

Official newsletter from the staff, graduates and
volunteers of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs



BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS

PAW PRINTS

Summer 2016 - Issue No. 33



*Celebrating
20 years*

1996 - 2016

Waldie, in training

ABOUT OUR ORGANIZATION

Message from CEO, William Thornton



This is a very exciting year for our organization! It has been 20 years since British Columbia Guide Dog Services was incorporated as a registered charity, June 28, 1996! In that year, we hired our first employee, we received our first puppy, had our first litter of puppies and we hosted our first fundraising event, Dog Days of Summer. 20 years later, we now have 16 employees, approximately 160 dogs in our programs at any time and we are involved in countless fundraising events every year. We have also had two babies born to our staff!

As we turn 20, we find ourselves in an expansion mode. I am happy to share with you that we have welcomed two new apprentice instructors, Rebecca Preston and Nicola Landells and a puppy training supervisor for the lower mainland, Matthias Lenz. Plans are afoot to take on two more apprentice instructors early next year. We have almost completed the final plans for our future Training and Breeding Centre, to be built on our office site, Ladner Trunk Road, and hope to begin our fundraising efforts early next year – we look forward to your support for this exciting venture.

I trust that you will enjoy our latest copy of Paw Prints. You can see that we have come a long way over the last two decades. This has all been made possible because of our amazing volunteers, supporters and staff. Thank you, one and all. Please take some time to learn more about the profound difference our Guide Dogs and Autism Support Dogs have made in the lives of our graduates, as you read their testimonials. Thanks for 20 glorious years! Look for a special 20th Anniversary Edition of Paw Prints this fall.

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FRONT COVER:

Waldie, in training.

Photo credit:

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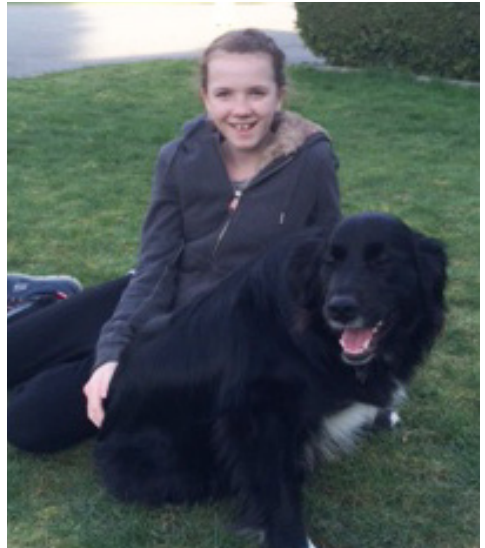
Legal Name: British Columbia Guide Dog Services
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VERY SPECIAL PLACEMENT

Tia and Pet Dog, Nanook

We are very thankful for our Very Special Placement dog. I can't express enough how much it has changed our lives. I just wanted to let you know how Nanook has responded to the family. She is settling in so well. As a result it has been life-changing for our family. Before we received Nanook, Tia was so scared of dogs and also struggled sleeping through the night by herself. After we received Nanook, Tia has slept through the night in her own room. She is also no longer afraid of dogs. Nanook is such a kind and gentle dog. Tia has responsibilities now; walking her, feeding her, brushing her and playing ball with her. As you know children with diverse needs do not have very many friends, if any at all. Nanook has become her companion and friend. Tia's days are filled with love from Nanook.



Thank you so much for considering Tia for a VSP dog. I cannot say enough on how wonderful it has been for the family. I would also like to thank the Puppy Trainers and all involved for all their effort. Tears come to my eyes just thinking about what it is done for my daughter. We are now a family of six.

Thanks again, Nancy, Craig, Clinton, Brett, Tia and Nanook

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Leah & Howie Meeker, CM

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GUIDE DOG TEAM

Sue & Guide Dog Button



Team Sponsors: Puppy Sponsorship

It gives me much pleasure to thank all those involved in the wonderful gift of my second Guide Dog. Button is a sweet tempered, fun-loving, lively female yellow Labrador. After 10 wonderful years with my first dog Pinta, I thought I could never love another. I waited undecided, but after only three months it became evident that my life was changing from an outgoing, productive person, to a retiring, less joyful one. I found myself waiting for rides, companions, and unable to do things on the spur of the moment. I knew that I should apply for another dog.

