**ALUMNI NEWS**

Volume 28 – Number 3

Marcia Wick, AA Board Chair and Theresa Stern, Vice President of Outreach, Admissions and Alumni Services, 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](mailto:tstern@guidedogs.com) or [alumninews@guidedogs.co](mailto:alumninews@guidedogs.co)m

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](mailto: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>

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. [From Your Alumni Association](#_In_Memoriam_–)
   1. [GDB Alumni Association Board Quarterly Report, By Scott Wilcock](#b)
   2. [Welcome New GDB AA Board Members, by: Dorianne Pollack](#c)
2. [Development Spotlight](#d)
   1. [Virtual Festive Holiday Luncheon, by: Theresa Stern](#e)
3. [News From Client Services](#f)
   1. [Support in Good Times and in Bad, by Marcia Wick](#g)
   2. [Coming Soon: GDB Partners with Be My Eyes, by Kelly Egan](#h)
4. [As We See It](#i)
   1. [Fifty Years of Wonder, by Lynda Boosy and Mary Kozy](#j)
5. [Chapter Chat](#k)
   1. [Rocky Rovers Aim High with Virtual Fundraiser, by Ted Tahquechi](#l)
6. [Alumni Bulletin Board](#aa)
7. [In Memoriam, In Memory, In Tribute](#bb)
8. [Gift Shop News](#cc)
9. [Alumni Association Board of Directors](#dd)
10. [Roster of Alumni Association Chapters](#ee)
11. [Guide Dog News 2020 - Issue 2](#x)

# From Your Alumni Association Board of Directors

## Guide Dogs for the Blind Alumni Association Board of Directors

## Quarterly Report May 2020

Overview:

The GDB Alumni Association Board conducted its third quarterly meeting March 7; a Chapter Presidents Forum April 4; and a well-attended Town Hall meeting April 23. The board also met via phone to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on alumni.

2019-2020 project goals are moving in a positive direction or have been completed. Three broad strategic themes guide our efforts: Awareness, Collaboration, and Enrichment.

Project Team Updates:

1. Survey: Lead, Amit Ahuja

The team will repurpose the alumni survey in response to the COVID crisis which presents new challenges and exacerbates old ones for the GDB community.

1. Post-Graduation Surveys: Lead, Jessica Naert Stone

The team aims to facilitate Zoom conference calls with new graduates and students in class beginning in 2020. Guidelines, and supporting documents have been submitted for review.

1. Curriculum: Lead, Dorianne Pollack

The team proposed revisions to the class curriculum to reflect current best practices and increase awareness of the Alumni Association.

1. Puppy Raisers and Handlers: Lead, Jack Heim

The team is exploring ideas to encourage interaction between raisers and handlers.

1. Alumni News: Lead, Marcia Wick

The Project Team compiled articles for the May edition of GDB’s AA News, and is now outlining content for the August edition.

1. Speaker Series: Lead, Kelly Egan

The team hosts quarterly Speaker Series calls.

1. Paws and Remember: Lead, Deanna Lewis

The team is reviewing survey results to improve future monthly P&R calls which offer peer support for alumni dealing with the loss or retirement of their guide dog.

1. Self-Advocacy: Lead, Jason Mitschele

The team is working to create a “how-to guide” for alumni who face access issues.

1. Nominating: Lead: Marcia Wick/Amy Salger

The team interviewed candidates for open AA Board positions, and presented nominees for board approval in June. The team also presented nominations for officer position for the 2020-2021 fiscal year.

1. Town Hall Meetings: Lead, Bruce Gilmour

The team hosted the second of two Town Hall meetings in April with an estimated 230 graduates on the Zoom Platform. Four GDB personalities formed the panel.

Summary:

In spite of challenges and setbacks resulting from the unexpected COVID-19 situation, the AA Board is committed and dedicated to helping GDB and its alumni to rebound in a resilient and positive way. We remain focused on spreading the vision of “Service to Others” throughout this difficult time. 2020 will continue to be a year of collaboration, teamwork, bridge building and service to others!

A Parting Message from the Chairman:

It’s with considerable emotion that I express gratitude to Theresa Stern, Chris Benninger, and the GDB Board for your continued support of GDB alumni and the AA Board. Serving on the AA Board for the past six years have been an amazing experience for me and one I will always hold close to my heart. I am grateful to have been a part of such an outstanding team. It has been an extreme pleasure to serve with so many people I have grown to love and respect, and who I will always consider some of my best friends. Although my time on the board is up, please know that I will always be the largest supporter of GDB and its mission, and am willing to help and serve in any capacity I can. Thank you!

Respectfully, Scott Wilcock & Sailor (my awesome guide)

Outgoing GDB AA Board Chair

## Welcome New GDB AA Board Members

By Dorianne Pollack with *Dime*

“You lose some, you win some,” could sum it up for GDB’s Alumni Association Board of Directors. At the close of the fiscal year June 30, we “lost” four fine directors including our Chair Scott Wilcock, and Bruce Gilmour who each completed two full three-year terms, Jessica Naert Stone who resigned at the completion of her first term to pursue a doctoral program, and Amit Ahuja who has been invited to serve as a director on GDB’s corporate board. Congratulations to each one of them, although we feel the loss.

At the same time, we win! We welcome three new AA Board members, selected after evaluating and interviewing more than a dozen applicants – always a tough process for the Nominating Committee because each applicant brings special qualities to the table, as you’ll see below.

Meet Deb, Melba, and Maia.

Deborah Cook undoubtedly will contribute to our Alumni Association Board project teams. Here are just a few things to know about Deb. Throughout her working life, Deb has served the Blind and Visually Impaired. From direct training and services, to technology and accessibility needs, Deb has worked tirelessly to help people with visual and hearing impairments improve their lives through access and independence.

Deb’s mission has always been to serve. Throughout her adult life, she has volunteered and been active in state and federal organizations and agencies that serve the Blind and Visually Impaired. Over 37 years, Deb has taken on the roles of Rehabilitation Teacher, Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor, Civil Rights advocate, and assistive technology administrator.

One of Deb’s motivations to serve on the Alumni Board is to improve availability of Guide Dogs for our aging population of GDB teams.

“We can make things happen if we understand our resources, capacity, and commitment. We can do it if we do things to make it happen,” Deb said.

Deb lives in Washington State in a small town called Clarkston with her husband, retired from broadcasting, and her sixth Guide Dog *Praline.* Currently, she and her husband run a small internet broadcasting company…

Oh yes, Deb does sleep occasionally when she has no other commitments. Welcome Deb! We’re anxious to work with you.

Melba Velez-Ortiz also joins our Alumni Board. Melba’s professional work is rooted in the intersection of culture, disability, communication, and ethics. She holds her doctorate in philosophy, and is an associate professor at Grand Valley State University, Michigan.

