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**DRAFT**

**Informational packet for the 7th 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.

Sponsorship opportunities are available. See <https://www.psychdogpartners.org/sponsorship> for more information.

Scholarships may be available. See <https://www.psychdogpartners.org/scholarship> for more information.

**LOCATION & DATE**

Good times and good friends await you in **Rock Hill, South Carolina!** Our 2019 PSDP Convention returns us to a setting that suits us well—with an upgrade over our previous room. Our main convention activities will take place in the 1904-square-foot Palmetto A & B (joined) rooms of the Hilton Garden Inn at 650 Tinsley Way in Rock Hill.

Activities are planned starting on Friday night, **April 5th**, through Monday morning, **April 8th**. We also will have the convention room open for informal hanging out between scheduled activities. Many people are arriving on the 4th or 5th and leaving on the 8th or 9th, so there may be additional chances to get together with other PSDP members around the time of the convention. There is a tradition of having breakfast together Monday morning to socialize and fare each other well (optional).

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.

**TRAVEL & LODGING**

Rock Hill, South Carolina is just over the Carolina border from the very active Charlotte, *North* Carolina Airport. It's about a 25-mile drive from the Charlotte Douglas International Airport to the Hilton Garden Inn at 650 Tinsley Way in Rock Hill. Without heavy traffic, this trip usually takes a half hour or so.

The cost (in November of 2018) of a one-way Uber or Lyft\* ride is around \$26–\$34, and a taxi is roughly \$64–\$77 (no tip in these figures). Download the Lyft or Uber app and sign up to use either of these services. The rideshare (Uber/Lyft) pickup area is on the Arrivals/Baggage Claim (lower) level outside of Zone E. The taxi area is nearby, outside of the baggage claim area as well.

The hotel is just off Highway 77 at the Dave Lyle Blvd. exit (79), set back on a small road loop behind the Manchester Village Shopping Center. The hotel shuttle operates between 8:00 a.m. and 10 p.m. within five miles of the hotel ((803) 325-2800), but restaurants etc. are walkable from the hotel for most folks. Convention-goers staying on site usually don't find it necessary to have a car during the convention.

Our group rate at the hotel is \$119/night (excluding taxes), which includes breakfast for two. More information is available on the registration page:

<https://www.psychdogpartners.org/resources/convention/2019-convention/registration>

\*PSDP is not endorsing or recommending Uber, Lyft, or any ride service.

## **UPON ARRIVAL**

The stress of travel is not only felt by you, but also your dog. We highly recommend that when you arrive, before joining in with whatever the group is doing, you take a minute and relax with your dog. You have no obligation to check in with any social groups you may see on your way in, and everyone understands if you don't. Water yourself and your dog, maybe take a quiet walk together, or enjoy a power nap. Make sure that you and your dog are relaxed. This will help you and your dog have a better time, and will make it easier for your dog to focus on you instead of on the many other service dog teams there!

At the welcome meeting and throughout the convention, take advantage of the unique opportunities available. You will be surrounded by helpful, friendly, and experienced people who also want a great convention experience. Make friends and get contact info to continue to benefit from your shared adventures! Try to squeeze in working together on training during convention downtime. Sometimes training takes two people; consider training such things as alerting to the presence or approach of others, responding to being “down and out”, etc.

## **PSDP CONVENTION 2018 SCHEDULE**

*Please note that the schedule and activities are subject to change without notice.*

All activities on this schedule (unless otherwise indicated) take place in the Palmetto A & B room(s) of the Hilton Garden Inn in Rock Hill, SC, on the evening of April 5th through the morning of April 8th. We also have the meeting room available much of the time as a social room when activities aren't scheduled.

Convention-goers must sign in upon arrival at the convention meeting room—at the latest during the mandatory welcome meeting. In case you want to print just the schedule (rather than have it on your mobile device), it is on the next full page so you do not have to print the entire info packet.

**DRAFT—this space to be filled in as details are fully sorted.**



## ACTIVITIES

**DRAFT—this space to be filled in as details are fully sorted.**

## 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.

### Food

We will have optional times to gather and eat meals together, but you must provide/buy your own food. You can bring food from home if you prefer.\*

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.

**\*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](http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/training_testing.cfm)). Dogs attending the convention should be able to perform the items on this test with treats, and/or be able to complete all but one item

on the test. If your dog is unable to do more than one thing 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 (service dog in training), 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 (and then only if others present explicitly agree). 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 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. In circles, if your dog is disruptive or destructive for any reason, we expect you to remove your dog and resolve the situation before returning.

### **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 email us at [info@psych.dog](mailto:info@psych.dog).

### **Sales Policy**

PSDP may authorize products or services to be offered at the convention, such as team testing.

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 Carolina Veterinary Specialists at 760 Addison Avenue, (803) 909-8300. <http://carolinavet.com>

If you have a medical situation, the closest hospital is the Piedmont Medical Center at 222 S Herlong Avenue in Rock Hill, (803)-329-1234. <http://www.piedmontmedicalcenter.com>

If you have a health/mental health emergency, please call 911.

### **WEATHER**

History-based predictions for Rock Hill put the temperature range at 44°–73° F. 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.

## **PACKING LIST**

This list is only a suggestion of items you may want to bring to the convention. Wear clothes suitable for walking around. The packing list is on a single page below in case you want to print it without printing the whole info packet (and you don't just want it on your mobile device).



Clothing, including layers, long pants, shorts, t-shirts, and long-sleeved shirts (PSDP logowear is encouraged!)	Medications, including prescriptions, over-the-counter pain meds, and motion-sickness meds
Extra underwear and socks	Games/cards
Pajamas	Water bottle
Sweatshirt or jacket	Emergency contact & medical info for you and your dog
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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

(If under 18 years old, Parent or Guardian must also sign.)