# ALUMNI NEWS

Volume 28 – Number 2

Theresa Stern, Vice President of Outreach, Admissions and Alumni Services, Marcia Wick, AA Board, Amit Ahuja, AA Board, Editors

Audio version voiced by Michele Spitz, Woman of Her Word

We love your participation in this newsletter. Send submissions to the editor via phone, mail, or e-mail tstern@guidedogs.com or alumninews@guidedogs.com

Alumni Association Mission Statement

The Alumni Association will support the vision of GDB, “using our power of partnering to improve quality of life”, by building a strong sustainable community of support among our Alumni. We will work to support Alumni success with their guide, in building relationships with others, and actively participating in the greater GDB community.

Alumni Association Board of Directors Mission Statement

Connecting our community through leadership, advocacy, communication and outreach

Alumni News is available electronically, in Braille (upon request), and on audio CD (upon request). The audio version of this newsletter and Guide Dog News can be found on our website, guidedogs.com. If you are able to access email and would like future issues sent to you electronically, please let Theresa Stern know at tstern@guidedogs.com. Email allows us to get the news to you in a timely manner and is easy on the environment!

We'd like to send our very special thanks to all of our Alumni who, by their efforts and their examples, refer others to our program.

Interested in a career with GDB? Check out our opportunities at: <http://guidedogs.com/careers>

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# FROM YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## 2020 Year of Service Update

 By: Scott Wilcock with *Sailor*

Response to the 2020 Year of Service challenge which Scott Wilcock, Chair of the Alumni Association Board, put out to GDB Alumni has been impressive. Many grads have shared stories of service that illustrate the positive impact guide dogs and handlers have in our communities.

“Here is a collection of amazing people doing all sorts of things!” said Marcia Yale, president of Paws Around the World Alumni Chapter whose members were among many to submit stories of service. But first, here’s Marcia’s own report.

 Marcia volunteers with her guide dog *Nottingham* at two elementary schools to help students with math and reading. She also supports other organizations, serves on the board of the Brain Injury Association of Kansas, and participates in BIA Support groups.

Danette with *Mayor*  shared her story with a classroom of 3rd graders with a puppy raiser; she thanked the puppy raiser for her participation with a special GDB magnet.

Tom with guide *Rhoda* volunteered at an elementary school teaching students English as a second language. “The kids wanted *Rhoda* in their class picture this year, they are so sweet,” Tom said. Tom also tutors and mentors children after school, and he ministers with Racers for Christ.

Laura with *Reenie,* attached long stem chocolate roses to her guide dog’s harness and delivered them to smiling colleagues on Valentine’s Day. “*Reenie* always shares her amazing unconditional love and joy,” Laura said.

Vickie with *Buddy* serves her community with the Guide Dogs of Hawaii's group, presents workshops at an Elder Care facility, volunteers for the Hawaii Association of the Blind, and sits on the Advisory Council for the Queen's Medical Center. “I feel blessed and honored to work with *Buddy* in giving back to our community,” said Vicky.

Anonymous:  Volunteered at Ski for Light, cheered up a sick friend, worked at a church food drive.

Wendy, with *Blanche* at her side, serves as president of the Tucson downtown Lions club, takes part in community service projects, visits the veterans administration long-term care unit, shops with families in need, teaches Braille and sign language, and helps at school events. Her husband and their sons also participate in clothing and food drives, and sing at an eldercare facility. “I feel blessed to be able to pay it forward. A loving guide dog who isn't afraid to forge ahead in unfamiliar circumstances makes it all possible,” Wendy said.

Marilyn with *Payson i*s the chairperson of her local ADA advisory Council, and the president of the Topeka Association for the blind and visually impaired. With *Payson*, she also Volunteers at local hospitals. “The nurses love to give *Payson* a belly rub,” said Marilyn.

Heidi with guide *Morrissey* shared the TSA Cares link with colleagues in the University of Oregon disability community.

Bev with *Carri* volunteers as a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) for neglected and abused children. With *Carri* by her side, she serves our most vulnerable children. “Volunteers are needed all over the country, in case others would like to join,” Bev said.

