

PAW PRINTS

FALL 2021

A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY OF 25 YEARS

Robyne Adlam shares her story, as our first ever Guide Dog graduate team, and the most recent - "The four dogs I have received have truly changed my life."



BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS
25 YEARS: 1996 ~ 2021

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BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS

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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.



ON THE COVER: Robyne Adlam with her new Guide Dog, Tasha. Photo by Anita Chapman, Perfect Moments Photography.



MESSAGE FROM THE CO-FOUNDERS

We are both very grateful for the past 25 years, and being able to look back at the hundreds of lives changed because of a united effort by many to bring Guide and Service Dogs to those who need them.

Featured in this issue is Robyne's story, and it is special to us for many reasons. For us, Robyne represents the Silver Jubilee perfectly as she was our very first graduate, has received dogs from us over the years and is our most recent Guide Dog recipient. We first met Robyne when she was 18 years old, and we've had the privilege to watch her raise a family and experience many of life's milestones. How special it is to be a part of her story, and what an absolute joy it was for Bill to personally place Tasha with her this summer.

Our longest-serving puppy raising volunteers from all of our office locations have also shared their motivations for being involved through the years (page 10). Their thoughts echo ours: Why do we continue to do what we do? Well, once you see the life-changing benefits our dogs provide, it's impossible to stop!

We would like to share our deepest thanks to our volunteers, staff and generous donors who make our mission a success. Thanks to you, it's full steam ahead for 2022 and for the next 25 years!!

Our best wishes for a healthy and happy holiday season with your families. Thank you.

Handwritten signature of William S. Thornton

William S. Thornton, CEO

Handwritten signature of Linda Thornton

Linda Thornton, Director of Breeding and Puppy Raising

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



Happy 25th Anniversary! It is my honour to officially unveil "Transforming Lives", our commemorative artwork by artist Zann Hemphill.

Our organization and the work we do never ceases to amaze me. The lives changed by our amazing staff and volunteers will always warm my heart. Whether it's creating enhanced mobility for visually-impaired Canadians, a sense of safety and belonging for a child with autism, or a supportive relationship for returning Veterans and First Responders, our Guide and Service Dogs are up to the challenge.

It has been a privilege to see this training first hand and to be awed by the complexities of the training relationship as it develops. Over 25 years, these dogs have touched countless lives: from those who have whelped the puppies, to the puppy raisers, the trainers, and those who have offered homes to our retiring dogs. We are grateful to you and to everyone who has supported these wonderful dogs so they could deliver on a lifetime of service. None of this work would be possible without fantastic volunteers. Accolades to every one of you.

I enjoyed meeting and seeing golfers at this year's London Drugs Golf for BC Guide Dogs tournament, held this year in memorial of our late, great patron, Howie Meeker. I can't wait until we're able to have more opportunities to gather together in the year to come.

It is a pleasure to serve as Board Chair and to work with an amazing team. Cheers to each of you as we head into 2022.

Handwritten signature of Linda Reid

Linda Reid, Board Chair

"Transforming Lives"

Limited Edition Prints available for purchase.

This artwork was painted by renowned pet portrait artist, Zann Hemphill to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, and celebrates 25 years of transforming lives for those in need.



Released as a limited edition of 250, each print is matted and includes certificate of authenticity. \$125 per print. Frame not included.

Visit our website at: bcandalbertaguidedogs.com/SilverJubilee to purchase your print online, or call our head office at 1-877-940-4504.



Burnaby Firefighters and Delta Firefighters at London Drugs Golf for BC Guide Dogs



Bill with Team London Drugs at Hole #1



LIAM WITH AUTISM SERVICE DOG SAM

Team Sponsor: Puppy Sponsorship

Sam is the first Autism Service Dog from BC & Alberta Guide Dogs in Williams Lake, BC. He really brings awareness to our little community and teaches everyone about the important work done by these incredible dogs. Liam and Sam are paving the way together.

Training with the vest was initially very challenging for Liam, but now he immediately puts the belt on. When I pick Liam up from school, he has no issues being attached to Sam, and walks happily without meltdowns or bolting.