A bold and vocal communicator, Melba has created programs surrounding communication and culture, authored books, published articles in peer reviewed journals, and presented papers at conferences in her field. She steps outside the boundaries to bring philosophy, dialogic inquiry, culture and ethics across all departments at her university.

A Latina, Melba is a fierce advocate for the LatinX, Disability, and other marginalized communities and cultures. She identifies herself as “A person who opens doors” for others who work hard to achieve their goals. The enthusiasm she brings to her field and to conversations is uplifting and exciting. You can just about see her, over the phone, jumping up and down.

Driven by a philosophy developed by Jose Vasconcelos called “Happy Pessimism,” Melba accepts her blindness. She doesn’t expect the best, but she expects to work toward it. Melba was afraid of dogs her entire life. Now, she is working her first guide dog, *Chad*, a yellow lab - an experience that has changed her life

“The staff and fellow trainees at Guide Dogs educated and guided me,” said Melba. Guide Dogs is the most valuable educational experience of my life,” she proclaimed.

Welcome Melba! We know you’ll have much to contribute to our Alumni Association Board.

Maia Scott may already be familiar to many alumni. She has been happily partnered with four different guides, each helping her find the way through adventures on foot and in spirit. Maia’s fourth Guide Dog, *Gleam*, works closely by her side.

“*Gleam* teaches me to go forth with confident abandon and ask for forgiveness, rather than permission,” Maia said. “The lessons guide dogs have taught me about life - going forth with confidence, asking for what I need, setting boundaries, and being shamelessly curious - have empowered me,” she added. This illustrates Maia’s positive, gentle, caring, and altruistic attitudes and perspectives on life.

Maia has a Master’s in Fine Arts and interdisciplinary arts. She works as an arts educator, and recreational therapist for children with disabilities. She also works as a bodyworker, college accessible arts instructor, and interdisciplinary artist. Throughout her work and daily life, Maia is committed to social justice, civil rights, equity, and access to creativity. She combines physical, mental, and social dynamics through her workshops, community events, books, public speaking, and private work.

Maia brings a creative spirit, quirky sensibility, love of words, and the desire to push the boundaries of “possible” to the Alumni Association. This artist is also a welcomed addition to our board.

# DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT

## Virtual Festive Holiday Luncheon – You are Invited!

By: Theresa Stern with “*Wills*”

To help stop the spread of Covid 19 and to help protect our GDB community of employees, clients, volunteers, puppy raisers and donors, we are excited to announce that we will be hosting a Virtual Holiday Celebration instead of gathering in person. For the first time ever, our entire GDB community will have the opportunity to join in the fun from across the US and Canada.

I will be your emcee for the afternoon and hope you will join*Wills*and I to celebrate the holiday season! The event is free of charge and all pets are welcome this year!

Join us in Sunday, December 6 at 5pm PST for an hour of dogs, puppies and inspiring stories.  Register at <https://www.guidedogs.com/events/virtual-holiday-celebration> for this free event and login on December 6th to help us kick off the holiday season as we look forward to a new year!

# NEWS FROM CLIENT SERVICES

## Support in Good Times and Bad

By: Marcia Wick with *Vivianne*

In good times and bad, the health and safety of the entire GDB community - including staff, clients, volunteers, and dogs - is of paramount importance to Guide Dogs for the Blind. Even during a pandemic, Alumni can count on GDB’s Support Center to respond in a timely manner.

"We continue to offer phone support during this difficult time. We are here for any questions or concerns whether medical, behavioral or general, assured Stephanie Jackson, who is on the support team with Beth Hamilton, Jim Power, Ken Altenburger, and Toby Contreras.

“The support team has been able to work from home thanks to the expert assistance of the GDB Information and Technology Department,” said Ken. “We’re spread out over five cities and two states. However, you wouldn’t know that when you call us for assistance. The phone system does a great job of directing calls,” Ken added.

At full capacity or sheltered-in-place, GDB’s values and respect for one another guide our way,” said Director of Client Services, Lauren Kenney.

The Support Center is available to help guide dogs and alumni cope with this ‘new normal.’ The team can help us talk through our feelings about changes and challenges, which may bring up new ways to process the situation and minimize self-doubt or second-guessing.

Recent callers have asked about guide dog boredom, dogs veering, marking more often even after relieving, and finding alternative sources for dog food and equipment. (Alumni are advised that shipping for supplies may take longer during this health care crisis.)

Tried-and-true techniques like using the Gentle Leader, heeling the dog to get past a problem-area, and improving our following position are some helpful support staff reminders.

“It can be a bit of a challenge to keep the dogs engaged when it feels repetitive, said Beth. “Luckily, kibble used at the right times can help the interest level for most Labs!” she added.

Don’t hesitate to call GDB’s Support Center with questions or concerns. Support Center staff are available Monday-Friday from 8:00 AM-5:00 PM Pacific Time, and can be reached directly at 1- 800-295-4050. Please note that as Field Service Managers resume visits, contacting the Support Center Team first with questions will provide you with the quickest response. The support team looks forward to hearing from you.

## COMING SOON! - GDB Partners with Be My Eyes

**By: Kelly Egan with *Hope***

There’s no question that we find ourselves in a time of uncertainty, but despite the pandemic, GDB is finding new ways to help alumni overcome everyday barriers and care for our guide dogs.

“We’re excited to announce GDB has partnered with Be My Eyes and will soon be able to provide visual assistance for Alumni through the free app for smart phones and tablets. Be My Eyes will enable alumni to connect with GDB staff at the click of a button,” said Kelly Egan, a member of GDB’s Alumni Association Board of Directors, who also happens to work for Be My Eyes.

Between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Mon. – Fri (excluding the lunch hour from noon – 1PM) Pacific time, alumni can now Ask questions about any relevant issues regarding your guide dog that might require live visual assistance from GDB through Be My Eyes, a Specialized video platform for the blind and vision impaired.

* Address issues with harnesses or other guide dog equipment and supplies.
* Read labels on pet food, medication, or written materials related to your guide dog.
* Inspect the physical condition of your dog.
* Answer general inquiries about GDB events, programs, and announcements.
* Access or interact with the GDB website.

Although our GDB special service is not “live” yet, you can access other Be My Eyes services by downloading the app via the directions below:

Download the Be My Eyes app for free on your smartphone or tablet. It’s available for both iOS and Android devices. – [Download from Google Play](https://t.sidekickopen79.com/s1t/c/5/f18dQhb0S7lM8dDMPbW2n0x6l2B9nMJN7t5XWPfhMynN2BpCGxcV_FKN56dWl_QCW2H102?te=W3R5hFj4cm2zwW45RjbS1Jz9RGW3P3n_M3Fbt5SW4cQhLH3JFWKdW45V76R3K9DsyW3Z--x13GPb1kW3_qTlD4004crW3K96w03K6MdSW4rxkZW3R1V0k2223&si=8000000002555001&pi=fc6f03e7-1dec-4dcc-82ae-24bd5385546a) or [Download from App Store](https://t.sidekickopen79.com/s1t/c/5/f18dQhb0S7lM8dDMPbW2n0x6l2B9nMJN7t5XWPfhMynN2BpCGxcV_FKN56dWl_QCW2H102?te=W3R5hFj4cm2zwW3zfPTB1JwJ3FW3ZV6nw43T4P9W4cgyMR45lXkQW1GF81r3KcK9SW1LyyhZ1N6mFBf20YbJh04&si=8000000002555001&pi=fc6f03e7-1dec-4dcc-82ae-24bd5385546a).