Sandy and *Jet* baked bread and shared food from her pantry with neighbors, sent uplifting messages and made calls to check on others, ordered a pizza delivery for a friend’s birthday, and she’s making baby blankets for friends. “It’s hard to know if what we do will help or if it is enough. If we all take time to serve in a small way, it would be a different World,” she believes.

## Guide Dogs and Entrepreneurs

By: Kelly Egan with *Hope* and Amit Ahuja with *Tashi*

What Do Guide dogs and GDB Entrepreneurs have in common?

They love their work!

Entrepreneurs are individuals who are willing to take risk. They back their ideas with effort, time, and money, while being aware they can fail completely at their venture. Our February Speakers Series call featured 4 of GDB's very own guide dog handlers – Stu Starkey, Rod Barker, Alex Schay, and KaeAnn Rausch, entrepreneurs who shared their stories from losing their sight to starting and successfully building, growing and evolving businesses, with their guides at their sides. They were driven by a variety of motivations. A desire to solve a problem, to follow successfully in the footsteps of entrepreneur parents, to discover a meaningful profession in the aftermath of sight loss, and to be one's own boss. They may have been motivated differently, but listening to them and their stories of successes, setbacks, and resilience, one could not help admire their courage and self-belief.

Stu and his guide dog own a successful moving company with nine locations and 100 employees.

"My guide dog makes me feel so much more comfortable," Stu said about meeting the challenge of being a business owner who is blind.

Rod and guide Cairo own a Real Estate brokerage and teach real estate law.

Dealing with preconceptions is Easier with a guide dog, Rod said. The guide dog is a social icebreaker.

Alex and guide Frisco own a Renewable Energy company: Carbon Solutions Northwest. When his vision loss was diagnosed, he prepared to become a successful blind professional. From a business perspective, a guide dog opens doors, he said.

KaeAnn with guide Debra own a blind product company, Guidelights and Gadgets.

"It's amazing how people warm to dogs," she said. Conversations about the dog transitions into meaningful dialogue about business, she added.

Thanks to the Speaker Series Project Team – Kelly Egan, Amit Ahuja, and Jason Mitschele who did a fantastic job moderating the call. To listen to the recording of the Speaker Series call, go to:

<https://www.guidedogs.com/explore-resources/alumni-resources>.

## [Town Hall Project Team Report](#d)

By: Bruce Gilmour with *Marley*

In late 2019, the Alumni Association Board identified the need to improve two-way communication with GDB graduates. We explored new ideas to bring alumni feedback forward. As a result, the board developed a project-based approach to strengthen Awareness, Collaboration, and Enrichment (ACE, which led to the introduction of the Town Hall Project Team.

First, the team focused on two questions: What platform would reach the most alumni at one time given the distribution of 2200 graduates in North America, and what topics are of current interest and value, explained Bruce Gilmour, lead of the Town Hall Project Team. In February 2020, the team hosted the first Town Hall on the powerful Zoom Communication platform. An astounding 120 graduates were logged in during peak call traffic!

The timely conversation focused on the increased frequency of people misrepresenting pets as service animals and the challenge of sharing public spaces with emotional support animals. Two panel presenters participated - Rabih Dow, Director of Outreach and Advocacy at GDB, and Jamie Axelrod, Disability Resources Director and ADA Coordinator/504 Compliance Officer at Northern Arizona University.

Key Findings:

* There is a need to increase public awareness about the growing problem service dog teams face when encountering a therapy dog, emotional support animal, or fraudulent service dog in public. Although the percentage of people with working service animals in the overall population is small, the impact on our access to opportunities, community involvement, and quality of life is significant.
* While civil statutes are in place to protect access rights for guide dog teams, the laws are inconsistent between States and Provinces.
* GDB graduates should become familiar with local legislation and stay informed about their rights, as distinguished from persons illegally representing themselves as having a disability requiring a non-trained pet to accompany them.
* The Town Hall Project Team will investigate integrating this topic into GDB’s training materials.

Questions remain. Now that emotional service animals and fraudulent service dogs have their foot in the door of public spaces, how will the record be set straight? What are the access rights for trained and legitimate service dogs as opposed to emotional support animals or the family pet?