The process begins with Bill and Linda Thornton and the wonderful administration staff at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. Next come the sponsors, and every single person who puts a dollar into the collection box, or who runs a fundraising event. We thank you! Then comes a variety of wonderful generous people who open their homes to the birth and raising of these puppies - whelpers, puppy trainers, boarders and instructors. Concluding this circle is the client. Some are young people attending educational facilities, some are in the workplace and others are like myself - a retired Grandmother. There is such an element of trust, courage and commitment from all those concerned in this wonderful service. For myself life has become fun again, and I shall be able to contribute more to my family and community. Walks in nature with Button are my highlights...and of course finding our way to my favourite coffee shop.

- Sue



GUIDE DOG TEAM

Ana-Maria & Guide Dog Lois



Team Sponsor: Delta Firefighters Charitable Society

I am the very fortunate recipient of a beautiful dog named Lois that has become my best friend, my lifeline and independence, and my eyes. I started to lose my sight in 2011 and the effects have been devastating. I lost my ability to drive, to get around safely without help, to work and provide for myself. I became reliant on other people's assistance to do even ordinary tasks and the loss of independence was deeply distressing. I became proficient with using a white cane, but I found using it to be a very isolating experience.

Having Lois as my partner and guide dog has changed everything. I have become independent again with her by my side. Lois has many admirers in our community and I am very proud to stop and chat with people about how wonderful my dog is. She has helped me to become a more social and active person again and I no longer fear travelling outside of my home by myself.

I have been given a gift that I never dreamed was possible. I have been given my life back thanks to a sweet black Labrador Retriever and the organization that raised and trained her. I would like to thank the many people that were involved in making Lois the talented and proficient dog that she is – her puppy raiser, her boarding family, Bill and the many wonderful people at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, and the Delta Firefighters Charitable Society for sponsoring her. I would especially like to thank Jaime Arnup for her incredible skill and expertise. It was a privilege to work with such a gifted dog trainer. My deepest thanks to all of you for making Lois the amazing dog that she is. I will cherish her always. With gratitude, Ana-Maria



GUIDE DOG TEAM

Sieghard & Guide Dog Radar



Team Sponsor: John Hardie Mitchell family foundation

As a long-term guide dog user, getting a new guide dog is exciting, but it is also sad because it usually means retiring one's old companion. I am fortunate in that my lifestyle and occupation as a self-employed retail store owner allows me to keep my retired dogs so they are still very much a part of my daily routine.

Last September I received a call from BC & Alberta Guide Dogs with the good news that they had a good match for me. My new dog was going to be Radar, a beautiful yellow lab. I flew to Vancouver to do a walk with Radar and to confirm the match. Just as with my previous dog, Mulligan, Radar and I instantly liked each other. On Sunday, November 22, 2015, Instructor, Jaime, and Radar flew to Smithers and Radar spent his first night in his new home. My wife Jackie and Radar also had no problems liking each other. Jaime and I then spent 5 sunny, but quite cold days showing Radar the beautiful little community of Smithers.

The following Monday we flew to Vancouver for another week of personalized, one-on-one training. We stayed at the Coast Hotel just off Denman street in a very quiet and green neighbourhood and each day started our training from there. I also met Laura who trained Radar and had another fantastic experience.

On graduation day Bill joined us and I want to thank him, Laura, Jaime and all the other staff at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs for their hard work and for again setting me up with a sweet, fun and well-trained dog. Of course also a big thank-you to Radar's puppy trainers and boarders.



