

GUIDE DOG NEWS

2025
ISSUE 2

JODI WILSON WITH GUIDE
DOG PUPPY, SAL AND
HANNAH FENELON WITH
GUIDE DOG PUPPY, SULU



Guide Dogs
for the Blind

NEWS UPDATE



Guide Dog News is now formatted as two printed issues and two digital issues per year. This allows us to reduce costs, lessen our environmental impact, and enhance reader accessibility.

Visit guidedogs.com/guide-dog-news to sign up for digital notifications.



To learn more about our mission and how you can get involved, visit our website at guidedogs.com; call us at 800.295.4050, or scan the QR code (left).

Make a tax-deductible donation today by mailing a gift in the enclosed envelope or donating online.

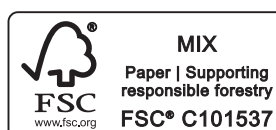
U.S. DONATIONS: guidedogs.com/newsgift

CANADIAN DONATIONS: gdbinternational.ca

On occasion, GDB will share donor information with like-minded non-profit organizations to better fulfill our mission. If you do not want your information shared, please email us at donations@guidedogs.com.



Full
Member



Please recycle
this newsletter!



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

Christine Benninger—President & CEO
Deborah J. Neff—Chair
Leanne Bremner—Vice Chair
Dan L'Abbe—Vice Chair, Finance
Amit Ahuja—Secretary

Non-Board Member

Sherilyn Dacquisto—CFO & Treasurer

Directors

Rhonda Bakusko
Claudia Barkmeier
Joan Boyd
Chris Coleman
Ann Grube
Steve Hultquist
Cheri Owen
Joan Robinson

Director Emeritus

Jack Scott

ALUMNI BOARD

Directors

Claire Stanley—Chair
Maia Scott—Vice Chair
Chris Yoon—Secretary

Members at Large

Deborah Cook
Derek Daniel
Kelly Egan
Kirsten French
Leigh Moss
Betty Nobel
Melba Vélez-Ortiz

PHOTO CREDITS

Submitted photos:

p5-6; p7 (top); p8 (bottom left).

GREETINGS FROM THE CEO

Greetings!

Spring has sprung, and at Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB), we're embracing new beginnings for our clients — wherever they are in their journey. Whether that means gaining orientation and mobility skills, training with a guide dog, or finding confidence and comfort through a K9 Buddy, we are here to support clients every step of the way.

I know some of you might be worried that recent federal budget cuts to nonprofit organizations could impact our services to the blind and visually impaired community. GDB receives no government funding and has always relied on the generous support of our donors and volunteers. And with your help and that of our full community, we will carry on our life-changing mission without interruption, meeting our clients where they are.

As an organization dedicated to creating a more accessible world for people who are blind or visually impaired, we recognize the importance of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in advancing our mission and creating a community where everyone, from our employees to the people we serve, experiences a sense of belonging and empowerment. We are committed to advocating for the rights of individuals who are blind or visually impaired and helping create a world that embraces diversity in all its forms. Because when everyone is empowered to participate, our communities are stronger.

With your ongoing support, our clients are living more abundant, inclusive lives. Thank you for making a difference!

With gratitude,



Christine Benninger
President and CEO



For 44 years, Ginger Anderson has shared the joy of tap dancing with students of all ages, creating lasting connections along the way. Among her many students, two stand out — Amelia Diaz and Cristina Ana Jones. Their bond goes beyond dance and blossomed into a lifelong friendship rooted in mutual respect, and intertwined with their connection to Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB).

Their journey began when Amelia, age 7, and Cristina, age 6, enrolled in Ginger's tap dance class at Braille Institute, in Southern California. This was Ginger's first time teaching students who were blind or visually impaired, and she was determined to make the experience as inclusive as possible. Instead of asking her students to watch her feet,

MAKING AN IMPACT ONE STEP AT A TIME



GINGER ANDERSON AND CRISTINA ANA JONES

she described every movement. “Ginger was very precise, so it was easy to track what she was doing,” recalls Amelia. “She’d say something like, ‘Pick your right foot up and brush the ball of your foot forward and back.’”