After downloading, launch the Be My Eyes app to register. The app will take you through a short 5-step registration process:

1. Select whether you are a blind user or a sighted volunteer.
2. Choose whether to sign up with Facebook, Google or email. For iOS users, an Apple ID sign up option is available as well.
3. Confirm your email address by clicking the verification link that is sent to your email.
4. Select your primary language. - When you make a call, you'll be connected to the first available volunteer who speaks your primary language. You can always change your preference and add secondary languages in the app settings.
5. Allow access to microphone, camera and notifications to be able to make video calls

Amidst the ongoing coronavirus epidemic and social distancing ordinances, GDB continues to help ensure its graduates have the resources needed to live happily and independently.

“We’re thrilled Guide Dogs for the Blind can now reach its community at the click of a button, from anywhere, “ said Will Butler, Vice President of Community at Be My Eyes. “ With nearly four million users and a growing family of company partners, Be My Eyes is one of the largest “micro-volunteering” platforms in the world –more than 3.7 million volunteers are on call at all times to assist those who need an extra pair of eyes at short notice.

An announcement will be forthcoming to alert you when the GDB special services program is “live” and ready for calls! If you have questions, please reach out to **Joe Weber, Be My Eyes** Manager, Accessibility Solutions, at: [+1 314-330-3425](tel:13143303425), or Theresa Stern,

# AS WE SEE IT

## 50 Years of Wonder

By: Lynda Boose with *Missy* and Mary Kozy with retired *Regina*

*Recently, Lynda Boose was astounded to realize that she had been a guide dog handler for 50 years. Today, she is working with Missy, her seventh Guide Dog for the Blind. Mary Kozy has also enjoyed 50 years of independent travel, thanks to six female yellow lab guide dogs. Read their tales of wonder here.*

Lynda’s Story:

In 1968, Lynda flew from Orange County to the GDB campus in San Rafael CA. She had no idea what to expect. She knew nothing about guide dogs and less about handling. Lynda recalls the small rooms at the “old dorm.” Students all sat at one long table in the dining room, and ate the same meal. There was a day room for lectures and a place to hang out. There weren’t places to walk so there wasn’t much to do after training.

“Dog Day” then, however, was similar to now.

“When they brought in Pixie, I heard something tare around the room, and I seriously wondered what I was getting myself into,” Lynda said. *Pixie*, a female black lab weighing 49 pounds was about to shake Lynda’s world.

Lynda remembers her first instructor, Bruce Bensler, who taught her so much.

“Our first walk was so exciting! Moving down the side walk at *Pixie’s* pace, I felt so free!”

Returning to campus with *Pixie*, Lynda recalls striding confidently to the tune of the Simon and Garfunkel song “Feelin’ Groovy.”

*Pixie a*nd Lynda traveled, hiked, and camped. She was with Lynda for her first job as a home teacher for newly-blind people in Massachusetts. After Pixie, there was Nancy, aka “*Nancy* Dog” because Lynda’s mother was also name *Nancy*. Lynda lived closed to the beach with both *Nancy* and *Pixie*, so they shared fun times walking and swimming together. With *Nancy* in harness, Lynda continued hiking, backpacking, traveling, and pursuing her career teaching severely handicapped children.

Following *Nancy*, there was *Blondie*, who undoubtedly helped Lynda attract her future husband, Doug, her ski guide at a Ski for Light event. She moved with *Blondie* from California to join her husband on Isle Royale, Michigan where he worked.

The only way to reach the island was by boat or plane.

“*Blondie* was amazing,” Lynda said. She loved hiking, backpacking, and canoeing. They hiked every day on a trail on their own.”

Lynda was hired as the Park dispatcher, and *Blondie* came to work with her. After *Blondie,* a small black lab named *Duce* continued to work at Lynda’s side.

When *Duce* retired, *French* followed Lynda from the Oregon campus to Michigan. After *French, Neema* joined Lynda whose turn it was to retire. With *Neema,* Lynda took classes at the local fitness center, and joined a fun women’s hiking group called “trail seekers.” Today, *Missy* walks, hikes, and occasionally travels with Lynda.

In August, Lynda will be 76 - in September Missy will be six.

“It’s been an amazing journey working with each of my dogs. Of course, there were challenges,” Lynda amits, “ but I’ve been happy to have all of them in my life. Here’s hoping there will be more guide dogs in my future,” she added.

Mary’s Story:

Mary Kozy, a retired social worker living in Huntley, Illinois, received her first guide dog, *Keeley*, as a college student in 1970.

“Our class was ‘famous’ for many years at GDB because we were filmed by The ‘American Sportsman’ and shown on National TV,” Mary recalls.

Mary found her college campus easy to navigate with her guide, although *Keeley* groaned loudly in class one time. The teacher agreed the class was boring, Mary said. When *Keeley* guided Mary across the graduation stage, local media covered the event. The pair next moved to Evanston, IL, where Mary worked as a medical transcriber.  They rode the bus and enjoyed exploring the small downtown area.

Next, Mary and *Keeley* attended Washington University in St. Louis where Mary pursued her goal of becoming a social worker. During an ice storm, *Keeley* guided her across solid ice and over downed branches to the Social Work School to find out it was closed because of the storm, so they trudged back to the dorm.

“I always felt safe and confident with my guide dog,” Mary said. “Keeley kept me safe and provided companionship.”

After college life, Mary and her guide moved into a high-rise apartment building in downtown Chicago. Mary worked at The Rehabilitation Institute where *Keele*y guided her around wheelchairs, carts, physical therapy equipment, and hospital beds.

Mary trained with her second dog, *Tamsen*, in 1978.  They reached her urban apartment in time for 83 inches of snow – that winter, they negotiated mountains of snow to find places to relieve.

*Tamsen* had allergies, so the pair made many trips via train to Mary’s home town for vet visits to keep her healthy. *Tamsen* and Mary also traveled to Washington D.C., Milwaukee, WI, and Springfield, IL.

Dog number three was *Keiko*, trained by Michelle Pouliot. In 1988, *Keiko* was the Flower Dog at Mary’s wedding.  She proved adaptable when Mary and her husband Ken relocated and adjusted to new jobs.

