



40 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE

# The Companion

Summer 2015, issue twenty-one

Southwest Region



"I didn't realize all the benefits of having such a loyal and giving partner." Read Bruce's Story

PAGE 2

Get Ready for DogFest

PAGE 6

Regional News

PAGES 7 TO 10

40 Years of Independence

PAGE 5

# Dodgers, Tommy Lasorda Recognize Canine Companions

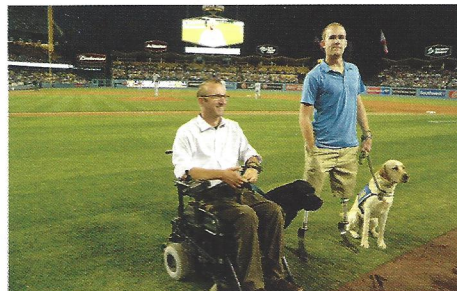
In April, the Los Angeles Dodgers recognized USMC Veterans and Canine Companions Graduates Justin Crabbe and Lance Weir on the field as the military heroes of the game. Justin and Lance and their service dogs were

baseball legend Tommy Lasorda's guests on his 65th wedding anniversary to his wife Jo! Canine Companions puppy Spunky is named in honor of the Lasorda's late son.



Above: Tommy and Jo Lasorda, Lance Weir with Service Dog Auggie, Laura Lasorda and Cathy Smith Bresciani listen to the national anthem before the game.

Right: USMC Veterans Lance Weir and Justin Crabbe were recognized on the field at Dodger Stadium with their service dogs.



Photos courtesy of Jan Scott-Hoer/L.A. Dodgers

## Upcoming Events

[cci.org/swevents](http://cci.org/swevents)

### YAPPY HOUR

**August 13** at The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel, CA

### GRADUATION

**August 14** in Oceanside, CA

### YAPPY HOUR

**September 10** at The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel, CA

### DOGFEST WALK 'N ROLL

**September 19** in Salt Lake City, UT

### DOG DAYS OF SUMMER GOLF CLASSIC

**September 25** in Paradise Valley, AZ

### DOGFEST WALK 'N ROLL

**October 3** in Denver, CO

### HAUTE DOG | LA

**October 15** at The Peninsula Beverly Hills, CA

Online registration is now open for this hilarious doggie runway fashion show at [cci.org/hautedogla](http://cci.org/hautedogla). Our celebrity judges panel will include Fred Schneider of the B-52s!

### GRADUATION

**November 6** in Oceanside, CA

### THE DIAMOND BALL

**November 7** at The Ritz-Carlton, Laguna Niguel, CA

Gala with auctions, gourmet dinner, live music and dancing to benefit our Wounded Veterans Initiative. Purchase tickets at [thediamondball.org](http://thediamondball.org).

### DOGFEST WALK 'N ROLL

**November 14** in San Diego, CA

## It's a Small World

Last summer, Jason Gackstetter graduated with Successor Skilled Companion Taran II. Taran's puppy raiser was Willie Crawford who, coincidentally, lives about one mile away from the Gackstetter family! "My husband and I have known Jason and his family for many years," explains Willie. "We were thrilled to learn Taran was matched with him!"

Jason has grown up with assistance dogs, having received his first when he was only six years old. He explains, "I would be completely invisible without an assistance dog. With them, it's like I'm not invisible. The

world cares about me. The world cares about people like me. I'm not alone."

The family has also benefited from connecting to other Canine Companions graduates and volunteers. "The Canine Companions community has meant so much to us over the years," says Jason's mother Nancy. "We've met so many good friends. It has added to our lives tremendously."

From left to right: Tim, Jason and Nancy Gackstetter with Taran II and Willie Crawford



Photo by Stacey Webb-Smith, Scout Photography