



# Capital Area Parkinson's Society

August 2015 Newsletter

P.O. Box 27565, Austin, Texas 78755-2565

[www.capitalareaparkinsons.org](http://www.capitalareaparkinsons.org)

## Considerations When Choosing a Service Dog for Parkinson's

*American Parkinson Disease Association MA*

People with Parkinson's can benefit greatly from dog ownership. A dog can provide a mandatory opportunity for exercise several times a day as well as companionship to help alleviate the common symptom of depression. They can also be trained to assist Parkinson's patients with several types of daily activities.

### Desirable Characteristics of a Dog

Choosing a dog requires careful consideration to make sure you and your future canine companion can meet each other's needs. Keep in mind that puppies may be cute and fun at the animal shelter, but once at home they will require house-breaking and basic training. A good choice for someone with Parkinson's is a one to two year old dog that is not skittish so they will not trip. Some key characteristics include: calm demeanor, not easily frightened, good around both young children and adults, has mastered basic training (sit, stay, heel, etc.) and is an appropriate size. It is also wise to consider the characteristics of your home as they relate to the dog. For example, some dogs drool, which could cause hazardous slippery patches on a wood or laminate floor.

Before choosing your dog, consider what your current needs are and what you expect your long-term needs to be. You may want to consider working with a trainer and getting a Service Dog right from the beginning.

### Service Dog Training

This is an intense training program for dogs and their persons, together. The training can take several months to over a year to complete, depending on the dog and the tasks it needs to handle.

### What is a service dog?

A service dog performs specific tasks to assist a person with a disability with tasks they may not be able to perform on their own. A service dog is considered a working animal, not a pet (although your pet can be trained and certified as a service animal.)

### What are the advantages of a service dog?

Service dogs provide support in the daily life of people with Parkinson's. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), service dogs are allowed in public areas, such as stores, restaurants and public transportation. Other benefits for people with Parkinson's include:

companionship, walking support, assistance with breaking a freeze, alleviates depression, lessens social isolation and retrieves dropped objects.

### What are the disadvantages of a service dog?

Dogs can draw attention from many people and may solicit unwanted interest, such as petting while on duty. The dog may be the center of attention and may be greeted before the person with Parkinson's. Uninformed businesses may (though not legally) question a person's need for a service dog and cause difficulty for a person with a service dog. (Businesses may legally inquire if the dog is a service dog, may question what service the dog provides, but may not inquire into your disability.)

Dogs continue to need exercise, feeding, veterinary care and grooming throughout their lives, which adds up in costs as well as time. They also have a shorter lifespan than humans. This may lead to a disruption in "service," and will certainly cause emotional distress to the person with Parkinson's.

### Choosing a Trainer & Associated Costs

Choose your trainer carefully, making sure to select one who has experience in training service dogs. Some may offer to train the dog for free (and take a tax deduction) or at a reduced rate, but most likely the cost would not exceed, over a two year period, more than a thousand dollars. While the trainer guides the training process, much of the work of reinforcing the proper behavior is done by the patient, which also helps to reduce any costs. ■

Capital Area Parkinson's Society  
**1st Annual Summer Bash**  
 Night of Dancing and Celebration  
 Thursday, August 13, 2015 • 6:30 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.  
 Balcones Country Club • 8600 Balcones Club Drive

**Tickets: \$75 - May be purchased at**  
[www.capitalareaparkinsons.org/summerbash](http://www.capitalareaparkinsons.org/summerbash)  
 General and Table Sponsorships available

**For more information, contact Lina at 512-517-0621**  
 or [summerbash@capitalareaparkinsons.org](mailto:summerbash@capitalareaparkinsons.org)

**All proceeds go to the Capital Area Parkinson's Society**  
[www.capitalareaparkinsons.org](http://www.capitalareaparkinsons.org)

**Save the Date**  
 Thursday, August 13, 2015

**Bee Gees Songbook**

**Attire: Summer Disco (Optional)**

**Invitation to Follow**

CAPS Cares

Our Mission:

To provide individuals with Parkinson's and their families in the Greater Austin area with the social services that otherwise may not have been available to them. We aim to provide the resources and guidance they may need to manage the demands created by this disease.

CAPS Cares seeks to provide Licensed Social Workers and Licensed Staff with the assistance for phone consultations, in-office visits, as well as home visits when needed.

To apply for assistance, please contact CAPS at:  
512-993-6830  
P.O. Box 27565  
Austin, Texas 78755

Or apply online at:  
CapitalAreaParkinsons.org

CAPS Cares is a program of the Capital Area Parkinson's Society.



Services provided:  
Facilitation of family meetings  
Care and family education  
Client and family consultations  
Recommendations for housing  
Financial assessment resources  
Transportation needs  
Community program assistance  
Government program assistance  
Food assistance resources  
Home safety evaluations  
Advanced directive assistance

Made possible through a partnership with Family Eldercare



# CAPS Cares is Here for You!

Living with Parkinson's can be especially difficult in times of personal or family crises. That's why we developed a fund that covers the cost of counseling services through Family Elder Care. This program is funded by your donations. If you, or someone you love, is struggling with increased challenges, please call us to arrange an appointment with the social worker. These calls are handled confidentially, and the social workers are available for either in-office visits, phone consultations, or home visits.

To apply for assistance, please contact CAPS at 512-993-6830, P.O. Box 27565 Austin, Texas 78755-2565 or apply online at [www.CapitalAreaParkinsons.org](http://www.CapitalAreaParkinsons.org).

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## August Membership Meeting

Saturday, August 15 ■ 2:00 p.m.  
Medical Office Building, St. David's Medical Center  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, 3000 N. IH-35

### Answers to the Most Common Questions for a Movement Disorder Specialist

Dr. Elizabeth Peckham, D.O. is part of Central Texas Neurology Associates, a specialist in movement disorders. Dr. Peckham is board certified in Neurology by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology and has completed specialized fellowship training in movement disorders. She has also worked as a private practice movement disorder specialist and cared for Army soldiers and family members as a contract neurologist. Dr. Peckham now specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of Parkinson's disease, Parkinsonism, Essential tremor, Myoclonus, Tourette's syndrome/Tics, Ataxia, Dystonia, Restless Legs Syndrome (RLS), Huntington's disease, Tardive Dyskinesia, and Psychogenic movement disorders. She has extensive experience with the evaluation for and programming of deep brain stimulators and botulinum toxin injections.

