

Hello Lampeter Elementary School staff, Students and Parents:



My name is SSD Gabby, and I'm super excited about the great news I have for everyone. I will begin working at Lampeter Elementary the week of October 15th and my buddy, SSD Eagle, will be starting at Hans Herr on the 15th as well.

I was born in July of 2016, and I have been training with Susquehanna Service Dogs, based out of Grantville, Pa, all of my life. I started out working with my puppy trainer, Devon, for the first 18 months of my life. She raised me in her home and sometimes took me to her high school. I attended summer camps, and played with lots of kids. I really love working with kids! You may have met my brother SSD Phelps last year when he was in training.

While I was busy training, a few Lampeter-Strasburg staff members began the process of trying to obtain three new facility dogs to join SSD Maya on the LSSD Campus. They created the PAWS team and received permission from the School Board to raise money and begin the process with SSD (Susquehanna Service Dogs). Fundraising efforts were made by the PAWS Team, the Aevium club at the High School, and the Lampeter Elementary PTO were a huge success!

I was lucky enough to be part of "Meet the Dogs" day at SSD in May and was matched with Lampeter Elementary School. I was so excited when I found out I would be in a school with lots of children.

I have spent the last six months in advanced training, practicing old skills and learning a lot of new cues specifically for staff and students at the school. I am so very excited to show you what I am able to do. Some basic cues I am really good at are sit, down, heel, lap, pressure, and come. If you drop my leash, don't worry I can pick it up myself! I might add that I am an excellent listener and will rest my head on your leg and let you pet me if you need a friend. It is also noteworthy to report that in order to do my job I have to have excellent manners and a calm, friendly temperament. In addition, I am in excellent health and fully socialized.

You may be wondering why I will be working in the school. Well you see, when a facility dog is involved, people, especially children, often respond more positively and with enthusiasm. I can help students learn empathy, sharing, and patience. In some instances, I am able to help calm a person simply by letting them pet me or by applying some light pressure to them. The staff at Lampeter Elementary School are awesome, but sometimes kids feel more at ease talking about upsetting situations when I am around. I can also make difficult tasks seem more attractive, interesting and enjoyable when I am there to assist.

In the beginning, I will be spending a lot of time with Mrs. Pedersen, Mrs. Bitler, Ms. Jeffers, & Mr. Baylor, who have been trained as my handlers and have earned public access certification with me. Once I get settled in, I will be able to meet students in many more classrooms and around the school. You may see me in the hallways or the bus loop. I will be wearing a green vest to indicate I am a fully-trained service dog. Although I love human interaction and attention, please ask my handler for permission before petting me and/or giving me cues. This could confuse me, and I would not want to be a distraction in the educational process.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Dr. Bray. This is going to be a great adventure. I am so excited to be at Lampeter Elementary School and show everyone what I can do. I can't wait to make a lot of new friends!

Thank you, SSD Gabby

