

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER FROM THE STAFF, GRADUATES AND VOLUNTEERS OF
BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS AND AUTISM SUPPORT DOGS

PAW PRINTS

SPRING 2014 - ISSUE NO. 29



Ethan & Autism Support Dog Andy



BC & Alberta
Guide Dog
Services

+

Autism
Support
Dogs



ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION



MESSAGE FROM CEO, WILLIAM THORNTON

Spring has just arrived and already this year, we have graduated four new guide dog teams and four autism support dog teams. Congratulations to these new graduates and thanks to all of the puppy raisers, boarders, supporters and the training department for making this possible!

We are very pleased with our progress so far this year and we are looking forward to continued success through 2014.

A goal for 2014 is to ramp up our breeding program.

We have planned to have 10 litters this year. With good fortune this will produce up to 60 puppies. Each year thereafter we will be increasing the number to help meet the demand for both our Guide Dog Services and Autism Support Dogs. If you are interested in volunteering to raise a puppy, do please contact us directly as we will be very grateful for your assistance.

Lastly, I would like to encourage you to save the dates for three of our important upcoming summer fundraising events. The details of which are enclosed in the newsletter. All of our events are managed by our amazing volunteers for whom I once again thank each and every one for their hard work and dedication to the organization.

Thank you for all of your continued support! We couldn't do this without you.

- William Thornton

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BC GUIDE DOG TEAM

KAREN & GUIDE DOG BRUCE

Team Sponsor: Sue McGorman

On August 31, 2013, Bruce arrived at our home. Bruce is a beautiful black lab and my third guide dog (my second dog from BC & Alberta Guide Dogs). Like my first two dogs, Bruce is very sweet and gentle, and he also works as hard as he plays. What is particularly adorable about Bruce is that he frequently yawns as he's working. These yawns are quite vocal and attention-getting. Makes me smile every time he does it!

I retired my second dog, Cecil, in December of 2012 after eight wonderful years together. With the arrival of Bruce, I now have my independence back and I am very grateful. Being able to travel on my own gives me a great sense of freedom and allows me to go to work and carry out my day-to-day activities.

I want to sincerely thank everyone involved with BC & Alberta Guide Dogs for all their hard work in raising and training Bruce to be the amazing dog and guide that he is. I truly appreciate all your hard work and dedication. You make it possible for me to be successful!

- Thank you from Karen



BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS

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William S. Thornton, GDMI

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AUTISM SUPPORT DOGS

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Some letters have been edited for space. To read full letters, please visit our website.

ALBERTA GUIDE DOG TEAM



DARYL & GUIDE DOG JENNY

Team Sponsor: Jenny's Puppy Sponsors

It is Christmas Day the morning I write this, and Jenny, my guide dog, is curled up in a ball with her head on my foot. The presents have been unwrapped, and I realize that I have one more person - or should I say group of people - to thank for a gift this year... and that is the BC & Alberta Guide Dogs.

Jenny and I began training in September 2013. It was a wonderful, intense, learning process. Having been a cane user all my life, I have struggled in some ways to allow Jenny to lead me, and Henny (our mobility instructor) did a great job in letting me make my

mistakes and learn to trust Jenny with the little things.

The independence I have gained with her is amazing! I have always ALWAYS hated traveling more than necessary in Alberta winters; I have found it disorienting, and more than once I have gotten turned around and lost when sidewalks have not been cleared of snow. But Jenny and I have learned to trust each other through the falling snow, -30-degree temperatures, icy sidewalks, and crowded shopping malls during Christmas season. We have gone to work, to parties, to the gym, and to goalball practice. Jenny has changed my life by providing an endless supply of guidance, support and love.

She adores any kind of toy (Jenny is living proof that a dog CAN have too many toys), and she loves to cuddle and wrestle (sometimes at the same time). Our cats have started to warm up to her and I think eventually she will let one of them take over her doggie bed. She sometimes barks in her sleep, and once, she woke herself up and let out a big "woof!" at 2:00AM and abruptly went back to sleep. I get complimented on her almost everywhere we go ("What a nice-looking dog"; "Can you train my dog to be that well-behaved?"), and sometimes I worry that Jenny will get a big head for all the compliments!

