



# Southwest Companion

Exceptional Dogs for Exceptional People®



Spring 2007 Issue: Director's Chair, February 2007 Graduates, Chapter Highlights, Upcoming Events

## Disneyland® Resort Spreads Magic to CCI

by Karyl Carmignani

What began with a fan letter to bestselling author and generous CCI supporter, Dean Koontz, has morphed into a wonderful corporate partnership with Disneyland Resort, CCI and the planet. A few years ago, Jill Bolton, Director of Community Relations at Disneyland Resort, was dazzled by a novel written by Koontz and sent him an appreciative letter. She soon received a response from the writer

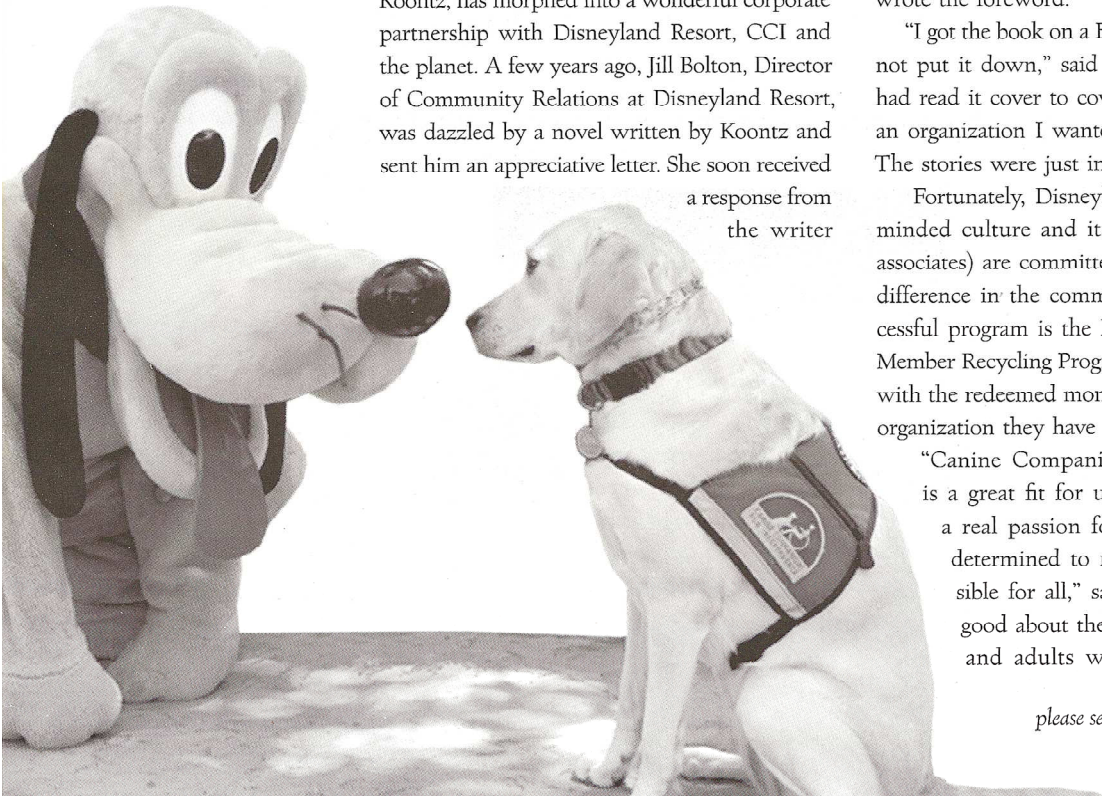
along with a copy of *Love Heels*, a compilation of CCI Graduate stories to which Dean Koontz wrote the foreword.

"I got the book on a Friday and literally could not put it down," said Bolton. "By Saturday I had read it cover to cover and knew CCI was an organization I wanted to be involved with. The stories were just incredible!"

Fortunately, Disneyland Resort has a civic-minded culture and its Cast Members (a.k.a. associates) are committed to making a positive difference in the community. One highly successful program is the Disneyland Resort Cast Member Recycling Program for bottles and cans, with the redeemed monies going to a nonprofit organization they have chosen—CCI.

