

# PAW PRINTS

BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS

## A BEACON OF HOPE IN SAANICH

*Beacon joins the Saanich Police Department with an eye on mental health*



BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS





## 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:** Lynn George of the Saanich Police Department and Operational Stress Intervention Dog Beacon.

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

CEO: William S. Thornton, GDMI

Building for the future means we must lay the foundation of a solid business plan today. BC & Alberta Guide Dogs has always operated with our client's best interests at heart. Our Guide and Service Dog programs are successful because we strive to exceed international standards as established by the International Guide Dog Federation and Assistance Dogs International.

That starts with our Breeding Program. Our brood bitches and stud dogs are carefully selected for health and temperament, leading to the best chance of producing quality litters.



From there our Puppy Raising Program lays the groundwork for developing successful dogs that can move into Advanced Training. Volunteers work with our Puppy Raising Supervisors to solidify tasks and behaviours that ensure the pup grows and matures into a working dog.

Our Advanced Training Instructors then hone these skills and establish a successful connection between dog and client.

This process is what has made us a leader in the Guide and Service Dog industry in Western Canada. Our OSI-PTSD Program exemplifies that commitment. We recently graduated our 100th team, a feat that requires the strong foundation we have worked tirelessly to build.

None of our success happens in isolation. As a not-for-profit organization, we rely on the generosity of the public. We also know that wait times for new dogs are an issue. It's a situation we are working on addressing by not only investing in new training staff, but by launching a Capital Campaign to build a new Breeding and Training Centre of Excellence.

Respectfully, I want to thank our many volunteers, donors, and supporters at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs as we launch this - the next exciting chapter in serving those in need.

William S. Thornton,  
CEO



## CAPITAL CAMPAIGN BUILDS ON OUR FUTURE

BC & Alberta Guide Dogs is now celebrating our 27th year of operation. During this time, we have achieved several significant milestones.

We were and are, the first Guide Dog School in British Columbia. We were the first to develop and deliver an Autism Service Dog Program in Western Canada. We have provided Guide and Service Dogs to residents in 57 different communities across BC and Alberta.

We have served as mentors for the development of Western Canada's first Operational Stress Injury (OSI) PTSD Service Dog Training Program. This resulted in the merger of VICD with BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. We have expanded this program from Vancouver Island to include the Vancouver area and Edmonton.

Our priority is reducing wait times for those seeking the benefit of our amazing dogs and enjoying their life-long service. To that end we are looking forward to officially launching our new Breeding and Training Centre of Excellence.

This Centre will enable us to make a significant difference in our capacity to support a far greater number of individuals seeking assistance from BC & Alberta Guide Dogs than we are able to do so today.

For more information on our Capital Campaign and the positive impact it will have we invite you to learn more on our website at [bcanalbertaguidedogs.com](http://bcanalbertaguidedogs.com).





# JIM AND BENNET BECOME BEST OF BUDS

**Team Sponsor: In Memory of Peter Midgley**

In November of 2022, after eight-and-a-half years, I retired my fourth guide dog, Kushner.

As I waited for my new Guide Dog, I was anxious to take the next steps. Based on my experiences, I knew the right Guide Dog was just down the road.

I met Bennet and took this wonderful lab for a walk and quickly discovered he was the one.

Over the next three weeks, we learned to work together while he learned the routes I frequently take on my daily outings. Bennet is a real pro and picked them up quickly.

While on walks, we passed every dog and possible distraction without incident. We completed our Guide Dog Certification and began our new journey together.

Since we first met, he has made me smile and laugh. He has allowed me to safely walk the streets around my home.

Putting Bennet in his harness anytime I want — whether it's a quick trip across the street to McDonald's or a stroll to Save-on-Foods — without asking for help is a true blessing. Bennet is so willing to work, and when I put on his BC & Alberta Guide Dog harness, he is right there, eager to go.

Everyone he meets tells me how handsome he is, and they love his face and his expressive eyes. He enjoys going out for groceries to pick up food, but his favourite trip is going to church, where he can see his new friends.

He loves to work and play. After a good day of work and play, he still has time for some cuddles.