Can corporations be brought into the dialogue? 7-11, Wendy’s Burgers, and Starbucks, anecdotally, have entrance signs clearly stating only those dogs trained to do a task or service are permitted to enter the premises. How did this messaging result? Can a collaboration with businesses promote the change we seek? Will hotels and grocery chains join the team?

GDB grads, having completed a bona fide service dog program, know that four on the floor in good health, well-groomed, wearing recognized gear, under control, and displaying good behavior is the standard for working service animals. Occasionally, owner-trained dogs also meet these requirements.

What can a graduate do to proactively affect a positive outcome when encountering an emotional service animal or a fraudulent service dog?

Increasing public awareness is a daunting, time-consuming task. The education net expands and strengthens as GDB grads spread the service dog message one by one.

 GDB Alumni are ambassadors. Contact Theresa Stern to request the public education card (2019) about fraudulent service animals. Graduates are encouraged, as they are comfortable, to share these cards with taxi drivers, airline agents, fellow passengers on a transit bus, the young child in the grocery store, or the curious person in a medical office waiting room. The post card advocates for the guide dog lifestyle.

To request post cards, email: TStern@guidedogs.com.

To listen to the February Town Hall, go to:

<https://unt.zoom.us/rec/play/uJF_Ieuv_zo3TNLEuASDC_R4W468LK-shiQdrqAEyB3jUSIKO1uiM7VGYLEAGqlPmSdUm1H4ZCbhcSsi>

Our second Town Hall took place in April featuring Chris Benninger, Michelle Cliborn, Kim Samco and Dr. Kate Kuzminski. The panel addressed our response to, and questions from graduates about, the COVID-19 situation. This will be summarized in the next Alumni News. If you missed attending in person here is a link to the recording: <https://unt.zoom.us/rec/play/7pAvcL35pmg3E9eW5gSDAv9xW47oKqqs1ChP-_VemUe3UyICYVKuZ7YRZuQwFCvNRZsMteaiQv2AAe_C?autoplay=true>

Respectively submitted, Bruce A. Gilmour, Town Hall Project Team Lead: Team members Jessica Stone and Dorianne Pollack

# NEWS YOU CAN USE

## Emergency Preparedness Part 2

By: Jack Heim with *Scout*

An emergency can happen to anyone at any time - with or without warning. As a guide dog handler, being prepared for an actual emergency will give you peace of mind even if you never need to take action. It will also be safer and less stressful for you and your dog if you’re prepared. Being prepared comes down to planning. Anticipate your needs.

Part 1 of this article published in the previous issue of Alumni News<https://www.guidedogs.com/meet-gdb/news> ,, dealt with things you can do in advance to be prepared. Part 2 covers what you should do during an emergency.

* As a person with a disability, emergency preparedness is essential for you. In any emergency, your health and safety comes first. Make sure you are safe then take care of your dog.
* First responders, police, firefighters, and EMT’s may need guidance on how to deal with you and your dog. Make sure first responders realize that you have a disability and that your dog is a service animal. Don’t take this for granted.
* Inform emergency service providers that Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc. is ready to assist by providing information or direct assistance in an emergency. The GDB emergency contact number is 1-800-295-4050. Inform the emergency person-ell that they can find this number on a tag on your dog's collar.
* If you must be transported via ambulance, your dog should be allowed to ride with you. If able, inform emergency personnel that your dog is well trained and is very friendly under normal circumstances. In an emergency, your dog may become frightened or confused. Your guide may react by clinging to you, trying to escape, or in rare cases, by becoming aggressive. Do your best to calm your dog. Speak in a soft, low voice. Be generous with food rewards.
* If you can’t manage the dog yourself, the next best thing is to have another person the dog is familiar with take control of your dog. If your dog has to be left with a person he is unfamiliar with, GDB should be contacted immediately.
* An emergency situation may require you to be evacuated from your home. Keep in mind that you have the legal right to be accompanied by your service dog. In the case of an evacuation, bring along a water-proof pouch with a photocopy of both sides of your dog’s GDB identification card, vaccination records, micro-chip records, and a recent photo of your dog. You should also bring along 2 weeks of food in a waterproof container,   cleaning supplies, extra leashes and collars, and toys.

