MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR & CEO

As we put our final stamp on the 2021/22 fiscal year, one important theme stands out. Through the kindness and generosity of our supporters and volunteers, we continue to grow and reconnect with our communities in British Columbia and Alberta. We are forever grateful for the support that has helped us navigate the past two years.

We are excited to be able to engage, in person, with our volunteers. Whether it’s through in-person puppy training classes or hosting events with our partners, the ability to strengthen the bond between our organization and our supporters will only make us stronger.

As we move forward, we are seeing the tangible effects of your support. Our Advanced Training Department has grown, taking on new apprentice instructors. This investment will mean BC & Alberta Guide Dogs will continue to change the lives of our clients for the better.

Throughout our journey, a key contributor to our success is a strong and healthy community of dogs. Their well-being is paramount to our breeding and raising programs. From the tireless work of the team at our various veterinary clinics to the volunteers who keep a close eye on our dogs while out in the community, we continue to be a leader in the guide and service dog sectors. Despite the challenges faced in 2021/22, we continue to graduate new working teams across both provinces. To our puppy raisers, adult dog boarders, and our dedicated and growing staff, none of this is possible without your efforts. Our appreciation is immense.

The enclosed financial highlights show that revenue for the year ended June 30, 2022 amounted to $2,663,942. This was up approximately $66,940 from 2021. Expenses amounted to $1,979,530 resulting in a surplus of $684,412.

We look forward to reconnecting again in the coming year. Our blue and white dog vests are a symbol of great pride as the dogs who wear them continue with their training. None of this would be possible without your support.

Linda Reid, Chair
William S. Thornton, CEO

THANK YOU FROM BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS PATRON, LEAH MEEKER

It is no secret my beloved Howie cherished the opportunity to showcase the excellent work of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. The joy it brought to Howie was always evident in his smile whenever he had a chance to meet clients and their Guide and Service dogs.

While I couldn’t meet you this year at the 25th Annual London Drugs Golf for Guide Dogs tournament, I want everyone to know that both Howie and I were there in spirit. Your continued generosity means the world to me and is a fitting tribute to Howie’s memory.

It is an honour to continue as a Patron of this organization and to support the incredible work of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. Through the outstanding work of dedicated staff and tireless volunteers, I have no doubt they will continue to meet their client’s needs.

Thank you to those who make donations to this wonderful organization. Through your support, I am excited at the possibilities that lie ahead. You are forever in our hearts.

Leah Meeker

Fergie’s Doggie Delight Bakery in Chilliwack is donating proceeds from sales to support BC & Alberta Guide Dogs

The mission of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs is to meet the demand for professionally trained Guide Dogs, Autism Service Dogs, and OSI-PTSD Service Dogs for citizens of British Columbia and Alberta. At all times we meet or exceed International Standards as established by the International Guide Dog Federation and Assistance Dogs International.

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For 25 years, BC and Alberta Guide dogs has been a leader in Western Canada. As we begin the journey to the next quarter century, the emphasis is on building a stronger and more robust Advanced Training staff.

New staff members were added to the BC & Alberta Guide Dog team in the Lower Mainland in early 2022 to work on the Guide Dog and Autism programs. As well, a new Instructor was hired to work on the OSI-PTSD program in Edmonton.

CEO William Thornton says being able to strengthen our core training staff will go a long way to placing more dogs to those in need. It is an important step as the demand continues to grow in both provinces.

The goal is to continue adding training staff in 2023 to increase the number of dogs placed in communities across BC and Alberta.
THE RETIREMENT BRUCE DESERVES

Like people, Guide Dogs eventually retire from work to enjoy well-deserved rest and relaxation. As a Guide Dog user, two of the most common questions I’m asked are: “how do you know when your dog is ready to retire?” and “what happens when they retire?”

Since I just retired my third dog, Bruce, in July of this year, the best way to answer these questions is to tell his story.

Bruce arrived in the late summer of 2013 as an eager and enthusiastic 18-month-old dog who loved to wear his harness and was ready to guide his heart out. In harness, he was all business, walking with his head up, chest out, and tail wagging. He guided with purpose and confidence. My husband once described him as a “dog on a mission.”

His favourite workplace was our local mall because he had been socialized as a puppy there. He LOVED the mall despite the fact it was not my favourite place. He often “talked” in the car in the parking lot and couldn’t wait to get inside.

In March of this year, Bruce turned 10 years old and was still guiding in his usual peppy, confident manner. Then in early May, I noticed changes in his heart rate.

In 2013, while I was still training with Bruce, the trainer arranged for me to meet his puppy raiser, and I asked her if she and her husband would like to have Bruce back once he retired. She had agreed, and we have kept in touch over the years.

