

# PAW PRINTS

Spring 2020  
No. 41



*Official newsletter from the staff, graduates and volunteers of:*

**BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS**

GUIDE DOGS • AUTISM SERVICE DOGS • PTSD SERVICE DOGS

# MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO



Now, more than ever, I hope this Paw Prints finds you and your family healthy and safe. The COVID-19 pandemic has had dramatic implications for the livelihoods and freedom of people all over the world, and its effect on BC & Alberta Guide Dogs has been no exception. I feel that it's important to update you about the state of the organization on behalf of myself and the Board of Directors.

The well-being of our clients, volunteers, staff and dogs is of the utmost importance to us. As such, we made immediate changes to our program delivery. The puppies-in-training remain with their volunteer families and continue to train virtually, supported by staff. The dogs in our advanced programs are 'on pause' until distancing restrictions are lifted; they are with their foster families. We are in touch with our clients, and we are ready to proceed with placement once it is safe to do so. I'd like to make a special mention of thanks to all of our dedicated volunteers who generously continue their support under these difficult circumstances. Without you, we couldn't continue to do what we do!

As you know, we have never received financial support from the government, and unfortunately that continues as we do not presently qualify for the emergency support funds released to non-profits during this crisis. While cuts have been made and valuable staff members let go to manage the immediate decline in revenue, we still have significant operating costs to meet.

Your help during this difficult time is very much needed to ensure that we can continue in our mission. While our programs and events are postponed, the need faced by our clients continues to grow, so please think of us in your giving plans.

As always, I send my wishes for your continued health and happiness. Thank you for supporting the work we do, and please enjoy flipping through these pages and reading of the overwhelming impact that our dogs have in the lives of our clients. We hope their stories are a bright reminder of the gift of hope and peace within our power to give.

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## Lincoln with Autism Service Dog Pixie

**Team Sponsor: Estate of Doreen  
Marjorie Powles**

My 6-year-old son has Autism. He doesn't understand why he shouldn't run into the road or wander off, so ever since he was out of a stroller he wore a backpack with a lead that I would hold onto. It worked well until he got bigger and people started staring at us and I became self-conscious.

My sister-in-law told us about BC & Alberta Guide Dogs and we went on the waitlist. A little over 2.5 years later, we were matched with a dog. Pixie was well worth the wait!

My son loves her and gives her hugs and kisses, and she relaxes and calms him. Lincoln feeds her



every day and it gives him a sense of responsibility. She loves to play so my kids play fetch and tug with her. We go on nice walks and go hiking. We bring her everywhere!

Lincoln is completely safe attached to Pixie. She knows what to do when he stops suddenly or bolts. When Lincoln's hooked up to Pixie with her special vest on, people don't see a boy that's different and can't be controlled or a mom that can't keep her son safe without a leash - **I feel like people see the vest and there is more understanding, which we need sometimes.**



# Betty with Guide Dog Mac

## Team Sponsor: Puppy Sponsorship

When it comes time to retire your current Guide Dog and train with a new one, a confusion of feelings takes over. It is exciting to consider that you will be working with a new, young dog, but you feel sad because you are losing a long-time companion and partner.

On August 15, Mac came to my home for the first time. For three weeks we walked to and from the mall, went downtown, travelled on the bus and SkyTrain, and so on. It was a very busy and demanding schedule, but it was the best way for the two of us to get used to each other. All of those walks and trips also helped me gain confidence in Mac's guiding and allowed me to learn to trust him.

I am a retired teacher and having Mac by my side will enhance my independence. Mac will travel to board meetings that take place both locally and in other parts of the country, as I still do a lot of volunteer work. He will also have the pleasure of visiting with school children when I have speaking engagements at schools where he will be the most popular member of our team. Undoubtedly, he will take me safely to whatever destination I choose.



*Undoubtedly, he will take me safely to whatever destination I choose.*

”

Perhaps you are thinking that our life together is all work and no play, but that is far from the case. Mac likes to go on a free run. He likes to play with a bouncy ball and carry his stuffy around to show me – this was new to me as although I have worked with six dogs up to this point, none of them had had a favourite stuffed toy!

Thank you all for donating to Mac's care and training. It has been a great advantage for me to have training in my home area. Instruction has been excellent, and as Mac and I have come together as a team, the feedback has been very positive, and **I know that Mac and I will have a meaningful and positive relationship for many years to come.**

## Mott Electric - Generous Donor for Over 20 Years



My father had a dog named Harley when he first took over the business of Mott Electric. Harley went everywhere with Dan in the Mott Electric branded pick-up and they were seen all over New Westminster and the Lower Mainland.

When Harley passed away it was within weeks of Dan's father – Don Mott. Both Harley and Don were long-time fixtures in Dan's life, but also at the company. To lose them both so close together, left a hole never to be filled. However, we continue to honour both as often as we can.

