

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

PAW PRINTS

SPRING 2015 - ISSUE NO. 31



BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS

Bear, in training



ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION

MESSAGE FROM CEO, WILLIAM THORNTON



Well, it's official: BC Guide Dog Services and Autism Support Dogs are pleased to announce the amalgamation of the two organizations. We will continue to conduct ourselves under the bylaws of BC Guide Dog Services and we welcome all of the members of Autism Support Dogs as members of BC Guide Dog Services. On a day-to-day basis, there will be no change other than we will make every attempt to graduate an equal number of Guide Dog and Autism Support Dog teams in any given year. Donors will be able to specify, should they so choose, whether or not their gift is non-designated, for the

Autism Program or for the Guide Dog Program. Our legal name remains BC Guide Dog Services. However, for branding purposes, in addition to using our new logo, we will collectively be known as BC & Alberta Guide Dogs.

Our first steps to strengthening the amalgamation will be the recruitment of an additional qualified Guide Dog Mobility Instructor and, later in 2015, the recruitment of two Apprentice Instructors.

We are in the process of introducing Clicker Training with our dogs in Advanced Training and food reward with our puppies-in-training. A number of Guide Dog Schools have already made this transition with resounding success and, based on this, we have also decided to adopt Clicker Training. I would like to thank Gerald Brenninkmeyer, Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, from our friends at Guiding Eyes for the Blind, New York, who spent a week with us training our Instructors and Puppy Supervisors.

Many thanks to you all. We trust that you are delighted with the difference your support is making in the lives of individuals and families who have received one of our Guide Dogs or Autism Support Dogs.

Help us go green and save on paper/printing costs. Email us at info@bcguidedog.com to switch from hardcopy to a digital version of this newsletter.

BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS

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Chair: Verne A. Blyth
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Norm Sayfy, B.Comm
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Legal Name: British Columbia Guide Dog Services
Charity Registration No.: 89131 1763 RR0001

AUTISM SUPPORT DOGS

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: William S. Thornton, GDMI
Vice-President & Secretary:
Brock Homewood
Treasurer: Verne A. Blyth

Members of:



GUIDE DOG TEAM

Some letters have been edited for space.

MARK & GUIDE DOG MINDY

Team Sponsor: John Hardy Mitchell family foundation

It is my pleasure to be the owner of Mindy, my excellent new guide dog since January 2015. She is a very enthusiastic dog with excellent affect and attitude. She is wonderful with my five-year-old daughter and fits well into our family. She has developed an amazing relationship with my retired guide dog, Victor, who has welcomed her warmly in return as well. Mindy is a great fit for accompanying me at work. She joyfully and calmly welcomes clients and employees at the clinic that I direct and has become quite a popular member of the team. I recently traveled to Toronto and she was an excellent companion in the airport, on the airplane and in a new, unfamiliar city. Overall, Mindy is such a wonderful member of my family and just a joy to have in my life. I greatly appreciate her help and superb training to make my days run smoothly.



FOUNDING PATRONS & FOUNDING DONORS

PATRONS

Howie Meeker C.M. & Leah Meeker

BC&ABGD FOUNDING PATRONS

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BC Guide Dog Services

Diamond Foundation

Grand Chapter of Alberta - Order of

the Eastern Star

Grand Chapter of British Columbia and

Yukon - Order of the Eastern Star

Vandekerkhove Family Foundation

Variety — the Children's Charity

Victor & Anna Kern Foundation

AUTISM SUPPORT DOG TEAM

JAKE & AUTISM SUPPORT DOG SERGE

Team Sponsor: Puppy Sponsorship; Rob, Kim, Danny and Lexi from Green Lake, AB



It is difficult to find the words to express our deep gratitude to Laura, Jaime, Bill and everyone at the Autism Support Dogs division of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. Our lives are changed for the better in so many ways. Serge has quickly become part of the family, and although he has bonded somewhat with all of us, he has a particularly special bond with our son, Jake.

Jake was diagnosed with Autism at only two years old. He has experienced setbacks and delays right from his premature birth, and while a very happy and energetic boy, still experiences many challenges. He truly has the capacity to experience the world in a unique level of sensory detail and reasoning in problems that most “ordinary” folks would find overwhelming.