Note: Emergency shelters are in violation of the ADA if they refuse to allow service animals. You can’t be separated from your guide dog - even if pets are normally prohibited in the shelter, or if shelter staff or volunteers can provide the same assistance as your dog. Also, you can’t be separated from others because you have a service dog. You have the right to ask for reasonable modifications at security checkpoints so you’re not repeatedly subjected to long waits simply because you must take your dog outside for relief.

Emergencies can be extremely disruptive to your daily life. Proper planning and knowing what to do can make it safer and less stressful for you and your dog.

## Tip for Sheltering in Place

By: Kim Samco with *Kiva* - GDB’s Client Support Specialist

How many times a day do we hear that these are unprecedented times with more questions than answers?  While we may be tired of hearing this, it is true nonetheless. The following article is intended to normalize feelings you may be experiencing during these challenging times and share ideas for self-care that may offer a small distraction and a bit of comfort.

As human beings we are programed to seek out others in times of stress yet this is exactly what we are told we cannot do during these  Difficult times. There are “positive” stressors and “negative ” stressors.  An example of a “positive ” stressor might be preparing for a public performance.  Even though there is likely some anxiety involved, our experience tells us we’ll have the support of the audience and, through preparation, we have the necessary resources to accomplish what we need. In fact, the event related to “positive” stress may actually be one we are excited about and even looking forward to. Because we are prepared and know what to expect, we are able to cope and get through it. We are aware of what resources are required to get us through and we know that we have them. Just knowing that we have what we need to cope makes managing stress a little easier.

“Negative” stressors might be best described as occurring when we are facing something that is distressing rather than exciting. Often events associated with this type of stress somehow impede our daily life and we have no idea what to expect or what practical and emotional resources will be  required to cope.  Current shelter in place and social distancing requirements may leave us feeling isolated and uncertain. We may not know what resources are needed to cope or if we even possess them. While this type of anxiety may be difficult to manage, there are coping strategies that can be helpful.  Following are some suggestions that may be useful.

Most of you have either spoken with me or read my articles and know that I encourage all of us to pay attention to the messages we tell ourselves. Simply shifting our thoughts a little can make a big difference in how we feel. One example is rather than telling yourself that you know you will get sick and then focusing on the fear related to that belief, you might give yourself the more positive message that you will do the best you can to stay safe and follow the precautions put out by experts. You can also do what you can to boost your immune system by eating healthy food, taking supplements and doing your best to keep a positive attitude.

Even though we might be drawn to watch the news in order to stay informed, keeping the TV tuned to the same news loop will not contribute to lowering stress and anxiety.  I recommend checking in to see what’s happening in the world in the mornings and evenings and choosing to do something other than watch the news throughout the day.

While we are all social beings, some of us are more extraverted than others. For those who are extraverted, the sense of isolation created by sheltering in place may be particularly difficult. Although spending time talking to friends and family on the phone is helpful, sharing an experience with those people may be even more beneficial. Examples include sharing  an activity while on the phone such as grooming your dog, knitting/crocheting, working a crossword puzzle or even watching a movie and either discussing it afterwards or texting comments back and forth during the movie, just to name a few ideas.

Creating and maintaining structure and routine is a method which many find comforting.  Get up at an appointed time and dress as though you are going out to provide a sense of normalcy and predictability.

Give your brain the message that things are OK by inhaling for the count of five and then exhaling for another count of five.  Repeat this three times or more.  This tells the flight or fight portion of our brain that things are OK since we are breathing slowly; after all, if they weren’t we’d be taking short, shallow breaths.

If you are sharing space with someone else, make it a point to create your own separate experiences so that you have something to talk about at the end of the day.  This could be reading different books, watching different TV shows, having different phone conversations to name a few ideas.

Lastly, do the best you can to take one day at a time and please know that the staff at GDB is here to offer support.  You can reach us through the Client Support Center at 1-800-295-4050

or you can reach me directly Monday-Thursday at 1-888-336-3039

Do the best that you can and treat yourself with the compassion you deserve.

