



Judy Taylor and Ellie Mae



Dogs have always been a part of my life. It has always been a given that the Taylor household has at least one dog as part of the family.

I had a yellow Labrador, Sadie, who was getting older in 2014. I began to look for our next family member. I have always wanted a beautiful, classic looking English Labrador. English Labradors have a mellower disposition and have blockier characteristics of the breed. A co-worker at the Forest Service, where I worked, told me about Everso Labrador Retrievers. I contacted Stefanie Perrine, the owner of Everso Labrador Retrievers and put my name on her waiting list. After two long years I asked her “Do you think you will ever have a puppy available for me?” She answered, “I think I might have one available.” My husband and I met Ellie and we fell in love.

I retired in March 2015 and I brought Ellie home in July 2015. I will never forget her following me around in the field. My husband said, “She is everything you always wanted, isn’t she?”. What made our relationship so special was the fact that since I was retired, I had the time to focus on training Ellie and establishing a strong bond. Being a pet therapy team became a goal, so that I could continue to have a fulfilling passion in retirement.

Ellie was a challenge, as most energetic and headstrong Labrador puppies are. I took her to basic obedience training, Canine Good Citizenship training and then worked with a private trainer, which was invaluable.



The best piece of advice was to let her be a dog. The trainer observed that I was always in training mode. I was always trying to make her heel. The trainer told me a dog needs to be a dog. She said a dog will rebel if they are not allowed to “be”. That wise piece of advice helped immensely. I now know that when we go for a walk, Ellie likes to smell and explore and I understand the

wisdom in letting her enjoy life as only a dog can by, using their senses. When it is time to work, then she needs to heel but life can’t be all work and no play!

After all our training, Ellie and I passed our Denver Pet Partners’ evaluations in October 2016. I was so proud! I remember when her vest came in the mail. I took a picture of Ellie in her vest and when I went to my yoga class, I showed Melissa, my instructor. I didn’t know that Melissa worked at Fort Logan Mental Facility. Melissa was as excited as I was and asked if I would be interested in volunteering at Fort Logan. Ellie and I began volunteering in November 2016 and I feel like



I have really found my place. Some of the people at Fort Logan are at such a difficult place in their life and for a few moments, they can smile and relax. I remember one woman who was afraid of Ellie when we first met. She would not get close to her but after a few weeks, she now embraces Ellie and they are buddies. Animals are so healing.



Ellie and I also volunteer at Hutchinson Elementary School. I enjoy the children and once again, for a few moments, I think the children can relax and are able to benefit from the wonder of a dog. I

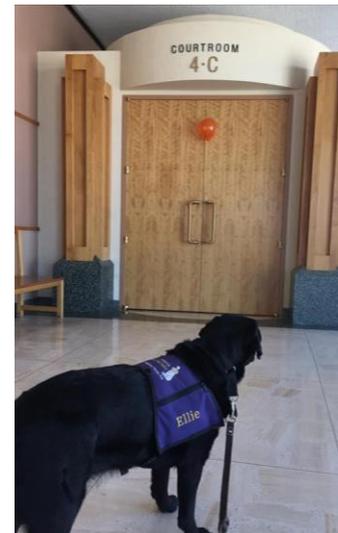


remember asking a girl if she liked dogs. She strongly said “No!” I asked why. She had once been bitten by a dog. I asked what type and she said, “a black Labrador”. Eventually, she was able to relax with Ellie and learned to trust her.



Seeing the joy that animals provide to young children and people that are in a difficult point in their life has been a rewarding experience. Listening to

the stories of the individuals that Ellie and I have had the pleasure to meet has filled my life with gratitude and helped me realize that the unconditional love of animals is invaluable. I am thankful for Ellie and Denver Pet Partners every day!



DPP Team of the Month (April 2020)