Sam has made trips to the grocery store manageable. It used to be a massive meltdown just to get out of the car, and I ended up with extra or wrong items as we went as quickly as possible down the aisles. Now he walks great with Sam and holds on to the cart. Since it's easier for Liam to deal with crowds, we have enjoyed activities out in our community that we've never done before. We went to our local movie theatre for the first time ever with a group of his friends and he sat the whole time with Sam!



Brood Bitch Caregiver and Whelpers: Marie
Stud Dog Caregivers: Chris & Brook,
Puppy Raiser: Susan
Puppy Supervisor: Sandra
Instructor: Danielle
Boarders: Suzanne & John



When you put that jacket on Sam, he knows what his job is and what he has to do. He is so happy to work, and when I get his jacket out, his tail immediately starts wagging! But when that jacket comes off, he is just so playful. Sam and Liam have created a sort of tag and race game, and they are always playing together. They are such good buddies and Liam is so much happier.

We would like to thank Sam's Puppy Raiser and Boarders for all their hours of dedication to Sam, as well as his staff and trainers. We are also very grateful to everyone who has donated to train Sam - we couldn't have had this opportunity on our own.



Dr. Irene O'Brien, Primary Veterinarian for BC & Alberta Guide Dogs

The dogs we raise and train have the ability to change the world for each and every person they are placed with. My role is to provide care and medical advice for the puppies and dogs who form the backbone of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs.

It is so rewarding to see these puppies start their careers at 7 weeks old, go through their wild teenage phases (corresponding with a spay or neuter), mature through phases of training and eventually become a successful team with their partner.

It has also been amazing to watch this organization grow from the personal efforts of Bill and Linda into the success it is today. It takes a community to raise a Guide or Service Dog, and I'm proud to help by producing the healthiest dogs we can.

**"I'm proud to help by producing the healthiest dogs we can."
- Dr. Irene O'Brien**

A LABOUR OF LOVE

by Linda Thornton, Director of Breeding and Puppy Raising

Behind each of our life-changing dogs is a breeding program that continually assesses their health, temperament and genetic data. Over 25 years, amazing progress has been made with testing. We currently work with Paw Print Genetics, who with the help of Guide and Service Dog Schools, continually research and provide a panel of hereditary diseases that are prevalent in the breeds we use.

Many dogs show no sign of a disease but may carry a gene that could produce it in future generations. By being diligent with our screenings and choosing breedings wisely, we are able to reduce and eliminate the incidence of these diseases. This genetic testing is happening worldwide, which is beneficial when exchanging frozen semen ("pup"sicles) with schools from other countries.

We thank all the schools that have provided frozen semen, or in some cases breeding dogs, over the last 25 years - the cooperation between schools internationally is amazing! It is a small world when it comes to breeding Guide and Service Dogs, and we are all on the same page to learn and improve what we can from each other.

Special thanks to the following for assisting us in the last 25 years: Dr. Irene O'Brien, for medical advice, treatment and care for our dogs; Dr. Cory Vanderende, for being behind the endoscope for our inseminations; and Dr. Graham Lewis, Dr. Charlotte Keller and Dr. Brian Skorobohach for annual eye exams. They are all integral to our success and we hope they are around for the next 25 years!

Reflection: 25 Years of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs - Ken and Roberta Whiley

Our involvement with Bill and the guide dog program dates back many years, starting with puppy training our first of eleven pups in 1989. Once BC Guide Dogs was well established, there was no turning back! We have had the pleasure of whelping sixty-nine pups for BC & Alberta Guide Dogs in our house, and twenty-seven prior to that with Canadian Guide Dogs.

Bless the days of sun and rain for our many PAW POWER walks in Stanley Park and the Tsawwassen and Ladner May Day parades. We forget the number of hot dogs we cooked for hungry golfers at the Golf for Guide Dogs tournaments! On any number of outings, we were always very visible with all the pups dressed in their blue and white jackets; it was always a proud day to be part of the guide dog program. We wish Bill and Linda and their family of dedicated volunteers many more successful years putting out the best Guide and Service Dogs for those in need.