Thank you to Bob and Jan, her puppy raisers and boarders (yes, she still has her piggy!) for all of the love you have given her; Henny and Bill, and the team at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, for the comprehensive training, support and for helping with some of the bumps along the way. And to all who donated time, resources, food, shelter, love, laughter, and adoration for the greatest little puppy in the world (in my eyes), who, at this moment, is off in doggie dreamland (probably chasing some cats). - *Thanks again, Daryl*

ALBERTA GUIDE DOG TEAM

GARRETT & GUIDE DOG TOPHER

Team Sponsor: Eldon & Anne Foote Fund at Edmonton Foundation 8

When I was three I spent a year at the hospital being treated for B cell lymphoma. I had chemo, radiation, biopsies, injections, a broviac catheter, hospital food, and ended up losing a kidney and a pair of optic nerves. After that, it was the white cane, opening the wrong side of my chocolate milk at lunch, reading the Hardy Boys in braille for teachers and listening to Tom Clancy on cassette for myself.

I made an effort to socialize, but I also did my own thing. The tools and accommodations I used, while they

made some aspects of the sighted world accessible, also separated me from my peers. Things like braille books, the computer note takers, the even odder clunky Perkins Braille, and especially the white cane, were all obtrusive and inconvenient. They made you stand out in all the wrong ways. Compare that to the dignity that comes from having a dog, a cachet miles from the white cane. Eye contact never happened person to person; now it happens person to dog. You are an ambassador for the dog, and the dog is an ambassador for you. Topher, who's been described to me as chiseled and hard-core, finds doors, literally and metaphorically, then I just have to open them.

Topher is my second furry companion, and as different from my first as a Mac is to a PC (insert funny joke here). Marty, my first dog, graduated high school and university with me. He snoozed through boring lectures, waited patiently while I did assignments and wrote exams, and guided me from my house to my classes and back again as if he were a person and not a dog at all. I don't know if I could have earned my degree without him.

Topher is doing this all over again in his own unique style. As I proceed with supplementary courses, employment training, and job interviews, he is keeping me on an even-keel and the right path in more ways than one. His energy and exuberance are sometimes frustrating, but usually infectious. We go to the dog park for his stimulation, but it goes both ways. He is going to be with me as I sort out what I'm doing with my life after school, just as Marty helped me sort out and achieve the schooling itself. I'm much more confident about my future because I know Topher is guiding me toward it, and I cannot overstate my gratitude to those involved in Topher's history. Puppy raisers, boarders, sponsors, his trainer Henny, Bill and the rest of the BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, my thanks to you all. - Garrett



IN THE LITTERBOX

These little puppies are off to their Puppy Raisers homes for the first steps of their training. They are placed in homes throughout Greater Vancouver, Victoria and Calgary! Thanks to the Whelpers and Puppy Raisers for taking such good care of our moms and pups.

KIWA & RODEO'S PUPPIES!



BORN

November 28, 2013

WHELPER

Bonnie, S. Surrey

PUPPY RAISERS

Biezen (YLM)

Carmen, Calgary

Brynne (BLM)

Art & Sandy, Victoria

Wally (YLM)

Monel, Vancouver

JACUZZI & MAX'S PUPPIES!



BORN

December 2, 2013

WHELPER

Debbie, S. Surrey

PUPPY RAISERS

Dia (BLB)

Marlene, Calgary

Bear (YLM)

Linda, Victoria

Lois (BLB)

Mike, Vancouver

IN THE LITTERBOX

THANKS TO CANADIAN GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND FOR TWO NEW RECRUITS!



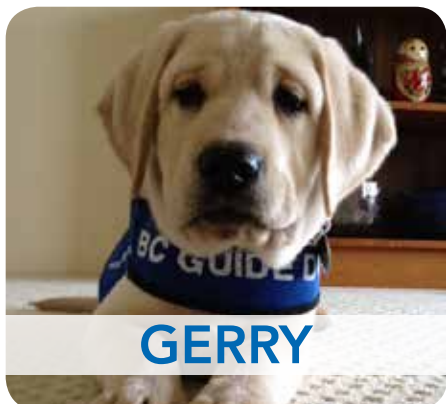
BERT

BORN

October 20, 2013

PUPPY RAISER

Linda & Verne, North Delta



GERRY

BORN

November 5, 2013

PUPPY RAISER

Connie & Graham, Port Coquitlam

We would also like to thank all of the volunteer boarders for caring for our dogs throughout their advanced training. We couldn't do it without you!