GUIDE DOG TEAM

Melissa & Guide Dog Telus



Team Sponsor: Eldon & Anne Foote Fund at Edmonton Community Foundation

It's truly amazing how fast ten years pass and how much life and learning can be packed into that decade. When I was thirteen, I received my first guide dog, Trep, from BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. I am now twenty-three. Trep walked across the stage with me at my junior high & high school graduations, slept through 3 years of university lectures, travelled all over Canada, lived with me in Peru, attended dozens of Whitecaps games, flew on over 50 flights, travelled thousands of kilometres of sidewalk, and guided me around countless obstacles. I think it is fair to say he has earned his retirement.

Enter my second dog, Telus. He is a fresh burst of energy. He's eager to work and go new places, and most importantly, he walks fast. There's a particular road in my neighbourhood with many poles inconveniently placed down the middle of the sidewalk. When we zoom down that sidewalk, Telus guiding me around the poles at speed, I feel like I'm flying. He navigates my university campus like he's been doing it his whole life. The transition between Trep and Telus has been seamless.

Telus is a very happy dog. He's constantly wagging his tail, and loves to give frequent kisses. He and Trep get along well, and my cat may one day forgive me for allowing another dog into the house.

As I reflect on the last ten years, I cannot believe how many adventures I've had with Trep always at my side guiding me. I am eagerly looking forward to all the future holds with Telus. Thank you so much to his sponsors, puppy trainers, boarders, Nick (his trainer), and everyone else at BC & Alberta Guide Dogs.



IN THE LITTERBOX

These pups are currently in their puppy training homes in Greater Vancouver, Vancouver Island and Calgary! Puppy training is a full-time volunteer job, and is fundamental to our success. We want to say a heartfelt THANK YOU to all our amazing volunteer breeders, whelpers, trainers, and boarders for all your time and the loving homes you provide to our pups. We couldn't do it without you!

KIWA & BERT



BORN: October 14, 2015

WHELPER/CARETAKER: Bonnie S.

PUPPY TRAINERS:

Baloo (YL x GRB) - Judy, Vancouver
Hoppy (YL x GRM) - Lee & Rolly, Victoria
Sailor (YL x GRB) - Lindsay, Victoria
Miguel (YL x GRM) - Wendy, Calgary
Ryder (YL x GRM) - Eline, Calgary

GERTIE & GERRY



BORN: October 30, 2015

WHELPER/CARETAKER:

Diane M./Donna W.

PUPPY TRAINERS:

Shawn (BLM) - Geraldine, Burnaby
Jewel (BLB) - Mark, Surrey
Olive (YLB) - Judy, Delta

JACUZZI & MAX



BORN: November 25, 2015

WHELPER: Deb P.

PUPPY TRAINERS:

Ogden (BLM) - John & Yvonne, Calgary
Danny (BLM) - Bill & Melodie, Courtney
Tilly (BLB) - Annette, Langley

CALYPSO & BERT



BORN: November 10, 2015

WHELPER: Joanna J.

PUPPY TRAINERS:

Roper (YLM) - Colleen, Calgary
Waldie (YLM) - Sandy, Delta
Tolio (BLM) - Sandra & Kevin, Victoria
Huxley (BLM) - Lynn, Calgary
Cuba (YLB) - Leah, Richmond
Dewling (BLB) - Debby, White Rock
Eileen (BLB) - Martha, Port Moody
Anita M (BLB) - Beverly, Victoria

LEGEND

YL: Yellow Labrador Retriever
BL: Black Labrador Retriever

LxGR: Labrador cross Golden Retriever
B: Female M: Male



COMMUNITY SUPPORT



In December 2015, the Ogden Legion No. 154 Calgary closed its doors after decades of service. As a result, they spent an evening celebrating and donating \$2.2 million to local charities. They presented BC & Alberta Guide Dogs with \$84,500! Our thanks for their amazing generosity!



This past Christmas, Telus Community Ambassadors generously donated \$3,740 from their Telus Retiree Holiday Dinner! Thank you to Telus, the retirees who contributed and to Linda & Diane who dropped off the gift!



