

GUIDE DOG NEWS

2022
ISSUE 3



*PUPPY RAISER KATIE HUNT WITH
YELLOW LAB GUIDE DOG PUPPY, GENE*



**Guide Dogs
for the Blind**



Guide Dogs for the Blind

A NON-PROFIT, CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION

CONTACT INFO

California Campus, National Headquarters:

350 Los Ranchitos Road, San Rafael, CA 94903
415.499.4000 | Fax 415.499.4035

Mailing address (donations only):

P.O. Box 3950, San Rafael, CA 94912-3950

Tax ID: 94-1196195

Oregon Campus:

32901 S.E. Kelso Road
Boring, OR 97009

503.668.2100

Fax 503.668.2141

800.295.4050 | guidedogs.com

In Canada: Guide Dogs for the Blind International

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1275 STN K, Toronto, ON M4P 9Z9

Canadian registration number: 83061 8682 RR0001

866.797.6603 | gdbinternational.ca

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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.

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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.

GREETINGS FROM THE CEO

Greetings,

Thank you for all you do! As Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) continues to celebrate our 80th anniversary year of empowering clients to live the life they want to live, we thank you for your ongoing support. You make our mission possible and on pages 4-5, we are shining the spotlight on the ways people are giving back and furthering our mission, whether they are a donor, a volunteer, or a client.

To help meet our strategic vision, we have made some exciting additions to our team this year. We welcomed Larry Meisner as our Chief Philanthropic Officer to lead our fundraising efforts and look forward to his integrated approach to revenue growth to support our important work. We are also thrilled to introduce Sam Curckovic, a member of the Client Services team and our first Guide Dog Mobility Instructor based in Canada. During the height of the pandemic, border closure issues created a unique and complex set of challenges in training and supporting Canadian clients. Since GDB is the largest provider of guide dogs in Canada, having Sam on board will help ensure our services remain uninterrupted, with the world-class support for which GDB is known.

We have grown our K9 Buddy program to serve people of all ages and expanded the program from ten Western U.S. states to throughout all of North America. Like our guide dog client teams, we will provide financial assistance for veterinary care for K9 Buddy teams, as needed. Cost should never be a barrier to anyone who could benefit from a magical partnership with one of our dogs!

Throughout this lingering pandemic, we have learned that we can accomplish remarkable things with the commitment of our caring supporters. Because of you, our programs are expanding. Our team is ready for the future. Our clients are leading more abundant, inclusive lives. Thank you!

With gratitude,



Christine Benninger
President and CEO

P.S. Listen to our podcast, “Central Bark,” at [guidedogs.com/podcast](https://www.guidedogs.com/podcast) and enjoy our blog, “No Bones About It,” at [guidedogs.com/blog](https://www.guidedogs.com/blog)



CHRIS BENNINGER WITH GUIDE DOG PUPPY, TRANQUIL, AT FUN DAY. SEE PAGE 10 TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS TOTALLY RAD 80S-THEMED EVENT!

GIVING BACK

Some partnerships are meant to be. Not only is this true for Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) alumni and their guide dogs or K9 Buddies, but it's also true throughout our entire organization. The partnerships with thousands of passionate volunteers, clients, and donors across the U.S. and Canada who give of their time, money, talent, and heart are what make our GDB community so special.

"We know there's a special magic about GDB's dogs who change people's lives. But there's magic in the people too," says Christine Benninger, President, and CEO. "Our GDB community creates connections, fosters inclusion, and helps make our communities stronger."



**COLLEEN MADIGAN
WITH GUIDE DOG, TED**

GDB alum Colleen Madigan volunteers on our Oregon campus with her guide dog, *Ted*. Colleen helps orient new clients to our Oregon campus and residence hall. She also works in the residence dining room every Friday. "I wanted to give back by sharing my time, energy, and effort." As a guide dog user, Colleen knows that getting a new guide dog is a time of excitement and anticipation. She also can empathize with clients who have retired or had to say goodbye to their guide dogs and are returning to campus for a successor dog. "I know what they're going through and can share in their emotions and support them."

GDB puppy raising volunteer, Jenny Collins, enjoys the camaraderie and friendships that she's built through her involvement with GDB, and considers many GDB clients and fellow volunteers among her dearest of friends. She's so supportive of GDB's life-changing mission and the strong sense of community it brings to her life that she celebrated her 50th birthday by raising funds for GDB. "Independence and inclusion are important values to me," explains Jenny. "The more I've learned about GDB and the community

**PUPPY RAISERS LAUREN WALKER WITH PUPPY MIRA (LEFT)
AND JENNY COLLINS WITH PUPPY METZI (RIGHT), TOGETHER
WITH GDB CLIENT CHARI CHAUVIN AND HER GUIDE DOG
HAVILAND (CENTER).**





“We are all ambassadors of the program. That’s very powerful.”