Serge matches Jake’s relentless energy and has quickly earned the nickname ‘Black Renegade’! He has been a

constant for Jake in a busy and ever-changing routine of school and life on a busy farm. Serge has helped keep Jake safe many times when Jake is completely unaware of the dangers around him—especially roads and parking lots where automatic doors give quick easy access to bolting boys! Serge has helped even out some of Jake’s emotions—learning appropriate emotions is a work in progress and his “meltdowns” are shorter and less frequent with Serge at his side, both in public and at home.

As a veterinarian I have experienced the human-animal bond and the profound positive impact it can have on human life. We are also deeply moved that through the selfless generosity of amazing people and businesses, these dogs are provided at no cost to those who need them and with the full ongoing support of such a committed organization.

The road ahead for Jake is unknown, as for each of us, but with Serge on his support team we are ever so grateful for such unconditional love and companionship. We identify with each of the stories we read about Autism Support Dogs—there is so much good that this opportunity is providing for our family and for Jake!

With tears of gratitude, thank you and bless you!

Love: Paul, Jackie, Jake, and Grace



GUIDE DOG TEAM

DENISE & GUIDE DOG BELLA

Team Sponsor: Puppy Sponsorship

I have had Bella since September of 2014, and she is a phenomenal dog. She has been taught extremely well and is very good at what she does. She alerts me whenever we come up to a door or curb or set of traffic lights. She lets me know when other people are walking in front of us, and never gets distracted or loses focus. Bella is also a fantastic shopping buddy. When we are at the grocery store, I ask her to find the soup aisle, and she takes me right to it. She also helps me to navigate and find things around the house.

My relationship with Bella is incredible. I once had to take a trip to Victoria for a couple of days, and I left her with a friend. I suppose Bella thought I may have abandoned her, because when I came back she was so relieved and excited to see me. We really enjoy spending time together, and have so much fun going for walks. We go out for coffee together, or meet up with friends. One of my friends also has a guide dog, but Bella is so much better behaved, and always so full of joy.

I have a daughter who is 12 years old, and she and Bella get along wonderfully. This is especially important because my daughter was once jumped by a dog at school and has since been fearful of dogs. When Bella first arrived, she approached my daughter and gently greeted her by lifting her paw as if to say, "Don't worry, I won't bite you." Now, when my daughter comes home from school, Bella is so excited to see her, she does a little wiggle and wags her tail each time. Bella has brought so much joy to our home.

The trainers at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs have been wonderful. Nick (Bella's trainer) was phenomenal. He taught me so much about Bella and how to work with her, how to walk with her and how she interacts with other dogs. It was a great experience training with him. With Bella I am able to go outside more, to walk down the street and feel safer. I have more confidence now than ever. Life is just so much better now that she is around.



Denise



AUTISM SUPPORT DOG TEAM

TEAGAN & AUTISM SUPPORT DOG TOTEM



Team Sponsor: Puppy Sponsorship; Burnaby Lougheed Lions


Our beautiful daughter Teagan was diagnosed with autism when she was about four years old. We had seen her struggle with her communication and, at that time, were unaware of the sensory challenges she was having. We rushed into numerous appointments: speech therapy, behavioural intervention, occupational therapy and social communication classes, often just shy of a meltdown.

We applied for an Autism Support Dog when Teagan was eight. By this time I no longer took her on shopping trips or to crowded venues by myself. I no longer took her anywhere with my toddler, because I could not pick them both up if I needed to. Teagan's sensory systems would overload, particularly with stimulants like loud sounds, strong scents and bright lights. Meltdowns would mean the trip was over, and we would have to go home. It was always just too stressful on all of us.

Totem came to us in January of 2015, and has brightened our lives immeasurably. She is so well trained that the two weeks we spent training with Laura were more for me than for Totem. Thanks to Laura, who was readily available to answer all questions, day or night, this transition was very easy to make. Totem accompanies us on numerous outings. I am able to take my children grocery shopping again. I am able to take them to the mall again. I was worried that Totem might be a burden to take along with the kids, but she has made going on outings easier!

Teagan and Totem have bonded, and Teagan enjoys touching Totem's very soft ears and rubbing her face. Totem is incredibly gentle with her, and provides a calming presence that facilitates sleep time. Totem has become a welcoming figure by Teagan's side, allowing for easier transitions between home and other places.

We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who played a part in bringing Totem to our world. Her puppy raisers, sponsors, boarders, Laura, Henny, Jaime, and Bill – thank you. The impact Totem is making on our lives is just beginning, and it is already enormous! Thank you BC & Alberta Guide Dogs for providing Totem and her wonderful companionship!

