

Amanda's Story

A Short Version



Amanda is currently scheduled to receive her Service Dog by August 2008, from the dogs currently undergoing training at USP - Hazelton, Bruceton Mills, WV

paws4people™
paws4prisons™/ SLAMMERDOGZ™

Private Placement

Announcement

The volunteers of **paws4people™**, **paws4prisons™** and the **SlammerDogZ™** Programs are proud to announce the selection of Amanda, a three-year old, who suffers from Infantile Spasms, a form of catastrophic epilepsy presented in infancy, as a Private Placement Candidate for a Service / Educational Assistance Dog.

Amanda was selected as a Private Placement Candidate [PPC] on June 9, 2007.



Amanda suffered a stroke while still in the womb, which damaged both sides of her brain.

During her first six months of life, Amanda showed some developmental delays. In December 2004, she was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and began physical and occupational therapy.

A short time later, Amanda began having seizures and was diagnosed with a severe form of infant Epilepsy, known as Infantile Spasms. This diagnosis came with a grim prognosis with regard to Amanda's intellectual ability but Amanda fought hard to progress developmentally despite the prognosis. Over the next 6-8 months, Amanda's seizures would come under control, only to start again. She tried many different medications, diets, and other treatments but she could not keep the seizures at bay.

By September of 2005, Amanda was having over 100 seizures per day despite taking seven different medicines to prevent them. Amanda was taken to UCLA Hospital where doctors recommended she have major brain surgery, which was performed in October of 2005.

The eight-hour surgery resulted in one-half of one side of Amanda's brain being partially removed, and the other half of that side being disconnected from the other hemisphere. The surgery also resulted in the removal of her speech center and the loss of about 25% of her eye sight.

In November 2005, Amanda had a shunt inserted into her brain to reduce the pressure that was building up. While the surgery initially left Amanda with severe right sided weakness, she now walks using a gait trainer and with assistance in a regular walker.

Amanda is now able to sit without assistance, roll both ways, and is able to kneel. She is still working at transitions into many of these positions but has mastered them if you place her in a position. The fine motor skills in Amanda's right hand are very slow to develop. While Amanda's future health status is not fully known, she remains virtually seizure free since her surgery.

Amanda's current therapies include occupational, physical, speech, vision, and special education, and all of her therapists are thrilled with her progress since surgery, as she has made great strides in all areas.

Amanda's Assistance Dog will aid her with walking because the surgery resulted in her having to use a gait trainer and regular walker. The dog will also assist Amanda by picking up objects she may drop, opening doors for her, and carrying items for Amanda. Amanda's parents also believe the dog will help Amanda during her school career, as it facilitates her acceptance, inclusion and integration into her school environment.

For more information on Amanda, you can check out her Blog at:

<http://www.amandaiupdate.blogspot.com>, or go to: <http://www.amanda.story.paws4people.org>

To help Amanda and others get their Assistance Dogs, please go to:

<http://www.amanda.paws4people.org>

Amanda's parents have established a foundation to advance the understanding and treatment of conditions associated with Infantile Spasms and to foster support to those impacted by the condition. For more information go to: www.infantilespasmsfoundation.org