Pictured with "Marty" - named in memory of their son

The 'PUP'ulation increases!



Nikki & Finn - May 11, 2021



Spoof & Juno - July 2, 2021



Gwinna & Felix - Oct. 19, 2021

A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY OF 25 YEARS

Pictured: Robyne Adlam with retired Guide Dog Purdy and current Guide Dog Tasha



Photo by Anita Chapman, Perfect Moments Photography

Team Sponsor: Victor and Anna Kern Foundation

As Graduate #1, I have been part of the BC & Alberta Guide Dogs family from the very beginning. Candy came into my life after an orientation and mobility instructor put me in touch with Bill Thornton after hearing about my desire for a Guide Dog. Candy and I started a journey that continues to this day. She was amazing. She opened my world up and made so many things easier and possible for me. Her first assignment was to be my co-counsellor at a summer camp for kids. My cabin was for sure the one to be in because it was the only one with a dog! She was by my side as I completed my university degree, even walking across the graduation stage. She was my ring bearer at my wedding.

When it came time for Candy to retire, Tickey was brought in to fill her very large paws. He was a huge part of my working life as I worked for the school district. He was so important to me for travelling around the city using public transit, cabs, and walking. He was also on deck when my daughter was born. Our daily walks to meet people for coffee was made possible by Tickey. Tickey was succeeded by my sweet chocolate Lab, Purdy. Purdy continued the legacy of amazing assistance and he was around when my son was born.

My most recent blessing from BC & Alberta Guide Dogs came this year with the addition of Tasha to our family. She is a gorgeous and loving black Lab who has made herself indispensable to all of us. With Purdy now retired at home, my kids now have a dog each to snuggle with!

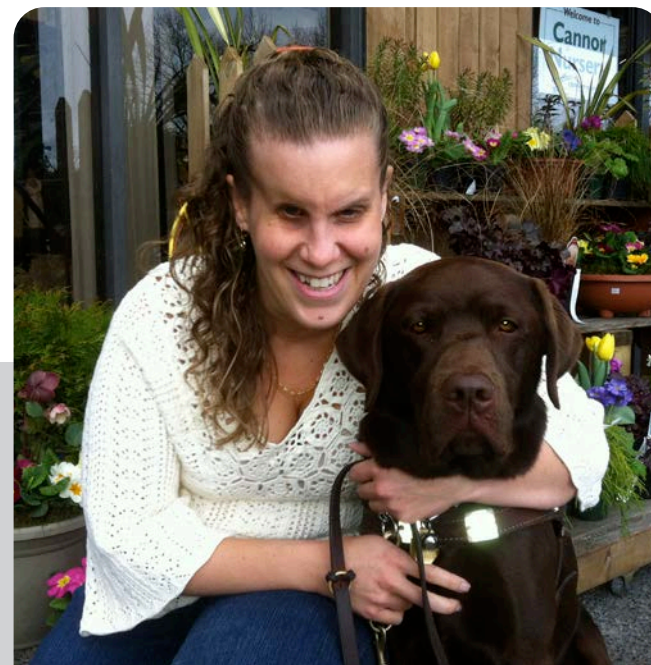
Tasha is my first dog that has been food trained, and I find this so awesome. There is something about being able to praise and thank her for doing or finding something asked of her by giving her a treat. It motivates her and makes me feel good that I can do something for her she likes so much.

Being a part of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs for so long has been such a pleasure. The four dogs I have received from them have truly changed my life. I want to take this time to thank all the donors, volunteers, trainers, and everyone involved. What they do makes a huge difference to those lucky enough to receive one of these amazing dogs. **I am so grateful to everyone involved for the ability to have some independence, autonomy, and companionship. From the bottom of my heart, Thank You.**

To Bill and Linda, I have many more words I could say that would go far beyond the bounds of this story. Your dedication to what you do is amazing and inspiring. Bill trained me with Candy, and I had the distinct privilege of being trained with Tasha by Bill again. What an absolute blessing.