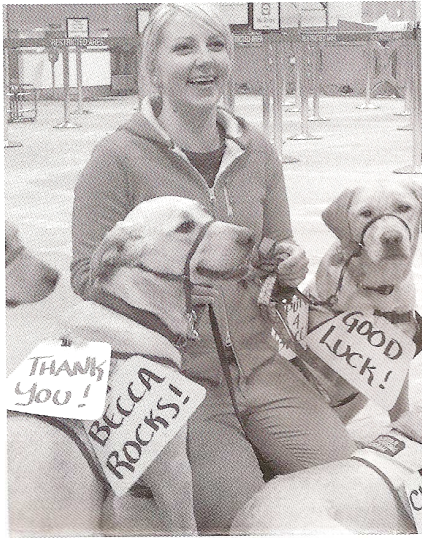
"Canine Companions for Independence is a great fit for us, as many of us have a real passion for animals and we are determined to make Disneyland accessible for all," said Bolton. "We all feel good about the fact that both children and adults with disabilities benefit

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## Utah

Wishing Puppy Raiser Becca Stanford a pleasant journey to China in February, Utah's CCI puppies gathered at the Salt Lake International Airport and created



an uncommon sight. Puppies and Puppy Raisers are now anxiously awaiting the "Welcome Home" event in July.

Our puppies stepped out again as ambassadors for CCI during the recent Family Links North Conference. The Utah Parents Center sponsors this event for educators and families of children and youth with disabilities. As CCI puppies always do, they attracted attendees to the CCI exhibit, allowing us to introduce them to the Skilled Companion program. None were familiar with CCI so it was heartwarming to watch as parents considered the possibilities. One mother who had been searching for a service dog for her child was quite discouraged by the high cost. When she heard that CCI dogs are provided at no cost to the Graduates, her eyes filled with tears. What a touching reminder of why we are Puppy Raisers.

## Oklahoma Chapter

by Dawn Ransey

The Chickasaw National Recreation Area in Sulphur, Oklahoma will be the home of the Red Earth Champions' largest fundraising event of the year: the Snoopy's 10km Challenge. Along with the Snoopy's 10km Challenge we will be kicking off the inaugural Crooked Horn Bike Tour. There are two tours, both winding their way through the foothills of the Arbuckle Mountains. Get in gear October 13, 2007 for this spectacular fundraiser. Register online at [www.active.com](http://www.active.com) and make plans to join us for a howling good time.

One of Oklahoma's largest dog shows is at the Expo Center in Shawnee,

Oklahoma, so we decided since we would have all those fur loving people in one place we would tell them about CCI and the Puppy Raising Program. We will be setting up a vintage military type recruiting booth with "We Want You!" posters and tons of brochures and pictures of our pups and their Puppy Raisers.

The annual Shawnee Mall Mutt Strut took place April 7, 2007 and everyone in attendance had an ear scratchin', foot thumpin', throw-your-head-back-and-howl good time. There were approximately 40 dogs that strutted their best Easter attire through the mall. The event, sponsored by the Shawnee Mall and organized by the members of the Red Earth Champions, included games, contests and Easter Bunny photo opportunities.

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## Disneyland *continued from page 1*

from CCI assistance dogs, and that our 'green environmental efforts' support CCI's mission and benefit the environment." To date, Disneyland Resort has donated \$90,000 to CCI from this recycling program.

Disneyland Resort also has a Volunteer Leadership Council (a.k.a. Volunt-Ears) that provides volunteers to meet the needs of nonprofit organizations' special events. Last year, these cheery Cast Members worked 100 volunteer projects (including several for CCI!) and logged 104,000 volunteer hours to the community.



Disneyland Resort management recently made a visit to CCI. From left to right: Mike Sweeney, Mike Hart, Bill Hillis, Frank Dela Vara, Matt Grey, Larry Vick, Linda Valliant and CCI puppy Thad. Front row: Adonis Reeves, Betty Appleton and Jill Bolton.