Mary and *Keiko* were selected to be on the first GDB Advisory Council, and enjoyed flying to California and Oregon for meetings. In 1995*, Keiko* retired and returned to her puppy raisers.

“She was pretty much a ‘perfect’ guide dog, a great traveler, always up for new adventures,” Mary said.

In one of the first classes at the Oregon campus, Mary trained with her fourth guide, *Margie*. At that time, Mary worked for the Center for Independent Living, and attended meetings across the county to advocate for accessibility and inclusion. Having a guide dog helped her demonstrate independence as she mentored others with disabilities.

Alongside *Margie*, Mary also worked for the GDB outreach program, speaking at regional venues about guide dogs to potential students and professionals, who could observe how a well-behaved, expertly-trained guide dog worked.

“*Margie* was a sweet, easy dog who would roll up in a ball like a meatloaf when not working,” Mary recalled.

*Shirley*, a yellow Labrador with a professional demeanor, partnered with Mary in 2004. They worked in a low-vision rehabilitation center interfacing with the public, counseling people adjusting to vision loss, and facilitating support groups. When Mary and her husband moved to a 55-Plus community with 5,000 houses, *Shirley* quickly learned new routes and met new people. Her familiar puppy raisers watched Shirley while Ken and Mary traveled to Hawaii, Australia, New Zealand, and Fiji.  Shirley attended the first GDB Reunion in 2006 with Mary, Ken, and her puppy raisers. It’s no surprise that *Shirley* happily returned to live with her puppy raisers when she retired.

In 2013, guide #5, *Regina*, entered Mary’s life at a critical time - Ken had been hospitalized with a serious illness.

“*Regina* was a solid, well-trained, well-mannered dog from the beginning, and I felt extremely confident returning home with her after the 2-week training program. We were fortunate to be in the first class at the new San Rafael dorm. Regina hit the ground running - , sleeping on hospital floors, guiding on unfamiliar routes, and dealing with an ever-changing routine after Ken returned home.  ”

Happily, Ken recovered and the couple traveled with *Regina* to Nebraska, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Missouri. They also enjoyed some Caribbean cruises. Regina reunited with other guide dogs at Top Dog in Florida, and Ski for Light in Nevada and Wyoming.

“She acquired quite a fan club,” said Mary.

Now, Regina must retire after seven years of service because she has cancer. While Mary awaits her 7th guide partner, she looks forward to regaining the freedom to go where and when she wants, the confidence of being independent, and venturing into unfamiliar territory.

“My guide dogs have kept me safe for 50 years and have been a blessing in my life…can’t wait to see whose paws are coming around the next corner,” Marymused.

# CHAPTER CHAT

## Rocky Rovers aim high with Virtual Fundraiser

By: Ted Tahquechi

Although the Covid-19 virus has forced cancellation of many traditional events, the Rocky Rovers Alumni Chapter in Denver, Colorado is aiming high with a virtual Fundraiser this year.

A Rocky Rovers board member has created a  design featuring a guide dog or puppy in training which can be printed on a wide variety of items ranging from T-shirts, tank tops, and hoodies to coffee mugs, beach towels, throw pillows, and super soft fleece blankets. Browse the cool Rocky Rovers gear at the online shop (link below). Proceeds will support GDB Rocky Rovers activities.

Design Description:

Shirts and Hoodies - Front features three paw prints moving diagonally up to the “C” in the Colorado state flag, with a guide dog in brown harness inside the “C.” Back features a silhouette of the Rocky Mountains with the words “Rocky Rovers” underneath it. The “C” in “Rocky” is the stylized “C” from the Colorado state flag. Below the words is a larger image of the guide dog in harness.

Accessories (like the pillow and beach towel) – Feature the design from the back of the shirts with the mountains, Rocky Rovers text, and guide dog in harness.

Puppy Raiser version – Similar to the designs above, but the dog sports a green puppy harness, and the words, ”Puppy Raiser” appear in green under the puppy in harness.

Rocky Rovers Merchandise\*:

Unisex t-shirts, Tank Tops , Pullover Hoodies, Women's V-neck shirts, Women's Comfort tee, Unisex Long Sleeve shirts, Kids tees, Kids Onesies, Tote Bags, Coffee Mugs, Throw Pillows, Beach Towels, Fleece blankets

\*All items are available in multiple colors and sizes.

The store is up and running. Go to: <https://teespring.com/stores/guide-dog-gear>

For questions, contact Rocky Rovers Chapter President Beth Gustin at [bethglpc@gmail.com](mailto:bethglpc@gmail.com) or Ted Tahquechi at [nedskee@tahquechi.comm](mailto:nedskee@tahquechi.comm).

## 2020 Year of Service

*We know so many of you give back to the community in special and unique ways, we want to celebrate you! Remember to send us your story of service to* [*alumninews@guidedogs.com*](mailto:alumninews@guidedogs.com) *to be included in the next newsletter.*

Barbara Spear volunteers at a primary school working in an early childhood  special education classroom providing in Richmond activities for children and providing special music activities for the entire school when requested. She also works at the nursing home in town playing music two times a month. Unfortunately because of the coronavirus, these volunteer activities have been temporarily suspended but she will be resuming them when she can. She also crochets afghans and other materials for the Abused Women's Shelter in San Antonio Texas. Many people crochet for other worthy charities, but she feels that abused women are often forgotten and they and their children come to the shelters with nothing. She likes knowing that she is giving something to people who have had to leave all their belongings behind because they are escaping terrible home situations. When the nursing home opens up again, the activity director told Barbara they're going to have a really nice opening celebration. The residents have not had a chance to meet her guide *Miller* yet since she arrived home on March 6, but they loved her previous guide *Pip,* and are anxious to meet her new furry friend!

# ALUMNI BULLETIN BOARD

Congratulations to GDB Alumna Jo Elizabeth Pinto, her award-winning novel, "The Bright Side of Darkness," has finally been released on BARD. The book is available in an audio format via the catalog number DBC13147. For more information about "The Bright Side of Darkness" or her nonfiction book, "Daddy Won't Let Mom Drive the Car: True Tales of Parenting in the Dark," which are both available from Amazon in audio, Kindle, and paperback formats, please visit my Web site at [www.brightsideauthor.com.](https://l.facebook.com/l.php?u=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.brightsideauthor.com%2F%3Ffbclid%3DIwAR2IS4jcIRo5vdQee11GSb3ZC0Bhz0ssCUg_ExJb6gmheWbwXUaaINQVsno&h=AT1JmSrjRpwoyGe1jBZPRg0_6RNw1S81YqL-bSIhJthqmWcJdAvXbQ2Qvoxlhn1IJhr-9mwoBz2WPIafa5hV0UjScB4mkglsx0CryWkQo49cS2E4WyW5NEL5iz7SfO27tVdmMhNHKitJv3NVttlT5SFpvsQs)

GDB grad George Kerscher wants to remind all grads to use Amazon Smile when shopping as you can designate GDB to receive a donation for your purchases!