# THE WAY WE SEE IT

## Misperceptions

By: Amit Ahuja with *Tashi*

[Studies](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/20/well/the-worst-that-could-happen-going-blind-people-say.html) show that most Americans fear going blind and underestimate the capabilities of individuals who are blind. Blindness is believed to be worse than losing a limb, one’s memory, hearing, or the ability to speak, and even worse than contracting HIV/AIDS. This is because blindness is supposed to compromise one’s quality of life and independence so thoroughly as to make life not worth living. While these (mis)perceptions almost certainly inhibit the interactions of people who are sighted with those who are blind, they are also being positively transformed by growing numbers of guide dog users.

To begin, consider three published vignettes on blindness that have appeared in recent years:

“They have variously been perceived as pitiable idiots incapable of learning, as artful masters of deception or as mystics possessed of supernatural powers. One of the most persistent misconceptions about blindness is that it is a curse from God for misdeeds perpetrated in a past life, which cloaks the blind person in spiritual darkness and makes him not just dangerous but evil.” – [Rosemary Mahoney,](https://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/05/opinion/sunday/why-do-we-fear-the-blind.html) non-fiction writer.

“Whenever I tell someone that ‘I really don't see at all — just like you don't hear anything at all when you cover your ears,’ they always seem bamboozled, as if I've lost my mind because the sensation I am describing sounds physically impossible.” – [Michelle Hackman](https://www.afb.org/blog/entry/why-do-people-fear-blind), Yale University graduate and journalist for the *Wall Street Journal*.

“In many ways, I have overcome my blindness… what I haven’t been able to overcome is how others perceive me and treat me differently now because of my blindness … I feel the looks of my fellow passengers, wondering what my story is, but too afraid to ask for fear of saying the wrong thing and offending me. I feel helpless, stared at like some sort of freak.” – [Brad Snyder](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/28/opinion/blind-sight-seeing.html), veteran and Paralympic gold medal-winning swimmer.

Such anxieties are widely shared among people who are blind. When in the company of a sighted person in public spaces, for example, individuals who are blind often report that the service providers, waiters, cashiers, doctors or nursing assistants, often look past them, and instead engage the sighted person even if they, and not the sighted person, are the one ordering the food, paying the bill, or afflicted with the ailment. This discomfort reflects the distance that persists between people who are blind and the rest of society.

Cumulatively, such attitudes raise the barriers for the blind community. Clearly, to alter social attitudes towards blindness and open conversations around sight loss as well as disability requires much more effort. Until then, those of us who are blind, still have to navigate the world and lead fulfilling lives. A guide dog enables us to overcome some of these perception-related challenges.

First, the independence that a guide dog brings to an individual’s life can dispel some of the fears related to blindness. A highly mobile and confident person living with vision loss challenges the idea of helplessness, which is at the root of the fear associated with blindness.

Second, as much as our guide watches out for us, we also look after our guide. We are a team after all. When a guide dog handler works with a healthy and well looked-after guide dog, she or he amplifies the signal to the world that in addition to being able to take care of ourselves, we are also capable of looking after others.

Third, a guide dog can reduce the unease during the contact between people who are blind and those who are sighted. We in America, as it turns out, love dogs. [The country is home to 75 million dogs, with a dog for every four people, a proportion higher than any other nationality](https://www.economist.com/united-states/2019/11/23/americas-extreme-obsession-with-dogs-and-what-it-means). Given this context, a well-trained guide makes it easier for people to approach the handler, triggering conversations that may not have occurred at all. Such contacts go a long way in dispelling the fear around blindness, educating the public about the normal, as well as fulfilling, lives we lead.

Finally, the guide dog industry inadvertently creates an entire constituency of allies for those of us who are blind. Recall, the journey of a guide dog begins in the care of a puppy raiser. Across the country, tens of thousands of people raise puppies for guide dog schools. Puppy raisers, then, have a glimpse into the lives of people living with sight losss, an experience that enables them to push back on the fears and misperceptions related to blindness.

Given its potential to change perceptions about blindness, the guide dog lifestyle holds much promise for the blind and visually impaired community. Only 10,000 guide dog and handler teams are active in the United States currently. [According to one estimate, 33 countries across the world have active guide dog programs](https://www.igdf.org.uk/about-us/facts-and-figures/statistics/). These figures highlight the opportunity for overcoming the perception-related challenges by popularizing the guide dog lifestyle.

