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Informational packet for the 3rd annual PSDP Convention

The annual Psychiatric Service Dog Partners Convention is an event where people with mental health disabilities can learn more about working with their service dogs, have public access training and testing, and celebrate the freedom of going out and having fun with other service dog teams.

PSDP CONVENTION 2015 SCHEDULE

All activities on this schedule (unless otherwise indicated) take place in the Manchester meeting room at the Hilton Garden Inn in Rock Hill, South Carolina, on April 18th and 19th. We also have the meeting room available as a social room when activities aren't scheduled, from 8:00 p.m. Friday through 8:00 a.m. Monday morning.

Convention-goers must sign in upon arrival at the convention meeting room—at the latest during the mandatory welcome meeting.

Friday, April 17th

8:00 p.m. Pre-convention meet & greet, early sign-in

Saturday April 18th

8:00–10:00 Breakfast at the hotel (informal)

10:00–10:30 *Committee meeting (closed meeting)*

10:30–11:00 Sign-in and welcome meeting, mandatory

11:00–noon Understanding your laws (interactive presentation; internet-enabled devices encouraged)

noon–1:30 Lunch on your own

1:30–3:00 Dog body language (interactive presentation)

3:00–3:30 Break

3:30–5:00 Mitigating your disability (community circle)

- 5:00–7:00 Dinner on your own
- 6:30–7:00 *Committee meeting (closed meeting, tentative)*
- 7:00–8:00 Social hour (informal)

Sunday April 19th

- 8:00–9:30 CGC(A) & Public access test (mandatory breakfast at 9:30, cost not included in PAT fee)
- 9:30–11:00 Breakfast at Bob Evans (informal, at same location as PAT takers)
- 11:00–12:30 Preparing for service dog transitions (community circle)
- 12:30–1:00 *Committee Meeting (closed meeting)*
- 12:30–2:00 Lunch on your own
- 2:00–3:30 Training with first responders (interactive presentation)
- 3:30–4:00 Break
- 4:00–5:00 Freestyle and tricks training (facilitated open floor)
- 5:00–7:00 Dinner on your own
- 7:00–8:00 Decompression and closing thoughts (community/social circle)

ACTIVITIES

Pre-convention meet & greet, early sign-in

This social time on Friday night starts as soon as our room reservation begins! Say hi to old friends, meet new ones, and share in the excitement of the convention. Early sign-in will be available within the first hour and is required to use the room.

Sign-in and welcome (mandatory)

Check in, socialize with other teams, hear convention policies, and be welcomed by Dr. Veronica Morris.

Interactive presentations

Interactive presentations are designed to promote practical understanding of a focused topic that is best learned about in person.

Understanding your laws: Some of us are familiar with the DOJ ADA regulations, but other federal laws and especially our individual states' laws are confusing. Bring your internet-enabled device (or share if you don't have one) and Dr. Morris will help you get to know how to find your state's SD laws and learn what they mean.

Dog body language: Morgance Ellis, IACP-CDT professional dog trainer, leads us in an interactive discussion of dog body language. In explaining how to both observe and

replicate canine signals, Morgance will highlight how to keep your service dog and yourself safe during unplanned encounters with off-leash dogs.

Training with first responders: Ambulance personnel from Ambulance Service Piedmont guide participants through what they need to know to be emergency-ready in this particularly unique interactive opportunity.

Circles

Circle discussions are guided discussions of service dog related topics. Questions, stories, advice, and support are key parts of our circle discussions. The convention will have three circles.

Mitigating your disability: How does your dog help you with your disability? Can others help you brainstorm new service dog work or tasks?

Preparing for service dog transitions: It's never too early to prepare for how your next SD will fit into your life. Talk with others about everything involved in the transition.

Decompression and closing thoughts: Share what this convention has meant to you, what you've learned, and what you'd like to see next time.

Social hour

Saturday night is a time to relax and have fun with other PSDP convention-goers. Hang out, chat with peers, and possibly enjoy some informal musical stylings!

CGC(A) & Public access test

Professional dog trainer Morgance Ellis facilitates three types of tests on Sunday morning: Canine Good Citizen (CGC), Community Canine (Advanced Canine Good Citizen/"CGCA"), and a public access test (PAT). If you are interested and have not signed up, get in touch with Morgance before the convention or on site.