I want to thank Jim, his Puppy Raiser, for a fantastic job raising him and BC & Alberta Guide Dog Advanced Training Department for all their hard work.

I look forward to many years with Bennet by my side as we walk the streets and spend time with family and friends. There will be many smiles, laughs, cuddle times, and the challenging and rewarding work of being a Guide Dog.



**BENNET**

## A COMMUNITY OF CARING

**Whelpers:** Trish O'Meara  
**Brood Bitch Caregiver:** Leah Rempel / Roo  
**Stud Dog Caregiver:** Connie Caldwell / Gerry  
**Puppy Raiser:** Jim Gibson

# MURPHY OPENS NEW DOORS FOR RONIN

**Team Sponsor: Kitz4Kids and the Schmelke Family Charitable Foundation**

Murphy came to us this year, a stroke of good fortune for our family and my son Ronin, who has Autism. Murphy joins our family alongside me, Ronin, and his younger brother Liam, who has Autism and Down's Syndrome.

Murphy has given our family love and the ability to leave the house. He has a lovely temperament and is sweet and completely attentive. I have had many people comment on how exceptional a dog he is!

Ronin can join Murphy with his harness, and we can all go out for a walk or to the park. He keeps Ronin from running away, which had been a struggle.

Also, people give us space as they generally know he's a working dog with his vest.



Murphy's calm demeanor comforts Ronin when he gets overwhelmed in public as well.

Ronin helps feed and groom Murphy and plays with him at home. Murphy also cuddles with Liam daily and our cats, who have accepted him into the family. He sleeps with my little cat curled up next to him.

We have gone on excursions now that Murphy has joined our family. He's such an amazing addition to our family.

## A COMMUNITY OF CARING

**Brood Bitch Caregiver & Whelpers:** PADS  
**Stud Dog Caregivers:** PADS  
**Puppy Raiser:** Kim McTaggart



**MURPHY**

# PUPPY RAISING A REWARDING EXPERIENCE

For Puppy Raiser Lori Coghill, learning that Beacon has graduated and is now an Operational Stress Intervention Dog with the Saanich Police Department puts a smile on her face.

This was her second dog to graduate after completing the Puppy Raising Program. Andy, who she started raising in 2018, graduated and was teamed with a Veteran in Edmonton in the OSI-PTSD Program.

After Andy left, Lori says

she knew she would enjoy using her new knowledge to raise another dog.

But what worked for Andy wasn't going to be an option for Beacon. The week Beacon was born, COVID was just hitting the news.

By the time the black Labrador was ready to leave his litter mates, the world was in

lockdown. It was a very different training process at the beginning, as classes were done at home, with Skype or Zoom.

"Beacon and I spent lots of one-on-one time together. He gave me a purpose during the pandemic," says Lori.

As the restrictions eased, Beacon's training improved. Lori says the best compliment when

out is when they'd get up to leave a restaurant. When Beacon comes out from under the table, she would hear people comment "oh my goodness, I had no idea there was a dog in here."

For Lori, becoming a Puppy Raiser has been a gift.

"I knew coming in this is what I signed up for. I'm not doing this for me. Seeing these dogs graduate and going on to helping people — that's my reward."





# A BEACON OF HOPE ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

**Team Sponsor: Wounded Warriors Canada**

A new Operational Stress Intervention Dog Team is making its mark on Vancouver Island.

Mike Annan, OSI-SDI Executive Director of the VICD program, completed the training of Beacon, who will be stationed at the Saanich Police Headquarters.

Beacon will assist the Saanich Police Services Wellness Unit with his handler Lynn George of the Saanich Police as an Operational Stress Intervention Dog.

Operational Stress Intervention Dogs — OSID Dogs — are professionally trained by VICD’s Service Dog Instructors and placed with designated handlers. These handlers undergo training to learn the tasks that the dogs can perform, and how those tasks can be specifically used within their operational work environment.

After placement, handlers like Lynn George receive ongoing support from the VICD Client Services team, which includes mental health professionals.

Each dog is trained to respond to environmental and interpersonal cues of stress and anxiety and intervene and



Lynn George of the Saanich Police Department will serve as Beacon’s handler.

provide support to service members and the organizations’ wellness leaders with a variety of tasks.

