

## Japan's First Hospital Facility Dog Training Program

日本初！NPO法人シャイン・オン・キッズが国際基準に準拠したファシリティドッグ国内育成事業を開始

Shine On! Kids, a Japanese government certified NPO, is launching a puppy training program for Hospital Facility Dogs created in compliance with international Assistance Dog training and program standards.

Over the past 10 years, Shine On! Kids (SOK) has introduced its pioneering Hospital Facility Dog (HFD) Program to three hospitals in Japan. SOK has now launched a pilot training program for future Hospital Facility Dogs in FY 2019 in Tokyo. To date, no organization in Japan has raised and trained young puppies specifically to be Hospital Facility Dogs.



Our HFD candidates, Ty (L Golden Retriever, Male, born Feb23.2019) and Masa (R Labrador Retriever, Male, born Mar7.2019)

### 1. About the Shine On! Hospital Facility Dog Program

Shine On! Kids' HFD Program pairs a "Facility Dog", specially trained to work at a children's hospital, with a "Clinician Handler", a medical professional who has acquired the knowledge and skills for handling the Facility Dog. Together they work as part of the medical team supporting the care of pediatric patients. All of SOK's handlers are certified nurses with years of clinical experience. Each handler works with their dog full-time at a single hospital after completing SOK's rigorous training program.

The Shine On! HFD Program was launched in collaboration with Assistance Dogs of Hawaii (ADH), an internationally recognized leader in HFD placements. SOK's first HFD was placed at Shizuoka Children's Hospital (SCH) in 2010, followed by Kanagawa Children's Medical Center (KCMC) in 2012 and Tokyo Metropolitan Children's Medical Center (TMCMC) in August 2019. The teams have completed over 50,000 patient visits to date, including accompanying patients who are going into surgery or undergoing invasive procedures. Thanks to SOK's rigorous infection control policies and procedures, no cases of infection or allergy-related incidents have occurred.

As inquiries for the Program increase, SOK faces a new challenge – how to sustainably supply HFDs going forward. As there was no organization in Japan that had experience in raising and training HFDs complying with international standards, SOK originally partnered with Assistance Dogs of Hawaii (ADH) and acquired trained HFDs, mentorship, and oversight for the handler training program. However, as a US-based charity, ADH prioritizes providing dogs to its local community and is not a sustainable solution for the future supply of SOK’s HFDs.



Japan’s first HFD Bailey (R). The director of ADH and puppy raisers visited Japan for Bailey’s retirement ceremony

## 2. About the Facility Dog Training Project

Shine On! Kids operates its HFD training program in accordance with the international standards and ethics set by Assistance Dogs International (ADI), a global organizing body of Assistance Dog organizations. The future HFDs will be trained by an Assistance Dog professional and mentored by a senior Assistance Dog Instructor/trainer. Both are highly skilled and experienced in training HFDs with organizations accredited by ADI.

**Marina Rodriguez** Assistance Dog Trainer, Occupational Therapist. Ms. Rodriguez has trained Assistance Dogs at internationally accredited organizations - ADH in the US and Bocalan in Argentina. Out of 52 dogs she trained so far, 10 dogs are currently working as HFDs in the US and Japan.

**Catherine Dorr** Assistance Dog Instructor and Trainer, OTD, MSGM, OTR/L. Dr. Dorr is a senior Occupational Therapist at a top Rehabilitation Hospital in the US with over 13 years of experience as a certified Assistance Dog Instructor and Trainer. She has trained and placed numerous Service and HFDs, and launched and overseen HFD programs at both civilian and military hospitals across the US.



SOK's Dr. Natsuko Murata (Ph.D. in Animal Behavior) and Marina Rodriguez, dedicated Assistance Dog trainer, upon puppies

Shine On! Kids' two HFD candidates came from Career Dogs Australia (CDA, <https://www.careerdogs.com.au/>). The puppies' temperament and health were evaluated from an early age, and the young puppies were carefully selected for indications of talent and competency to become HFDs. SOK chose CDA, because it is a globally recognized organization specializing in breeding dogs for Assistance and Service Dog work with superior skill in assessing each puppy's potential.



with Dr. Catherine Dorr, Assistance Dog Training Supervisor upon Annie's initial training at KCMC.

The positive reinforcement training process takes 1.5-2 years and is divided into four stages, during which the dogs will learn up to 100 commands. Simultaneously, the puppies undergo socialization following a curriculum including field trips to shopping malls, hospitals, schools, etc., and exposure to a variety of people and physical stimuli. At the

end of each stage, the dogs are evaluated on three criteria: temperament, skills and obedience, and reaction to stimuli. Finally, the Assistance Dog Trainer and Supervisor will determine their suitability for working as HFDs by evaluating their progress throughout the training and via a field observation.

### 3. Announcing Our New Advisory Board

SOK created an advisory board to oversee the HFD training process to ensure that the future HFDs can work safely at medical facilities and to nurture healthy dogs.

Sayaka Kuze-Arata, D.V.M., Ph.D. /Lecturer, Azabu University, School of Veterinary Medicine, Department of Animal Science and Biotechnology Laboratory of Companion Animal Research

**Sayaka Kuze-Arata**, is secretary of the Japanese Veterinary Society of Animal Behavior, and is involved in the mental care of cats and dogs as a certified veterinary behaviorist in Japan.

Ryohei Nishimura, D.V.M., Ph.D. / Professor, The University of Tokyo, Graduate School of Agricultural and Life Sciences Laboratory of Veterinary Surgery

Dr. Nishimura assisted in revising the Act on Welfare and Management of Animals as a member of Central Environment Council of Ministry of the Environment.

**Tomoko Takayanagi**, M.D., Ph.D./ Visiting Professor, Aichi Medical University; Executive Director, Japan Service Dog Association

Dr. Takayanagi contributed in the compilation of the 2002 Law concerning Assistance Dogs for Persons with Physical Disabilities as a member of Japanese Health and Labor Sciences Research group.

**Mariko Yamamoto**, Ph.D. / Lecturer, Teikyo University of Science, Department of Animal Sciences

Dr. Yamamoto has extensive knowledge of working dogs in both the US and Japan through her post-doctoral research at UC Davis.

日本語版リリースはこちら▼

<https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000040.000023199.html>

---

当プレスリリースURL

<https://prtimes.jp/main/html/rd/p/000000041.000023199.html>

特定非営利活動法人シャイン・オン・キッズのプレスリリース一覧

[https://prtimes.jp/main/html/searchrlp/company\\_id/23199](https://prtimes.jp/main/html/searchrlp/company_id/23199)

---

#### ◆Contact

e-mail : [fd\\_sok@sokids.org](mailto:fd_sok@sokids.org)

phone : 03-6202-7262 (Mon.-Fri. 10:00-17:00)

#### ◆ Shine On! Kids

What we do

Founded in 2006, the creation of the organization was inspired by the smiles and courage of Mark and Kim Ferris' son Tyler, who spent his short life battling infant leukemia in Tokyo. After they lost Tyler, they wanted to create something positive for families going through what they had endured. The medical system in Japan is one of the best in the world, but the area of patient support is still relatively undeveloped. SOK aims to create a complete pediatric patient support system in Japan: from the moment of diagnosis, throughout treatment and after discharge from hospital.

SOK has introduced its unique programs to hospitals throughout Japan: Beads of Courage to 20 hospitals; Hospital Facility Dog Program to 3 hospitals; and 4 workshops per year of "Camp Courage" for childhood cancer survivors.

<http://sokids.org/>