In March 2016, Grade 10 students from Walnut Grove Secondary, Kevin, Brodie, Anderson and Jonathan, won \$5,000 on behalf of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs as part of the Youth Philanthropy Initiative! Job well done boys!



In March 2016, Bob & Susan Leblevec hosted the 25th Annual BS Invitational Curling Bonspeil in Richmond, BC and they donated \$5,000 from their proceeds to BC & Alberta Guide Dogs! Thank you for this great contribution!

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS FOR THEIR ONGOING SUPPORT AND GENEROSITY!

To learn more about these donor stories, please visit our blog:
bcandalbertaguidedogs.com/dogblog



VOLUNTEER PUPPY TRAINER



Q&A with BC & Alberta Guide Dogs Volunteer Puppy Trainer Rhonda in Calgary, AB

Q: When did you first get started with BC & Alberta Guide Dogs?

A: I applied and went for an interview in the fall of 2012. I started attending obedience classes and training in the mall with older dogs to prepare for my puppy. Meg, my first puppy, came to me on February 12, 2013. I raised Meg and Cleo and puppy-sat for other dogs in training.

Q: Why did you initially get involved with BC & Alberta Guide Dogs?

A: Becoming a Puppy Trainer was something I had heard about and had always wanted to do, but it was never the right time for our family. When the timing was right I did some research and BC & Alberta Guide Dogs appealed to me because they respect that not every dog is meant to be a service dog.

Q: What do you like best about being a Puppy Trainer?

A: Best part is that you get to take a puppy home!

Q: What is the hardest part of being a Puppy Trainer?

A: The journey to raise a puppy isn't always easy, in fact it can be very challenging at times. The biggest challenge is understanding that you were only meant to be a part of their lives for a short while and the day will come when you have to let them go.

Q: What is the most rewarding part of being a Puppy Trainer?

A: I have heard the saying that there are no unselfish acts. I believe that to be true. As volunteers we give our time and energy but our rewards seem to be greater than our efforts. The rewards with being a Puppy Trainer vary from small to large but they come everyday. It may be a cuddle or it may be the satisfaction of the moment that your dog understands and performs the training command. The biggest reward for me is when I read the recipient testimonial letters and see over and over again how these beautiful dogs change lives.

If you are interested in becoming a Volunteer Puppy Trainer and you live in Greater Vancouver, Victoria/Nanaimo or Calgary, please visit our website:
bcandalbertaguidedogs.com



DONOR SPOTLIGHT

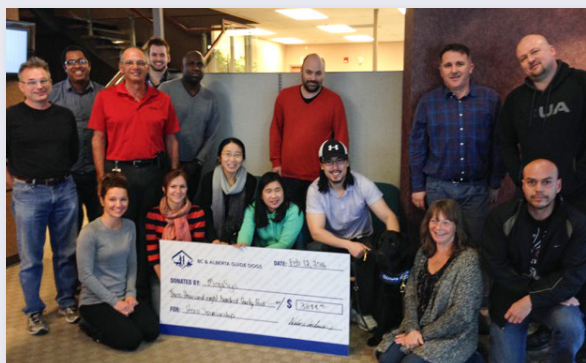
THANK YOU TO THESE GREAT ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS!

KITZ4KIDS

Since 2009, Eva Dolejsi has been organizing an Annual Kitz4Kids Fundraiser in memory of her late son, Andrew Dolejsi, with a focus on children in need. For the past three years, Autism Support Dogs, a division of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs has had the privilege of being the recipient of this amazing fundraiser. Eva has singlehandedly raised over \$32,000 for children with autism and their families.



This year's event took place on January 15th at the River Rock Casino in Richmond, BC. 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 the DayTrippers. The evening raised over \$11,500! We would like to thank Eva and everyone who has helped organize the event every year. We are truly grateful for everything that you do for us!