“His impact on the organization and the people that work here has been tremendous,” says Saanich Police Chief Constable Dean Duthie. Beacon is the fourth OSID placement in BC

and second at a police force. The Surrey Police Department saw Ragnar join the ranks in July of 2022.

The placements were made possible thanks to the continued support of Wounded Warriors Canada.



## A COMMUNITY OF CARING

**Brood Bitch Caregiver & Whelp:**

Ulrike Radermacher / Taz

**Stud Dog Caregivers:**

Brook & Chris Charles / Bert

**Puppy Raiser:**

Lori Coghill

# REACHING THE VICD 100-TEAM MILESTONE

**Team Sponsors: Wounded Warriors Canada and The Royal Canadian Legion Foundation | BC/Yukon Command**

Having Lucy has brought me happiness. It was like meeting an old friend you once loved. She helps me stay calm while navigating through the rough and tough aspects of my life. Lucy makes me feel like I’m not alone. She keeps me active, and I think she helps me be more comfortable having deeper, more meaningful relationships.

**“Every morning, I’m greeted by a face full of kisses, a happy tail, and a wet nose, which helps me start the day with a smile.”**

Having Lucy has also given me more confidence. Being in public is still a work in progress, but having a Service Dog makes it so that my focus is on the team aspect of our relationship rather than what’s happening around me or in my head. Focusing on my public access skills and the bond with Lucy seems to help reduce my stress. Even though I still have difficult days, what’s nice about having her is I have somebody to go through my struggles with. I talk to my Service Dog, and guess what? ... She listens. Lucy is such a good listener.

I am proud to be the 100th graduate of the VICD Program. I am grateful for the 99 successful teams before me, and I look forward to celebrating many more to come. It has been a remarkable journey in finding myself and figuring out how to have self-compassion. Knowing there is a community, and we are in this together, gives me hope. It helps knowing there are people who understand and want to help.

I appreciate the support from everyone at VICD and BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. The inclusiveness, professionalism, and dedication are immeasurable. When I arrived at a VICD session for the first time, I felt a deep sense that this program focuses on fostering safe, honest, open, and loving relationships. For that, I am thankful.



Rheel and Lucy are the 100th VICD graduating team.

## A COMMUNITY OF CARING

**Brood Bitch Caregiver & Whelp:**

Marie Gustafsson / Penny

**Stud Dog Caregivers:**

Brook & Chris Charles / Bert

**Puppy Raiser:**

Jane Schupbach



# HONOURING PARTNERS OF THE VICD PROGRAM

Rheel and OSI-PTSD Service Dog Lucy, our 100th VICD graduating team, took part in the WorkSafe BC First Responders Mental Health Conference.

They joined Mike Annan, OSI-SDI Executive Director of the VICD Program, to recognize Wounded Warriors Canada and The Royal Canadian Legion Foundation | BC/Yukon Command for their contributions to the program. Amber Stewart, Executive Director of the The Royal Canadian Legion Foundation | BC/Yukon Command (left photo) and Wounded Warriors Canada’s Director of



Health Services Philip C. Ralph (right photo), and Executive Director Scott Maxwell join joined Lucy, Rheel, and Mike to celebrate the event.

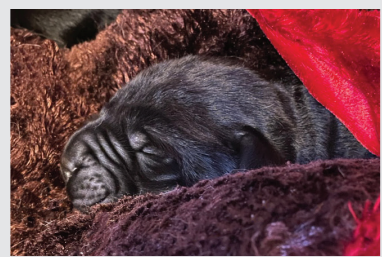


# PICS OF THE LITTER



*Special Thanks*

- Whelper - Jenette Paschen & Diane Mott
- Brood Bitch Holder - Robert Sampson
- Stud Dog Caregiver - Kim Kendall



*Special Thanks*

- Whelper & Brood Bitch Holder - Mark Bunkso
- Stud Dog Caregiver - Kim Kendall



*Special Thanks*

- Whelper & Brood Bitch Holder - Janet Wilson
- Stud Dog Caregiver - Denis Nadeau