LEGEND

YL: Yellow Labrador Retriever

BL: Black Labrador Retriever

GR: Golden Retriever

LxGR: Labrador cross Golden Retriever

B: Female

M: Male

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AUTISM SUPPORT DOG TEAM

JASON & AUTISM SUPPORT DOG

ECHO Team Sponsor: Variety - The Children's Charity



Echo officially became a part of our family on February 14th, which was such a great Valentine's present for us. Our son Jason is 8 years old and was diagnosed with Autism just before the age of 3. We faced many challenges as parents with children with autism have.

Jason had many behaviours that we found difficult to manage. As a family, we struggled to go on outings with him as he would often bolt away from us and not look back. He had no safety awareness, so darting out in traffic was a huge fear for us. Jason would also have difficulty expressing his emotions. When he hurt himself, he would become angry

and upset and would sometimes scream for hours. We could not comfort him during those times. As a parent when your child is hurting, your instinct is to hug and comfort them, but we could not do this with Jason.

One evening in 2010, we saw a news story about a boy with autism and his new support dog. The story talked about how the support dog helped the family keep the boy safe. We knew that this was what we had to do for Jason. So we applied and were accepted.

Echo has become an instant part of our family and is inseparable from Jason. Jason has always been a happy child but Echo has brought him to a new level. Echo has made going on outings much easier for us now. As parents, we do not have to constantly be focused on Jason when we are out in the community. We know that Echo is by his side and keeping him from darting into the street or taking off in a store. When Jason gets upset, he hugs Echo and is learning to comfort himself by this. His episodes of being upset are over in almost an instant with a simple hug from Echo. We have also noticed that Jason seems to be talking more. As Echo has become an instant celebrity at Jason's school, a result has been that many of the children, no matter what grade they are in, come up and talk to Jason about Echo.

The happiness that bursts out of Jason when he is with Echo and the smiles on our daughter Evy's face when Echo is around is invaluable and we cannot thank Variety and BC & Alberta Guide Dogs enough for what Echo has done for our family and for Jason. - Jason's parents, Brad & Candy

AUTISM SUPPORT DOG TEAM

**ETHAN & AUTISM SUPPORT DOG
ANDY** Team Sponsor: John Gordon
Autism Foundation

It has only been a few months since Andy joined our family and already we cannot imagine life without him. Truly a loving a gentle puppy, Andy is the most happy when he is playing with toys or sitting on a lap for a snuggle, but put his work jacket on and his training kicks in, providing our son Ethan with so much support. Like many children with autism, Ethan is not aware of the dangers around him and may run onto a road or in a parking lot, especially when he is agitated or overwhelmed. This made it difficult for us to keep him, and our other children, safe, especially when only one parent was present. Having Andy has changed this.



Ethan has developed such a bond with Andy and we find them sleeping together, in Andy's dog bed, every morning. We are teaching Andy to give deep pressure by lying across Ethan's body. This pressure really helps Ethan calm down and regulate his behaviours. Watching Ethan talk to people about his "helper dog" is what has been the most amazing development. Ethan was mute, even at home, for 17 months and only just began speaking again this past summer. There are still some environments where Ethan is not comfortable talking but when Andy is with him, he wants to share, and has a reason to speak again! We are so grateful to the Autism Support Dogs and everyone at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs for all that they have done for our family and your continued support is so appreciated. - *Ethan's parents, Tammy & Jason*

BUY PUPPY GREETING CARDS TODAY!



\$20 for 8 blank cards (2 of each). Call 1.877.940.4504 to order!

BC GUIDE DOG TEAM



DIANE & GUIDE DOG BEEBLES

Team Sponsor: Rotary Club of Sidney by the Sea

There have been so many blessings in my life but none greater than my guide dog, Beebles. She is a beautiful black Lab who came to me at a young age, professionally trained and mature far beyond her age. I fell in love with her the minute we met and I honestly believe she felt the same way. She is now my shadow, leader, companion and inspiration. She is amazing at guiding me in familiar and unfamiliar routes and I trust her completely to keep me safe. When she is not working, she is a playful,

affectionate, fun-loving dog and makes me laugh out loud at some of her antics.

