



ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY REIMAGINED

The Jacqueline Meline Service Dog Scholarship Fund

Success as a Service Dog team requires hard work and commitment. While dogs are capable of learning and serving, handlers must remain consistent, patient, loving, and protective to achieve their goals. This is a life-time commitment with handlers learning to advocate for their dogs and working together as a team. Our goal in the Service Dog Training Program is to help handlers form a partnership with their dog; a partnership that will support and empower independence and the ability to gain control over life circumstances.

No individual more demonstrated these values than Service Dog Training Program graduate; Jacqueline Meline. Jacqueline met her mobility service dog Nathan in 2021. The pair became inseparable after working through all the ups and downs that it takes to become a service dog team. Nathan didn't always make things easy, but through Jackie's gentle personality and steady demeanor, Nathan became one of the most reliable and capable mobility service dogs. Together, Jackie and Nathan showed what a service dog team can do. They attended movies, travelled together, and became concert-famous. Jackie touched uncountable lives with her kind and outgoing personality. She exemplified everything Heeling House stands for and was an unmatched advocate for this service dog training program.

It is in Jackie's honor that Heeling House seeks to award a scholarship toward a future Heeling House Service Dog Graduate. Jackie would always seek to improve the lives of others and would see adding a service dog as one of the best paths to independence and confidence.

1. Submission Process

Heeling House will be accepting applications until November 1st with finances to be awarded February of the upcoming calendar year. Scholarship recipients will be notified in December the amount of their award and the award will be presented at graduation in February. Any applications received after November 1st will only be considered for the following graduating class.

The first place submission will be awarded \$1,000. Any additional funds raised during the fiscal year toward the Jacqueline Meline Service Dog Scholarship Fund will be divided among the other applicants as determined by the evaluation committee.

1.1 Deadline: November 1st, 2026

1.2 First place award: \$1,000

1.3 Awards beyond first place: determined by funds raised and committee



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1.4 Application Requirements:

- Applicants must have an active Service Dog contract with Heeling House, Inc.
- Applicants may be enrolled in the In-House or Owner Train Service Dog Program
- Applicants must be part of the upcoming graduating class (e.g. applications for 2026 will be open for teams graduating in Spring 2027). If you are waitlisted or graduating beyond the next graduation date, your application will be deferred until your class begins training.
- Service Dog Users must “write” or generate the content of their application essay. Adults, handlers, etc. may help with physically writing the essay.
- Applicants outside of the Heeling House Service Dog Training Program are not eligible.
- Mobility applications will take priority

1.5 Submission Instructions

- Complete the electronic application on the Heeling House website: www.heelinghouse.org
- Submit your application essay in PDF format to mail@heelinghouse.org

2. Essay Requirements

2.1 Include the following identification information in the document:

- Service Dog User First Name / Last Name
- Email
- Phone
- Service Dog Name
- Service Dog Type (Mobility/Autism/Psychiatric)
- Graduating Class (Year)

2.2 Answer the following questions:

- Tell us about your need for a service dog
- How do you think a service dog will change your life?
- In what ways will you incorporate your service dog into your day to day life?
- In what way will a service dog enable you to help others?
- Is there anything else you would like the committee to know about you, your dog, or anything else?

2.3 Submission Requirements

- Essays must be received at mail@heelinghouse.org and electronic application must be completed by November 1st
- There are no minimum or maximum length requirements, but please ensure you have answered all questions thoroughly and thoughtfully

2.4 **Note:** Heeling House recognizes the challenges our applicants face and that outside help may be required to complete this essay. However, we wish to hear from the individual using the service dog in



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their own words. This means essays are not evaluated against grammar, spelling, syntax, etc. but rather how they answer the spirit of the essay questions. Adult handlers may help physically write the essay, but may not generate the content of the essay. Any essay assessed to be written by someone other than the Service Dog User including the use of AI, may be subject to rejection from the application process.

If you have any questions about the application process, please contact mail@heelinghouse.org.

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