# IN MEMORIAM, IN MEMORY, IN TRIBUTE

## In Memoriam – *Remembering GDB Alumni who have died*

Anna Cepeda of Houston, TX with female Black Lab guide, *Calliope* (OR 65 – August 2015)

## In Memory – *Remembering Guides who have died*

*Angela*, female Yellow Lab guide for Vickie Kennedy of Ewa Beach, HI (CA 682 – March 2008)

*Jennings,* male Black Lab guide for Yonah Peterson of Houston, TX (CA 730 – December 2011)

*Nicole,* female Yellow Lab guide for Chris Parchman of Regina, SK (CA 765 – September 2013)

*Ellen*, female Yellow Lab guide for Alysa Chadow of Alameda, CA (OR 130 – December 2006)

*Francisco,* male Black Lab guide for Thomas Klaus of Harrisburg, PA (September 2009)

*Trudy*, female Yellow Lab guide for Vasant Garcia of Phoenix, AZ (CA 680 – December 2007)

*Pelham,* male Yellow Lab guide for Andre Van Hall of Denver, CO (CA 743 – July 2012)

*Brannan*, guide for Stephen Lewis

*Nugent*, guide for Lonzi Rose

*Brittania*, female Brindle Lab guide for Arly Feil of Shafter, CA (OR 152 – September 2008)

*Dobie,* male Yellow Lab guide for Quinton Ramirez of San Francisco, CA (OR 174 - March 2010)

*Sylmar,* female Black Lab guide for Meredith Schade of Fort Collins, CO (CA 681 – January 2008)

## In Tribute – Honoring guides who have retired

*Regina*, female Yellow Lab guide for Mary Kozy of Huntley, IL (CA 763 – June 2013)

*Wynn,* female Yellow Lab guide for Virginia Parker of Stafford, ON (OR 253 – July 2013)

# GIFT SHOP NEWS

By: Michelle McNew

Listed below are new items that have arrived in the gift shop recently:

Adult GDB Letters Zip Hoodie

This Zip Hoodie is another GDB exclusive design! This sweatshirt will keep you warm on chilly days. It features a white gdb logo on the left chest. The back design contains the letters GDB. Inside each of the letters are various illustrated items: bowls, bones, paw prints, collars and hearts. Made from 50% cotton and 50% polyester. Available in heather  in sizes Extra Small thru 3 Extra Large. Limited quantities , get them while they last.  $35.00

**Audible Beacon Safety Light -** This safety light uses audible signals to indicate on/off, low battery, charging, and charge complete. The Audible Beacon is waterproof and rechargeable, using bright LED lights to boost visibility in all directions. A silicone mount attaches easily and securely to guide dog harnesses  and the Quick Clip™ can clip to backpacks, coats, or other gear. With up to 12 hours of run-time, the Audible Beacon is a dependable added layer of safety for both dog and handler The 280mAh LiPo battery is rechargeable with the included 15 cm micro USB cable and charge time is approximately 1.5 hrs. $34.95

**Face covering -** GDB has got your face covered! This 2 ply face mask for every day use to protect yourself and others. Easy to use, with an over the ear design that allows for superior comfort. Featuring black seams, a teal colored background and a repeated white GDB logo.  Made of polyester. Get them while they last!! Machine Wash Cold or Hand Wash. Hang Dry. Do Not: Bleach, Press, Iron or Steam. This face covering is not a medical device. $8.00

**Glass Treat Jar -** Give that good dog a treat from this 26 ounce glass GDB treat jar! The design on the front is in teal blue and features a bone with the word TREATS inside of it, accompanied with the GDB logo underneath. The jar is made of glass and the lid make of bamboo. Measuring 4 ¾" H x 4" W x 4 ½" D, Meets FDA requirements, BPA free. Hand wash recommended. $10.00

Men’s GDB Letter Tee - Be green with this EXCLUSIVE recycled fabric tee!!! Our Men's crew neck tee features a white gdb logo on the left chest. The back design contains the letters GDB. Inside each of the letters are various illustrated items: bowls, bones, paw prints, collars and hearts. At 5.3-ounce, Made from 100% recycled fabrics: 60% recycled cotton/40% post-consumer recycled polyester. Available in blue in sizes Extra Small thru 4 Extra Large. Limited quantities, get them while they last.  $25.00

Men’s Guide, Live Love Crew Neck Tee - This dry blend tee is made of 50% cotton and 50% polyester.  The design on the back was created by Client, JR Quevedo. It features the words "Guide, Live, Love." They words are surrounded by dots, hearts, bones, leaves and paw prints.Available in sand in sizes Small through 5XL.$25.00

Men’s Raise a Hero Crew Neck Tee - This pre shrunk shirt was designed by Client, JR Quevedo. The back design features the words "Raise a hero, puppy love included." An illustration of a black labrador, yellow labrador and golden retriever in green puppy coats are included in the design. The front includes a GDB logo on the left chest in white. Made of 65% polyester and 35% cotton. Available in military heather in sizes Small through 4XL. $25.00

Men’s Wordy Dog Tee - Another awesome design from our GDB team! This v neck tee features a white GDB logo on the left chest.  The dog design on the back consists of words that represent what a GDB dog means to our communities.  Some words include love, adventure, companion , etc. This tee is a blend of 65% polyester and 35% cotton.  This is a GDB Exclusive design, get them while they last! Available in charcoal in sizes Small through 3 Extra Large.$25.00

**Multi-use Headwear -** Get into the GDB Spirit with this Multi-use headwear! Featuring a dark blue background with designs of paw prints and bones.  The GDB logo is located around the top in white, while the rest of the headwear is sprinkled with illustrations of the faces of black labs, yellow labs, golden retrievers, orange paw prints and white bones.  So many ways to wear!! Made of 100% polyester and measuring at 9.45 inches by 18.9 inches.  Get them while they last!  Machine Wash Cold or Hand Wash. Hang Dry. Do Not: Bleach, Press, Iron or Steam $10.00

**Puppy Luggage Tag -** Who doesn't  like puppies? Let your luggage stand out while you travel, using this puppy fun GDB luggage tag! One side features the GDB logo, along with illustrations of three puppies: a golden retriever, yellow labrador and black labrador. The design has a great tactile feel due to it being raised on a rubber material. The reverse side has space for all your contact information. Attach to your luggage with a belt like clasp to ensure you will not lose it. You will be the envy at the baggage carousel!  Made of soft rubber material, measuring 4" x2.5" $7.00

**Waterproof Hat -** Don't let the rain stop you! This three-layer technical performance waterproof fabric is constructed with sealed seams.   Featuring breathability and an adjustable reflective web strapping facilitate perfect comfort and sizing. Adorned with the GDB logo in light gray.Available in black. One size fits all. $26.00