MEGASYS

MegaSys is the provider of Telenium™, Network Management Software for telecommunications, energy, emergency services and government markets. Each Christmas, MegaSys holds a fundraiser in support of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. This year, the MegaSys team members participating in

the 17th Annual MegaSys Christmas Charity raffle raised over \$1,900 – which MegaSys matched dollar for dollar. This year's funds were raised to help pay for the education and training of the puppy-in-training that MegaSys named - Hero. Since 2008, MegaSys has raised more than \$27,000 in support of our dogs! Thank you Megasy for your continued donations!



DOGS ABOUT TOWN

Trivia Nights in Victoria and Calgary!



In April, we launched Trivia Nights in Victoria and Calgary. Both events had a great turnout and fun was had by all. In Victoria, first place went to the team "Blind Luck" and in Calgary, "Fantastic Fidos" beat out "Teacher's Pet" by a mere 1/2 point for the championship.

Our thanks go out to everyone who came out to play trivia, all the donors who generously gave to the silent and live auctions, our judges, and all the wonderful volunteers who helped us put together these events! We hope to see you back next year!



For the second year in a row, Rungo and BC & Alberta Guide Dogs partnered for Dash For Dogs, held at Stanley Park on February 20, 2016. Over 175 participants with their dogs raised \$6,700 in support of BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. Thank you to Craig, Rungo, all the sponsors, volunteers and everyone who attended the event!



BC & Alberta Guide Dogs participated in the Calgary Scotiabank Marathon Charity Challenge on Sunday, May 29th. Our team of volunteers and eight puppies-in-training walked 5 kms to raise awareness and funds for BC & Alberta Guide Dogs. A total of \$2,570 was donated! Our thanks to the puppies, volunteers, staff and donors for the great effort!



GOLF FOR GUIDE DOGS



19th Annual **GOLF FOR GUIDE DOGS** *Hosted by Leah & Howie Meeker, C.M.*

Registration Now Open!

DATE: Friday, August 26th, 2016

LOCATION: Mayfair Lakes Golf & Country Club
5460 No. 7 Rd., Richmond, BC

TIME: 11:00 am check-in, 1:00 pm shotgun start

REGISTRATION: \$200 per golfer which includes golf, golf cart, complimentary balls on the driving range, lunch voucher and a fabulous buffet dinner

PLEASE NOTE:

- There is a change in venue this year and the shotgun start is at 1:00pm.
- Golf cart is included in your registration.
- Dress code is in effect at Mayfair Lakes. Soft spikes only, please.
- Registration will not be accepted without payment.
- Sorry, no refunds, but registration is transferable.

To register, visit our website: bcandalbertaguidedogs.com

For more information, call Bill or Chris at [604-940-4504](tel:604-940-4504).

For sponsorship opportunities, email: anita.cymet@bcguidedogs.com

Your support helps BC & Alberta Guide Dogs breed, raise and professionally train Guide Dogs for individuals who are blind/visually-impaired, and Autism Support Dogs for children with moderate to profound autism (ages 3-10) and their families.



PUPPY SPONSORSHIP

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



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 training adventures and writing letters to sponsors during their journey towards becoming Guide Dogs or Autism Support Dogs. If you sponsor one of these puppies, they could be writing to you!

YOU CAN CHOOSE FROM THE FOLLOWING SPONSORSHIP LEVELS:

PUPPY SCHOLARSHIP \$15/month ongoing* (puppy letters & photos ongoing)

PUPPY SCHOLARSHIP \$250 gift (puppy letters & photos for 2 years)

KINDERPUP \$50 gift (one puppy letter & framed photo)

***NEW SPONSORSHIP LEVEL* PUPPY PAL** \$100 gift (one puppy letter, framed photo, greeting cards & a sponsor certificate)

MOM & PUPS FUND \$1000 gift (photo and birth announcement of litter and 2 year puppy scholarship package)

To sponsor a puppy today, call 1-877-940-4504, email puppysponsorship@bcguidedog.com or visit our website.



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.

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Toll-free (Alberta):
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A VOLUNTEER JOB LIKE NO OTHER



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