 My 45-Year Guide Dog Journey
By: Terry Almy with *Kettle*

 Terry Almy lives with her husband and guide dog Kettle in Los Angeles. She
works as a freelance Spanish interpreter and sings with the Angel City
Chorale. This is her 45-year guide dog story.

My guide dog journey began in 1974. I was 19, about to embark on my junior
year at the University of Redlands, CA. I was majoring in foreign languages
and was active in extracurricular activities. While using my cane to
navigate the college campus, I almost fell down a flight of stairs. I can
only suppose that I wasn't using my cane correctly since we know that cane
travel is safe.

I had known few people who had dog guides. With reservation, I approached
GDB in San Rafael. I heard the follow up might be better in view of the fact
that I lived on the West Coast.

In January 1975, I began a new life as a guide dog handler. Training was
quite different then than today. Class was comprised of 13 students, and
most of the instructors were men. The class period for first-time students
was 28 days. I arrived on a Sunday, and obtained my dog on a Wednesday.
Individualized training was limited by the larger class size, though
attention to each student was provided. Often, students worked in teams. All
students crossed the Golden Gate Bridge, went to Chinatown, trekked Muir
Woods, and shopped the city.

Training and treatment of the dogs was also different. Leash corrections
were more common and severe. Now, a collar cue reminds a dog to refocus.
Training methods today accomplish results with more dignity afforded to the
dog. This is a good thing, I think. The pull into the harness was also a lot
harder. Some people might say that guide dogs are "softer" now, but the dog
seems more sensitive to me, which I appreciate. Increasingly, "fake service
animals" make it more difficult for those who have legitimate service
animals to travel in public. I hope, with the help of blind consumer
organizations, this situation can be rectified.

Throughout my 45-year journey as a dog guide handler, I've been blessed to
receive dogs from GDB. I've traveled to various countries with my dogs,
worked several different jobs, and gained much joy and independence. Each of
my dogs have fitted in and worked well. They've been welcomed with open arms
by most everyone we've met. I wouldn't change having a guide dog for
anything in the world.

I have to admit I'm no longer the 20-year-old lady that I was. These days, I
utilize a support cane with my guide dog - although I was reluctant at first
- I didn't want to interfere with my guide's work. Following the advice of
GDB's instructors to keep myself safe and provide Kettle with a positive
guiding experience, we now work well with this additional tool.

In closing, I want to thank GDB for providing me with incredible dogs over
the last 45 years. Additionally, I encourage everyone to continue with their
individual journeys. Be proud to have that dog at your side. Be proud to
train dogs and to make a difference in the lives of those who receive them.
Be proud to raise puppies who will one day keep their handlers safe, poised,
and prepared to take life head on.

# ALUMNI BULLETIN BOARD

Do you have a guide dog from gdb and wish to connect with other graduates?  If you are on WhatsApp and would like to join a group of graduates to connect and talk about our furry friends please send Rebecca Ilniski an email at rilniski@gmail.com

Expressing your interest in the group and your contact information on WhatsApp.  WhatsApp is a voice and text messaging client that you can download on IOS and Android from the App Store or Google Play store.  We’d love to connect with you. Rebecca Ilniski and Marvin Email: rilniski@gmail.com

Congratulations to GDB Alumna Aria Mia Loberti, who has been selected as a Fulbright scholar! She and her black Lab Ingrid, who often sports pearls, will be headed to the UK in the Fall to take part in the prestigious program.

Thank you Field Service Managers for sending out two fabulous articles with information about how to keep our guides engaged during shelter in place! If you did not receive these via email you can check out these articles on the GDB website: “Back to Basics”, and “Bordum Busters”, <https://www.guidedogs.com/explore-resources/alumni-resources>

GDB’s Director of Outreach and Advocacy, Rabih Dow, would like folks to know about a great learning opportunity, Camp Crip,

