



Pensacola, Fla. (Jan. 5, 2022) – The Pensacola Ice Flyers announced today they have a new addition to the organization by way of a puppy that is a future service dog through the national non-profit organization called Canine Companions.

The puppy is named Ranger and is a black Labrador/Golden Retriever cross. He arrived in Pensacola a week before Christmas and will be raised and socialized by long-time volunteer puppy raisers, LeAnne Pickering and Weston Cramer. Ranger was already named when they were informed they would be receiving a new puppy to raise. It was a perfect name as Cramer is an Army Ranger who served from 2003 to 2008 with the 3rd Infantry Division and was deployed in 2005 for Operation Iraqi Freedom III with his operation being East Baghdad.

“I’ve known Weston for a while now and have recently got to know LeAnne, and I was fortunate enough to get to know their previous puppy,” said Ice Flyers owner Greg Harris.

"We had talked multiple times about the Ice Flyers having a puppy as part of the team and everything fell into place in late December. Although we did not get to name the puppy, I feel the name Ranger is perfect as he now is also a tribute to Weston and his service and sacrifice for the country. A Ranger helping raise Ranger to become a service dog for someone in need."



The concept of service dogs for people with physical disabilities began with Canine Companions in the mid-70's in a home office and a garage. In the 47 years since, thanks to the unparalleled generosity and dedication from supporters, they have grown tremendously and are the leader in the service dog industry.

"I have been involved with Canine Companions since 2004, and Ranger will be the 12th puppy I have raised for this amazing organization," Pickering stated. "The fact that Canine Companions has been around since 1975 and has placed over 7,000 dogs free of charge is just one of the many reasons I keep coming back."

"As a volunteer puppy raiser, it is a rewarding experience with selfless service to raise a Canine Companions service dog that can help adults, children, and veterans with disabilities," Cramer commented. "The partnership with the Ice Flyers will bring a greater awareness of Canine Companions as a non-profit organization to the Pensacola area and surrounding communities."

For the next 14-18 months, Ranger will be in Pensacola and taking part in different community events, activities and games with the Ice Flyers. After that, Ranger will move on to professional training where he will learn more advanced commands in order to become an expertly trained service dog.

"I'm excited to add a dog to our team and having Ranger represent the Ice Flyers as we promote and draw attention to Canine Companions and the need for service dogs," Harris added. "I know our fans and community will love having an Ice Flyers puppy and will look forward to having him as a member of the Ice Flyers family. I also want to thank LeAnne and Weston for their work and commitment to this partnership and becoming a part of our family, too."

Cramer followed up by stating, "A Canine Companions future service dog can make a positive difference in someone's life. It's all about making miracles happen with Canine Companions."

"I can't imagine not having a puppy," Pickering said. "When people ask me, 'How can you give them up?', I say, 'How can I not?'. These dogs go on to help veterans, children and adults with disabilities. I will never forget handing over the leash of my first dog to her forever person. It was life changing."

Ice Flyers fans can follow Ranger's progress on the team's official social media pages and will soon be able to see Ranger at upcoming home games. Fans can download the team's official app and follow them on social media to stay up to date with all the team information, news and stats, as well as the promotions and events planned with Ranger involved.

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About Canine Companions:

Canine Companions is leading the service dog industry so our clients and their dogs can live with greater independence. Canine Companions provides service dogs to adults, children and veterans with disabilities and facility dogs to professionals working in healthcare, criminal justice, and educational settings. Established in 1975, Canine Companions is a nonprofit 501(c)3 and has six regional centers across the country serving all 50 states. Learn more at canine.org or call 1-800-572-BARK.

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