When the opportunity presented itself to name a puppy, we were overjoyed to be able to have a namesake in our beloved company mascot and family friend – Harley. **Ellisha Mott, Vice President**



# Q&A with Puppy Raisers Lyle and Sandy Dietrich



## **Q: How did you get involved with BC & Alberta Guide Dogs?**

Sandy saw a news special in 2014 on people picking up their pups to start their training as Guide Dogs. We discussed it, sent in the application form, had the interview and received our first pup Roman to train. Roman was matched to a family with two boys with autism, our second pup Andy chose a career as a PTSD Service Dog with a Veteran (featured in the previous issue), and our third pup Ferus is currently in advanced training.

## **Q: What is the funniest thing one of your dogs has done?**

Roman wasn't very old when we went to a restaurant for lunch. Being a black Lab and tucked in under the table our waitress had no idea a pup was there. As she took our order Roman decided to give her bare leg a lick. The expression on her face was priceless!

## **Q: What would you tell people considering raising a puppy?**

This has to be one of the most rewarding things you can do. It is a fun volunteer job that gives back in snuggles and love, and you make many great friends who share your passion. Seeing the impact these amazing dogs have with their people is beyond words.

## **Q: Congratulations on your nomination for a KAR Jefferson Award! Tell us more?**

I work for Adesa Calgary and was nominated by a coworker. Our parent company KAR Global has partnered with the Jefferson Awards Foundation to celebrate employees' outstanding, selfless volunteerism in their communities. The Institute was founded in 1972 by Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, U.S. Senator Robert Taft, Jr. and Sam Beard. This is a very prestigious award and the list of recipients is mind boggling. I'm honoured!



# Brock with Autism Service Dog Terra

**Team Sponsor: Donna Anderson**

My five-year-old son Brock is exceptionally bright, has a charming smile, loves hugs and snuggle time and is non-verbal. When you factor in Brock's uncanny escape artist talents, his lightning-fast speed and a complete unawareness of personal traffic safety, we have a problem.

Terra joined us in December, and it feels like she has always been a member of the family. When Brock and Terra travel throughout the city as a duo, I have ZERO fear for his safety. **The tethering of the two together has also helped with transitioning from different activities (Terra needs to go home...) and creates a sense of calm expectations.**

Terra's concern for Brock's safety isn't limited to when she is working, and she will jump to his needs when she recognizes the urgency. For example, Brock and I took Terra to Nose Hill Park for a walk recently. Brock was attached to me via a wrist band and Terra was off-leash having a great time.

Several bigger dogs were being quite friendly (probably smelt my pocket full of recall treats), and Brock seemed a bit overwhelmed. Terra came running back and interjected herself between Brock and the bigger dogs, giving him the space he needed. She wasn't far from his side after that, until we were done the walk. Her pack stuck together!

**Thank you to the team at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs for giving us the tremendous gift of safety. Safety and love.** I appreciate you more than you know.



# Wesley and Kerrie with PTSD Service Dogs Jimmy & Brisbane

## Team Sponsor: Wounded Warriors

Our journey with our Service Dogs began 4 years ago when we decided to become Puppy Raisers with BC & Alberta Guide Dogs and had an awesome little black Labrador placed with us. We attended a luncheon with other Puppy Raisers and met Barb Ashmead, co-founder of VICD Service Dogs who told us about their program. Although we were both Military Veterans diagnosed with PTSD, we could not have known how integral VICD would become in our lives.

Kerrie felt having a Service Dog would help her, so she began the application process and was matched with Brisbane. She began to do things more independently and with enjoyment as having

Brisbane at her side kept her grounded and *"in the moment"*.

**Seeing her grow so much was amazing, almost as amazing as seeing her smile again.** I knew that I would also benefit from completing this program, and that having my own PTSD Service Dog would enable me to focus on my personal goals. We were initially a little concerned that having two dogs would be overwhelming for us, but we discussed it with VICD staff and they put our minds at ease.

As Kerrie and Brisbane neared graduation, I was paired with Jimmy, who is actually the brother of the little black Labrador I mentioned earlier! It was meant to be!

To say that he is the perfect match for me is an understatement. He does all of the required tasks such as keeping me grounded, turning on lights, licking me if I disassociate, or *"telling"* me to leave places if I get too anxious or agitated. Yet, he also does things specifically for me.

This has meant that I get out more and that I am not as angry as I used to be. He has become my best friend, besides my wife of course!

Neither one of us could have possibly known how much a Service Dog would benefit us or how attuned to each of us our dogs would become.

To know that BC & Alberta Guide Dogs is sustained due to the benevolence of donors and the dedication of volunteers and staff, is utterly amazing. It is impossible to put into words how much of an effect your contributions have had on our lives. **If it was not for you, we would not be who we are again today.**

We both joined the Military because we wanted to serve our country. We don't regret our decisions but there have been lasting effects on us due to our service.