—Mina Sun

it serves, the more I’ve wanted to broaden my involvement.” Jenny adds that she’s met “some of the greatest people” through GDB. “It’s been an enriching experience that’s changed my life.”

Mina Sun, whose 9-year-old son, Kai, has a K9 Buddy, first learned about GDB after a co-worker brought a guide dog puppy to work. “Now, I have friends who have guide dogs, friends who are puppy raisers, or have career change dogs,” she said. “We are all ambassadors of the program. That’s very powerful.”

Forging strong community ties that power connections at GDB also applies to our staff. Recently-retired GDB Community Field Representative Tami Shankle—who had a 25+ year career in our Puppy Raising Department—helped to facilitate one of GDB’s largest-ever Legacy gifts just by sharing her passion for her job with a woman she met through a mutual friend. “It’s a great feeling knowing that I’ve helped GDB,” says Tami.

President and CEO Chris Benninger says the multimillion-dollar gift is an inspiring example of how everyone connected with GDB can have an impact. “Without Tami, we would not have known about the donor’s interest in GDB, and the gift likely would not have come about.”

Indeed, there is a special magic about the people and dogs of GDB who enrich lives and strengthen bonds within our communities. We’re grateful every day to all of those who are connected to our mission in so many capacities. Thank you for being such wonderful ambassadors of our work.

TAMI SHANKLE



CAMP GDB IS PAWSOME!

Camp GDB was back in full swing during the summer on our Oregon campus and at nearby Oral Hull Park. This year, GDB held a session for teens ages 14 to 17 and a second session for those 18 to 24 years old. Campers from across the U.S. and Canada attended the free five-day camps, where everyone had the unique opportunity to experience the guide dog lifestyle.

Jane Flower, GDB's youth outreach specialist and one of Camp GDB's staff directors, says camp can be life-changing for participants who are deciding whether to pursue life with a guide dog. "Most of the campers have never walked with a guide dog, which is a very different experience than walking with a cane. We also want campers to focus on how the dogs feel, their behaviors and what those behaviors might sound like. A lot of them have never been around dogs or may not know what's involved in caring for a dog."

Bring on the Dog

Campers learned about the specific orientation and mobility skills required to be a successful guide dog handler, as well as the fitness and endurance necessary for guide dog travel. They explored the independence, responsibility, and companionship of having a guide dog by getting hands-on experiences that involved grooming and cuddling with dogs in our kennels, caring for dogs during an overnight visit, and spending time in our veterinary clinic. Campers also had the unforgettable opportunity to walk with a guide dog, an experience that is always the highlight of the week.

14-year-old camper Mina Lamarra of Huntington Beach, Calif., wasn't sure if she wanted a guide dog, so she attended the camp to learn more. "I never knew if I wanted a dog or not," Mina explains. "I wanted to go to college, and I was wondering if I would have the time to walk or



*MINA LAMARRA WALKS WITH A GUIDE DOG
ALONGSIDE GUIDE DOG MOBILITY
INSTRUCTOR MEGAN DODDER*

GDB'S JAKE KOCH LEADS THE CAMPERS ON A CAMPUS WALK








feed the dog. I just wanted to know if I wanted the added responsibility.” After her time at Camp GDB however, Mina says she can see a guide dog in her future. “Walking with the guide dog just changed my life! It makes everything so much more efficient and really unbelievably great!”

The dog experiences are certainly what makes Camp GDB unique, but participants also enjoyed traditional camp activities like swimming, hiking, games, tandem bicycle riding, and of course, campfires with s’mores! Friendships were solidified, bonds were formed, and memories were made.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

HELP SUPPORT OUR LIFE-CHANGING PROGRAMS!

-  **\$50** helps provide a leash and grooming supplies
-  **\$100** helps cover camper meals or activities
-  **\$250** assists with a “Puppy Raising Kit” for a volunteer puppy raiser
-  **\$500** helps pay for a guide dog harness
-  **\$1,000** helps support the cost of training a guide dog team



THE SCIENCE AND ART OF THE MATCH

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT GOES INTO FINDING THE PERFECT DOG FOR EACH CLIENT?

When it comes to making guide dog-client matches, GDB Training Directors Cheryl Vincent (Oregon campus) and Vanessa Lyens (California campus) say it's a little bit of science and a little bit of art that really starts from the beginning of the guide dog application process.