Women’s GDB Letter V Neck Tee- Be green with this EXCLUSIVE recycled fabric tee!!! Our women's vee neck tee features a white gdb logo on the left chest. The back design contains the letters GDB. Inside each of the letters are various illustrated items: bowls, bones, paw prints, collars and hearts. At 5.3-ounce, Made from 100% recycled fabrics: 60% recycled cotton/40% post-consumer recycled polyester. Available in red in sizes Extra Small thru 4 Extra Large. Limited quantities, get them while they last. $25.00

Women’s GDB Letters Pullover Sweatshirt - This pullover sweater is another GDB Exclusive design! Made of 50/50 cotton/poly fleece and at 7.8 ounces - it is the perfect weight for chilly days.It features a white gdb logo on the left chest. The back design contains the letters GDB. Inside each of the letters are various illustrated items: bowls, bones, paw prints, collars and hearts.  Available in heather purple in sizes Small thru 4 Extra Large. Limited quantities, get them while they last. $35.00

Women’s Guide, Live , Love Crew Neck Tee - This crew neck  tee is made of 100% cotton.  The design on the back was created by Client, JR Quevedo. It features the words "Guide, Live, Love." The words are surrounded by dots, hearts, bones, leaves and paw prints. Available in maroon in sizes Small through 3xL. $25.00

Women’s Guide, Live , Love V Neck Tee - This neck  tee is made of 100% cotton.  The design on the back was created by Client, JR Quevedo. It features the words "Guide, Live, Love." The words are surrounded by dots, hearts, bones, leaves and paw prints. Available in navy or white in sizes Small through 3xL.$25.00

Women’s Raise a Hero Crew Neck Tee - This 100% cotton tee was designed by Client, JR Quevedo. The back design features the words "Raise a hero, puppy love included." An illustration of a black labrador, yellow labrador and golden retriever in green puppy coats are included in the design. The front includes a GDB logo on the left chest in white. Available in purple in sizes XS through 4XL. $25.00

Women’s Raise a Hero V Neck Tee - This summer tee was designed by Client, JR Quevedo. The back design features the words "Raise a hero, puppy love included." An illustration of a black labrador, yellow labrador and golden retriever in green puppy coats are included in the design. The front includes a GDB logo on the left chest in white. Made of 100% cotton. Available in gray in sizes XS-4XL. $25.00

Women’s Wordy Dog V Neck Tee **-** Another awesome design from our GDB team! This v neck tee features a white GDB logo on the left chest.  The dog design on the back consists of words that represent what a GDB dog means to our communities.  Some words include, adventure, companion , etc. This  tee is 50/50 cotton/poly.  This is a GDB Exclusive design, get them while they last! Available in charcoal in sizes Extra Small through 4 Extra Large. $25.00

Youth Guide, Live, Love Crew Neck Tee - This tee is made of 50% cotton 50% polyester.  The design on the back was created by Client, JR Quevedo. It features the words "Guide, Live, Love." They words are surrounded by dots, hearts, bones, leaves and paw prints. Available in orange in sizes XS through XL. $15.00

Youth Raise a Hero Crew Neck Tee - This summer tee shirt was designed by Client, JR Quevedo. The back design features the words "Raise a hero, puppy love included." An illustration of a black labrador, yellow labrador and golden retriever in green puppy coats are included in the design. The front includes a GDB logo on the left chest in white. Made of 100% cotton. Available in sand in sizes XS through XL. $15.00

Bottom of FormAll orders are subject to applicable tax and shipping fees.

You can order Gift Shop merchandise online 24/7 at www.guidedogs.com, or you may call 415-492-4151 and leave us a message. We return phone calls and ship online orders on Tuesday and Thursday mornings, only. For faster service, order 24/7 at [www.guidedogs.com/shop](http://www.guidedogs.com/shop).

Please check our website periodically for new merchandise updates.

**Alumni Association 2020 Board Meetings**

Saturday, Feb 1, 2020: Saturday, June, 6, 2020: Saturday, Sept. 12, 2020: Saturday, Dec 5, 2020

**Alumni Association Board of Directors**

Officers

Chair - Marcia Wick / *Viviane*

Colorado Springs, CO

[marciajwick@gmail.com](mailto:marciajwick@gmail.com)

Vice Chair - Amy Salger / *Marsala*

Vinton, IA

[asalger@guidedogs.com](mailto:asalger@guidedogs.com)

Secretary, Deanna Lewis / *Mambo*

Cincinnati, OH

[dlewis@guidedogs.com](mailto:dlewis@guidedogs.com)

Members at Large

Deb Cook Lewis / *Praline*

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Kelly Egan / *Hope*

San Diego, CA

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Jack Heim / *Scout*

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Maia Scott / *Gleam*

San Francisco, CA

[mscott@guidedogs.com](mailto:mscott@guidedogs.com)

Melba Velez-Ortiz / *Chad*

Grand Rapids, MI

[mvelezortiz@guidedogs.com](mailto:mvelezortiz@guidedogs.com)

Ex-Officio members / board liaisons

Board Liaison

Amit Ahuja / *Tashi*

Santa Barbara, CA

[aahuja@ucsb.edu](mailto:aahuja@ucsb.edu)

# ROSTER OF ALUMNI ASSOCIATION CHAPTERS

Last updated: Tuesday, June 09, 2020

# USA

## Arizona

### Desert Dogs of Phoenix

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

### Northern Arizona High Country Walkers

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

## California

### Foggy Doggies

* Location: San Francisco, California
* Email: [fogdog@groups.io](mailto:fogdog@groups.io)
* Co-president: Lauri Shay, [laurishay@gmail.com](mailto:laurishay@gmail.com)
* Co-president: Jan Robitscher, [jbrobit@aol.com](mailto:jbrobit@aol.com)
* Secretary: Alysa Chadow, [chadowab@gmail.com](mailto:chadowab@gmail.com)

### OC Guide Dogs Alumni Chapter

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

### Sacramento GDB Alumni

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

### San Diego Alumni Chapter of Guide Dog Handlers

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

## Colorado

### Colorado Rocky Rovers

* Location: Denver, Colorado
* Email: [CoRockyrovers@gmail.com](mailto:CoRockyrovers@gmail.com)
* President: Beth Gustin, [bethglpc@gmail.com](mailto:bethglpc@gmail.com)
* Vice-president: Veronica Rodriguez, [Veronicarodriguez1954@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:mjbukala@yahoo.com)
* Vice-president: Jim East, [jim.east.mhs@gmail.com](mailto:jim.east.mhs@gmail.com)
* Secretary: Reggie Alvarado, [reggie.alvarado@gmail.com](mailto:reggie.alvarado@gmail.com)