My husband and I took Bruce to her home in mid-July following one last after-care visit with a BC & Alberta Guide Dog Services trainer. For me, and every guide dog user, deciding whether to keep the dogs ourselves or retire them elsewhere is very personal.

For me, I knew Bruce would have a much better retirement with his puppy raiser than he would with me. I wanted him to kick back, relax, play, have fun, and be a dog with no responsibilities whatsoever. Giving him up was heartbreaking, but it was what was best for him.

Wounded Warriors Canada, a non-profit organization helping Veterans and First Responders injured in the line of duty, continues to deliver, thanks to its partnership with BC & Alberta Guide Dogs.

Wounded Warriors’ goal is to ensure veterans and first responders and their families feel, safe, supported, and understood. One of its core programs helps fund Service Dogs provided by BC & Alberta Guide Dogs.

The Service Dogs are trained to provide a living, breathing lifeline to the outside world. The objective is to empower Veterans and First Responders with the tools to reclaim their place in the community and rebuild their lives by helping them feel more secure in situations that may trigger their OSI-PTSD symptoms.

As a mental health service provider, Wounded Warriors Canada offers a range of clinically facilitated programs specifically developed to support the unique needs of Veterans, First Responders and their families.

Wounded Warriors Canada chose to support BC & Alberta Guide Dogs because they believe in the power of Service Dogs to improve the lives of individuals with an OSI-PTSD. They have seen firsthand the positive impact of Service Dogs.

After Veteran Dave was paired with Service Dog Storm, his life dramatically improved.

“He has changed my life in so many ways, that I find it hard to explain how wonderful it has been for me. I now get up every morning to feed and walk him; I play with him and train him. It’s truly incredible how one dog can change the life of a Veteran in such a positive way.”

Thank You!

TO THE FANTASTIC VETERINARIANS AND CLINICAL STAFF WHO CURRENTLY SUPPORT OUR PUPPIES AND DOGS ACROSS BRITISH COLUMBIA AND ALBERTA

Boundary Bay Veterinary Specialty Hospital
C.A.R.E Centre Animal Hospital
Canada West Veterinary Specialists
Central Victoria Veterinary Hospital Ltd.
Crestwood Veterinary Centre
Charlotte Keller med. vet., DACVO, DECVO
Fish Creek Veterinary Hospital
Little Creek Veterinary Clinic
Mckenzie Veterinary Services
Qualicum Beach Animal Hospital
Scottdale Veterinary Hospital
Vetcor Canine Reproduction Services
Woodlands Veterinary Hospital
Despite an unusually harsh and wet spring, the sun is beating down as Ken and Roberta Whiley prepare to say goodbye to their house guests.

Like anyone who welcomes someone into their home, the time to say goodbye is always bitter-sweet. You are more than happy to welcome them in, but in the end you know it’s time for them to go.

There house guests were a beautiful, albeit sometimes demanding, litter of puppies. Bertie and Finn were the proud parents of six adorable pups, and the next seven weeks would be all hands on deck for Ken and Roberta. A smile washes over them as they reflect on their time whelping their latest litter. Their days of volunteers with BC & Alberta Guide Dogs dates back more than 25 years. Over that time they have whelped 75 dogs for the organization. It’s not always an easy task, but it’s reward is evident when they help put on the blue and white guide-dog-in-training jacket for the pup’s first official photo for BC & Alberta Guide Dogs.

“It’s certainly not for everybody,” laughs Ken. “You have to be ready to give up your normal routines. Sleep is not something you can depend on.”

Roberta explains that you have to keep a close eye on making sure the pups are properly feeding, that they are gaining weight, and that mom is healthy and happy. As they age week-by-week, you also have to prepare for the unexpected.

“It can be hectic, but it’s a good kind of hectic,” explains Roberta. “Knowing what lies ahead of them, it’s worth it.”

It’s the exact same sentiment that drew Puppy Raiser Susie Ward to BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. A volunteer since 2013 and now working on raising dog number seven, she says being prepared to work and play helps both the dogs and the Puppy Raisers learn and grow together. As Susie makes her way to weekly classes with Dixie, she says it’s what she gives — not what she gets in return — that makes it such a rewarding experience.

“It’s important to give back to the community. My mother was blind and never had the opportunity to have a Guide Dog,” explains Ward. If you ever considered volunteering for an organization, and have a love of dogs like I do, it’s a wonderful thing.”
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

BRITISH COLUMBIA GUIDE DOG SERVICES
FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS
AS OF JUNE 30, 2022

Thank you to our donors

A complete set of financial statements audited by Crowe MacKay LLP is available upon request.

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