Renee, Jose, Teagan and Tesla 

GUIDE DOG TEAM

ANN & GUIDE DOG TAYLOR

Team Sponsor: Puppy Sponsorship

The Wonderful ABCs of Taylor

A young lady who wraps her paws around your neck and heart.

Brown eyes to replace my green.

Careful when guiding me over rough ground.

Delightfully inquisitive about our walks.

Enjoys her new life in the country.

Funny little antics of the harness full of energy.

Guidance once she learns a route, never forgets.

Happiness Taylor gives to all.

Interior Provincial Exhibition: Taylor meets chickens, geese, cows, and goats.

Jaime bringing all together, the training and the caring.

Kelly, my retiree, still helping both Taylor and me.

Love Taylor shares with all, family and pets.

Memory, she knows my routines and prompt for meals.

Natural puppy still when playing with grandchildren.

Overcomes obstacles in my way.

Perfect fit for our family.

We love you Taylor.

To all the staff and volunteers at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, thank you to all who made my freedom possible once again. – Ann Craik and Taylor



IN THE LITTERBOX

These pups are off to their Puppy Raising homes throughout Greater Vancouver, Victoria and Calgary for their first steps of training! Puppy Raising is a full-time volunteer job, and is fundamental to us being able to train our dogs and provide our services. We want to say a heartfelt thank you to all our breeder/caretakers, volunteer boarders, and our amazing Puppy Raisers for all your time and the loving homes you provide to our pups. We couldn't do it without you!

DREAM & MAX'S PUPPIES

BORN: November 9, 2014

WHELPER: Wendy W.

PUPPY RAISERS:

Charlotte (GRxBLB) - Natalie, Victoria
Fern (GRxBLB) - Cynthia, Vancouver
Harlan (GRxBLM) - Leah, Vancouver
Rancher (GRxBLM) - Carla, Sidney
Yasgur (GRxYLM) - Vic, Delta



Dream's litter



Jacuzzi's litter

JACUZZI & NANOOSE'S PUPPIES

BORN: November 25, 2014

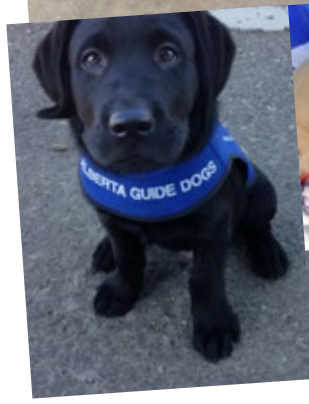
WHELPER: Deb P.

PUPPY RAISERS:

Noah (YLM) - Pauline, Nanaimo
Dianne (BLB) - Linda & Ron, Parksville
Jennie B. (BLB) - Sonja, Sidney
Macy (BLB) - Caroline, Langley
Shawna (BLB) - Ben & Jude, Vancouver

We are seeking Puppy Raisers in Vancouver, Victoria and Calgary. This is a 24/7 volunteer job, from when a puppy is 7-8 weeks to 14-16 months old. Through a supervised program, including scheduled visits and obedience classes, you will have a terrific support system throughout this journey with your new four-legged pal. If you want to learn more about this rewarding commitment, call us at 1-877-940-4504 or visit www.bcguidedog.com for details.

PURINA'S PUPPY PARADE

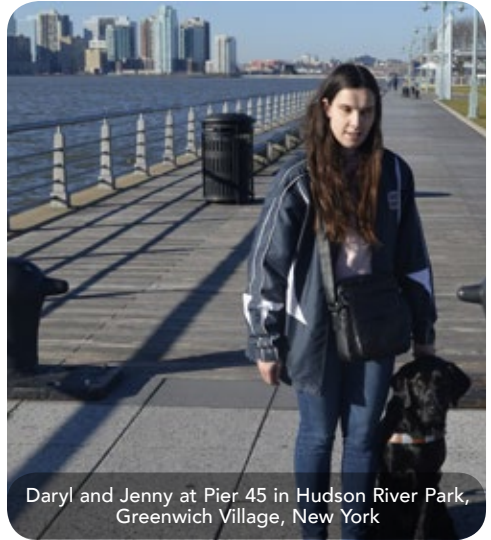


UPDATE FROM A CLIENT

2013 Guide Dog Team Daryl & Jenny travel New York!

Over the past 18 months of working with Jenny – my wonderful, impulsive, intelligent guide dog from BC & Alberta Guide Dogs – I have learned many lessons about adapting expectations, accepting her quirks, and trusting my dog. Nowhere was this more applicable than on a trip we took to New York City over the Christmas holidays.

