

# GUIDE DOG NEWS

The Quarterly Publication of  
Guide Dogs for the Blind

2019 ISSUE 4



*AMIT AHUJA AND HIS BLACK  
LAB GUIDE DOG, TASHI*

## GET STREAMING

We have a really big announcement: “Pick of the Litter” is now a NEW six-episode docu-series on Disney+! Streaming starting December 20. **p4**

## HOMECOMING

Reunited and it feels so good! GDB’s Alumni Reunion in Portland, Ore., this Fall was an overwhelming success, and a ton of fun! **p6**

## LITTER LOVE

Did you know that you can sponsor a litter of guide dog puppies? It’s true! Learn all about this new sponsorship opportunity. **p10**



**Guide Dogs  
for the Blind**



## THINGS ARE CLICKING OVER HERE!

In September, we were delighted to host our 5th International Clicker Training Conference on our California campus. At GDB, we believe maximizing positive reinforcement through Clicker Training is the key to our guide dogs' success and has become more of a standard dog training philosophy internationally. Since we fully integrated Clicker Training methods into all aspects of our formal guidework training program in 2004, we have continued

to find additional ways to maximize positive reinforcement through Clicker Training across many of our programs, including client handling, puppy development, and husbandry/veterinary practices. The conference offered us a chance to share our experiences and methods with our peers. There were 14 participants from six countries, and a number of GDB staff that served as faculty. We love collaborating with and learning from each other!



# Guide Dogs for the Blind

A NON-PROFIT, CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION  
800.295.4050 | GUIDEDOGS.COM

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Full Member

Guide Dogs for the Blind follows the guidelines recommended by the Council of U.S. Dog Guide Schools and the International Guide Dog Federation for the humane care and training of our dogs, and the instruction and services offered to our clients.



Please recycle this newsletter!

# GREETINGS FROM THE CEO

Greetings,

It is hard to believe another year is drawing to a close! 2019 certainly has had some wonderful bright spots for GDB. We especially enjoyed all the times we were able to celebrate our life-changing mission with our amazing community. We loved hosting members of our Legacy Society on our California campus for the largest Legacy Society gathering to date. Our Caps and Tails graduation held in downtown Portland offered a new way for folks to experience the power of partnership first hand and included a lot of happy tears. Fun Day celebrations on our campuses and farther afield presented us with a boatload of cuteness along with opportunities to thank, celebrate, and educate our outstanding volunteer puppy raisers.

Most recently, we held an Alumni Reunion in Portland, and it was incredible. See pages 5 and 6 for all the details, but what impressed me the most was how seamlessly the guide dog teams in attendance adapted to the reunion's environment that included city streets, boats, museums, a crowded hotel, and more. It made me truly proud to see our clients having a great time and truly thriving. And, for that, we have you, our donors, to thank. You play a critical role in making that happen not just for the guide dog teams that joined us at the reunion, but for the 2,200 teams across North America. I cannot thank you enough for your generosity and wish you all the happiest of holidays and a wonderful 2020.

