Llama. When you first hear that word, you often think of a rude, spitting animal, but really, they are kind, gentle giants. Llamas make very good companion animals, and you can use their fiber for yarn or felting.  You can also make dryer balls with their fiber, and dye the yarn in different colors.

What can you do with llamas? Lots of things, like hiking, shows, and llamping (camping with llamas)! Some common uses for llamas’ loyalty and friendliness are:

**Guardian llamas:** used to protect other animals, such as goats, sheep, and alpacas from common predators like coyotes, foxes, and dogs. My llama protects our pygmy goats.

**Therapy llamas:** often used to help with therapy needed for people going through a loss in their family, depression, etc. They are intelligent, social animals that can improve human’s mental and physical health. My llama makes me happy because he is cute, gentle, and huggable!

**Show llamas:** used for shows such as the California State Fair to help teach the public about all the amazing things llamas can do, such as carry a pack, go through an obstacle course, and to see how their fiber looks and feels.  I plan to show my llama this year at the California State Fair and hope to win a BIG ribbon!

**Pack llamas:** used for hiking or llamping, as they can carry up to one-third of their body weight! Llamas can be well-trained when they feel safe and can carry your lunch and maybe even a picnic blanket to use on your next hike! I plan to go llamping with my llama River this summer, and the more experienced “llampers” will teach me how to go on a hike using a pack.

I hope you learned a lot about llamas, and I hope that you stop by the California State Fair to “walk a llama/alpaca” when I am there.  It is where the llama and alpaca owners walk with fairgoers around the show ring with their llama or alpaca. The next time you see a llama, try to see them for the majestic, kind, gentle giants that they are!