From the time we booked our tickets, many guide dog handlers told me that New York would be overwhelming and distracting for Jenny. I'm glad I kept this in mind, because after a flawless flight and journey through several airports, our first couple of days in NYC were full of huge crowds, new smells, and numerous other dogs. Jenny, being the wonderful quirky dog she is, decided she would take advantage of the situation – until we took a 10-block walk from the Subway station to a jazz club, alone on a Friday night. I could almost see the motivational light bulb flash above her head, because for the entire rest of the trip she did the best guide work she ever has, including showing off her awesome skills at a Rangers hockey game.



We all (Jenny, my husband and I) loved the walking tours we did in New York City, including a guided tour through the Museum of Modern Art. My personal favourite was the Food on Foot tour, a four-hour culinary adventure that mixed New York cuisine and mingling with fellow tourists. After many of these walking tours, we took Jenny out of her harness so she could socialize with other tourists and their dogs, which greatly reduced any stress resulting from our hours of walking.

New York was a very dog-friendly city and, for the most part, the other dogs were all well behaved. Jenny received many compliments for her guide skills through the massive crowds at Times Square, for her blue boots that protect her paws from getting wet (yes, she is a princess), and simply for being adorable.

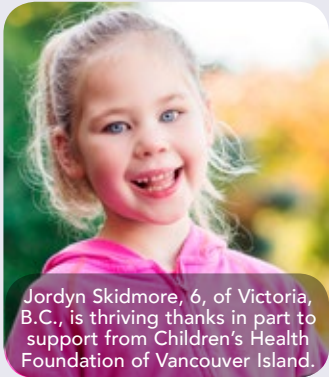
New York City was a fantastic place to spend time. The food was excellent, there was always something to do, and the people were so amazingly friendly. After a bit of a rough start, I fully believe this experience has enhanced our partnership in ways I can never describe. Jenny made it possible to take that trip to the jazz club, which I might never have had the confidence to do alone. She kept me safe from the craziness of New York traffic, and helped remind me that tomorrow is a new day, with new skills to shape, new friends to meet, and new places to go.

For more updates, follow Daryl's blog at blindbreader.wordpress.com

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Thank you to the following organizations for their generous support of
BC & Alberta Guide Dogs / Autism Support Dogs!

Committed to Kids: Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island helps fund Autism Support Dogs program



Children's Health Foundation of Vancouver Island, the largest children's health charity on Vancouver Island, raises money and manages funds to remove barriers and create opportunities to ensure children and their families have access to the support they need. With the help of the Foundation, children with disabilities and health challenges can have the same opportunities and life chances as other children.

Children's Health Foundation recently announced it will invest \$2.25 million in programs to help kids with disabilities and health challenges on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. BC &

Alberta Guide Dogs is one of this year's lucky recipients, earning a grant of \$15,000 to provide Autism Support Dogs to children with autism on Vancouver Island.

Says Linda Hughes, CEO, Children's Health Foundation: "This is the first year we have funded an Autism Support Dog program. We are looking forward to measuring the positive outcomes this program will have on Island children. I think we'll find that an Autism Support Dog truly becomes a child's best friend."



The Vandekerkhove Family Foundation: Autism Support Dogs Founding Patrons

In the summer of 1989 the Vandekerkhove family formed "The Allen and Loreen Vandekerkhove Family Foundation." The family has always recognized that the health of a vibrant community is based on those who give back to it. The size of the gift does not matter – the true gift is in the giving itself.

Over the past 26 years the foundation has donated over \$4.5 million to organizations and communities on Vancouver Island, and continues to support registered charities that reflect what the foundation stands for.

Mr. and Mrs. Vandekerkhove have been patrons of the Autism Support Dogs program since its inception, with the belief that animals help all of us with the daily pressures of life. They have relied on the love and companionship of their family dogs to relieve and manage stress in their own lives, and their gratitude is reflected in the continued support of our organization.

AROUND TOWN

KITZ4KIDS FUNDRAISER FOR AUTISM SUPPORT DOGS



Left to Right: Guests with pups-in-training; Lad, Eva & Doug Dolejsi, Muriel & Bryan Dawson with Jette.

For the second year Kitz4Kids held its annual fundraiser benefiting Autism Support Dogs. The event took place at the River Rock Casino in Richmond, BC on January 16th, and everyone had a terrific time! The night featured a buffet dinner, silent and live auctions, a speech from one of our Autism Support Dog recipient families, and a performance by standup comedian Ivan Decker. Kitz4Kids donated \$10,500 to Autism Support Dogs, and we kindly thank the event's organizers for their time and generosity!