*CGC(A) and PAT fees: The CGC and CGCA will be offered in a combined session, and the total *testing* fee for participating in any portion is just \$25. The PAT fee is \$25. This fee does not include food during the mandatory meal portion of the PAT.*

A note about AKC fees: If you have a purebred dog, in order for your dog to have any AKC title/certificate (CGC or CGCA, in this case), your dog either has to have an AKC number, or a PAL number (for which the AKC charges \$35). If you have a mixed-breed dog, you must register your dog under the "Canine Partners" label (also \$35) for your dog to have an AKC title.

The AKC charges \$8 for a CGC certificate, and \$20 for a CGCA certificate. While you and

your dog can qualify for both the CGC and CGCA certificates simultaneously at the convention, in order to get the CGCA certificate, you first must submit the paperwork to get the CGC certificate. Once you get your CGC certificate, you can submit your paperwork to get your CGCA certificate.

Freestyle and tricks training

Morgance Ellis facilitates an open-floor where handlers get to learn and teach each other dog tricks and dance moves—just for fun! This Sunday afternoon activity will help you and your dog unwind.

LOCATION

The 2015 PSDP Convention will be held at the Hilton Garden Inn in Rock Hill, South Carolina. Activities are planned on Saturday and Sunday, April 18th and 19th, from 8AM to 8PM. We also will have the convention room open for informal hanging out starting from 8PM on the 17th to 8AM on the 20th. Many people are arriving on the 16th or 17th and leaving on the 20th or 21st, so there may be additional chances to get together with other PSDP members around the time of the convention.

The Hilton Garden Inn in Rock Hill, SC is in walking distance of a breadth of eateries, a movie theater, and a large park. Breakfast is not included in the room rates. You are responsible for your own food, but we will go in groups to restaurants within walking distance.

WEATHER

History-based predictions for Rock Hill put the temperature range at 48°–74° F for April 18th and 19th. Precipitation is expected 35% of the time in April, with about a third of this consisting of thunderstorms. Check the weather forecast before you go, and bring layers.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

This is a low-fragrance event. Bring your least-scented personal care products as many are severely allergic.

This is a completely nut-free event. Do not bring any human or dog products containing nuts.

No weapons or illegal drugs will be permitted at this event (pocket knives are OK, as are any medications for which you have a prescription).

The consumption of alcohol or illegal substances is prohibited in PSDP spaces. Convention-goers are welcome to do what they want to outside of our convention spaces.

Disruptive or inappropriate behavior from any cause may result in being asked to leave PSDP spaces, for a length of time in proportion to the situation.

Registration

Our registration form is on the 2015 Convention Registration page:

<http://www.psychdogpartners.org/resources/convention/2015-convention/2015-convention-registration>

The cost for registration is \$65 (nonrefundable). You can either pay by PayPal (psdpinfo@gmail.com) or by sending a check made out to PSDP to Chanda Hagen at 4777 E Hwy 246, Lompoc, CA 93436 with "PSDP convention" in the memo line. The money must be received by March 20th. Registration is limited to 30 people.

In summary, to attend this convention you must 1) fill out the registration form, 2) pay via PayPal or check by March 20th, and 3) secure your accommodations in Rock Hill, SC.

Food

The Hilton Garden Inn does not provide complimentary breakfast for hotel guests, but does offer cooked-to-order breakfast for purchase in their Garden Grille. On Saturday, convention-goers are invited to enjoy breakfast together informally at this Garden Grille between 8 and 10 AM. Sunday's informal breakfast is structured around the Public Access Test, which makes breakfast later: between 9:30 and 11:00. All convention attendees are invited to meet for Sunday's breakfast at the Bob Evans restaurant that is a 0.4 mile walk from the hotel.

Lunch, dinner, and snacks will be on your own. You can bring food from home if you prefer.* There are refrigerators and microwaves in the rooms. There is a "pantry" on site at the hotel where you can purchase easily fixable food as well.

There are a lot of restaurants within walking distance, and some grocery stores within a drivable distance. We suggest you use google maps to explore these options. On regular overhead view (non-satellite), just zoom in close enough and the names of the restaurants will show up on the map.

There is a Chili's right next door to the hotel, and a Wendy's next door to Chili's. Among the grocery store options in the area are Food Lion, 0.9 miles away at 2260 Crosspointe Drive, and Earth Fare—emphasizing natural foods—4 miles away at 725 N Cherry Road.