## Illinois

### Windy City GDB Alumni

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

## Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio

### Guide Dog Handlers of the Midwest

* Email: [GDB\_Midwest+subscribe@groups.io](mailto:GDB_Midwest+subscribe@groups.io)
* President: Deanna Lewis, [Deannakay03@gmail.com](mailto:Deannakay03@gmail.com)
* Vice-president: Paul Walker, [herospaw2002@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:bobiearp@gmail.com)

## Utah

### Greatest Paws on Earth

* Location: Utah
* President: Sandy Ruconich, [sruconich@gmail.com](mailto:sruconich@gmail.com)
* Vice-president: Patty Mueller, [plmueller@q.com](mailto: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](mailto:wagdbalumni+subscribe@groups.io)
* President: Danette Dixon, [danettedixon63@gmail.com](mailto:danettedixon63@gmail.com)
* Vice-president: Jeanne Jacobs, [Jeannelavernejacobs@gmail.com](mailto:Jeannelavernejacobs@gmail.com)

# Canada

## British Columbia

### BC Dogwoods GDB Alumni

* Location: British Columbia
* Email: [BC Dogwoods Alumni Group talkadvocacy@hooh.ca](mailto:BC%20Dogwoods%20Alumni%20Group%20%20%20%20talkadvocacy@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](mailto: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](mailto:kimjkilpatrick@gmail.com)
* Co-president: Jo Elizabeth Pinto, [jopinto@msn.com](mailto:jopinto@msn.com)
* Vice-president: Sarah Gales
* Secretary: Deanna Lewis

## GDB Mommies with Guides

* Description: Focus on parenting
* President: Tara Chavez, [tmatzick06@gmail.com](mailto:tmatzick06@gmail.com)

## GDB Paws Around the World

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

## GDB Raisers and Handlers

* Description: Bringing raisers and handlers together.
* President: Danette Dixon, [Danettedixon63@gmail.com](mailto:Danettedixon63@gmail.com)
* Vice-president: Paul Walker, [herospaw2002@gmail.com](mailto:herospaw2002@gmail.com)
* Secretary: Mary Flynn
* Outreach: Andrea Barnhurst, [atl\_braves1fan@yahoo.com](mailto:atl_braves1fan@yahoo.com)

## GDB Stitch and Bit\*\*

* Description: Knitters, Croche, etc w/ socializing and fun!
* Contact: Dorianne Pollack – [dpollack@guidedogs.com](mailto:dpollack@guidedogs.com)

## GDB Tech Dogs

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

## GDB Writers Chapter

* Description: Writing
* President: Lisa Gilmartin, [lsg1144.lg@gmail.com](mailto:lsg1144.lg@gmail.com)
* Vice-president: Dorianne Pollack, [Doriannepollack@gmail.com](mailto:Doriannepollack@gmail.com)
* Secretary: Launa Hardy, [launahardy@gmail.com](mailto:launahardy@gmail.com)

**Please send updates to** [**jheim@guidedogs.com**](mailto:jheim@guidedogs.com)

﻿**﻿**Guide Dog News

**2020, Issue #2**

**COVER**

Moving forward during COVID-19

Photo: Canine Welfare Training Technician Kate Dougherty.

# Greetings from the CEO

Greetings,

I hope you and your loved ones are staying healthy and safe. During these uncertain times due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) is continuing to do what we do best: care for our dogs and puppies, and assist our clients across the U.S. and Canada. While we’ve had to adjust how we provide critical services, with the incredible support of our GDB community, we are moving forward.

I’m very proud of our amazing staff who are continuing to provide support services to our more than 2,100 guide dog teams and 2,000 puppy raisers via video chat, email, and phone, in addition to supporting our many foster volunteers, breeder custodians, and campus volunteers. As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, we are continuing to reassess the ways we engage our broader GDB community of puppy raisers, donors, volunteers, and clients.

One thing we know for certain: our guide dogs do so much more than help our clients get from point A to point B. Maia Scott, who is featured in this newsletter, credits her guide dog Gleam for providing her with much needed companionship and emotional comfort in these challenging times.

The GDB community has been tested through hardships and natural disasters before, and through every situation, we have emerged stronger than ever. With your continued encouragement and support, we will do so again. For the latest updates and ways you can help, please stay connected with us through social media and our website, guidedogs.com. Thank you for all that you do for GDB—today and every day.

With gratitude,

Christine Benninger, President and CEO

# **Gleam, Forward!**

**Moving Forward During the COVID-19 Pandemic with GDB Alumna Maia Scott**

Like the rest of us, Maia Scott has spent several weeks sheltering in place during the coronavirus outbreak. Gleam, her Golden Retriever guide dog, has been her source of emotional comfort. “I tend to worry. Gleam provides routine to my day and reminds me to be in the moment. She makes me feel vital again,” says Maia.

Gleam is Maia’s fourth guide dog. Maia describes the two-week training program as emotional, vibrant, and transformative. “Gleam is such a fiercely loyal dog and throws her heart into all that she does for her person. I was worried that she was so bonded to her trainer that she couldn’t be there for me, so I kept my emotional distance.” Maia credits her instructor, Cathie Laber, for helping her stay positive and trust the partnership that was developing.

Bonding Through Dance

Knowing she needed to let go of her apprehension, Maia took Gleam to her dorm room and put on Matisyahu’s song Live like a Warrior. Maia began to dance, letting her body and expectations flow free. When she worked her way to the ground, Gleam plowed into her headfirst and did a somersault into her lap. Gleam continued, wagging, and prancing.

“We danced together with Gleam offering downward dog play bows and prancing circles, and I improvised with inspiration from her authentic movements,” recalls Maia. Afterwards, Gleam lay against Maia with her paw atop her foot. “Dancing freely with her broke down that last barrier between us. In that dance, Gleam finally got to see all of me, unabashed silliness, joy, and creative spontaneity, not just the overly amped up, do-right person I’d been on the other end of the harness.”

Educator, Humanitarian, and Author

A self-described lifelong learner, Maia is an accomplished theatre, art, and dance instructor, massage therapist, labyrinth meditation facilitator, and writer. She recently completed Finger Walks, a guidebook in print and Braille along with 16 tactile, high-contrast finger labyrinths, published by the American Printing House for the Blind.

“That’s my biggest cause for a happy dance right now,” says Maia, who wrote the book after realizing there is nominal material about labyrinths accessible to the blind community. “I always tell people that while my sight may be impaired, my vision is clear,” explains Maia, who has focused much of her adult life using her disability to help others with differences realize their abilities.

Maia was recently honored in an exhibit called Changemakers: Bay Area Disability Pride at the San Francisco Public Library. The exhibit featured 50 portraits of local people with disabilities accompanied by audio and Braille descriptions. Maia was recognized for being “an extraordinary woman of compassion who has made it her life work to ensure all people are treated with dignity.”