In our opinion there is no greater way for people to thank Veterans for their service than by contributing in some way to this organization.



Photo by: John's Photography, Sooke BC



Wounded Warriors Canada - Gala Dinner

**Wes and Kerrie at the launch of Wounded Warrior Run BC - an 8-day relay raising funds for ill and injured Veterans and First Responders.**





## Kyle with Autism Service Dog Rufus

**Team Sponsor: Neal and Tania Cockshutt**

With Kyle we faced extreme meltdowns, and episodes of running away from his school and after-care. Every day we lived on edge and in fear that something terrible would happen to him.

Our Rufus arrived in November and the bond was immediate. Shortly into their relationship, Kyle said that Rufus was his

best friend. **For the first time ever, Kyle felt feelings that he didn't have to mimic or learn.** He was truly feeling friendship and acceptance because Rufus loves him regardless of how he behaves.

Since Rufus, Kyle has not run away from school once. His confidence has grown, and his social skills have blossomed. He had his first haircut without running away and we even had our first dental appointment without stress, anxiety and bolting as Rufus lay across Kyle's lap in the chair. Everyone is amazed with how far Kyle has come in such a short time.

We are beyond thankful for this life-changing gift. **The stress in our family has lessened immensely and we are laughing again and loving again in our home.** Most importantly, Kyle is laughing again and figuring out who he is. We could not be more thankful to the volunteers who helped to raise Rufus, the donors who sponsored his training and everyone at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. In order to show our gratitude, we now sponsor a puppy, Red. Other family members have been so amazed that they are also sponsoring a puppy. Thank you to all, keep doing what you do!!



## Don with PTSD Service Dog Alfie

**Team Sponsor: BC/Yukon Command of the Royal Canadian Legion Foundation**

I met Alfie (aka Little Cam) when my Service Dog, Big Mac retired. In the first couple of weeks, I let Alfie settle in and start learning from Big Mac. It was amazing to watch the two dogs transfer information. Big Mac was so happy to have a new friend to take the workload off his shoulders; it didn't take him long to be totally comfortable being retired!



There is a portion of the dog's service that each Veteran and dog must work out between themselves. It begins with the bond. Alfie and I bonded but it was totally different than the bond I had with Big Mac.

**“He seems to know almost before I do that something is amiss.”**

Alfie is full of energy, and willing to work. He seems to know almost before I do that something is amiss. If I am in my chair and start to zone out, Alfie will shove his nose under my arm or leg and fling it up with all his might. If I start to dream, Alfie will drop onto my side or chest and he will continue to do it until I acknowledge that I am fine and sit up.

Alfie has been good for my wife and Big Mac, as well as for me. **He brought new energy into the house, and keeps us laughing every day.**

I am blessed to have had both Service Dogs from VICD. This program continues to help Veterans do better in their personal lives, it continues to save lives, and I think it is one of the best programs in North America.



V2V Black Hops Brewing - Remembrance Day Open House

# IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Order of Oddfellows  
Columbia Lodge #2



Photo by Greg Herring



Kitz4Kids Fundraiser raises \$41,724.25

Laura, who is visually-impaired, raised an incredible \$1,265 with her raffle of handmade knitted items at our Calgary Open House! Thank you!!



VICD - Evening of Compassion



Spruce Meadows Leg Up Foundation



RunGo Dash for Dogs raises \$24,338



Vancouver Montessori Bake Sale



Delta Firefighters Charitable Society



VICD - Evening of Compassion



Calgary Office Open House

# The 'PUP'ulation increases!

# SPECIAL THANKS & PATRONS

Billie & Maestro - Oct. 18, 2019



1

Roo & Gerry - Feb. 4, 2020



8

Dewling & Max - Oct. 27, 2019



11

Taz & Bert - Feb. 6, 2020



5

Runa & Bert - Oct. 28, 2019



5

Molly & Max - Nov. 12, 2019



5

Nellie & Casper - March 4, 2020



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## Thank You Whelpers!

These amazing volunteers provide loving homes for our momma dogs and take care of the newborn pups.

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# Upcoming Events!

Thank you for your understanding as we make changes to existing and upcoming events this year. Keep posted for details about a Virtual Fun Challenge and Alberta Online Silent Auction. Details will be posted on our website at [bcandalbertaguidedogs.com](http://bcandalbertaguidedogs.com) as they come available.



Join us from the comfort of your living room for our first ever

## Virtual Trivia Night Saturday, April 25

Tickets are \$20 and are available at [bcguidedog.com](http://bcguidedog.com)

## Ties & Tails

Friday, October 23

at the Fairmont Hotel Vancouver

Tickets are \$175 and  
are available for purchase  
at [bcguidedog.com](http://bcguidedog.com)



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