Before their first stage performance, Ginger ensured the students were oriented to the space, giving them a clear sense of how much room they had to move. “They were such eager learners and great listeners,” says Ginger. “It didn’t take long for them to pick up on every move I made.”

Inspired by their progress and love for dance, Amelia and Cristina continued tap lessons at Ginger’s studio into their 20s. In their late teens, both young women were paired with guide dogs from GDB. Their new four-legged companions began attending tap classes, adding a new dynamic to the studio. “The dogs were amazing — so calm and well behaved, even in the chaos of a tap class,” recalls Ginger. “They were doing more than guiding — they were transforming the girls’ lives.”

Moved by the impact the guide dogs had on her students, Ginger and her husband, Don, became longtime GDB donors and Legacy Society members. “These dogs gave Amelia and Cristina enhanced confidence, independence, and love,” says Ginger. “I saw them open up in ways they hadn’t before. It was like they were walking with a new sense of freedom.”

Today, Amelia, 37, has her master’s degree in English, and is a writer, blogger, and poet, working on her first novel. Cristina, 36, is a trained opera singer who studied at the Royal Academy of Music and teaches voice.

“For me, tap was a fundamental part of growing up, and Ginger became like a second parent to me,” says Cristina. She credits her tap training for helping her perform on stage as an opera singer. “I attribute the majority of my ability to move confidently on stage without a mobility tool to Ginger.”

For Amelia, tap was a creative outlet. “It gave me a permission slip to have fun. It brought me a sense of security, freedom, and joy,” she says. “Ginger was always a safe person I could talk to. Some of our Friday afternoon tap classes became unofficial therapy sessions.”

Amelia recalls Ginger’s unwavering support when she and Cristina decided to pursue careers in the arts. “She was one of the few adults who supported me to follow my dreams. That was so meaningful,” says Amelia, who has written stories about her tap-dancing years and even dedicated a poem to Ginger.



Looking back, Ginger sees striking parallels between the steps the girls took in dance and the steps they took with their guide dogs. “Both require discipline, patience, and trust,” she says. Cristina and Amelia agree, noting that in dance, they memorized movements and performed, while with their guide dogs, they learned routes and trusted their dogs to guide them safely.

Though their paths have diverged, Ginger remains in close touch with Amelia and Cristina. They talk often and Ginger says couldn’t be prouder of the women they have become. “They’ll always be my girls,” Ginger says with pride and affection. “They’ll always be stars in my heart — each in their own unique way.”



MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE



GUIDE DOG PROGRAM

When Richard Faubion was matched with his guide dog *Lute*, he had no idea just how transformative the experience would be, particularly when traveling at night when his residual vision was more impacted. “That’s when I really felt what it was like to totally trust my guide dog,” recalls Richard. “I could feel *Lute* weaving around obstacles, dodging people, moving with purpose, and providing me a sense of freedom I hadn’t felt in years.” In addition, “Having a guide dog affords me more social interactions and interesting conversations.” Richard credits GDB’s supportive alumni community for helping him continue to thrive both personally and professionally. “The advice, the stories, the shared experiences — it’s invaluable,” he says. “Being part of this network, I’ve learned that we’re never alone in this journey.”



ORIENTATION AND MOBILITY IMMERSION PROGRAM

After retiring from a successful career in education business, Becky Campbell attended GDB’s Orientation & Mobility Immersion (OMI) program to gain independent travel skills to visit her grandchildren who lived out of state. “It’s just a wonderful feeling to get your independence back. I’ve always been a very independent person and vision loss took that away from me because I didn’t have the tools. Guide Dogs for the Blind gave me those tools.” Becky wants donors to know that the programs they fund are changing peoples’ lives. “To have these skills, these tools, and this community — it brings life into you. I feel like I can do anything I want to do now.”

At Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB), we believe that everyone deserves to move through the world safely and confidently — to live the life they want to live. Our Guide Dog, Orientation and Mobility Immersion, and K9 Buddy Programs meet clients where they are to serve their ever-changing needs throughout their lives.

