75063)
- Attend (parents and student) Allen High School Puppy interest meeting (date to be determined by appropriate sponsors)
- Parents must attend a mandatory meeting at the training facility for Canine Companions @ 7710 Las Colinas Ridge, Irving, TX 75063 at the date specified by the sponsors.
- Teach the puppy manners and basic commands
- Provide financially for the puppy's food, medical, and transportation expenses
- Feed the puppy a diet recommended by Canine Companions
- Provide a kennel or crate for sleeping indoors
- Provide the puppy with age-appropriate socialization opportunities such as public outings (school-sponsored as well as personal) and medical appointments
- Keep the puppy on a leash at all times unless in a securely fenced area
- Supervise the young puppy throughout the day
- Agree to return the puppy upon request to Canine Companions

You must be at least 18 years old to be a volunteer puppy raiser. Those under the age of 18 must have a parent or legal guardian as a co-applicant on the puppy raiser application (the majority of Allen FFA puppy raisers will require a co-applicant).

The Allen FFA Volunteer Puppy Raising Program will abide by the UIL eligibility policy. Program members must be eligible at all times through UIL, and frequent grade checks will be put in place. The sponsors will also monitor member attendance and discipline, both initially upon application and frequently while in the program.

All puppy raisers will be given a thorough timeline detailing feeding and medical expectations as well as training and socialization directions. A puppy raiser manual will be provided as well. All program members will be expected to utilize and abide by these resources as well as others.

Costs: (include general information after receiving the cost outline from Mrs. Bell, include cost of Allen program t-shirt)

Puppy sitters: those who are unable to be an Allen FFA volunteer puppy raiser may qualify to be an Allen FFA puppy sitter. Puppy sitters will abide by all of the same rules as the puppy raisers except they will not be placed with a dog. Instead, they will be available to care for and train various puppies in the program for a specific amount of time when the need arises.

### **Steps To Becoming A Puppy Raiser/Puppy Sitter**

1. Student fill out Allen High School Interest Form (Google Doc)
2. Allen High School staff verify student's eligibility based on attendance, GPA, schedule, discipline etc..
3. Mandatory Meeting for parents at Canine Companions campus at Irving campus- without students present.
4. Student and parent attend and observe a puppy class at the Irving Campus and tour the campus where the puppy's will attend puppy classes each month and will return for the remainder of the training prior to being placed with their permanent handler
5. Student knowledge /Interest test: canine body language/behavior, basic handling, canine nutrition, daily care, grooming, basic daily health checks (illness, injury, parasites etc.)
6. If chosen by AHS staff, your family will be given the Canine Companions puppy raising application to complete and return to Becca or Jenn at Canine Companions.
7. Canine Companion phone interview
8. Canine Companion home visit (completed by local volunteer)
9. Placed on the puppy waitlist

## Frequently Asked Questions

Individuals are encouraged to review the FAQs provided on the Canine Companions website:

- <http://www.cci.org/assistance-dogs/assistance-dog-faqs.html>
- <http://www.cci.org/get-involved/ways-to-volunteer/puppy-raiser-faqs.html>

Additional FAQs pertaining to the Allen FFA program include:

- What if I am no longer able to be a member of the Allen FFA chapter (there is no room in my schedule, I am graduating from high school, etc.)?

This question will most likely be answered on a case-by-case basis. For students who are graduating from high school, the protocol will be aligned with that of the Allen agricultural facility/ag barn: if the student has a younger sibling in Allen ISD, that sibling would be able to continue raising the dog through the program, even if he/she is not a member of the Allen FFA chapter.

- What if I will be gone for an extended amount of time due to a vacation, stock show, or other trip?

The student will be required to make necessary arrangements for the care of the dog while he/she is out of town and communicate these to Mrs. Schertz and/or Ms. Benter. If a family member is unable to watch the dog, a possible caretaker would be an Allen FFA puppy sitter. Please see above for the description of an Allen FFA puppy sitter.

- What if I become academically ineligible/placed in an alternative learning center while caring for a puppy or forced to leave the program (moving to a different city, etc.)?

Those who are selected as volunteer puppy raisers and sitters are expected to display past, present, and future academic excellence. In the rare event that a program member becomes ineligible, the puppy that he/she is assigned will be given to another raiser or sitter during the duration of ineligibility. If a student is forced to leave the program, the dog will be given to another raiser who is waiting to be assigned a dog. If there are no raisers available, the dog will be given to a temporary puppy sitter.

- Where does the puppy go during the day?

That will be determined by Mrs. Schertz, Ms. Benter and Canine Companions, at that time the puppies will remain sheltered in Mrs. Schertz classroom in K209 during the day and will not go into the high school population.

- When the puppy is old enough to go to school, can I take it with me to all my classes?

Again, that will be determined by Mrs. Schertz, Ms. Benter and Canine Companions, the puppies will remain sheltered in Mrs. Schertz classroom during the day and will not go into the high school population. When the puppy is ready a new location will be introduced starting with the Ag Hall classrooms (H116/H117).

- If I want to become a puppy sitter do I follow the same steps/guidelines as stated in the handbook?

YES

**If you are interested in being a part of the Allen FFA volunteer puppy raising program, please fill out the request form below:**

**<https://forms.gle/rFF7eAeqCE2UhRAC7>**



**Allen High School Sponsors  
Contact Information:**

**Stacy Schertz**

Agriculture Science Instructor

FFA Advisor

[stacy.schertz@allenisd.org](mailto:stacy.schertz@allenisd.org)

Room Location: K209

Office: 972-727-0400 x5959

School Cell: 214-876-1661

**Blair Benter**

Assistant Sponsor-AHS Campus

[blair.benter@allenisd.org](mailto:blair.benter@allenisd.org)

Room Location: F105

Office: 972-727-0400 x6013