<https://cripcamp.com/> Here is some info from their website: “The Crip Camp Impact Campaign is proud to announce Crip Camp: The Official Virtual Experience! In these unprecedented times, there is no one better to think outside of the box and deliver community building right to your home. We are inviting all grassroots activists and advocates to join us this summer for a virtual camp experience featuring trailblazing speakers from the disability community. All are welcome, you do not need any activism experience to participate. When: Every Sunday at 2 pm PST/5 pm EST from May 17th to August 30th for one and a half hours each.Please note all times on the Zoom link will appear in your local time zone. Online workshops will occur via Zoom and are ASL interpreted with Deaf Interpreters plus captioning. After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar. We encourage you to attend all, or as many sessions as possible. We will send Crip Camp 2020 swag materials to everyone who attends 14 out of 16 sessions. “

# IN MEMORY, IN

# IAM, IN TRIBUTE

In Memory – Remembering guides who have died.

*Latrice*, female Golden Retriever guide for Vicki Jack of Helena, MT (CA 738 - April 2012)

*Lace,* female Yellow Lab guide for Michaela Tsztoo of Alameda, CA (CA 660 – December 2005)

*Hibiscus*, female Yellow Lab guide for Dianne Phelps of Napa, CA (CA 684 – May 2008)

In Tribute – Honoring guides who have retired.

Tyra – female Yellow Lab guide for Holly McKnight of Arlington, TX (OR 243 – February 2013)

# Alumni Association 2020 Board Meetings

Saturday, Feb 1, 2020: Saturday, June, 6, 2020: Saturday, Sept. 5, 2020: Saturday, Dec 5, 2020

# Alumni Association Board of Directors

## Officers

Chair - Scott Wilcock / *Sailor*

Gilbert, AZ

stitchbert@gmail.com

Vice Chair - Marcia Wick / *Viviane*

Colorado Springs, CO

marciajwick@gmail.com

Secretary, Deanna Lewis / *Mambo*

Cincinnati, OH

dlewis@guidedogs.com

Members at Large

Amit Ahuja / *Tashi*

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Kelly Egan / *Hope*

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Bruce Gilmore / *Marley*

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Flagstaff, AZ

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Amy Salger / *Marsala*

Vinton, IA

asalger@guidedogs.com

Ex-Officio members / board liaisons

Board Liaison:

Melissa Hudson / *Camry*

Los Angeles, CA 90013

mhudson@guidedogs.com

# Guide Dogs for the Blind Alumni Chapters

Last updated: Saturday, April 11, 2020

# USA

## Arizona

### Desert Dogs of Phoenix

* Location: Phoenix, Arizona
* President: Scott Wilcock, stitchbert@gmail.com
* Vice-president: Brian Mucyo, brianmucyo@gmail.com

### Northern Arizona High Country Walkers

* Location: Northern Arizona
* President: Patricia Clingman, patriciaclingman@yahoo.com
* Vice-president: Doug Reber, dougib4586@gmail.com
* Secretary: Vicki Reber, vreber78@gmail.com

## California

### Foggy Doggies

* Location: San Francisco, California
* Email: fogdog@groups.io
* Co-president: Lauri Shay, laurishay@gmail.com
* Co-president: Jan Robitscher, jbrobit@aol.com

### OC Guide Dogs Alumni Chapter

* Location: Orange County, California
* Web Site: [ocguidedogs.com](http://ocguidedogs.com/)
* President: Scott Quinlan, scott.quinlan@hotmail.com
* Vice-president: Melinda Wulff, minwulff@gmail.com

### Paws of Fame

* Location: Los Angeles County, California
* Web Site: [www.pawsoffamela.com](http://www.pawsoffamela.com/)
* President: Joseph Landau, jklandau@yahoo.com

### Sacramento GDB Alumni

* Location: Sacramento, California
* Email: sacgdbalumni@gmail.com
* Web Site: [www.sacgdbalumni.com](http://www.sacgdbalumni.com/)
* President: Christopher Pitcher, christopher.pitch@icloud.com
* Vice-president: Debra Thompson, adrinamom@gmail.com
* Secretary: Shelby Haines, Shelby-Haines@scusd.edu

### San Diego Alumni Chapter of Guide Dog Handlers

* Location: San Diego, California
* President: Launa Hardy, Launahardy@gmail.com
* Vice-president: Monique Fenton, Moniquegdb14@gmail.com