With gratitude,

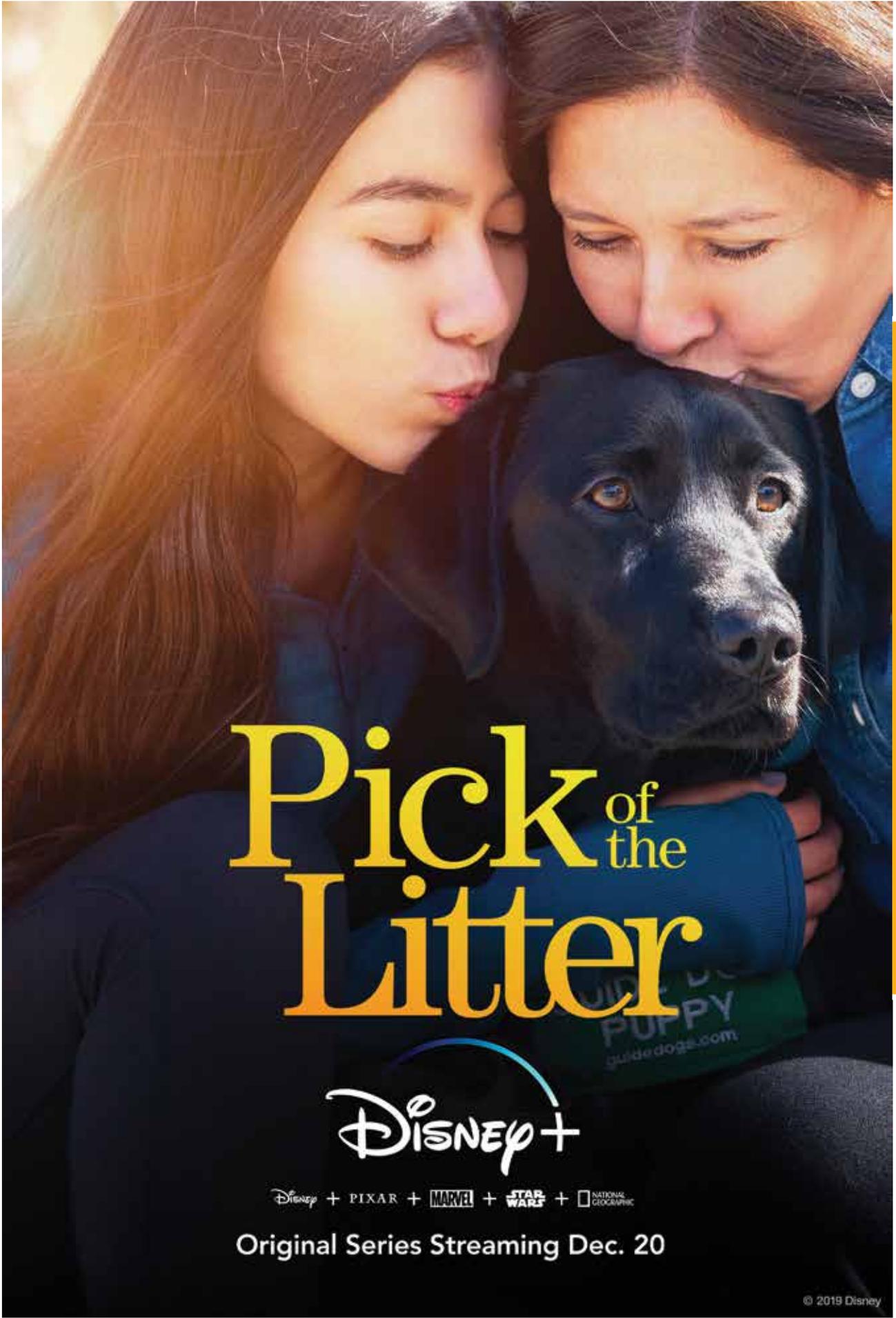


Christine Benninger  
President and CEO



**CHRIS BENNINGER AND HER GOLDEN RETRIEVER GDB AMBASSADOR DOG, THEIA, WITH CANINE HEROES GALA GUEST AND SPONSOR BILL GERSHEN. READ MORE ABOUT THE GALA ON PAGE 9.**

HAPPIEST SHOW ON EARTH



# Pick of the Litter



Disney + PIXAR + MARVEL + STAR WARS + NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

Original Series Streaming Dec. 20

© 2019 Disney



## “PICK OF THE LITTER” DOCU-SERIES COMING TO THE SMALL SCREEN!

Guide Dogs for the Blind was the subject of an award-winning 2018 feature-length documentary called “Pick of the Litter.” We are thrilled to report that the documentary has been developed into a television docu-series by the same name, set to air in late December on the new subscription streaming service Disney+.

The series documents the ups and downs of an adorable group of six dogs on their fascinating and surprisingly suspenseful quest to become guides for Guide Dogs for the Blind, the ultimate canine career. We are delighted that the series captures both sides of the harness by showcasing the people who love, train, and are paired with GDB dogs.

For more information on the series, please visit our website at [guidedogs.com/pickofthelitter](http://guidedogs.com/pickofthelitter).





## ALUMNI REUNION 2019

Every other year, we host an Alumni Reunion as a means to gather for a weekend of celebration, education, and community. This year’s reunion took place in downtown Portland, Ore., which was resplendent with Fall colors (and a few raindrops!), and was attended by nearly 200 people, including 100 guide dog teams, staff, volunteers, family members, and friends. The theme was “Tails Unleashed,” and attendees enjoyed workshops and activities, including excursions such as rock climbing, river cruises, walking food and coffee tours, a tactile art exhibit, and a luncheon at GDB’s campus in Boring. The reunion culminated in a banquet and screening of the film, “Pick of the Litter.” Kudos to our Alumni Association Board of Directors for all of their planning—the event was pawsitively amazing!