Brood Bitch Caregiver and Whelping: Ulrike
Stud Dog Caregivers: Chris & Brook
Puppy Raiser: Vic **Puppy Supervisor:** Matthias
Instructor: Addie & Bill
Boarder: Fiona



OSI-PTSD SERVICE DOG PROGRAM OFFICIALLY LAUNCHES IN ALBERTA

Our OSI-PTSD Service Dog Program officially launched in Alberta on August 25th, 2021 at the Prince of Wales Armouries in Edmonton. The formal announcement was also an opportunity to recognize recent graduates, several community partners and funding support from two mental wellness associations.

In attendance were members of the Alberta Government's Disability Initiatives Team, Community and Social Services; staff and volunteers of Alberta Guide Dogs; and representatives from the Edmonton Community Foundation, The Royal Canadian Legion Devon Branch No. 247, Wounded Warriors Canada, OSI-CAN Canadian Mental Health Association – Alberta Division, Callie's Corner, Hope Heels Service Dogs and the local Edmonton Fire Fighters Hall.

The event began with Bill Thornton sharing how the organization has grown over 25 years to become a leading Guide and Service Dog provider in Western Canada. Bill spoke of the journey that started with Guide Dogs for the blind and visually-impaired, continued with Autism Service Dogs for children and their families, and further expanded to include OSI-PTSD Service Dogs for Veterans and First Responders.

VICD Service Dogs Executive Director, Mike Annan, then spoke of the program's growth from being a one-person operation in Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island to now having teams graduating across British Columbia and Alberta.

One graduate team in attendance was Dave Marson and his OSI-PTSD Service Dog, Storm. Dave is a former member of the Canadian Armed Forces where he served as a firefighter and ambulance driver. He shared that it took approximately three years to qualify for a Service Dog and has now been with Storm for a year. Dave said that Storm knows what triggers him, wakes him up from nightmares, and has given him the ability to leave his house.

The Eldon and Anne Foote Fund at the Edmonton Community Foundation was formally recognized as the Team Sponsor for Dave Marson and Storm, and Dave presented them with a framed print of his OSI-PTSD Service Dog.



DAN WITH OSI-PTSD SERVICE DOG TEAGAN

Team Sponsor: Puppy Sponsorship

Since Teagan was paired with me, she has brought a sense of joy and purpose to my life. She has given me back a sense of independence and the VICD Service Dogs program has helped me become more interactive in my community.

I spent many years not leaving my house or doing regular healthy living things that most people find easy. Teagan puts happiness and a sense of self-efficacy and responsibility back into my life as my PTSD has kept me at home and out of society for years.

The way the VICD Instructors trained Teagan to help me with my PTSD has continually been amazing for me. For example, **Teagan's ability to often wake me up from nightmares has been a large part of my healing.** The improvement in my sleep helps me function day to day so much better and has even improved my relationship with my partner (as my partner often tells me my mood has changed for the better since Teagan arrived).



Dave Marson presents print to Edmonton Community Foundation - Philanthropy Advisor, Kathy Hawkesworth



Wounded Warriors Canada - Director Health Services, Phil Ralph with Dan



A big thank you to: Teagan, BC & Alberta Guide Dogs and the VICD Service Dogs program for saving my life. I may not have been here without them!

Teagan came to us from Guide Dogs for the Blind (California)
Puppy Raiser: Susie **Puppy Supervisor: Matthias** **Instructors: Kim & Claudette** **Boarder: Arlene**

Congratulations, Cristina!

Cristina Castrejon receives OSI-PTSD Service Dog Instructor certification.

BC & Alberta Guide Dogs - Vice-Chair, Tammy Winters and VICD Service Dogs - Executive Director, Mike Annan presented Cristina with her certificate to a standing ovation.



VICD Service Dogs - Executive Director, Mike Annan speaks to delegates at the launch

Thank You! - RC Pets Woof-a-Thon Virtual Challenge raises \$28,455!

