

# Rescued dog helps woman in wheelchair

By Ryan Blessing



LARRY ST. PIERRE / THE SUN  
Friends: Wheelchair-bound Theresa Jodoin of Richmond gets to know her service dog, Carry, and dog trainer Christina Johnson.

## The Sun

**Richmond** – Theresa Jodoin calls her new German Shepherd, Carry, a godsend.

Carry is a service dog that has been specially trained to aid people, such as Jodoin, in wheelchairs.

“I’m really happy. She’s going to e good company and a lot of help,” said Jodoin, who uses a motorized wheelchair to get around her Richmond home.

Carry, an 11-month-old dark brown German Shepherd was rescued from Exeter Animal Shelter by Richmond based *Paws for Independence*, a new non-profit organization that trains and matches service dogs with people who have limited use of their arms and legs.

She s the first dog to be paired with someone as part of Paws’ service dog training program.

“Carry has a wonderful work ethic,” said Christina Johnson of Paws. “That’s something we look for in the dogs.”

The dog still needs a little more time to mature to the point where she can be partnered with Jodoin.

“She has 90 percent of her behavior down pat,” Johnson said

Jodoin can’t use her legs and sometimes has trouble with her hands. Doors, in particular, can be difficult to open and close sometimes.

“Shutting doors will be a big help,” Jodoin said while lovingly scratching Carry’s head. “She’ll also be able to help me reach for things on a counter or a table.”

Jodoin and the dog will start partnership training in the next month or two.

Jodoin looked for a service dog before hearing about Paws, but found that available options were too expensive and required her to travel out of state to train with the dog.

“It just wasn’t something I could do on a regular basis, which is why I’m so happy to have learned about this,” she said.

Paw service dogs are initially brought to Delmyra Kennels in Exeter, where they are evaluated and where training begins.

During Partnership training, Jodoin will have the opportunity to bring Carry to such places as the supermarket, restaurants, and movie theaters.

“She’s going to learn to shop,” Jodoin said. “I love to shop and I love to eat out.”

Jodoin also wants Carry to meet the youngsters she teaches at a Sunday school in Warwick.

“The kids are absolutely dying to meet her,” she said.

The dog gets along well with everyone in Jodoin's family. Her husband, Bill, and daughters, Debbie and Brenda, have welcomed her into their home.

Carry and Jodoin will be a perfect team, Johnson said.

"We wanted to find someone really extraordinary to match Carry with," she said. "This will be a tough act to follow."