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MANDY

Our son Stephen has severe cerebral palsy and constantly requires ongoing treatment including surgery and painful follow up therapy away from home. As you can imagine this is very stressful and is difficult for Stephan to cope with.

We were lucky enough to have an Assistance Dog provided to our son in 2003 and it has been amazing to see what a dramatic impact it has had on our family. It has been wonderful to see the difference Stephen's Assistance Dog, Mandy, has made in his life and therefore the entire family.

Mandy is trained to assist Stephen with such things as picking up items that fall from his tray, pulling off his socks, fetching certain items—eg pillow. The tasks that Mandy undertakes provides Stephen with the opportunity to be more independent for himself, and as he grows older Mandy will be able to be further trained as Stephen further develops and matures and his needs change.

Mandy travels with us when we leave home for treatment, she lies at Stephen's feet on the plane and is permitted into hospital with him.

Mandy is able to accompany Stephen anywhere he needs to go. This is so important for Stephen, the fact that Mandy is able to be with him during the especially stressful times in his life.

In short, Mandy has become part of our family, she is an integral part of Stephen's support mechanisms and we see them being a wonderful team as he grows up and meets his challenges to make a fulfilled life of his own.