

## ER staff thinks service dog rocks! And so does Cody's family...

Ronda McCowen



Our son, Cody, fell in the shower Saturday evening after he and our seizure alert service dog, Polly, returned from camp. (Everyone there wanted to know if they could borrow Polly for a few days to teach their kids a thing or two.)

We thought he'd just jammed his finger, so we iced it. Polly wasn't sure about that: she wanted the ice bag to play with. But Sunday morning once Cody got up and around, we noticed it was very swollen. We decided to head to the ER after breakfast, and Polly alerted a seizure (small one), so he finished eating.

As we were trying to leave, Polly alerts yet another seizure. We worked through that one and then headed to the ER.

The security officer gave us a funny look and asked if the dog was a service dog. We told him "Yes," and proceeded to the check in desk. The nurse asked us the same thing, and we got some strange looks, but apparently, that goes with the territory.

Once called back to the exam room, we waited. Polly lay down. When the x-ray technician came to take Cody to x-ray, he said, "Polly can't go back there; it's not allowed." I explained that Polly is Cody's service dog and she alerts for seizures. He stopped for a minute, then said, "Well, okay."

Polly was right there beside the wheelchair all the way. She wasn't going to let Cody out of her sight.

As they proceeded with the x-ray, the technician finally asked what she does. I explained, and he was amazed. He couldn't believe that a dog could do these things. "I've heard stories," he said, "but I didn't believe it. That is cool!"



Later the doctor came in and told us that Cody had broken his finger. We were waiting for them to buddy the two and brace it, and Polly was content until they started to work on Cody. Then she decided it was time to get involved, checking it out, making sure that he was okay, and that no one was hurting him.

I signed the papers for discharge and the next thing I knew Polly started barking and jumped up in the bed. The security officer came running in, along with the doctor and nurses and staff from the other exam rooms. I explained to the doctor and the officer that Cody was having a seizure and Polly was alerting. You would have thought someone had just shot somebody.

Things were pretty tense, and then the doctor asked Cody what his name was. I explained that he doesn't usually speak for a while after he has a seizure. He looked at me, patted me on the shoulder, and said, "Well I guess you've got it under control," and walked out.



Everyone stood there in complete awe. They couldn't believe what they'd just witnessed from a dog that they'd seen lying down and sleeping while waiting for Cody. They were amazed and we were so proud of her. She made believers out of them all.

Polly checked on Cody every little bit, and then curled up with him when we got home so that she would know he was fine. Now we'll see how tomorrow goes with the orthopedic surgeon.

Thanks Jeremy, Karen and staff at [4 Paws for Ability](#) for the amazing match of Polly for Cody.

Ronda McCowen...mom of Cody and the amazing Polly, who became Cody's dog June 2009