

The Joel and Dena Gambord Charitable Foundation at the Community Foundation for Monterey County



Founders Joel and Dena Gambord grew up in the SF Bay Area and called the community of Monte Sereno home for many years. After serving in the US Army during the Korean War, Joel formed a building and land development business that focused on residential and light industrial projects in the San Jose area.

In 1996, Joel was elected to a four-year term on the Monte Sereno City Council. After his brief political career came to a close, he and Dena moved to the Monterey Peninsula. They currently live in Pebble Beach, California, with their two English Springer Spaniels, Missy and Bella.

Background

After being diagnosed with MS, their youngest son sought to obtain an assistance dog to help him with his day-to-day routine. The Assistance Dog Institute in Santa Rosa, California, was contacted, but reported that there would be a 3 to 5 year wait for a suitable companion. Upon hearing that, Joel and Dena decided to get involved by making it easier for people with disabilities to connect with dogs that could aid in maintaining their independence.

In 2006, they founded the Institute for Canine Studies (ICS), with a mission to reduce the wait time for service dogs for people with special needs. The initial focus would be on training people to train service dogs. They envisioned a \$33 million dollar, twenty-one acre learning and training campus to be located on the former Fort Ord military base in Marina, California. The property overlooked the Monterey Peninsula and was situated near the California State University at Monterey Bay (CSUMB).

After working for six years to make their vision become a reality, Joel and Dena, along with the ICS Board of Directors, decided it would be best to adjust their vision to a more immediate and attainable goal. They decided that supporting existing organizations that were already involved in training and placing service dogs would be more manageable. ICS was dissolved and The Joel and Dena Gambord Charitable Foundation came into being.

In 2013, its first year of operation, the Foundation provided financial grants to four 501(c)(3) charitable organizations. These organizations worked to train hearing dogs, diabetic alert dogs, psychological support dogs for wounded veterans, and search and rescue dogs that partner with emergency first responders. The Foundation was able to assist these organizations in putting 11 additional dogs into service helping people in need. The Foundation hopes to exceed that number in the future with even more sponsorships and continued relationships with current organizations for many years to come. For more information, visit www.cfmco.org/gambord.