I was born with a hereditary genetic disorder, Usher's Syndrome - a combination of an eye disease called Retinitis Pigmentosa and a severe hearing impairment caused by bone malformation and nerve damage. I didn't know that I had this disorder until my late twenties so I grew up thinking I was a normal kid, which was not such a bad thing. I just thought no one could see in the dark or hear very well. So I did all the things that 'normal' kids do - rode bicycles and horses, figure skated, snow/water skied, played basketball, baseball, volleyball and jumped out of perfectly serviceable airplanes.

I got through all my school years and my first career as a bank teller by lip reading, which led me to supervisor and management positions. When hearing aids became available for my type of deafness in my thirties, I was able to become a legal assistant for a large law firm. Then when I was in my forties, my vision was obviously deteriorating and I could no longer do the work I loved so much.

In my sixties, I was diagnosed with macular degeneration, which meant that not only was my peripheral vision practically non-existent, my central vision was affected. I was getting more nervous about going 'out of my space' and I knew I needed more help. I wanted to be independent so I learned how to use a white cane and then was assessed and accepted by BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. Although the wait list was long, it was worth waiting for.

A special thank you to Bill and Henny who both guided and taught me so much about working with a guide dog. Henny, my mobility instructor, gave me so much encouragement and inspiration to rise to the challenges. Thank you to the Puppy Raisers and Boarders for doing such a great job. There are many stars lit up in Heaven for you. I also want to thank the Rotary By the Sea in Sidney for their support and sponsorship that helped me achieve my goal. And thank you to my friends and family that supported and encouraged me to keep striving. Without you all, I would not be where I am today - in a beautiful place with a beautiful guide dog, named Beebles. I will be forever grateful for all my blessings and for my greatest blessing of all, my guide dog. - Diane

WE NEED YOU!

VOLUNTEER TO RAISE A PUPPY!

We need volunteers to raise puppies that are training to be guide dogs for a blind/visually-impaired person or a support dog for a child with autism.



WE ARE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO:

- raise a puppy in-training in their home from about 7-8 weeks to 14-18 months of age
- help prepare pups, through a supervised program, for advanced training by teaching them obedience and socialization skills

PUPPY RAISERS MUST:

- live in Greater Vancouver, Victoria or Calgary
- be available for event appearances
- be strong enough to control a large dog
- be available for training during the day 3 times per month
- be home during the day and willing to take the puppy with them wherever they go (best suited to retirees or at-home workers)
- provide a dog-friendly home with a secure outdoor space (e.g. fenced yard)
- follow BC & Alberta Guide Dogs' guidelines for training and caring for the dog

Volunteers receive ongoing training from the puppy supervisor and the charity provides dog food, vet care, and other basic necessities for the dog

Please call Linda at 1.877.940.4504 in Greater Vancouver, Laura at 250.217.3132 in Victoria/Nanaimo and Sandra at 403.258.0819 in Calgary for more information.

AROUND TOWN

LOIS THE PUPPY MEETS LOIS THE MAYOR!



(left to right) Delta Firefighters Steve Soravito, Steve Mercier, & John Burr, Mayor Lois Jackson, Director of Delta Firefighters Charitable Society, Ben Lewis and Lois the Puppy.

The Corporation of Delta's Mayor, Mayor Lois Jackson, meets her namesake, Lois, puppy in training. Lois was named by our long time supporters, the members of the Delta Firefighters Charitable Society, in recognition of Mayor Jackson's support for our Firefighters. Delta Firehall #1 in Ladner, BC rolled out their big red fire truck for the occasion!

KITZ4KIDS EVENT RAISES \$10,000!



(left to right): Eva Dolejsi, Kitz4kids ; William Thornton, CEO, BC Guide Dogs; and Nicole Kaler, mother of Autism Support Dog recipient.

Kitz4Kids held a fundraiser for Autism Support Dogs in January at the Shark Club, Vancouver and raised \$10,000! Thanks to all who attended.

AROUND TOWN

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL TRIVIA NIGHT!



The winning trivia team for 2013, The Poorly Run Animal Park!