“Most people view blindness as a massive barrier, an insurmountable mountain that can never be climbed. I view blindness as an alternative path, one with perhaps more obstacles, but also more triumph.”

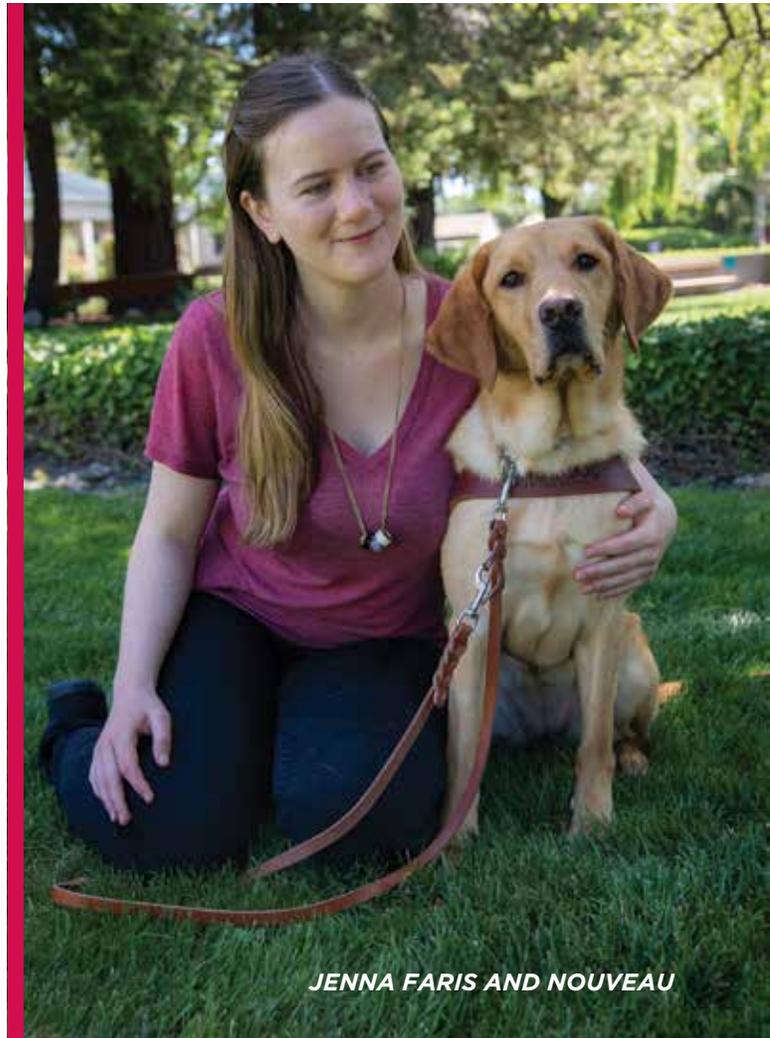
That quote is from GDB graduate Jenna Faris of Vancouver, British Columbia, who graduated with her second guide dog, yellow Lab *Nouveau*, earlier this year. Jenna, a recent college graduate, writes a blog called “Safe Space: Where Everyone is Welcome to Participate,” where she shares very candid, open, and inclusive posts about disability.

“Social inclusion is the cornerstone of confidence, belonging, and success. Can you imagine living without it?” she asks. “My friends and significant others are some of the highest quality people you will ever meet. They’re my friends because they see me for me, not my disability. Social networks are as important to me as breathing.”

Jenna has been open about how getting her first guide dog, a yellow Lab named *Susie*, as a teenager was life-changing. “The experience of getting my first guide dog turned my life around. During my training at Guide Dogs for the Blind, it was the first time in a long time I felt accepted and included,” she said. “As a blind teenager, I was painfully aware of everything that set me apart from my sighted peers. Now, as a blind twenty-something, I am gratefully conscious of all the beauty my differences have allowed me to see.”

Coming back to GDB for her second dog, Jenna said, was just as memorable. “I reconnected with a classmate from eight years ago and made two new lifelong friends,” she said. “Guide Dogs for the Blind is a magical place where everyone, not just my favorite circle of people, sees me for me. At GDB, all blindness means is that your fluffy friend has a job to do.”

Congratulations and many happy trails (and tails!) to Jenna and *Nouveau*!