LOVE IS BLIND EXPERIENCE WITH MAISON CHAPOUTIER



Pictured: Guests with pup Bodhi and his Puppy Raiser, Donalda Spearing.

Our thanks to Pacific Wine & Spirits for hosting the *Love is Blind* event at Willow Park Wines & Spirits in Calgary, AB on February 21st. More than 70 people enjoyed a unique experience, sampling delicious food and French wines – all while blindfolded! Our puppies-in-training were on hand before dinner to meet guests and were a big hit with all who attended.

AROUND TOWN

RUNGO APP'S DASH FOR DOGS RUN/WALK FUNDRAISER



Left to Right: RunGo's Craig Slagel, Jaycee Day, Alicia Woodside, and BCAGBD's William Thornton and Anita Cymet

A big thank you to the RunGo App team and the 120+ participants who came out on February 21st to Stanley Park in Vancouver for the first-ever *Dash for Dogs* event. It was a terrific turnout with great weather and an even greater group of people. RunGo raised over \$2,800 for us – thank you! We can't wait to do it again next year.

FOR THE LATEST UPDATES, MORE EVENT PHOTOS, AND TO SIGN UP FOR OUR EMAIL LIST, VISIT US AT BCGUIDEDOG.COM

BC & Alberta Guide Dogs



@bcguidedogs / @abguidedogs

UPCOMING EVENTS

SCOTIABANK CALGARY MARATHON CHARITY CHALLENGE

Sunday, May 31, 2015 - Calgary, AB

FOR YOUR EYES ONLY 11TH CHARITY DINNER & AUCTION

Saturday, June 6, 2015 - Vancouver, BC

SPRUCE MEADOWS RUN SERIES PAWSITIVELY FUN RUN

Sunday, June 21, 2015 - Calgary, AB

TOWNSHIP 7 FATHER'S DAY WINE & SWINE

Sunday, June 21, 2015 - Langley, BC

LONDON DRUGS 18TH ANNUAL GOLF FOR GUIDE DOGS

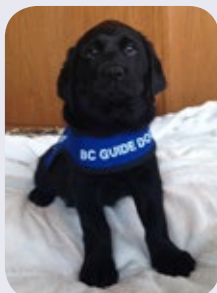
Friday, August 21, 2015 - Tsawwassen, BC

SPONSOR A PUPPY

With your help, these little pups could grow up to make a visible difference in someone's life!



Charlotte



Fern

These pups are not only training to change lives, they have also been specially selected to be our Puppy Sponsorship Ambassadors! They will be documenting their advanced training adventures and writing letters to sponsors over their two-year journey towards becoming Guide Dogs or Autism Support Dogs. If you sponsor one of these puppies, they could be writing to you!

CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING SPONSORSHIP LEVELS:

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 sponsor a puppy today, call 1-877-940-4504 or email puppysponsorship@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
Chase River Veterinary Hospital
Elanco Veterinary Canada
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.
Pfizer Animal Health
RC Pet Products
Sue Paege (*for our puppy jackets*)
Scottsdale Veterinary Hospital
Dr. Brian Skorobohach, DVM, DACVO
VetCor Canine Reproductions
Westjet

BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS

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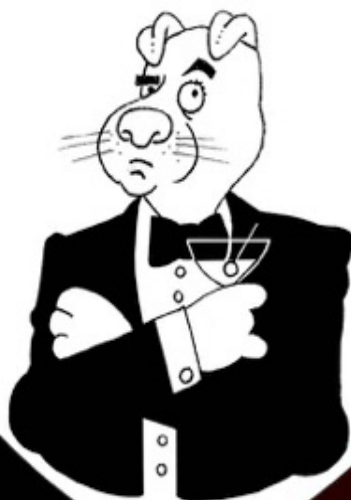
VICTORIA SATELLITE OFFICE

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

Charity Registration No.: 89131 1763 RR0001

BC & Alberta Guide Dogs
"For Your Eyes Only"
11th Charity Dinner and Auction

Saturday, June 6, 2015



**Tickets
on sale
now!**

Fairmont Hotel Vancouver

**Dinner, live entertainment,
live and silent auctions!**

Tickets: \$100 each
Tables of 8

Call us at **604-940-4504** to
purchase yours today!

Charity Number 891311763RR0001