

Yes, Virginia
There is a huge food pantry in
Virginia.

Ultracapable Club
Georgia Lions ease social woes.

LION

A Best Friend— Many Times Over

Service dogs do much
more than help the blind



A BEST FRIEND— IN MULTIPLE WAYS

BY ANNE FORD

Say “service dog,” and most people picture a guide dog for the blind. Truth is, service dogs can make life easier, bigger and brighter for people with many types of health conditions, from peanut allergies to post-traumatic stress disorder. And Lions are very much involved. Here are eight Lions-supported dogs that are making a difference.

Joint Base Andrews and Brad

When U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Brad suspects that something’s not right with a person under his command, he takes the appropriate military action—putting his head in their lap.

Brad, a facility therapy dog, is trained to detect emotions that humans might not notice. As he makes his rounds at the medical clinic of Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, he’s on alert for any patient who seems especially sad or troubled. If he finds one, he rests his head in their lap and looks at his handler, Chief Petty Officer Bobby Long.

“Then I say to them privately, ‘Maybe there’s something you’d like to talk about,’” Long says. He’ll then refer the person to a behavioral health care provider. Since the base has begun employing a facility dog, its suicide rate has dropped.

Brad was trained by Southeastern Guide Dogs, a Florida nonprofit that counts both the Lions Club International Foundation and many individual Lions clubs among its supporters. In addition to detecting emotions, Brad helps patients perform physical therapy exercises (by playing fetch or tug-of-war), helps them get in and out of wheelchairs (by standing firm like a crutch) and generally lowers blood pressure throughout the base (by wagging his tail and being petted).

“We have a psychiatrist who tells everybody that Brad does his job better than he does,” Long says with a smile.

(Opposite) Brad is a soothing presence for Navy Captain Patrick Mcgroarty as he visits the dentist at the Naval Health Clinic Patuxent River’s Dental Clinic in Maryland.

Photo by Bobby Long

