

Side *by* Side

Fall/Winter 2020

Volume 35, Number 2



Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind
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Six Feet Apart

Physical distancing due to COVID-19 has introduced new challenges for individuals who are blind and use a guide dog, such as Donna Tessier. "She's a huge help. I would not go out of the house nearly as much as I do", Donna says.

Her guide dog Xaria helps Donna to get around. "She gives me so much freedom and reduces the stress when I'm walking, whether it's staying on the sidewalks, not go into the road, find the step, and find the door. There's all kinds of things that she's trained to help me located and to stay safe."



Donna Tessier & Xaria

Donna says that using a guide dog during COVID-19 and physical distancing does have its challenges. She is fortunate that friends and family can bring her groceries, but not everyone with a guide dog has that option. "Lining up at the doorway of a store, my dog is trained to go to the door, not to line up six feet apart from people. We would just truck on right to the door and it would look like we're trying to jump the que."

Guide dogs are not trained to understand physical distancing. A guide dog is training to get through very narrow aisle ways and be able to navigate around things in a store. Therefore, if you have a couple of people six feet apart, the dog will not realize 'I can't go there'. They will think, 'Wow, there's a gap of six feet, that's perfect. I can fit through there and get to where I need to go'.

The message is to be patient with someone using a guide dog. Donna says, "Know that in this situation, when we need to keep physical distancing that they give me a wide-berth and that they are the ones that should initiate going around me and my dog". ■

Read Side by Side online

Help save on printing and postage costs. The latest edition and past issues of Side by Side are available on our website at www.guidedogs.ca. (This includes Spring/Summer 2020, which was not sent via Canada Post due to COVID-19). New issues are posted in May and October. If you wish to read Side by Side online, please contact us to be removed from our Side by Side mailing list. Whether it's in print or online, be sure to read Side by Side twice per year to stay up-to-date about Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind.

(613) 692-7777 info@guidedogs.ca

Thank you to the following businesses that have contributed goods or services to Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind.



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COVID-19 Wellness Check

Ottawa Deputy Mayor and City Councillor George Darouze stopped by Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind on April 29, 2020. The Councillor made the rounds in and around his ward to check on how folks were coping during COVID-19. Darouze said, "As we celebrate International Guide Dog Day (April 29, 2020), this is day that people not only here, but around the world thank guide dogs that take the lead every day to ensure that blind people are given the chance to experience independence and freedom. This is also the day we recognize the staff for all their dedication and hard work. On my wellness checks I stopped into Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind to see how they were managing". ■



George Darouze (right) with Steven Doucette (left) of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind.



Barbara Annas in one of the team's homemade masks.

Volunteers Go Above and Beyond

Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind operates solely through donations and has a volunteer network of approximately 400 people nationally. The COVID-19 pandemic has a negative impact on many charitable organizations. Many people cannot afford to give to charities or are stopping contributions in fear of losing jobs, businesses closing or uncertainty of their immediate or long-term future.

In May 2020, a few volunteers from Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind were asked to make homemade masks. These individuals, who usually sew jackets for our puppies in training or tiny jackets for our TY Beanie Babies we sell as a fundraiser, sewed masks that could be used by

staff of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. The masks were intended for immediate use by essential staff caring for the dogs and other staff for later, when they returned to working on-site.

These volunteers took this idea even further and created a team, consisting of Barbara Annas, Nancy Dunham, Kelly Ford, Bev Furniss, and Roselyn Murphy. They continued making masks, selling them to their own colleagues and contacts in the community and, in some cases, even strangers, with all proceeds being donated to Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind's volunteer coordinator Steven Doucette said, "This was such an innovative and generous project. As a charity, our donations dropped significantly due to COVID-19, so it is especially appreciated when people go above and beyond and are so kind."

The demand for masks was growing in the community, and so was their desire to help. Giving back is something these five ladies have in common, and they ended up raising over \$5,000 for Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. We would like to thank them for their initiative and kindness. ■

I didn't know much about Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind when I graduated, but, later, I realized how well-trained their dogs are. I had guide dogs before (from another organization), but the service from Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind is really great. The dogs are very well-trained. They really care about the dogs and make sure they stay healthy, which they show through annual visits and regular follow up. It's definitely the best place to get a guide dog.

Robert with Noble, Sherbrooke, Quebec

CGDB Events

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, we had no events from March-August 2020.

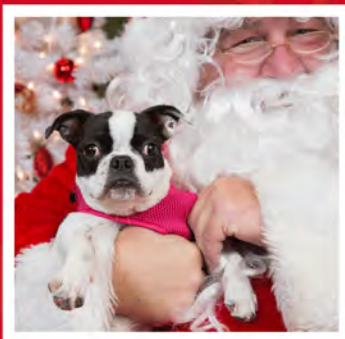
Pet Photos with Santa

Reaching back to December 2019, Pet Food 'n More in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia held their annual fundraising program in support of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, including Pet Photos with Santa. In May 2020, Pet Food 'n More made a contribution of over \$24,000 to Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind! Their support for many years is greatly appreciated. Check their website and shop at any of their seven Pet Food 'n More stores to stay updated on this year's holiday events.

ho! ho! ho!