*As a reminder, this is a completely nut-free event. Do not bring any human or dog products containing nuts. Also, alcohol consumption is prohibited in PSDP spaces.

Dog behavior policy

This is a convention for handlers with service dogs and service dogs in training. As such, we expect that all dogs in attendance will be friendly with other dogs and people. Dogs displaying aggressive behavior will be asked to leave. If you prefer your dog be given extra space, we encourage you to signal this to others by tying yellow ribbon (available at the

convention) to your dog's leash or collar.

When deciding whether this convention is appropriate for you and your dog to attend, look over the basic behavior standards of the Canine Good Citizen test (http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/training_testing.cfm). If your dog is unable to do one or more things on this test, or has been known to be uncomfortable around other dogs or people, this convention may not be appropriate for your dog.

Before embarking on this trip, it would be wise to ensure that your dog is comfortable in the following situations: traveling on public transit, walking in a mall or crowded store, visiting restaurants, being in close quarters with other dogs and people, etc. If you have two service dogs, or a service dog and an SDIT, be aware that you will not be allowed to leave any dog tethered or unattended, even in your hotel room. You must be able to handle both dogs safely yourself, or bring a human helper who can handle one of the dogs for you at the event.

When you are around other service dogs, keep your dog within 2 feet of you, and keep at least 2 feet between dogs at all times unless people say it is OK. Be sure to ask first before you or your dog greets another team. It is the job of the handler to ensure their dog is not invading another dog's space. This is an on-leash convention, and dogs should never be left unattended at the activities.

All dogs must be kept leashed to a collar, vest or harness at all times, and the leash must always be held by a person. There are no exceptions, apart from disability-required situations that are approved in writing by Veronica Morris at the time of registration. This includes when your dog is relieving itself, unless in a gated/fenced area designed for this purpose. This rule includes **all** PSDP activities. If you use a shoulder leash and it is not long enough for your dog to lie on the floor next to you while it is around your shoulder, please remove the leash from your shoulder and maintain a secure hold on it so your dog is never untethered from you.

Please be prepared to clean up after your dog. Bring appropriate bags and products to ensure that we leave the facility in the same condition that we found it or better. We are representing PSDP and all other service dogs by our behavior in public at this event, so it is important that we all obey these behavior standards. There will be a professional trainer on site to talk with if you are having any issues upholding these standards.

If you witness a dog grossly misbehaving (e.g. biting or fighting with another dog, repeatedly eliminating inappropriately, etc.), please report it to at least one of the people in charge as soon as possible.

Elimination policy

For sanitation reasons, we ask you to prevent your dog from eliminating on any building, vehicle, or structure. All solid waste must be picked up immediately. Potty pads and litter

boxes are not to be used. If a dog has elimination problems in indoor spaces, it will be asked to leave.

In addition, we ask participants to be conscientious in adhering to our P.U.P. policy—“Pick Up Poop”. If you see any dog waste in addition to your own dog’s and you are able to pick it up, please do so! Our efforts to leave the area better than we found it are a great way to spread good will around our convention and toward our community.

Minor policy

This is not a family vacation type of event. The convention is for handlers of psychiatric service dogs (PSDs) and psychiatric service dogs in training (PSDITs), and the activities will be geared towards these individuals. Children with PSDs or PSDITs are welcome to attend with a guardian, but please keep in mind the convention is a chance for people to speak freely about their mental illnesses and this may include discussions of self-injury, abuse, nightmares, and flashbacks. It is up to each parent to ensure their child is either OK with these discussions, or to remove the child from these discussions. If you have any questions, please contact Veronica Morris at veronica.m.psdp@gmail.com.

Sales Policy

PSDP may offer products or services for sale at the convention.

People sometimes bring gear to swap or sell on their own at the convention. Any offers by convention-goers of products or services for sale cannot be conducted in PSDP spaces during organized activities. Consistent with [List Rules 7 & 8](#), personal requests on the listserv for information to facilitate sales are prohibited.

Anyone selling items is personally responsible for security, financial transactions, and customer satisfaction. PSDP is not responsible for anything involving sales to which PSDP is not directly a party.

Emergencies

If your service dog has a medical emergency, the closest emergency vet is Rock Hill Animal Hospital at 803-324-7585. <http://www.rockhillanimalhospital.com/>

If you have a medical emergency, the closest hospital is the Piedmont Medical Center at 803-329-1234. <http://www.piedmontmedicalcenter.com>

PACKING LIST

This list is only a suggestion of items you may want to bring to the convention. Wear clothes suitable for walking around.