Staying Strong

Maia says she’s extremely grateful for GDB’s training program and ongoing support services. “GDB’s training is very person-centered and sets clients up for success so that we can go home safely and confidently.” That confidence has helped her find a silver lining during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Every time I pick up the harness handle with Gleam at my side and utter ‘Gleam, forward,’ I’m appropriating the guide dog handler’s command as a mantra for me and a prayer that we will all navigate our way through this troubling time. May we all Gleam Forward!”

Quote: “Maia and Gleam are perfect for each other. They share the same spirit, and she loves all the fun and silly quirks that Gleam has. Seeing the two of them together, watching the bond they have—that’s what puppy raising is all about.” —Anna Wilke, Gleam’s puppy raiser

# **Finding our new normal with COVID-19**

GDB wants to thank our community for pitching in and allowing us to continue our life-changing mission during these uncertain times. When we asked for your help, you rose to the challenge. As our organization adjusted to how we work, the strength of our staff and volunteers continued to shine, proving that even when we’re apart, teamwork and our furry friends are key to our success!

Photos:

* Admissions Manager Ryan Garrett.
* Foster Care Volunteers Bill Princen and Sharon Labs.
* Canine Welfare Neonatal Tech Michelle Rada.
* Field Service Manager Bill Archie.
* A puppy club Zoom meeting.
* Volunteer Denise Duncan.
* Supervisory Certified Vet Tech Kelsey Nightingale.
* Guide Dog Mobility Instructor Adam Gilbert.
* Dogs in our California campus kennel practicing how to shelter in place.
* Vet Tech Kristina Kolenko and Veterinarian Kristen Haviland.
* CCP Operations Specialist Michelle McNew.
* Guide Dog Mobility Instructor Jane Allman.
* Field Service Manager Will Henry.
* Canine Welfare Training Technician Bobby Cortez.

# About GDB: Did You Know?

* All of our services are provided free of charge, including personalized training and extensive post-graduation support, plus financial assistance for veterinary care if needed.
* GDB is 100% privately funded. We receive no government support. The majority of our funding comes from individuals like you.
* GDB is the largest guide dog school in North America and the second largest in the world, with more than 15,000 guide dog partnerships created since our founding in 1942.
* On average, clients receive four guide dogs from GDB. Clients range in age from 12 to 80+.
* Each year, approximately 300 guide dog teams graduate from our program. Thanks to caring people like you, more than 2,100 people and their guide dogs throughout the U.S. and Canada are harnessing the power of partnership.

# Moving Forward During COVID-19

GDB has provided critical support services to our clients throughout the pandemic while ensuring the safety of our staff, volunteers, puppies and dogs. This has meant lots of video chats and moving 150 adult dogs off our campuses to nurturing home environments until the shelter-in-place mandates are lifted and staff can return to campus. These necessary adjustments have resulted in increased costs related to:

* Veterinary care for dogs and puppies off campus
* Providing dog food for program dogs whose caregivers and clients are experiencing financial hardship
* Enrichment supplies and exercise pens for puppies in training across 10 states
* Zoom video service for staff and puppy raiser meetings and client consultations

When our training operations fully resume, we expect higher demand for in-home client training as some clients may not be able to travel to our campuses. GDB is committed to meeting our clients’ needs even if it means incurring higher travel costs. Why? Because we believe that every eligible person who is blind or visually impaired should have the opportunity to partner with a highly trained guide dog to provide them with enhanced independence, confidence, mobility, companionship, and greater inclusion.

# Help Create Powerful Partnerships!

Make a donation by August 15, 2020 to help ensure that more guide dog teams like Maia and Gleam receive the training and support they need to be successful. Your donation will be matched dollar for dollar up to $50,000! Please use the attached envelope to mail your donation today, or donate online at guidedogs.com/newsgift.

**Donate Today! Your Gift Will Be Matched**

* $50 provides a leash and grooming supplies
* $100 provides transportation for one puppy to either our CA or OR campus for guide dog training
* $250 assists with veterinary care for off-campus adult dogs
* $500 provides initial vaccines and veterinary care for five puppies
* $1,000 provides field support services from our call center to 10 clients throughout the U.S. and Canada

# New Instructor

Congratulations to our newest Guide Dog Mobility Instructor: Shelby Gernhart. She recently completed her GDB instructor apprenticeship, which required a combination of hands-on experience, as well as a comprehensive course of academic study.

“Being a part of the moment when clients meet their new guide for the first time is magical,” she said.

Congratulations Shelby on your accomplishment. To read her complete bio, please visit guidedogs.com/blog.

# Puparazzi!

Thank you to everyone who participated in our annual online Puparazzi photo contest. Winners were determined by the number of votes that the photos received, and each vote cost $1. Because of your generosity we raised nearly $39,000! All of the money raised will go toward our life-changing programs. These are the winning photos in each of the five categories.

Photos

* Overall Winner/GDB Working Guide Dog Category: Marsha Bukala with Jewel; Alicia Eidson with Jerome; Joanne Seagle with Nan.
* Category winners—Pet Pooch: Penny; GDB Breeder: Alfred; Career Change Dog: Jambo. At Left—GDB Guide Dog Puppy in training: Picard.

# Save the Date

* Caps & Tails: November 7, 2020 in downtown Portland
* Holiday Luncheon: December 4, 2020 in San Francisco
* Canine Heroes Gala: April 10, 2021 in San Francisco

For more information or to register, please visit guidedogs.com/events.

# Amazon Smile

Designate GDB as your charity of choice at Amazon Smile to have a portion of your purchases support our mission. To enroll, go to smile.amazon.com.

# **New giving Opportunities with the CARES Act**

You can support GDB’s mission and enjoy enhanced charitable giving incentives. Find out more about The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.

* The adjusted gross income (AGI) limitation (60%) for gifts of cash is eliminated for those who itemize.
* Above-the-line charitable deduction of up to $300.00 is available for all standard and itemized deduction donors.
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For more information, return the coupon below or call 415.492.4190.President’s Circle: Thank You to Our New and Continued Supporters, January 1-March 31, 2020

Honoring the generous major donors who contribute $5,000 or more annually.

Quote: “I give to Guide Dogs for the Blind because they provide independence, friendship, and lifelong veterinary care. The dogs are amazing and life changing.” —Yvonne Gee, donor since 2014

## Soul Mates: $100,000+

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Phoenix Guide Dog Raisers Inc.

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## Companions: $10,000-$24,999

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## New Legacy Society Members, January 1-March 31, 2020

Recognizing the vision of those who have included GDB in their estate plans.

Leslie Brueckner

Barbara and William Collins

Annie Martin

Linda and Rick Pyeritz

Alicia and Jose Rodriguez

Sharon Ruiz and Richard Bueno

Joanne and Glenn Shojinaga

Luis Torres

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