K9 BUDDY PROGRAM

The Porcano family couldn't be happier with K9 Buddy *Herschel*, aka "*Hershey*." Parents Justin and Rosalyn say their daughter, Lia, age 6, wasn't very confident around dogs but quickly warmed up to *Hershey* after the two met. "Now she looks forward to *Hershey* licking her face every morning," says Justin. "Since getting *Hershey*, we've noticed that Lia is generally happier. No matter how tough her day at school has been, the moment she comes home and is greeted by *Hershey*, those feelings seem to melt away. He is so sweet and comforting around her. We got super lucky with *Hershey*, and we're just so grateful for the program and the folks who helped raise him."



YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT CHANGES LIVES!

Donate at guidedogs.com/newsgift or use the provided envelope.

-  **\$50** helps provide a leash and grooming supplies
-  **\$100** helps cover a client's transportation costs to campus
-  **\$250** assists with the cost of training an OMI client
-  **\$500** helps provide veterinary care for a guide dog or K9 Buddy
-  **\$1,000** helps cover the cost of training for a guide dog team



BUILDING BRIGHTER FUTURES

This year, GDB will break ground on a state-of-the-art Client Residence and Community Hub on our Oregon campus that will revolutionize how we serve, support, and connect more individuals to our life-changing programs. GDB President and CEO Christine Benninger says the project will more than double GDB's ability to serve clients in Oregon, creating an inclusive complex that unites clients, staff, puppy raisers, and other volunteers in one unified space.

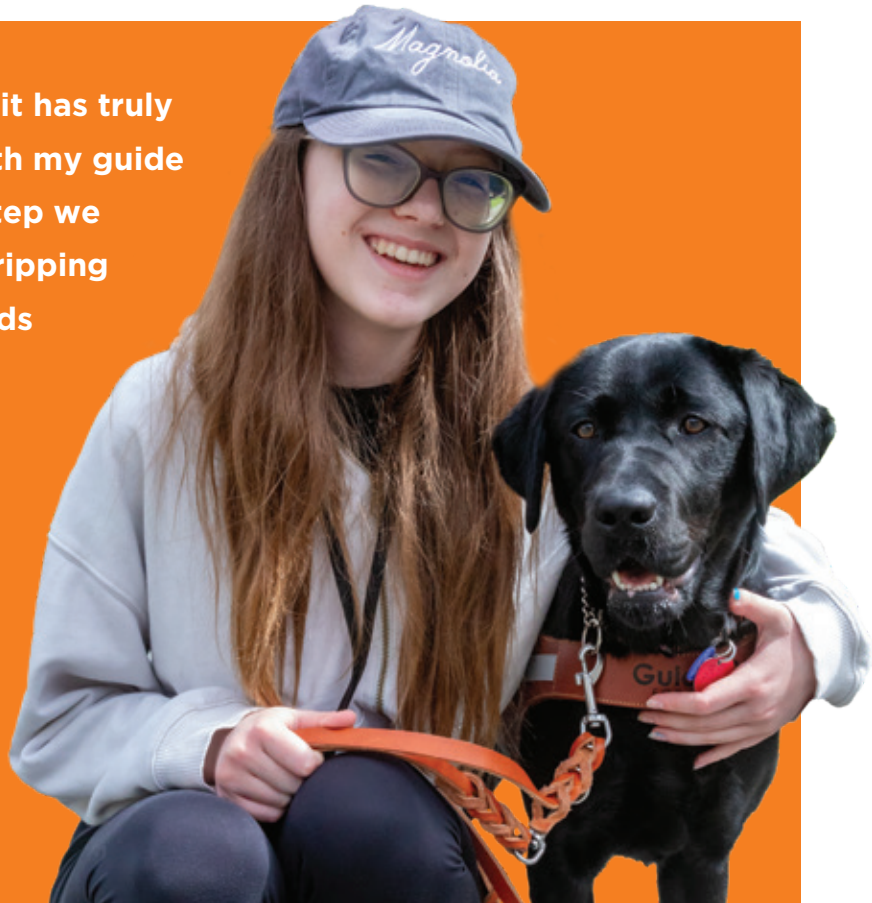
Susan Armstrong, Vice President of Client Programs, says the new building complex will serve as a global benchmark in accessible and inclusive training programs within the guide dog industry. To ensure the project is inclusive and accessible beyond ADA requirements, GDB gathered feedback from focus groups of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. "I really believe that if you design for people with disabilities, you're designing for everyone."