Clothing, including layers, long pants, shorts, t-shirts, and long-sleeved shirts	Medications, including prescriptions, over-the-counter pain meds, and
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	motion-sickness meds
Extra underwear and socks	Games/cards
Pajamas	Water bottle
Sweatshirt or jacket	Emergency contact information
Hat for warmth	Dog dishes
Sunglasses/hat/ballcap to protect from sun	Dog food
Comfortable shoes to walk or hike in	Dog medication
Soap and shampoo (unscented, please!)	Towel for your dog
Deodorant—unscented	Poop bags
Sunscreen—unscented	Service vest if you use one
Toothbrush and toothpaste (human & dog!)	Collar and leash
Brush or comb (human & dog!)	Dog treats
Camera & film/storage, charged batteries	Charging cords: camera, phone, etc.
Bag for dirty items	Dog toys
Doctor's letter for flying	Portable dog watering bowl

Psychiatric Service Dogs Partners' purpose is to promote the mental health of people using service dogs for psychiatric disabilities by educating, advocating, providing expertise, facilitating peer support, and promoting responsible service dog training and handling.

ACCIDENT WAIVER AND RELEASE OF LIABILITY FORM

I HEREBY ASSUME ALL OF THE RISKS OF PARTICIPATING IN ANY/ALL ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THIS EVENT, including by way of example and not limitation, any risks that may arise from negligence or carelessness on the part of the persons or entities being released, from dangerous or defective equipment or property owned, maintained, or controlled by them, or because of their possible liability without fault.

I certify that I am sufficiently fit, have sufficiently prepared or trained for participation in this activity if appropriate, and have not been advised to not participate by a qualified medical professional. I certify that there are no health-related reasons or problems which preclude my participation in this activity.

I acknowledge that this Accident Waiver and Release of Liability Form will be used by the event holders, sponsors, and organizers of the activity in which I may participate, and that it will govern my actions and responsibilities at said activity. In consideration of my application and permitting me to participate in this activity, I hereby take action for myself, my executors, administrators, heirs, next of kin, successors, and assigns as follows:

(A) I WAIVE, RELEASE, AND DISCHARGE from any and all liability, including but not limited to, liability arising from the negligence or fault of the entities or persons released, for my death, disability, personal injury, property damage, property theft, or actions of any kind which may hereafter occur to me including my traveling to and from this activity, THE FOLLOWING ENTITIES OR PERSONS: Psychiatric Service Dog Partners (PSDP) and/or their directors, officers, employees, volunteers, representatives, and agents, and the activity holders, sponsors, and volunteers;

(B) INDEMNIFY, HOLD HARMLESS, AND PROMISE NOT TO SUE the entities or persons mentioned in this paragraph from any and all liabilities or claims made as a result of participation in this activity, whether caused by the negligence of release or otherwise.

I acknowledge that PSDP and their directors, officers, volunteers, representatives, and agents are NOT responsible for the errors, omissions, acts, or failures to act of any party or entity conducting a specific activity on their behalf.

I acknowledge that this activity may involve a test of a person's physical or mental limits and carries with it the potential for death, serious injury, and property loss. The risks include, but are not limited to, those caused by terrain, facilities, temperature, weather, condition of participants, equipment, vehicular traffic, lack of hydration, and actions of other people including, but not limited to, participants, volunteers, monitors, and/or producers of the activity. These risks are not only inherent to participants, but are also present for volunteers.

I hereby consent to receive medical treatment which may be deemed advisable in the event of injury, accident, and/or illness during this activity.

I understand while participating in this activity, I may be photographed. Unless I make it clear otherwise to anyone engaged in the recording of my likeness, I agree to allow my photo, video, or film likeness to be used for any legitimate purpose by the activity holders, producers, sponsors, organizers, and assigns.

The Accident Waiver and Release of Liability Form shall be construed broadly to provide a release and waiver to the maximum extent permissible under applicable law.

I CERTIFY THAT I HAVE READ THIS DOCUMENT AND I FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS CONTENT.

I AM AWARE THAT THIS IS A RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND A CONTRACT AND I SIGN IT OF MY OWN FREE WILL.

Participant's Signature	Date	Participant's Name (Please print legibly.)	Age
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Parent/Guardian Signature	Date
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(If under 18 years old, Parent or Guardian must also sign.)