

My Journey **Rebecca Frock and Taz**

I started the process of researching medical response dogs over a year ago. At that time I searched on the internet, called Great Plains and talked with Mr. Goehring. I received an application packet and started my pursuit to complete all that is requested. In doing this I learned much about myself and about my family's needs. At that time my youngest son was only 11 months and my eldest was 3 years old. The more I thought about adding another family member [the dog], the more concerned I became about this pursuit for a canine companion. However, now that my children are older, more verbal and more willing to "share mommy's time" with others I feel like I want to complete what I started."

I hope that you will consider my application for a medical response dog and feel free to contact any of my references or family members. I have discussed my desires and needs for such a service dog in my essay. There are so many things that a medical response dog would add to my life and the lives of those that love me. I find myself becoming hesitant to get excited about the prospect of more freedom in my life because I don't want to get my hopes up and then feel disappointment. I am asking you please to approve my application so that my hope for more autonomy is no longer just a dream but rather my reality.

Barri Sanders [Rebecca's mom says] of her impression of Great Plains. "More people should know about it! Both for support and research [understanding the relationship of dogs and service to people beyond pets] The dogs at Great Plains are magnificent! It was amazing to me that training was so effective even with the puppies." She goes on to say, "The people [employees] were very, very helpful in every way – they made me feel welcome even a part of their mission. I brought books and stuff to do and never needed any of it. Thank – You!!"

I have not done this before. I have not looked at my Epilepsy in such a personal and profound manner in which I allow myself to see all aspects of my diagnosis. My challenges with seizures began when I was nine years old while I was out jogging in my neighborhood with a friend. My world and the lives of my family changed so quickly...

Having the structure of an actual medical diagnosis does lend some comfort, oddly enough. It is very isolating to feel weird and different. As a child I felt stupid.

I find that the absence and partial seizures cause less physical injury and significantly more emotional injury. Most of the time people are not aware of my seizing. In fact, usually if I tell them they freak out. I have put so much energy into hiding my seizures from others so as not to impose my problems on them. I have worked hard at minimizing the impact that this disorder has on my life and the lives of my family. In fact, usually if I tell them they freak out. In fact now I find myself at the opposite end of the spectrum. Where once I defined myself as "the girl with seizures" now I have created "the woman who has no problems". I believe the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

...and when we asked mom if she felt the training needs were met. "More than just met. I learned a tremendous amount - most importantly a great deal about dog human relationships and expectations. I'm more comfortable for my daughter because I learned to trust Taz and Becca's ability to be the Alpha." "Mitch [SDA trainer] was extremely good about meeting individual needs as they become apparent. She's quite creative."

Rebecca attended training at our training center during the month of July. In the first week Rebecca was accompanied by her husband and children, her mother accompanied her during the second week and her sister joined her during her third and final week. Rebecca resides in New Mexico where she is employed as a clinical counselor and psychotherapist.

Emergency Medical dog Taz was bred and born within our breeding program. Taz is a big easy going black lab. His greatest strength is that he is a lover. He and Rebecca developed a strong bond rather quickly. Taz joins the Frock family with includes husband Tom ,two children Noah and Lucas, father Pop-Pop,as well as Picasso the dog, two cats and Woodstock the cockatiel.

The Service Dogs for America program again broke with industry tradition in that we accommodated the entire family throughout the training process. Husband, mother, children and sister all attended training during the team training session in July. Our program is working hard to present a non-institutional feel to the team training process. After all the people we serve live in homes... not in institutional settings.

Thank-You, Thank-You, Thank-You!

Thank you Mitch for your patience, thank you Vicky for your giving heart, thank you Joni for your laughter, thank you Annette for your joy [and beautiful pedicure], thank you Amy for your weekend presence, thank you Kimmy for always offering a helping hand, thank you Mason for your young energy, Thank you Mike for your wisdom and vision! Taz and I are navigating our new life well thanks to all of you. I promise to keep you updated always. Much Love, Rebecca Frock.