A big thank you to the fundraisers and donors of our RC Pets Woof-a-Thon Virtual Challenge. This year we raised \$28,455! Everyone got active together on October 23rd with all sorts of creative activities. It's wonderful to know that we can come together - safely apart - to raise much-needed funds.

We would like to especially thank our presenting sponsor, RC Pets and our incentive sponsor, Raymond James Qualicum Beach Branch!

And special recognition to our top three fundraisers: Jeff and his golfing team (\$5,565), Jill and Snoopy (\$5,000), and Betty and Craig (\$2,750). We appreciate your tremendous fundraising efforts!



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!

Our longest-serving puppy raising volunteers from each province share what motivates them to volunteer and raise puppies for BC & Alberta Guide Dogs.



"Seeing the benefits of what these dogs can do for their people keeps us starting this crazy cycle all over again."



▶▶ JAMES & JOANNE, LOWER MAINLAND

25 years ago, Bill Thornton interviewed us about becoming volunteer puppy raisers. We were prepared for the questions and even had a spot cleared out for where the dog would sleep. We really wanted this as we decided that this would be our alternative to having kids. Bill asked if we had a car to get to lessons, to which we responded, "Why would you need a car? Visually-impaired people won't be driving!" How could Bill say no to that!

We question why we are doing this and swear we will never do it again. You finally get a wonderfully trained dog and then it is time for them to move on. The experience of the empty nest syndrome, as well as seeing the benefits of what these dogs can do for their people, keeps us starting this crazy cycle all over again. We are now on dog #13 and although there are many ups and downs to this volunteer job, we love being part of this fantastic organization.

▶▶ DANIELLE, VANCOUVER ISLAND

You come back to puppy training again and again because you get as much as you give: fellowship and some amazing surprises. You are part of a group of people sharing successes and challenges, and finding solutions for the pups. One of my pups, Simba, was difficult to train, but my fellow PTs bolstered my confidence and he did a complete 180 and shocked us all.

While training in a mall, a mom stopped me to say, "Thanks for what you do." Tearfully, she continued that her husband had gotten a PTSD Service Dog and it had transformed their family. It was Simba! Much (pre-Covid) hugging and weeping ensued. I got to meet a calm and professional Simba who recognized but ignored me in dedication to his job.

As a repeat PT, learning how to train a pup has taught me a lot about myself and my fellow human beings. And for some reason, every time I say, "Au revoir," to an amazing dog, BC & Alberta Guide Dogs puts a fuzzy little bundle of wiggles in my arms to distract me.



All of the volunteers and staff involved with Alberta Guide Dogs make me feel like I belong to a community. To witness the development of the pups as they mature, the happiness they bring at a community event and the healing stories we hear and read about when they graduate with a client, touches my heart. This organization has my long-term commitment.

▶▶ WENDY, CALGARY

In 2013, Alberta Guide Dogs placed a notice in a magazine asking for volunteers to help raise future Guide and Service Dogs. I really love dogs, and the compassion and unconditional love that they bring to folks, so I made an inquiry about being a volunteer in this program. It was one of the best retirement decisions ever!

SPECIAL THANKS & PATRONS



Callie's Corner \$3,500



OSI-CAN - Alberta Division \$20,000



Envision Financial Community Endowment \$15,025



Peace Arch Peninsula Rotary Club \$1,000

PATRON

Leah Meeker

John Hardie Mitchell family foundation

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The Allen & Loreen Vandekerkhove Family Foundation

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The Fisher Foundation

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Edmonton Public Teachers (Local No.37, Alberta Teachers' Association)

BC Guide Dog Services
Diamond Foundation

Dr. Graeme Linton

Victor & Anna Kern Foundation

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Irene Lyttle

The Independent Contractors

Boomer's Legacy

Wounded Warriors Canada



BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS



The 'Paw'fect Holiday Gift Idea

Give a gift with purpose this holiday season and help our puppies become life-changing dogs for individuals who are blind or visually-impaired, children with autism and their families, and Veterans and First Responders living with operational stress injuries, such as PTSD.

Puppy Sponsorships come in all sizes, so please visit www.bcandalbertaguidedogs.com for the 'Paw'fect gift.

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