

## A Buddy for Sophie Adams



Sophie Adams has epilepsy. Epilepsy is a disease. It's not contagious. You are born with it. Epilepsy causes seizures. Sophie had her first seizure when she was four. She fell to the ground. Then her body started twitching. Her parents called an ambulance. They took Sophie to the hospital. Doctors did a lot of tests on her. They discovered that she had epilepsy.

Epilepsy can be dangerous. People can get hurt during seizures. They can't control their bodies.

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Sophie takes lots of medicine. It helps to stop her seizures. But it can't stop them all. An adult had to be with Sophie all the time to protect her head during seizures. Sophie needed an adult with her all the time. All. The. Time. When she played with friends. When she was at school. Even in the bathroom at school.

Sophie was sick of it. By the time she was nine, she wanted privacy. She wanted to be alone with her friends.

Sophie's parents understood. They wanted to help. They heard about a special program. It trains service dogs. Service dogs are trained to help people. They can help people with epilepsy. Training a service dog takes two years. It costs about \$25,000. There are many organizations that help families pay these costs.



Sophie's parents gave her a surprise when she turned 10. They got her a service dog. His name is Buddy. He is a Standard Schnauzer. He is black. He has wiry hair. He has a full beard.

"I love that he has a beard," laughs Sophie.

Buddy goes everywhere with Sophie. She doesn't need an adult. Buddy can sense if she's going to have a seizure. He alerts her by barking.

Buddy helps Sophie during seizures. He crawls under her head. He supports it. He keeps it from banging on the floor.



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Sophie loves Buddy. He goes everywhere with her. He lies next to her in class. He runs next to her during P.E. He even goes with her to the bathroom. Sophie is so much happier these days. She feels more independent. She feels more like a regular kid.

“Buddy is my best buddy,” Sophie likes to tell people. And she means it!