To date, GDB has raised more than \$15 million in support of the \$28 million project. To learn more about this leading-edge complex, visit guidedogs.com/oregon-campaign.

**TOGETHER, WE CAN BUILD A NEW ERA OF SERVICE,
CONNECTION, AND EMPOWERMENT.**

“I love having a guide dog for how it has truly changed my life. When walking with my guide dog *Izzy*, I feel confident in each step we take. I don’t have to worry about tripping over curbs because *Izzy* always finds them. I don’t have to worry about running into people because *Izzy* gets me around them. I’m not scared of missing a step I can’t see because *Izzy* helps me with the stairs. The worries that I once had are gone now that I have a guide dog.”

— Emerson Archuletta




WHY I LOVE MY GUIDE DOG

“Having a guide dog has been a life-changing experience. Walking with *Neutrino* is very freeing. With a cane, I stopped a lot, but with *Neutrino* we just keep on going. It’s so awesome! I can be a bit anxious around new people, but *Neutrino* helps with that anxiety. Now I’m a lot more confident and people are more likely to strike up a conversation with me. *Neutrino* is a small dog but he’s a big companion.”

—Zavier Wallace





*PUPPY RAISING VOLUNTEERS
JODI AND HANNAH TAKE A STROLL
WITH TWO GDB PUPPIES*

RAISE A PUPPY, CHANGE A LIFE!

Are you inspired by Guide Dogs for the Blind's mission to help people who are blind or visually impaired gain greater independence? Is your child or teenager looking for a fun and meaningful service project? Raising a guide dog puppy can help change lives — including your own!

This year, some 3,000 volunteers will raise 800 puppies, and GDB is always seeking more volunteers. Whether you're 9 or 90, no prior experience is required (though you must live in one of nine western U.S. states where the program is offered). Volunteers care for puppies in their homes from 8 weeks of age until they are about 15 months old. The dogs then return to GDB for formal training.

Sarah Blevins, GDB's Director of Puppy Raising, highlights two ways to get involved: the traditional puppy raising club model, where volunteers join location-based puppy clubs with regularly-scheduled activities, or the new, more flexible hybrid puppy raising program, currently offered in the San Francisco Bay Area and Portland, Ore.

While the traditional puppy raising club model involves in-person activities with a close-knit community of puppy raisers, the hybrid model offers flexibility through online training, webinars, and occasional in-person workshops. "The hybrid model helps encourage people of all backgrounds to participate as puppy raising volunteers," says Sarah. "There's no shortage of ways to help."

Join Guide Dogs for the Blind and volunteer to raise a guide dog puppy today!

To learn more, visit [guidedogs.com/puppy](https://www.guidedogs.com/puppy).

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW & CONTINUED SUPPORTERS

January 1- March 31, 2025

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE AND FRIENDS SOCIETY MEMBERS

Honoring the generous donors who contribute \$5,000+

SOUL MATES \$100,000 - \$499,999

Melinda and John Baum♦
Jin and Linda Zidell Fund

HEROES \$50,000 - \$99,999

Dmarlou Foundation — In Memory of
Dorothy and Martell J. Kaliski
William G. Irwin Charity Foundation

PARTNERS \$25,000 - \$49,999

Anonymous
Janice Burrows Ellis
Grace and Ed Ehrman
Jim and Chana Jackson —
The Ann Jackson Family Foundation
Sandra and Peter Keller
H. William Lichtenberger
Susan and William Lowery
Wayne and JoAnn Moore
Charitable Foundation
Mildred Murray+
Sharon Stoesser
Lillyan Tremaroli+

COMPANIONS \$10,000 - \$24,999

Ginger and Donald Anderson
Anonymous
Gregory Aposperis
Kristine dela Paz and
Christian and Isabella Tan
Delta Gamma Foundation
Wendy Dickerman
Michael Driver^
Margaret Glennon and John Bowden
Ulla Kercher

