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## **AKC/Eukanuba National Championship To Help Provide Assistance Dogs To People with Disabilities**

### ***Canine Companions for Independence the Featured Charity for Prestigious Dog Show***

OCEANSIDE, CA - Canine Companions for Independence (CCI) will be the featured non-profit organization at the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship in Long Beach, California on December 1-2, 2007. **CCI is a national nonprofit organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained assistance dogs and ongoing support to ensure quality partnerships.** The AKC/Eukanuba competition is widely regarded as the premier dog show in the country, featuring more than 3,000 of the world's top dogs vying for "Best in Show".

"Every dog at CCI is a top dog," Linda Valliant, CCI executive director, explains. CCI dogs undergo intensive training in order to qualify to help people with disabilities. They do things like pick up dropped objects, open doors, and alert the deaf to a smoke alarm. CCI dogs make an immeasurable difference in peoples' lives, but the assistance dogs are provided free of charge. In actuality, each one requires an investment of about \$45,000. **The goal of the AKC/Eukanuba event is to raise the funds to sponsor a CCI assistance dog team.**

"This will be a wonderful opportunity for the dog-loving public to learn about Canine Companions for Independence," Linda says. CCI's presence at the event will include booths with giveaways like the "Dogopoly" game and CCI calendars. Attendees can learn about CCI directly from Graduate Teams and volunteer Puppy Raisers. CCI Training Manager, Todd Young, will give a demonstration on the main stage.

**Graduates Cole Massie and Lance Weir will speak at the event** about the enormous impact their assistance dogs have had on their lives. Cole is 10 years old and has cerebral palsy. He calls his dog, Ilia, "like my dog slash brother." Lance, who uses a wheelchair after a diving accident, credits his dog, Satine, for turning his life around. "I'm doing everything I used to dream about...Satine's my angel."

#### **About Canine Companions for Independence:**

Canine Companions for Independence is the largest non-profit provider of trained assistance dogs with five regional training centers across the country. Established in 1975, Canine Companions provides highly trained assistance dogs to children and adults with disabilities and is recognized worldwide for the excellence of its dogs, and quality and longevity of the matches it makes between dogs and people. There is no charge for the dog, its training and on-going follow-up services. For more information visit [cci.org](http://cci.org) or call 1-800-572-BARK.

**For more information,** go to [www.cci.org](http://www.cci.org) or call Katie Malatino at 760-901-4307.

*Speaker photos are available upon request.*

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