JENNA FARIS AND NOUVEAU



**LEFT: DAN L'ABBE OF PRESENTING SPONSOR GRANITE SOLUTIONS GROUPE. TOP RIGHT: BARKLEY HEDINGER (L) AND HILLARY HEDINGER GUELFY (R) WITH A YELLOW LAB PUPPY. BOTTOM RIGHT: MEGAN AND BILL PATTERSON WITH AUCTIONEER KEITH MCLANE OF KLM AUCTIONS.**

## CANINE HEROES GALA

In September, more than 250 guests joined us at The Ritz-Carlton San Francisco for our Canine Heroes Gala. The annual fundraiser allowed our guests to get to know about our mission in an up close and personal way. There were interactive stations where people got to meet GDB puppies and their volunteer puppy raisers; see our guide dog mobility instructors in action with some of our guide dogs in training; take a walk with a simulated guide dog (called a *Juno* walk), and many other things. A multi-course meal, an inspiring program, and a raucous live auction rounded out the night, but an “Aw!”-inducing puppy delivery capped the evening’s festivities. More than half a million dollars was raised to go toward the cost of veterinary care for our canine heroes.

Thank you to our generous sponsors: Presenting—Granite Solutions Groupe. Diamond—SEI.

Platinum—The Klein Family, Lathrop Construction Associates. Gold—The Gershen & Sadowsky Families. Silver—Kimberly & Len Almalech, DILAN Consulting Group, GCM Grosvevor, Google,

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Amergent, Inc., Captain Kirk’s San Francisco

Sailing, Dodge & Cox Private Client Group, Heller

Consulting Risk Strategies, U.S. Bank Private

Wealth Management, Zamost Public Relations.

Underwriting—All-American Printing Services,

First Republic Bank, Granite Solutions Groupe,

KOIT, Main St. Floragardens, Moonstruck

Chocolate, Scott’s Seafood Restaurants.

### SAVE THE DATE

- **LABS LIVE AT ANDREI’S**  
March 28, 2020 (Irvine, CA)

- **CAPS & TAILS**  
May 9, 2020 (Portland, OR)

**For more information or to register, please visit [guidedogs.com/events](http://guidedogs.com/events).**

The Melvin and Geraldine Hoven Foundation has had a long history of supporting Guide Dogs for the Blind. It has sponsored numerous guide dog teams and has generously supported two of our California campus fundraising campaigns: the student residence and the Puppy Center. This year, the foundation is turning its attention to puppies with a **Pick of the Litter Sponsorship**. In this new sponsorship opportunity starting at \$35,000, donors help underwrite the costs associated with our breeding and whelping programs. They are able to name three puppies in the litter, receive select updates, and also get framed photos of the litter and each named puppy.

Robert Nigra, Director, Secretary & Treasurer of the foundation, and Barry Elkins, the Co-Director, are excited about this new

funding opportunity, and delighted to be able to help Mel and Geri carry out their wishes. “Mel and Geri Hoven loved the mission of GDB and they were huge dog lovers,” Robert said. “I am so happy the foundation will be honoring their legacy by sponsoring a litter of puppies and helping GDB’s breeding program. They would have loved this program.”

Mel and Geri Hoven were longtime residents of Los Altos in the San Francisco Bay Area. Mel was a successful businessman and an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed hunting, skiing, fishing, and golf. Geri was a registered nurse, and her background inspired her support of children and medical causes. The Hovens were also animal lovers, and always had a family dog. They desired to leave a legacy that, upon their death, would continue to support their favorite causes. To fulfill that goal, the Melvin and Geraldine Hoven Foundation was created. Guide Dogs for the Blind is grateful for the foundation’s generous support.

# PICK OF THE LITTER SPONSORSHIP



## Did You Know?

***You can sponsor a litter of puppies too! For more information about GDB’s Pick of the Litter Sponsorship, please contact Director of Philanthropy Robin Keating at [rkeating@guidedogs.com](mailto:rkeating@guidedogs.com) or 800.295.4050 ext. 4066.***

## FIND GIFTS FOR EVERYONE ON YOUR SHOPPING LIST WHILE SUPPORTING GDB!



### Guide Dog Challenge

We are thrilled to partner with Two Blind Brothers on a fun holiday shopping campaign. Are you up for the challenge? Visit [guidedogchallenge.com](http://guidedogchallenge.com).



### Amazon Smile

Designate GDB as your charity of choice to have a portion of your purchases—any time of the year—support our mission. To enroll, go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com).



### GDB's Gift Shop

A one-stop shop for all of your GDB official merchandise, for people and dogs. The perfect gift is waiting! Shop online at [guidedogs.com/shop](http://guidedogs.com/shop).