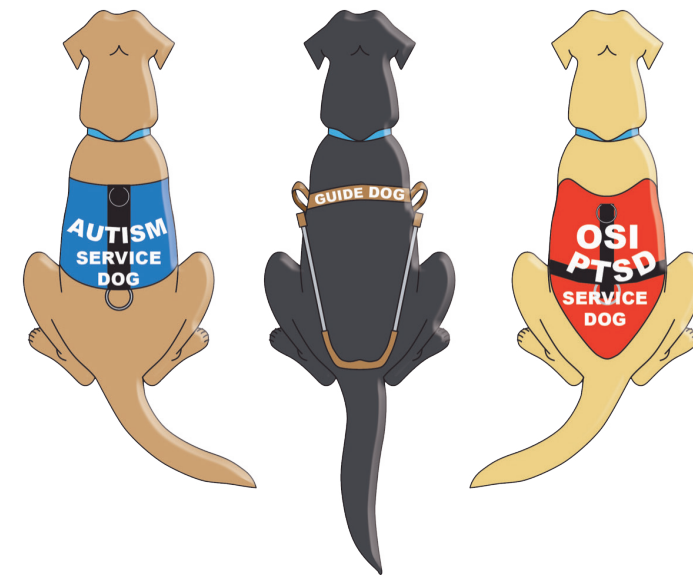
# TIES & TAILS RETURNS ... IN TSAWWASSEN

## Fundraising Gala to make grand entrance at Tsawwassen Springs

BC & Alberta Guide Dogs is excited to announce the return of "Ties and Tails" – our fundraising Auction & Gala. The event returns after a three-year COVID related hiatus on Friday, May 12, 2023, at its new location at the **Tsawwassen Springs Ballroom**.

The Gala had previously been held in Vancouver, but Thornton says the choosing a new venue should bring a fresh approach to the event.

The event brings together the organization's generous community of supporters to raise funds to help meet the growing demand for professionally trained Guide Dogs, Autism Service Dogs, and OSI-PTSD Service Dogs.



Linda Thornton, Director of Breeding and Canine Welfare for BC & Alberta Guide Dogs and committee lead, says it's great to bring the event back after the trying times of the past three years.

The evening will feature a sit-down dinner, silent and live auctions, a grand-prize WestJet raffle, and a chance to meet some of our adorable Puppies-in-Training and some recipients.

BC & Alberta Guide Dogs is a registered charity based in Delta, BC and has been operating since 1996. The organization breeds, raises and professionally trains Guide Dogs for blind/visually-impaired individuals, Autism Service Dogs for children

aged 3-10 and their families, and Service Dogs for Veterans and First Responders with Operational Stress Injuries (OSI) such as PTSD.

"It's such a joy to get together again with our friends and supporters," says Thornton. "We look forward to sitting down, sharing a meal and celebrating with the community that has supported us through the last few years."

Thornton says being able to hold in-person fundraisers now is vital for the organization, which relies heavily on the generosity of its supporters and corporate donors. It takes more than two years and upwards of \$35,000 to produce one certified dog, which is provided free of charge to the recipient.

Thornton says she's excited to bring the event to the Tsawwassen Springs Ballroom for the first time.



### TICKETS



### SPONSORSHIP



Join us at this year's Ties & Tails Gala\* and purchase your raffle tickets for a grand prize of

**TWO TICKETS**

to anywhere WestJet flies\*\*

\*Must be in attendance to win  
\*\*Some restrictions apply



## LONDON DRUGS GOLF FOR GUIDE DOGS

*This year we tee off August 11 at our new location, Tsawwassen Springs Golf*

Everyone's favourite golf tournament combined with dogs has found a new home at Tsawwassen Springs Golf.

The 26th Annual London Drugs Golf for Guide Dogs tournament will hit the links a week earlier this year on **Friday, August 11**. Tee time is 1 p.m., followed by dinner, silent auction, and prizes.

Last year's tournament raised more than \$32,000 for programing. Bill Thornton, CEO of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, says he's excited the event has found a new home and believes it will help grow participation.

He says having the support of Title Sponsor **London Drugs**, along with **Patron Leah Meeker**, is what makes this yearly golf tournament such a success.

We are excited to host the tournament at Tsawwassen Springs, a course that can be enjoyed by all levels of golfers.

