

Name _____

Pippi

Pippi, a golden retriever and Labrador retriever mix, lives a life of purpose. Her meticulous training is called into action daily by Micah Nash and his parents, Andy and Heather Nash.

On one particular day, Micah dropped to the floor and stared at the ceiling of a small grocery store in Missouri. Heather commanded Pippi to “nudge.” Immediately, Pippi used her nose to remind Micah to stand up and resume his position at her side. Micah laughed as he got up and again grasped his part of Pippi’s leash.

Why is a dog in a grocery store? Pippi is not a pet dog. She is a skilled companion dog, trained by Canine Companions for Independence. Her job is to assist Micah in dealing with his autism. She wears a blue and gold vest proclaiming her status as a service dog whenever she is in public.

People often ask to pet her. Pippi is trained to take the attention in stride, responding promptly to Heather’s commands. Heather answers most questions now, but

in the future, Micah will be given more opportunities to interact verbally with the people around him.

One of Pippi’s duties is to accompany Micah to restaurants. She curls into a ball under his table, ready to help Micah focus on the world around him. At the command “visit,” she will lay her head in Micah’s lap. This grounds him in the reality of the present.

During every family outing, Micah will increase his hard-earned verbal skills by giving Pippi commands, such as “sit” and “down.” But Pippi’s job doesn’t end when the family goes home. Over time, Micah will become more responsible for Pippi’s care. This will help him expand his conversation skills with peers and family.

When Pippi is “off duty,” Micah and his brother chase her wildly through the house. And Pippi, released from her duties, behaves like any dog loved by two rambunctious boys.

Text Questions

- What does it mean to say that Micah will *resume* his position at Pippi’s side?
 - He will start walking again.
 - He will take his place next to her again.
 - He will summarize what he is supposed to say to her.
 - He will continue to lie on the floor.
- What is the theme or moral of the text?
 - how to train a Labrador retriever
 - what it is like to have autism
 - why service dogs are allowed in public places
 - how trained dogs can help people with autism
- Which of the following is not a place where Pippi will likely be on duty for Micah?

a. in the car	c. at the store
b. at home	d. at a restaurant
- Which statement from the text shows one way in which Pippi interacts with Micah?
 - Pippi lives a life of purpose.
 - Pippi uses her nose to remind Micah to stand up and resume his position at her side.
 - She wears a blue and gold vest proclaiming her status as a service dog whenever she is in public.
 - Pippi is trained to take the attention in stride, responding promptly to Heather’s commands.
- Based on what you read, what is one part of his life in which Pippi will assist Micah?
