

Nominees: Paula Shay and Sidney Wright
Nominator: Wanda Unger-Stevens
Research by: Ann Nguyen

**PLEASE
CONSIDER**

Note: The program in question, **Service Dogs Central**, is in the process of becoming non-profit.

➤ **Background Information:**

- Ms. Shay is disabled and has relied on service dogs since 1990. She received her current companion, Dino, in 1997.
- Ms. Shay and Mr. Wright met in 1993. They founded the Hush Pup Club to facilitate the training of guide and service dogs.
- **They founded SDC in 1997** after an MS patient failed to receive a service dog sponsored by the Rotary Club. The breeder had sold the gift after Ms. Shay and Mr. Wright deemed her knowledge of dog training to be lacking. **Their program sprang from the training guidance they gave to the patient and several interested parties.**
- Ms. Shay is the Program Director and a trainer. Mr. Wright is the Director of Training.

➤ **Motivation:**

- Ms. Shay felt her own two-week training at another organization was not adequate.
- Ms. Shay and Mr. Wright wish to help the physically challenged gain advanced knowledge about and develop a deep, comfortable rapport with their assistance dogs.

➤ **Program Mission:**

- It instructs disabled students on how to train their own guide and service dogs.
- It tailors the dogs to meet the students' specific needs. Through methods such as positive reinforcement, it emphasizes the progress of the student-dog team.
- Students learn about the rights, temperament, and psychology of dogs.
- The program offers three three-hour sessions per month and allows more experienced class members to mentor the newer ones. Students graduate after two years. New classes begin every six months.
- The program includes a four-part book that contains pertinent information about dog training, such as class lectures, a Q & A, and commands.
- It provides a series of tests for various stages in the training, such as the Canine Good Citizenship Test (which consists of 10 tests) and the Public Access Test (14 tests). These tests help guarantee that the dogs are not a threat to the public.

➤ **Funding:**

- **In the process of becoming non-profit.**
- Charges students \$30/month, but **all the money supports the program itself.**
- Two-thirds of the funding comes from the student payments. One-third comes from Mr. Wright's own income.
- The dogs come from all over: shelters, breeders, etc.

➤ **Dedication:**

- **SDC goes a year beyond the training standards set by Assistance Dogs International.**
- **Mr. Wright, a carpenter, gives \$500 of his own income to the program.**
- Ms. Shay and Mr. Wright attend conferences about dog training every year. They have also gone to many seminars and consulted videos and books about the field.

➤ **Recognition:**

- A Poway reporter had asked for their judgment about the breeder sponsored by the Rotary Club.
- *The Rancho Bernardo News Journal* featured the program in an article on Thursday, March 29, 2001.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH FOR LEADERSHIP AWARD

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--Ms. Shay is disabled and relies on a disability income.

--Mr. Wright earns his income from his carpentry job.

--The \$30/month student charge helps support the program itself.