

playtime. The families are responsible for attending weekly training classes, doing homework and preparing their young students for their careers. At a year old, the dogs move in with a professional trainer who teaches 90 commands over the next six to 12 months. Throughout the process, the puppies are screened for health and temperament issues that could impact their service capabilities or ability to

on and off and, his personal favorite, pushes automatic door buttons for Clark, who uses a wheelchair.

The greatest impact may come from the companionship and bonding the dogs give their partners. Some young recipients living with disabilities get a pal and an instant icebreaker at their side in otherwise potentially stressful situations, like a new classroom or meeting. Along with functional assistance, a

day has brought," she said.

Not all dogs, no matter how adorable, are ultimately cut out for a life of service. A waitlist for service academy flunkies does exist, and yes, it's long. Though Maurer corrected, "We don't refer to them as flunkies, we prefer the term 'career change.'" For dog-loving volunteers wanting a shorter commitment while still helping the mission, ADN has another list for volunteer relief families,



PAWSIBILITIES Will and Maureen Maurer pose with a litter of ADN recruits who will go on to learn 90 commands before graduating as service dogs.



satisfactorily match with applicants.

After months or even a year of waiting, nothing offers more relief or excitement than the day an applicant finally receives her new partner. For islander Jenna Clark, getting Ranger, a black Lab, has been a life changer. "Working with him, training with him and walking him has given me a confidence I'd lost in the last few years," said Clark. Among other tasks, Ranger turns lights

service dog helps create connection with others while calming their partner. After living with his service dog Nelson, 7-year-old Ian said, "I finally have a best friend."

The positive emotional and physical impact of the service animals cannot be underestimated. "Many recipients have lived better and much longer than expected having an assistance dog," said Maurer. Clark concurred. "He makes me smile no matter what my

enlisted for times the official puppy training families are in need of a few days of puppy sitting.

ADN is supported solely by private donations and grants, when available. The organization plans to have an annual fundraiser event on Bainbridge Island in the coming months and welcomes donations, community outreach opportunities and volunteers.

» More information at assisteddogsnorthwest.org.

Wax Brazilian

» With referential sounds that span a half-century and more than 6,800 miles, *Tropicália* is lyrically, politically and spiritually binding Bainbridge Island to São Paulo. *Tropicália* music, which originated in late 1960s Brazil as part of a larger sociopolitical movement, integrates elements of American countercultural and psychedelic rock into traditional Brazilian rhythms and sounds. Now, the island band Cuban Heels is strumming, plucking, tapping and crooning its own take on the rich music. The group, led by guitarist Alan Simcoe—luthier and co-owner of Village Music—plays music inspired by Brazil, other parts of Latin America and the Caribbean, or like Simcoe says, "anything below Louisiana." Vocalist-flutist Shannon Dowling, bassist Steve Newton, and percussionist Bill Riach round out the ensemble, a favorite at house parties, island venues and festivals. Don't expect passive entertainment. "Inevitably, there is audience participation," said Simcoe. "Down there, it's rare for there to be one percussionist—it's a group effort. So we take some parts and pass them out to the audience." Keep the beat with the Cuban Heels at their monthly gigs at the Earth & Vine Wine Bar, or let the band's catchy rhythms, junta-busting jives and lilting melodies carry your party guests to the tropics. —JANICE HUANG

