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EDITORIALS

Big dogs and white linen a recipe for...

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The event literally went to the dogs and that is what it was all about, Service Animals of Mississippi sometimes referred to as project Sam.

Saturday night a white linen event was hosted at the home of Marcus and Ina Magee and the theme was to raise funds and awareness for a good cause-- Service Animals of Mississippi.

The casual event was hosted by the Magees, Al and Jacqueline Gordy, Kim and Joey McNulty, Dr. Rusty and Beverly Slover Dr. Denver and Amarylis Carter.

A musical ensemble was entertainment for the evening which was held poolside.

A little bit different twist saw the four-legged service dogs as special guest for the evening.

It is estimated that the cost of training a service dog ranges between \$10,000 and \$50,000 for each service animal that is placed with a client. The goal of the evening was to help raise funds to help with placement of other service animals.

The background, Al and wife Jacquelyn became interested in labradoodles, a cross between Labrador retrievers and standard poodles. As it turned out these animals are very adept at being service animals. Their first labradoodle, Smooch, started as a working therapy dog.

Because of health issues, Ina Magee had suffered from several falls and required surgery. Ina endured seven surgeries to be exact. Because the nature of her back surgeries she had problems with keeping her balance.

This is where Ranger, one of Gordy's labardoodles, came into the picture. Ranger is able to assist Ina and actually detect when her issues of balance come into play. Ranger is able to assist her to the point of helping her stabilize her balance and thus preventing her from falling. So Ranger became part of the Magee family.

These dogs are actually capable of a lot more. Vicki, the original owner of Sam a husky and her service dog relayed her story of being confined to a wheel chair for 25 years following an accident which paralyzed her.



Pat Brown Publisher

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Her daughter had raised huskies and was about to have her dog neutered. Vicki convinced her daughter to have one more litter and allow her to have the pick of the litter as a service dog. Vicki was told that huskies do not make good service dogs, but Sam was the exception. At the event Vicki told how Sam had assisted her and given her the confidence she needed to succeed despite her handicap.

Sam was diagnosed with lymphoma and after 12 years Vicki lost the animal that had become such an integral part of her life. As Vicki relayed her story it was evident her words were playing on the emotions of those in attendance.

The Gordys made the decision to donate one of their labradoodles, Gracie, to Project SAM. Al said the goal is to provide Gracie to a young lady that suffers from intense seizures. According to Gordy these occur about once a month.

The goal is to have Gracie work with this young lady in identifying what leads up to a seizure and to react in a manner that would prevent or minimize the affects of the seizure.

This would allow the young lady a better quality of life in regard to the seizures she experiences.

The funds from the ticket sales that were raised from this white linen event were used to support Project SAM. What a good way to have a nice time and do something for someone special.

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