Registration and Sponsorship packages will be available in May. Check our website for updates.



## RUNGO A BLIZZARD OF FUN IN STANLEY PARK

Not even Mother Nature can stop supporters of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs and RunGo.

A winter storm blasted Vancouver on Sunday, but that didn't stop folks from participating in the 9th annual RunGo Dash For Dogs in Vancouver's snowy Stanley Park. Smiles, laughter, puppies, dogs and pancakes were everywhere as participants took part in either a 10k, 5k, or 2k run supporting our Guide and Service Dog Programs. This year's event raised more than \$28,000. A BIG thank you to our runners, sponsors, volunteers and RunGo!



Blindfold walks with Sherlock, runners starting the 5k race, and supporters lining up for the cheque presentation were just some of the fun at RunGo!

## KITZ4KIDS CELEBRATES 15 YEARS IN STYLE

*The annual fundraiser was a rousing success, raising more than \$35,000*

The 15th Annual Kitz4Kids fundraiser was a wonderful evening in support of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs Autism Program. Held at Richmond's River Rock Casino, the event featured a dinner, the live music of the Dr. Strangelove Band, as well as live and silent auctions.

This very popular event has raised more than \$280,000 for the Autism Program.

Kitz4Kids is hosted every year by the Dolejsi family in memory of Andrew Dolejsi who passed away following a car accident.

Bill Thornton, CEO of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, also wished a big thank you to the Schmelke Family Charitable Foundation for their continued partnership with Kitz4Kids. Thanks to all the guests and volunteers who made the night a fantastic success.



## DUCKS FOR DOGS RETURNS TO POLSON PARK

*Vernon Lions Club raise \$21,500 in 2022*



The 3rd annual Vernon Lions Club Ducks for Dogs race and family day is set for July 15 at Polson Park in Vernon. The event will run from 11 am to 3 pm and it is free to attend. There will be entertainment, games for children, and blindfold walks with Guide Dogs. The duck race will be at 2 pm in the Vernon Creek at Polson Park.

Tickets will be available in grocery stores in Vernon and Coldstream at rotating locations every Friday and Saturday from April 15 to July 14. Top prize for the event wins \$1,000.



# Thank You to our Founding Patrons and Donors:

<b>PATRON</b>	Percy & Bette Adlington	Husky Energy	Grand Chapter of British Columbia & Yukon — Order of the Eastern Star
Leah Meeker	Robin & Kathryn Thornton	Leanne Palylyk Children's Foundation	The Allen & Loreen Vandekerkhove Family Foundation
<b>FOUNDING PATRONS</b>	The Arthur J.E. Child Foundation	Qualicum Pet Food & Grooming	Variety — The Children's Charity
William & Linda Thornton (Co-founders)	The Calgary Foundation	RC Pet Products	<b>VICD OSI-PTSD PATRONS</b>
Allard Foundation	The Fisher Foundation	REALTORS® Community Foundation	Mike Annan
Diamond Foundation	The Nemetz Foundation	Rotary Club of Ladner	Deborah Maddocks
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Irene Lyttle	Wild Rose Foundation	<b>ASD FOUNDING PATRONS</b>	<b>VICD OSI-PTSD FOUNDING DONORS</b>
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Nestlé Purina Pet Care	Greater Victoria Dog Obedience Training Club		
Novartis Animal Health Canada			

## Special Thanks to:

Big Steel Box Victoria	Fish Creek 24 Hour Pet Hospital	Scottsdale Veterinary Hospital
Chase River Veterinary Hospital	McKenzie Veterinary Services	Dr. Brian Skorobohach, DVM, DACVO
Crestwood Veterinary Centre	M-pressions Sportswear Limited	Vancouver Graphics Group
Dr. Charlotte Keller, DVM, DACVO, DECVO	Nestlé Purina Petcare Inc.	VetCor Canine Reproductions
Dr. Graham T. Lewis, DVM, DACVO	Qualicum Beach Veterinary Hospital	Westjet
Elanco Veterinary Canada	The Devon Legion, Branch No. 247	Zoetis Animal Health
	Sue Paegge	

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**BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS**  
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