

**WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE THE ADDITION OF OUR NEWEST  
STAFF MEMBER (CANINE COLLEAGUE)**

## MONTY



**Monty** (yellow Labrador retriever) is a **Social Therapy Assistance Dog**, specializing in trained behavior and emotional support. **Monty comes to us from the NEADS organization (National Education for Assistance Dog Services), located in Princeton, MA.** NEADS is accredited by the Assistance Dogs International (ADI), governing body that establishes industry standards and practices.

**When at work, Monty is required to wear a specific uniform called his “Cape” and “Gentle Leader.”** This uniform communicates to both Monty, as well as those sharing space with him that he is “at work.” The Cape designates his training and role as a Social Therapy Assistance Dog. The Gentle Leader rests loosely across his face, and around his neck. This leash does not serve as a “muzzle” as Monty is able to open his mouth and act/do the same things with or without it on. The Gentle Leader leash is modeled after Animal Science that a mother dog will correct her puppy by placing pressure on the same facial points that the Gentle Leader does. When on, the Gentle Leader provides Monty’s Therapeutic Partner (Tracey) a way to direct and correct Monty’s actions, and placement within a group. Pressure is applied by the Gentle Leader when pulled in an upward motion, and then released.



Monty will pursue his career working at Learning Solutions, LLC (LS); under the direction of his therapeutic partner, Tracey Stoll, MEd, BCSE, ACAS. Here are some of the ways Monty will provide support to LS clients (There are even more!):

### **Emotional/Therapeutic Support**

- **Non-judgmental, calm** presence to sit with a client who may be feeling sad, depressed or upset
- An attentive “ear” to **listen** to a client who needs to talk about events, topics, experiences that are stressful and/or upsetting
- Petting/Stroking Monty’s back in a repetitive, calming motion; paired with **deep breaths as a soothing strategy**
- Monty often wears items attached to his uniform (bandana, pin, etc.) that he will give to a friend to keep with them so the **friend does not have to feel alone.**

- Monty is able to **accompany friends into the community** in order to provide a comfortable presence that **reduces social anxiety**.
- **Monty does not bark (“speak”), toilet or at times move, without verbal direction**. This allows him to be a **less intimidating** dog for others to approach and get to know; especially if they are nervous due to experiences with other less trained dogs.
- Clients feeling sad/distressed after a challenging experience can **write down their thoughts, feelings, experience and leave it with Monty in his “Cape” pocket**.
- Clients feeling sad, lonely or just in need of a calming friend can **read books to/with Monty, listen to music, or just close eyes and regulate together**.

### Communication/ Social Skills/ Language Support

- Monty has a sensitive ear that hears words easily. Clients can **practice articulation when speaking to Monty**.
- Monty understands and **reacts to different voice volumes, tones, and facial expressions**.
- Monty has been trained to give **eye contact to his communication partner (“think with his eyes”)**. This is how he is able to understand his directions, and **share the same thought as his communication partner**. Monty enjoys modelling this skill with clients. Here is a photo of Monty modelling “shaking hands/paws.” Monty had to first sit, attend, and give eye contact to his partner. Then listen to his **partner’s words, share his partner’s thought**, and demonstrate this through his action(s).



- Monty works on **personal space boundaries**. When he is unfamiliar with someone, he waits until he is introduced to approach them. The more familiar he is with another person, the closer he is willing to get. Sometimes Monty gets too close, and his communication partner needs to remind him to think about personal space. Sometimes others get too close to Monty, and he tells them this with his non-verbal body language.
- Monty works on **understanding levels of relationship(s)** [Stranger and/or acquaintance]. There are people he will only ever interact with once, so he does not act familiar with them. There are people he will interact with frequently across life environments, so his mannerisms and behavior adapts with the memory of each experience with specific people [safe friendship, unsafe person]. Monty understands there is also his family members he will live with and emotionally be closest too. His behavior adapts to this relationship as well [family and “therapeutic partner” Tracey].
- **Taking turns and understanding when/when not to wait** is important for Monty. This way he can participate in interactions and group activities with positive social consequences.
- Groups can **work cooperatively** to design and make dog toys for Monty and his NEADS and/or shelter friends.

### Behavioral Support

**Monty was raised for two years with multiple handlers who taught him, cared for him, and supported him in learning the safe and skilled behavior expected of him.** He experienced many environments and interactions across aspects of work, community and in the home. Monty has several skills he is able to **demonstrate and model for clients**, but most importantly:

- Quiet, calm body.
- Safe mouth.
- Safe body.
- Impulse control.
- Keeping his body close to the person and group he is in.

- ### **Daily Living Skills**

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- A light-colored dog, possibly a Labrador, is lying on a wooden bench. The dog is wearing a red vest with the text 'K9' and 'SEARCH' on it. A black leash is attached to the dog's collar and extends to the floor. On the bench next to the dog are a black bag and a red bag. The background is a plain wall.



***If you would like to learn more about the NEADS organization, or to make a 100% tax-deductible donation to our supportive fundraising effort:***

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