## Colorado

### Colorado Rocky rovers

* Location: Denver, Colorado
* Email: CoRockyrovers@gmail.com
* President: Beth Gustin, bethglpc@gmail.com
* Vice-president: Veronica Rodriguez, Veronicarodriguez1954@gmail.com
* Secretary: Pat Hein

## Florida

### Sunshine Guide Dog Teams of Florida

* Location: Florida
* Description: We talk about our guide dogs and support each other with once a month calls and a once a year in person meeting.
* President: Marcia Bukala, mjbukala@yahoo.com
* Vice-president: Jim East, jim.east.mhs@gmail.com
* Secretary: Reggie Alvarado, reggie.alvarado@gmail.com

## Illinois

### Windy City GDB Alumni

* Location: Chicago, Illinois
* Description: Chicago and Northern Illinois
* President: Roxanne Calibraro, rcalibraro@earthlink.net
* Vice-president: Terry Ann Saurman, saurmann@access4less.net

## Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio

### Guide Dog Handlers of the Midwest

* Email: GDB\_Midwest+subscribe@groups.io
* President: Deanna Lewis, Deannakay03@gmail.com
* Vice-president: Paul Walker, herospaw2002@gmail.com
* Secretary: LuAnn Bowers

## Oregon

### Reigning Canines

* Location: Portland, Oregon
* Web Site: [https://www.facebook.com/Reigning-Canines-777050619078740/](http://https/www.facebook.com/Reigning-Canines-777050619078740/)
* President: Bobi Earp, bobiearp@gmail.com

## Utah

### Greatest Paws on Earth

* Location: Utah
* President: Sandy Ruconich, sruconich@gmail.com
* Vice-president: Patty Mueller, plmueller@q.com

## Washington

### Washington State GDB Alumni

* Location: Washington State
* Description: Supporting each other and keeping everyone up to date about GDB
* Email: wagdbalumni+subscribe@groups.io
* President: Danette Dixon, danettedixon63@gmail.com
* Vice-president: Jeanne Jacobs, Jeannelavernejacobs@gmail.com

# Canada

## British Columbia

### BC Dogwoods GDB Alumni

* Location: British Columbia
* Email: BC Dogwoods Alumni Group talkadvocacy@hooh.ca
* President: Heather Walkus
* Advocacy: Lisa Bentz
* Outreach: Matt Salli

## Quebec

### Isee Paws Guide Dogs

* Location: Montreal, Quebec
* President: Kim Holdbrook, kimholdbrook3@gmail.com

# Special Interest

### GDB Guide Dog Handlers All Ways

Description: GDB grads and other guide dog handlers with multiple disabilities

* Co-president: Kim Kilpatrick, kimjkilpatrick@gmail.com
* Co-president: Jo Elizabeth Pinto, jopinto@msn.com
* Vice-president: Sarah Gales
* Secretary: Deanna Lewis

### GDB Mommies with Guides

* Description: Focus on parenting
* President: Tara Chavez, tmatzick06@gmail.com

### GDB Paws Around the World

* Description: Travel
* President: Marcia Yale, dragoncatmc@gmail.com
* Vice-president: Kay Malmquist, kay.malmquist@gmail.com

### GDB Raisers and Handlers

* Description: Bringing raisers and handlers together.
* President: Danette Dixon, Danettedixon63@gmail.com
* Vice-president: Paul Walker, herospaw2002@gmail.com
* Secretary: Mary Flynn
* Outreach: Andrea Barnhurst, atl\_braves1fan@yahoo.com

### GDB Tech Dogs

* Location: International, meets via Zoom
* Description: Sharing tips, tricks, and techniques related to technology
* Email: techdogs@groups.io
* Web Site: [www.tech-dogs.net](http://www.tech-dogs.net/)
* President: Deborah Kendrick, Kendrick.deborah@gmail.com
* Vice-president: Paul Walker, herospaw2002@gmail.com

### GDB Writers Chapter

* Description: Writing
* President: Rebecca DeGeorge, rebeccadegeorge09@gmail.com
* Vice-president: Jo Elizabeth Pinto, jopinto@msn.com
* Secretary: Launa Hardy, launahardy@gmail.com