

Puppies Like Duke Need Foster Homes to Learn Good Behaviour to Become a Guide Dog

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Meet Duke. Duke is a yellow Labrador retriever. He might be a cute little bundle of fluff, but this yellow Lab will, hopefully, one day become the eyes for a Canadian who is blind or visually impaired. Duke was born into the breeding program of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, with the intention of one day becoming a guide dog.

It takes approximately two years for a puppy like Duke to become a guide dog. At approximately eight weeks of age, pups are placed into the homes of volunteers, who raise the puppy in their home, teaching basic obedience and socialization. The pups require homes to learn what it takes to be a 'good dog' before entering into formal training to become a guide dog or assistance dog for someone in need.

Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind is currently seeking loving homes for a long-term volunteer commitment of 12-18 months. All food and veterinary expenses are provided. Puppies will be ready for placement in the next several weeks.

Volunteers need to be able to spend most of the day with the puppy, not leaving it alone for more than a couple of hours at a time. These pups are raised with the intention of being with someone 24/7 as a working guide dog. Pups are placed into homes at approximately eight weeks of age, so you'll be housebound for a short time. The pup is kept mostly in the house until it has received vaccinations at sixteen weeks of age. After that, you are asked to take the puppy anywhere you go and introduce it to as many environments and situations as possible, which it may later encounter as a guide dog. You are expected to take the pup for daily long walks in all weather conditions.

The idea behind the voluntary role is to teach basic obedience and socialization. Support is provided from professional staff from Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, including training and obedience classes.

This is a very unique volunteer opportunity, and you could help play a role in changing someone's life. Would you be a suitable candidate for a volunteer position like this? The main thing is that the pup not be left at home alone all day. Current volunteers include stay-at-home parents, post-secondary students, individuals who work from home or have their own business, part-time workers, or retirees. In fact, some gain permission from their employer to take the dog to work on a daily basis. The organization is seeking volunteers who are committed, love animals, want to learn, and are able to work on a schedule with the puppy.

When the dog is ready to enter into formal training at the National Training Centre of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, you must be prepared to give up the dog, so that it may continue its journey to work as a guide dog.

To learn more about the Puppy Walking Program or sign up for an information session, you can contact Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind at (613) 692-7777 or email info@guidedogs.ca.

Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind was established as a registered charity in 1984. Canadian



Guide Dogs for the Blind has provided more than 780 professionally trained guide dogs to Canadians who are visually impaired from coast to coast. Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind also operates an Assistance Dogs Division, which trains assistance dogs for individuals in the local area with mobility-related disabilities.

As for Duke, he is currently residing and learning to be a good dog at the home of a volunteer in Stittsville. Later, he'll return to Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind for formal training, at the National Training Centre in Ottawa.

Should you wish to learn more about Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, you can visit them online at www.guidedogs.ca.