Beckett gives me the freedom to do anything. The hardened dirt pathways to the internationally renowned Swiss artist Ugo Rondinone's Seven Magic Mountains in Hendersen, Nevada, a large-scale site-specific public art installation, are accessible for a wheelchair. If you are in the area, it's worth a picnic. HOWEVER, the pathway around Rondinone's art is full of randomly spaced sunken grooves made by flash floods, creating obstacles of ruts, bumps, large rocks, and other desert delights.

- This is why, every day, Beckett and I practice together and separately. He trusts me. I trust him.
- This is why I keep my core strong and healthy with bands, Occupational Therapy and Feldenkrais, and by sitting or standing tall. I keep moving strong.
- This is why the command of Recall for our dogs is so important; sometimes, we find yourselves in situations that require our service dogs to move over ruts, to brace as we bend, pull, and step, while they brace and back up.
- A service dog thinks of a solution when trained daily to keep its mind alert to the next need.
- A handler surveys the land, the apartment, the next challenge, seeing it not as a difficult obstacle but as a puzzle to find the solution in order to keep going.

What is counterbalancing?

Counterbalancing serves the handler with balance and stability for forward mobility; it prevents falls and increases mobility. service dogs wear special harnesses for this type of work. The handler isn't putting substantial weight on the dog; the dog walks alongside the handler and assists with gait and balance. Think of it as a game of tug-of-war, with the handler and service dog gently playing give and take as they walk down the road...

What is bracing?

When a service dog braces, it stiffens its legs and stands in a stable, firm position, providing a balance point for a handler to change their situation. Think of falling or being stuck on the ground or chair: your service dog makes it possible to get up anywhere from any position.

What is a 'hike,' a momentum pull?

A service dog thinks of a solution when trained daily to keep their minds alert to the next need. Dogs move over the rut to brace as I bend, state 'hike', and step while Becket pulls me over the rut on the command "hike" and into the next position. From the ground sitting or from a fall a

'hike' will get you up and standing. Or from a chair; your service dog makes it possible to get up anywhere from any position with 'hike'.

Mobility Service Dogs West Coast Project's first-hand experience is firmly grounded in the truth that the FUNctional independence created when a well-trained Service Dog is working in unison with its Handler allows for a full and balanced life. A very wise and seasoned Service Dog Trainer told Janie always to remember that a Service Dog is spot on with its service 85% to 95% of the time. The rest of the time, it needs to be a fun-loving dog.

We believe that it is essential to have doggie fun adventure time when the Service Harness comes off. For Beckett, it is nose work, fun and fetching in a big field near our apartment. Finding a doggie daycare that caters to Service Dog Handlers or an active human that can give your Service Dog a nonworking doggie kind of experience once a week for a few hours is an excellent gift to our Service Dogs to incorporate into your routines.

The training, your consistency, and ever-flowing love, full of kindness is always ongoing and requires lots of time, patience, and a supportive, interactive community. MSD-WCP is here to provide puppy raisers, handlers, trainers, and the supporting crew the interactive network for a successful, full life.

We are a small but mighty organization that depends on your transparency and integrity as we work hard together to achieve your perfect SD Team! A service dog is a dog. He's not a robot; he's a living, breathing creature with feelings and wants and needs.