Thanks to everyone who made it out to the SOLD OUT event! Over 450 two-legged participants and 30 four-legged participants enjoyed an evening of Trivia and raised over \$15,000!

UPCOMING EVENTS

SCOTIABANK CALGARY MARATHON - CHARITY CHALLENGE

Sunday, June 1, 2014

Stampede Park, Calgary, AB

SPONSOR OUR TEAM - The Autism Support Dogs Woof Pack

Visit our website for more info: albertaguidedog.com

LABS! LIVE AT THE FAIRMONT - OUR 10TH CHARITY AUCTION

Saturday, June 21, 2014 ; Doors at 5:30pm

Fairmont Hotel Vancouver, Vancouver, BC

Tickets \$100 (tables of 8) ; Call 604.940.4504 to purchase tickets

GOLF FOR GUIDE DOGS ANNUAL TOURNAMENT

Friday, August 22, 2014

Beach Grove Golf Course, Tsawwassen, BC

Call for more info: 604.940.4504

SPONSOR A PUPPY

YOUR DONATION COULD HELP THESE LITTLE PUPS MAKE A VISIBLE DIFFERENCE!



These new little pups are not only training to become guide dogs or autism support dogs, but they have been specially selected to be our Puppy Sponsorship Ambassadors! They will be documenting their adventures and writing letters to sponsors over the next two years. If you sponsor one of these puppies, they could be writing to you!

WE HAVE A NUMBER OF SPONSORSHIP LEVELS AVAILABLE:

KINDERPUP (\$50+ GIFT): Help a puppy prepare for school. You (or your gift recipient) will receive a photo and introduction letter from a puppy in training!

PUPPY SCHOLARSHIP (\$250+ GIFT): Support the next generation of life-changing dogs! We will match you with a puppy, who from 8 weeks of age until approximately 2 years of age, will send regular photos and letters to you (or your gift recipient).

PUPPY SCHOLARSHIP (\$15/MONTH GIFT – ONGOING): Same as puppy scholarship above, but when the puppy graduates we will team you up with a new life-changing puppy.

MOM & PUPS FUND (\$1,000 GIFT): Support the care of a mom and her litter. You (or your gift recipient) will receive a birth announcement photo of mom with her pups. Then, we will match you with a puppy from that litter, who from 8 weeks of age until approximately 2 years of age, will send regular photos and letters to you (or your gift recipient).

To donate, call 1.877.940.4504 or visit our website bcguidedog.com

SPECIAL THANKS

Our thanks to the following individuals and organizations who have shown an outstanding, long-term commitment to making our work possible by donating goods/services year after year.



Boehringer Ingelheim
Feltham Pet Clinic
Fish Creek 24 Hour Pet Hospital
Dr. Charlotte Keller, DVM, DACVO, DECVO
Dr. Graham T. Lewis, DVM, DACVO
M-pressions Sportswear Limited (*for imprinting logos on our puppy jackets*)
Nestlé Purina Petcare Inc.

Novartis Animal Health Canada
Sue Paege (*for our puppy jackets*)
Scottsdale Veterinary Hospital
Dr. Brian Skorobohach, DVM, DACVO
VetCor Canine Reproductions
Vetoquinal Canada
Westjet
Zoetis Animal Health

BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS/AUTISM SUPPORT DOGS

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Toll Free in Alberta: 1.877.258.0819
Email: info@albertaguidedog.com

VICTORIA SATELLITE OFFICE

1027 Pandora Avenue (please call first) Victoria, BC V8V 3P6
Phone: 250.413.3095
Email: info@bcguidedog.com

Charity Registration Numbers: BC&AGDS 89131 1763 RR0001 | ASD 80796 1610 RR0001

**BC GUIDE DOG SERVICES + AUTISM SUPPORT DOGS
PRESENT OUR 10TH CHARITY AUCTION**

LABS!

**LIVE AT THE FAIRMONT
EMCEED BY GLOBAL TV'S LYNN COLLAR**

SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 2014, 5:30PM

FAIRMONT HOTEL VANCOUVER

**SIT DOWN DINNER/
LIVE ENTERTAINMENT
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**TICKETS: \$100 PER PERSON
TABLES OF 8
(INCLUDES DINNER)
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CALL 604-940-4504**