Karyn and Steven Kline
Dorothy Lazier
Sharon Maples
The McDonald Family Foundation
Kevin and Beatrice Olsen
Thomas G. Ramey and Peggy Huff Harris
Fund of the Community Foundation
for Mississippi
Ann and Andrew J. Reid+
Sidney Stern Memorial Trust
Alexander Sprague
Robert Terrell and Linda Jordan
Susan Warmbrand
Elaine Wilderman — In Memory of *Cashew*+

FRIENDS \$5,000 - \$9,999

Anonymous
Lois Berkiher
Vicky and Marshall Berol+
Aiko Bevans^
Don and Julia Boen
Audrey Maher
Jaclyne Boyden
Chris and Henry Bredenkamp+
Dorothy Brewster+
Jeff Brooks
Nancy Busse+
Joan Cavalero
Community Foundation of the North State
Philip and Nancy Draper
Robbie Dunlap
Evalyn M. Bauer Foundation
Linda and Dan Fowler
Dona Fuller — In Honor of Bud Fuller+
Frank Gerace

Linda and Dale Glasser+
The Grace Nixon Foundation
Jan Henry
Barbara Hinds
Peter Hirst^
Diana Hirzel+
Bennett and Andrea Holtzman
Jori Jordan+
Marcella Korwin
Jeri and Darrell Livingston
Bradford Manning
Sharon Meigs+
Faye Miller
Nancy Moore+
Cheri Owen and Jennifer Sorkin^
Madeleine M. Palacin — With Grateful
Thanks, *Miss Mandy*
Kent Rickabaugh
Diane S. Shammass
David Shennan
Susan Shipley and Craig Allison
Cindy and William Steenis+
Michelle Swift and Robert Lewis
Sheldon A. Taft
Richard Thayer
Irene Topor
Celia Vigil and William Gatcher
Donna Wills
Wood, Hat & Silver, LLC

♦Multi-year commitment

+Legacy Society Member

^Recurring donor from
October 2024-March 2025

NEW LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS January 1 - March 31, 2025

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

Anonymous
Margarethe Abbott
Mark L. Adreon
George Baker
Susan E. Bates
Janet R. Berg
Terry J. Blindt
Colleen A. Brennan
Dawn Brown
Margaret Carlson
Tim Collins
Marilyn Conway-Shepherd
Ronald and Margo DeCook
Loren and Barbara Donaldson

Carol Draga
Casey Handrop
Rudy Isaak
Helen James
Joan Janetakes
Carol Johnson
Cheryl Keller
Vickie LaBraque
Jacquelyn Morris
Arline Murad
C. Newson
Tsukumo Nishi Barrett
Aubrey and Arleen Olson
Craig Piette

Janet Piggins
Warren Rathbun
Carol Robbins
Qwendoline Scheffers
Jerleen Schlessner
Susan and Bob Shaw
Steve Eliot Smith
Al and Rebecca Szymanski
Edwin Vanhorn
Jean Ellen Von Wittenburg
Shirley-Ann Wagenaar
Sandy Christine Wetlesen
Carol Willover



THREE EASY WAYS TO INCLUDE GDB IN YOUR WILL OR TRUST:

1. Visit guidedogs.com/plannedgiving for sample bequest language.
2. Let us know that you are interested in making a gift in your will or trust.
3. Send us the completed coupon below.

“Our belief in Guide Dogs for the Blind has grown over the years, from the first graduation we attended, to our experience as volunteer breeder custodians and beyond. When making our estate plans there was no question that we would include GDB. We love the fact that our commitment will benefit GDB clients for years to come.” —Martha and Peter Plante



GDB CHARITABLE ESTATE PLANNING

- ☐ I have already included Guide Dogs for the Blind in my estate plan. I accept the invitation to be recognized as a member of the Legacy Society.
- ☐ Please send me suggested language to use in my will or trust.
- ☐ I would like to receive information about charitable gift annuities.

Return to:
Joan Scott, Planned Giving
Guide Dogs for the Blind
P.O. Box 151200
San Rafael, CA 94915-1200

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____