After clients complete an application for a guide dog, GDB talks with each potential client over the phone to understand what kind of dog they're looking for. Our Guide Dog Mobility Instructors (GDMIs) then conduct a home interview to learn more about the client's lifestyle, their walking routes, and other needs. "Matching a dog to a client's ideal walking speed is really important," says GDMI Joey Foat.

During the home interview, Cheryl says GDMIs will determine if an individual has the necessary orientation and mobility skills to work with a guide dog. They may have a person work with Juno, an empty harness that the instructor uses to simulate what it would feel like to walk with a guide dog.

During guide dog training on our Oregon or California campuses, Vanessa says GDMI's are constantly gathering information on each dog such as their natural walking pace, the kind of environment they thrive in, and what handling techniques best motivate them in their work. They also review observations puppy raisers provide after a dog's year-long stay that aid in the matching process. "Just like people, dogs are individuals too. A key part of a GDMI's job is to get to know each dog's personality, traits, and potential as a guide dog," says Vanessa.

Along with a client's lifestyle needs, Cheryl says GDMI's also consider the personality and key traits a client wants in a dog. "Some people like a more calm, cuddly dog, while others prefer a more playful type, so we work to match what the person wants in a companion because guide work is only an aspect of a dog's role in a person's life."

Alaskan graduate Willie Smith recently received his third successor guide dog, *Niner*. "All three of my dogs have been very good matches. I have no complaints. I don't know how they do such a good job on matching, but they do. In fact, everybody is just wonderful to work with from the instructors to the kitchen staff and housekeeping. It's just been a great experience!"

Occasionally, a match just isn't a match. Arizona graduate Rob Moreno received a different guide dog a few days into his training class after his initial dog's pace was too slow. His instructor matched him with *Inja*, who better suited Rob's walking pace. "I just love her. She's a firecracker," says Rob.

Matching guide dogs to serve clients of varying ages and backgrounds is also part of the magic we do to ensure our guide dog teams work well together. GDB serves guide dog clients in their teens to their nineties. "Everyone's lifestyle is different, so we customize our training to fit each client's needs," explains Joey. For someone who lives in a busy city, this could mean having the guide dog team practice getting on and off escalators, taking public transit, or walking through revolving doors. For a client who lives in a smaller town and enjoys being outdoors, the GDMI might have the team practice walking through a public park or explore a hiking trail. "It's an opportunity to work together and problem-solve real life situations," explains Joey. Indeed, it's the unique combination of science and art that has created more than 16,000 guide dog teams during GDB's 80-year history.



**WILLIE SMITH WITH
GUIDE DOG, NINER**

FUN DAY 2022

BARK TO THE FUTURE

Fun Day is an annual event held on our California and Oregon campuses to celebrate and thank our amazing volunteer puppy raisers. In honor of our 80th anniversary, we went back to the 1980s with a “Bark to the Future” theme! Think Madonna, neon colors, Rubik’s Cubes, mullet hairdos, and parachute pants! Each campus’ festivities included lots of fun games, engaging booths, a guide dog training demonstration with plenty of time for Q&A, puppy pawprint art, a scrumptious lunch, and of course, puppy deliveries! Fun Days are not only an opportunity for our puppy raisers to gather for a day of camaraderie, but they also give us an opportunity to thank our raisers for all they do to support our mission. To see photos and videos from both Fun Days, please visit [guidedogs.com/funday](https://www.guidedogs.com/funday).



SAVE THE DATES! For more info, visit [guidedogs.com/events](https://www.guidedogs.com/events)



CANINE HEROES GALA

October 29, 2022

The Ritz-Carlton

San Francisco

VIRTUAL HOLIDAY CELEBRATION!

Sunday, December 4, 2022

Pre-show: 4:30 pm PT

Live broadcast: 5:00 pm PT

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW & CONTINUED SUPPORTERS April 1-June 30, 2022

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

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LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY TO GDB IN YOUR WILL OR TRUST



**JULIE BURNET AND HER CAREER
CHANGE DOG, RUDY**

GDB volunteer and donor Julie Burnet has been a Legacy Society member since 2008. Legacy Society members are forward-thinking supporters who have named Guide Dogs for the Blind in their estate plans.

“I know how important it is to fund future generations of guide dog users. Making a gift in my estate plan is an effective way to have a lasting impact.”

If you'd like to make a gift in your will or trust, please let us know by calling 415.499.4456 (Erin Jones) or 415.499.4073 (Joan Scott). You may also complete and return this coupon or visit us at [guidedogs.giftlegacy.com](https://www.guidedogs.org/giftlegacy.com).



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- 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.

Name: _____

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Return to:

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Guide Dogs for the Blind
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