

ASHLEY SIMPSON

FOUNDER OF CANINE COMFORT



making a difference

Ashley Simpson is a truly awesome inspiration for the Hill Section Community. She has lived here for six years but has been helping her community in a myriad of ways since she was 8 years old. She first volunteered at The Midnight Mission with her mom and brother. Then at age 11, she contributed by playing the flute at skilled nursing facilities like Earlwood, where her grandmother stayed while sick with meningitis. She participates every year doing community service through her school at elementary schools and elderly nursing facilities. Ashley says, "Giving back to your community creates a sense of belonging and unity." Her generous heart and compassionate spirit are evident in all her charitable work, but you can really see her shine in her work with rescue dogs.



She will be starting her senior year at Chadwick School in Palos Verdes this fall and even though she is only 17 years old she already runs her own non-profit organization, Canine Comfort. Ashley grew up in the South Bay, attending Pacific Elementary, and then Chadwick starting in the sixth grade. She has always loved animals, especially dogs. Her first rescue was a dog named, Ricky. They found the sweet golden retriever tied up to a fence along the freeway. Luckily, they were able to help him and this experience and the love she felt for Ricky led to the creation of Canine Comfort. Ashley started



Ashley and her brother



to work with rescue organizations like Second Chances to help dogs find forever homes. Then a few years ago Ricky passed away and not long after that, Ashley's brother graduated college and joined the United States Navy. Ashley felt a significant loss with both of them gone and wanted to do something to make her feel connected to both of them. Hence, Canine Comfort was born. In February of this year, she registered her non-profit organization, Canine Comfort.org. Ashley's mission is to unite local canines with the men and women who unconditionally serve our country, to provide them support, empathy, and healing. Dogs provide unconditional love and have proven to be incredibly effective in therapy for post-traumatic stress disorder and mental illness.

Ashley is the founder and treasurer of Canine Comfort and will be the president when she turns 18 in March. Her mom is the current president. While being a full-time student, Ashley still manages to dedicate a lot of time to her charity. She spends about six to eight hours a week working on Canine Comfort, from updating the website, blogging, sending orders, designing gear, and yet she still spends two to three hours on weekends with other dog rescue organizations. The joy her work brings her is worth it for Ashley, as she states, "Every person I meet while volunteering or running my nonprofit fundraisers has something to share. I love hearing stories, giving treats to animals, getting lots of licks, and giving lots of belly rubs."

She has met many veterans through her work and they are living proof that the dogs really do make a difference. One such veteran, Mark, came up to her at a recent event and introduced his service dog, Duke, that has helped him since his discharge from the military. He shared with Ashley that Duke has changed his life. Stories like Mark's are why Ashley believes that dogs, and other animals, can have one of the most significant impacts on the emotional and mental well-being of humans. Check out her blog for other stories.

Ashley has found her passion and if you share her passion or are looking to make a difference in another human being's life and in an animal's life, Canine Comfort is always looking for volunteers, especially for their weekend events. You can send Ashley an email if you want to join them. Fundraisers are also listed on the website. www.caninecomfort.org.

