



OFFICE OF COUNTY MAYOR MIKE RAGSDALE

400 Main Street, Suite 615, Knoxville, TN 37902

September 21, 2006

Mr. Robert L. Phillips, President
Guide Dogs for the Blind
350 Las Ranchitos Road
San Rafael, California 94903

Dear Mr. Phillips:

Thank you and your organization for the opportunity of having Michael Hingson speak to Knox County Government employees on Wednesday, September 20, 2006. He was right on target! We received many positive comments in regard to his speech. Michael's dedication to Guide Dogs for the Blind is very impressive and it is people like Michael who make a real difference in our world.

Our employees listened intently as Michael recounted the events of that horrific day when he and his faithful Guide Dog, "Roselle" worked as a team to lead others to safety from the 78th floor of the World Trade Center's North Tower. Through incredible courage, strong determination, and teamwork, he spoke of how he and "Roselle" navigated their way through the World Trade Center down to the chaotic scene on the streets below, and finally to safety. He spoke of how everyone has the mind-set that a guide dog leads a person when, in reality, it's a team effort. Sharing a lifetime of experience facing the daily challenges of living in a sighted world and the horrific moments of our Nation's tragedy, Michael helped our employees learn the real lessons of 9/11. He related to those in attendance the importance of trust, teamwork, strong values, and the courage to face changes. He talked about how he and "Roselle" have an empathetic relationship that is second to none because they depend on each other at every moment. He brought to light the power of a human-animal bond.

Guide Dogs for the Blind is an outstanding organization and Michael's dedication is truly an example of a roving ambassador for your organization.

We wanted to extend our best wishes to Guide Dogs for the Blind, Michael Hingson, and "Roselle."

Sincerely,

Mike Ragsdale
Knox County Mayor

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cc: Mr. Michael Hingson
Guide Dogs for the Blind
350 Las Ranchitos Road
San Rafael, California 94903

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