Do you think that animals other than dogs can be trained to help people?

1. Have you ever heard of Monkey College? Who do you think goes to school there? If you said monkeys, you were right. Dogs are not the only animals that can be trained to help people. Helping Hands, an organization in Cambridge, Massachusetts, trains capuchin monkeys to be companions and helpers for people in wheelchairs who cannot move their arms or legs.

2. More than 20 years ago, Dr. M. J. Willard was working with a person who had recently become paralyzed. She thought that a monkey might be able to help her patient with some basic household chores. Dr. Willard was right. Not only can monkeys be trained to help people, they are also wonderful companions.

3. Capuchin monkeys are found in the wild in South Central America. They are about the size of a small cat and can live to be nearly 40 years old. They are very intelligent. They are also known for being friendly and good with their hands. Capuchin monkeys have opposable thumbs, which means they can use their hands much in the way that people do.

4. Everyday tasks, like turning on a light, putting something in the microwave, or pressing play on a CD player, can be difficult for someone who cannot use his or her arms and legs. Capuchin monkeys can easily perform these tasks. This allows their owners more freedom. They can accomplish things on their own and can live independently.

5. The monkeys and their owners become friends and learn to depend on each other. Some owners say the monkeys are almost like children to them. The monkeys can be mischievous and sometimes like to play tricks on their owners. This is especially true of young monkeys. Mostly, though, they like to please their owners. They like the treats they receive when they do a good job, and they like to be praised. Capuchin monkeys also love the affection they get from their companions. They love to snuggle, too.

6. Helping Hands matches people with disabilities to monkey companions who can help them. But the close friendships between the monkeys and their owners happen all on their own.
Vocabulary Skills

Check the meaning of the underlined word in each sentence.

1. Helping Hands trains capuchin monkeys.
   ___ groups of railroad cars
   ___ teaches or instructs

2. A Helping Hands monkey is more than just a pet for its new owner.
   ___ a tame animal that lives with a person
   ___ to stroke or touch lightly

3. In the wild, capuchin monkeys spend a lot of time playing in the trees.
   ___ out of control
   ___ a natural area; wilderness

Fill in the blanks below with the possessive form of the word in parentheses.

4. A ____________ opposable thumbs allow it to use its hands for many things.
   (monkey)

5. The ____________ friendship with his or her monkey is often very strong.
   (owner)

6. People with disabilities are often amused by their ____________ actions.
   (companions)

7. ____________ experiment was quite a success! (Dr. Willard)

Study Skills

A table of contents is one of the first pages in a book. It shows the title and page each chapter begins on. Use the table of contents below to answer the questions.

Monkey Business
Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Types of Monkeys ............ 2
Chapter 2: Habitat .................. 7
Chapter 3: Eating Habits .............. 12
Chapter 4: Communication ............. 15

1. What kind of information would you find on page 12?

2. On what page does the second chapter begin?