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## THANK YOU TO OUR NEW & CONTINUED SUPPORTERS July 1-September 30, 2019

### PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE MEMBERS Honoring the generous donors who contribute \$5,000+ annually.

#### SOUL MATES: \$100,000+

Granite Solutions Groupe

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

William M. Gershen Charitable Trust  
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#### PARTNERS: \$25,000-\$49,999

Erika and John Ammirati  
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The Danford Foundation  
The Klein Family  
Ann and Andy Mathieson  
Linda and Wallace Migura  
Suburban Auto Group  
Leigh Weaver

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

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Evelyn Anderson  
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Mr. & Mrs. Melvin T. Tukman  
Alice Wilse  
Jean Ho Woo  
Diana Wortham

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Ames-Fluhrer Charitable Fund  
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Mr. Kent Rickabaugh  
The Robert and Grace Liming  
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Heather and Billy Terrell  
VCA Charities for Pets  
Donna and Gary Wills  
Jim Zayac and Jim Schwarz

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### NEW LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS

July 1-September 30, 2019

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

Karen Adamson  
Robert and Fran Bailey  
Jane Becker  
Mr. & Mrs. Donn Comte  
Debra DeWeese  
Kevin and Becky Frankeberger  
Martha and Randy Hand  
Loisann Jacovitz  
Rebecca Jenkins

Karen Kessler  
Lynn and Gregory Lippincott  
Marti Madias  
Andrea Rossi  
Sue and Ken Suhling  
Mathilde White

## GIVE AND RECEIVE with Charitable Gift Annuities

Did you know that you can make a gift to help Guide Dogs for the Blind create exceptional partnerships between people and guide dogs while also receiving income for your retirement?

Want to learn more? Simply send us the completed coupon below, visit [guidedogs.com/plannedgiving](http://guidedogs.com/plannedgiving), or call us at 800.295.4050, ext. 4073.

### Sample Gift Annuity Payment Rates

| <i>Selected Rates for One Person</i> |      | <i>Selected Rates for Two People of the Same Age</i> |      |
|--------------------------------------|------|--|------|
| Age                                  | Rate | Ages   | Rate |
| 90+                                  | 9.5% | 90/90  | 9.1% |
| 85                                   | 8.3  | 85/85  | 7.3  |
| 80                                   | 7.3  | 80/80  | 6.2  |
| 75                                   | 6.2  | 75/75  | 5.5  |
| 70                                   | 5.6  | 70/70  | 5.0  |

*For illustrative purposes only.  
Please ask for current benefits and rates for other ages.  
Minimum amount for gift annuity: \$5,000*

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

- SEND A DONATION TODAY**  
**U.S. donations**  
 Mailing address (donations only):  
 Guide Dogs for the Blind  
 P.O. Box 3950  
 San Rafael, CA 94912-3950  
 Online: [guidedogs.com](http://guidedogs.com)
- Canadian donations**  
 Mailing address (donations only):  
 GDB International  
 P.O. Box 1275 STN K  
 Toronto, ON M4P 9Z9  
 Online: [gdbinternational.ca](http://gdbinternational.ca)
- ELIMINATE CHECKS/POSTAGE**  
 Direct your bank to automatically transfer your donation.
- MAKE AN HONOR OR MEMORIAL GIFT**  
 Cards of celebration or sympathy will be sent in your name.
- DOUBLE YOUR DONATION**  
 Find out if your employer has a matching gifts program.
- DONATE YOUR VEHICLE**  
 Call 877.364.2271 OR 877.DOG.CAR1.
- CREATE A LEGACY**  
 Name GDB in your will, trust, or as a beneficiary of an annuity, life insurance policy, IRA, or retirement plan.

Guide Dogs for the Blind will, on occasion, share donor information with like-minded non-profit organizations in an effort to better fulfill our mission and serve our clients. If you do not wish to have your information shared, please contact us at 800.295.4050 ext. 4160 or email us at [donations@guidedogs.com](mailto:donations@guidedogs.com).

### GIFT ANNUITY PROPOSAL

How would a charitable gift annuity work for me?  
(Minimums: age 50, \$5,000 gift)

My birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_ #2 Annuitant's birthdate: \_\_\_\_\_

Sample gift amount:  \$5,000  \$10,000  \$25,000  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Return to Joan Scott, Planned Giving Coordinator  
Guide Dogs for the Blind, P.O. Box 151200, San Rafael, CA 94915-1200  
800.295.4050, ext. 4073 | [jscott@guidedogs.com](mailto:jscott@guidedogs.com)