



Pictured left: James Brown listens intently while a student reads and holds his paw.



Lindsay training Caden for occasional wheelchair work.

SPOTS ALSO MAKE GOOD SERVICE & ASSISTANCE DOGS!

Traditionally, few Dalmatians have been used in Service & Assistance Dog roles but Dalmatians can and do excel in these areas as the owners of these featured dogs below can attest.

"I have an autism spectrum disorder with sensory integration problems", says owner/trainer Lindsay Neill.

"CADEN ~ JLS Leading The Cavalcade is in training to do tasks to mitigate my disability - following in the footsteps of GRADY, Ch Ravin's Top Grade CD (L), my current service dog. Caden has already completed most of his training at a young age. One of the most important tasks that Caden performs is guide work. This includes taking me around obstacles or stopping before we reach them so that I can determine how to get around, stopping at curbs, and helping me navigate through our environment (including things such as finding doors and check outs on command). He will also find people on command and do some mobility work, including bracing to help me get up and helping me to maintain my balance while walking. His pulling into his guide harness helps to keep me balanced. If I overbalance, he will brace while walking to keep me from falling. In addition to this he will retrieve dropped items.

One side effect of having an autism spectrum disorder is that I can get overloaded in busy environments or those with a lot of sensory input (noise, colors, fluorescent lights, etc). Caden also provides deep pressure to help me calm down and prevent me from having a meltdown."

GUIDE DOG DALMATIAN

"I have finally found the perfect partner", says legally blind owner Christi Bone. "I was born with a rare eye disease, retrolental fibroplasia, and combined with complications have subsequently left me legally blind. While like most blind people I do have a small amount of residual vision, it's not enough to let me function normally without help." DIVA ~ JLS My Queen Is Back CGC (L), is proving to be the right dog for Christi and Guide Dog work. Christi explains "Guide dogs react to directional word cues to help steer their partner. I decide where I want to go and know the route but my dog has significant input on how we get there -- we work as a team. My dog needs to pull lightly in harness while steering around pedestrians, ground obstacles like fire hydrants, indicate stair step dimensions smoothly, respond to changes in ground surface such as inclines or gravel, navigate overhead awnings and intelligent disobedience which is refusing a direct command if it may place the team in danger, such as refusing to cross the street when there is oncoming traffic after the dog has been commanded to cross. My dog will help find an empty seat, an elevator, a door, a particular vehicle or a specific person. My partner must have appropriate public manners, and generally be unflappable and look to me for direction while being able to think and act independently and scan surroundings to determine a clear path."

Continued on page 86