PET PHOTOS WITH SANTA

pet food
'n more



Remember you can always visit the events page at www.guidedogs.ca to keep updated on our latest events.

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Kids! Rock!

Check out our kids page at www.guidedogs.ca for our colouring sheet and other activities. ■

Children 12 and younger

can participate in our colouring contest. Prizes are awarded every three months.

Congratulations to our latest winners:

Avelyn, Ottawa, Ontario
Elsa, Nepean, Ontario
Gwen, Stittsville, Ontario
Naomi, Nepean, Ontario
Reve, Ottawa, Ontario
Vanessa, Ottawa, Ontario

Puppy Walking and Breeding Program

The following litters were born from
March 1 to August 31, 2020:

Dara (YLB) bred to Kato (BLM)
Maddie II (YLB) bred to Striker (BLM)
Clara (BLB) bred to Everest (BLM)
Praline (CLB) bred to Nero III (GR/BL M)

YLB – yellow Labrador, bitch
BLM – black Labrador, male
BLB – black Labrador, bitch
CLB – chocolate Labrador, bitch
GR/BL M – golden retriever/black Labrador, male

A sincere thank you to puppy walkers whose dogs have completed the Puppy Walking Program and breeding stock boarders whose dogs have been used for breeding from March 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020:



CGDB litter, March 2020

Barbara Annas, Kristie Babiar, Tina Bernier, Danielle Bilodeau-Roy, Kathleen Clancy, Margaret Daub, Brent Diefenbacher, Heather Dionne, Todd Niemi, Carmela Parent, Jessie Thornton, Claire Reed-Cassells, Puneet Mann, Katrin Nicholson, Kim O'Malley, Doris Phillips, Imre Rohonczy, Caren Stokes, Dave Webster, Robert White, Laura Zaine. ■

Obituaries and Guide Dog Memorial Tributes

Submissions may be sent to Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, 4120 Rideau Valley Drive North, PO Box 280, Manotick, ON, K4M 1A3; or by email to info@guidedogs.ca.

Our People...

Joy Ficko

Joy Ficko passed away suddenly on April 28, 2020. Joy lived a wonderful life full of joy, laughter, dogs, flowers and children. She was a stay-at-home mum, and considered this her most important role, almost her exclusive responsibility. In her retired years,

her life revolved around her family, her gardens, and the numerous puppies and dogs she boarded for Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. Her generosity of spirit and kindness is her legacy to us all. Our condolences are offered to Art and family.

Earl Miller

Earl Miller, a long-time client of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, passed away on May 9, 2020 in Mississauga, Ontario. Earl was always ready to entertain with a tale from his childhood, or a story about his love of fast cars and his many sports,

specifically, golf, hockey and fishing. In his earlier years, Earl was an avid golfer. In his later years and while his eyesight may have been diminished, his love of the sport did not. Amazingly, he could advise you about your swing solely based on the sound of the contact made to the golf ball. We offer condolences to Sharon, Earl's wife of 58 years, and his entire family.

Our Dogs...

No dog tributes were submitted for this edition of Side by Side. ■

Guide Dog Founders' Brick Path and Garden

Commemorate the life of a pet or loved one with the purchase of an engraved brick on the Guide Dog Founders' Brick Path at the National Training Centre of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind in Manotick (Ottawa), Ontario. Your brick will be engraved with the inscription of your choice. After engraving takes place, you can walk along our path, see your brick, and enjoy our fragrant garden anytime spring through autumn.

Bricks also make terrific gifts for any occasion, especially when someone's dog or other pet passes away. Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind appreciates your support. Order forms for bricks can be found on our website at www.guidedogs.ca or phone us at (613) 692-7777 to place an order. Bricks are \$75, taxes included.

Order by February 28, 2021 to have your brick engraved in late spring! ■



GiveShop

is a new and innovative way for you contribute to Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind by donating your used items through an online marketplace.

How does it help?

Repurpose gently used items into cash contributions that can make a meaningful difference in your community while also minimizing materials being directed to landfill. You can clean out your personal space or even get a group together to host a virtual garage sale.

Post and sell items, and select Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind as your charity of choice. You receive a charitable tax receipt for the purchase price. Buyers shop using the app, with the purchase proceeds supporting Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Please note that GiveShop is available only in the Ottawa area, but expansion is coming soon! ■



GiveShop

Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind
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CANADIAN GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND



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Winner is responsible for fees, taxes & surcharges
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Blackout days apply
Prize donated by WestJet with 100% of the proceeds directed to Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, Charity No. 10684 6819 RR0001 Raffle #M820424

CANADIAN GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

Client Profile – Bruce Wotherspoon & Stefan

It's a new world for guide dog training, too.

Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind had to change our approach during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bruce Wotherspoon of Cornwall, Ontario graduated with his latest guide dog, Stefan, on June 5, 2020. He's had guide dogs before and is a familiar sight on the city's sidewalks, walking everywhere for his errands. He says, "Cornwall is the type of city that pulls together and pulls for the underdog," and that he's never had any issues while out on the streets with his canine companion.

"I don't take taxis or public transit – I have a guide dog to get around and that's what I use him for. I cannot thank Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind enough for giving me independence."

In March, due to COVID-19, guide dog training stopped in Canada, as it did in many parts of the world. Therefore, Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind figured out how to adapt and continue our mandate, the first step being to figure out how to resume training, as clients could not travel and reside in a group setting at our National Training Centre.

Instead, it was decided the organization, initially, would go to the people, in what is referred to as domiciliary training, with a guide dog and Instructor traveling to a client's own neighbourhood for training.

Bruce, at the time of the shutdown in March 2020, was just a day away from traveling to Manotick to begin training. There was a delay until bylaws and public health enabled training and in the latter part of May and into early June, training took place with a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor training Bruce & Stefan every day in Cornwall.



Things are going very well with what is Bruce's fifth guide dog over the last twenty-five years.

"They've all been excellent companions," Bruce says. "Stefan reminds me of my first guide dog, Civitan, in terms of his sense of humour. People say dogs don't have a sense of humour – oh yes they do. Stefan can be zany, he makes me laugh."

Bruce noted that October 4, 2020 marks twenty-five years of having guide dogs in his life, something that is really special to him.

Bruce was in his early twenties when he was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa, often called RP. It is a group of rare, genetic disorders that involve a breakdown and loss of cells in the retina, which is the light sensitive tissue that lines the back of the eye. Common symptoms include difficulty seeing at night and a loss peripheral vision, eventually resulting in blindness.

After the diagnosis, Bruce continued to play his beloved sports, including football and softball, but only for about another year. All these years later, the fifty-eight year old thinks he's had it pretty good. Bruce is otherwise healthy and in good shape and twenty-five years of walking everywhere with this guide dog has helped.

"I think that if blindness is the worst thing that happens in a lifetime, you've done pretty well," Bruce said, adding that he's "fiercely independent," does his own cooking and laundry, and can't imagine ever giving that up.

Having a guide dog is what's made so much of the goodness in his life possible, he says, and Bruce has nothing but superlatives when talking about the support he's been given over a quarter century from the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, calling us "top-notch, very thorough and very encouraging." ■



Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind

We provide *freedom* to Canadians

Operating solely through donations since 1984. Thank you for your support.

Pre-authorized debits - Arrange for automatic monthly withdrawals from your bank account on the 1st business day of the month. You'll need to complete a PAD agreement - email bookkeeping@guidedogs.ca to request the agreement. A tax receipt will be issued at the end of the year for the total amount donated.

Online donation with the Royal Bank of Canada - This is available only to RBC clients at this time. Select Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind as the Payee and enter donation amount. You must have your Individual Donor ID which can be requested by email at donations@guidedogs.ca by giving your name and address, or by phoning our office at (613) 692-7777 and speaking with our Donations Department.

Cheques/Money Order - Make payable to Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. Cheques and money orders can be mailed to PO Box 280, Manotick, Ontario, K4M 1A3.

Cash - Donate in person at our National Training Centre, 4120 Rideau Valley Drive North, Manotick, Ontario.

Online donation via credit card payment - Visit our website at www.guidedogs.ca. You can donate using Visa, MasterCard, and American Express.

Monthly credit card payment - Phone our office at (613) 692-7777 to set up payment on the 1st or the 15th of each month. We accept Visa, MasterCard, and American Express. A tax receipt will be issued at the end of the year for the annual amount donated.

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Manotick, Ontario K4M 1A3
(613) 692-7777

First name: _____ Surname: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Province: _____ Postal Code: _____

You may also donate online at:
www.guidedogs.ca

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

How one young woman's experience with an assistance dog has given her more freedom and independence

By Monica Hoffman, Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind Assistance Dog Handler
(Permission to print this blog post given by 'Voices and Choices', a disability solutions group.)

Generally speaking, people have heard about guide dogs for the blind, but very few people know there are other types of working dogs. Another common type of service dog out there is the mobility assistance dog, often given to people in wheelchairs. These dogs, like all the other dogs listed above, provide their handlers with unconditional love; but perhaps more importantly, they give their handler freedom.

Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined that the bond between a dog and a handler could go so deep and strong. However, with almost a decade of experience to back me up, I can say that the bond between a service dog and his handler goes deeper than words can ever express.

I am now working with my second service dog. The decision to get her after my first dog retired at the mandated age of eleven was, for me, a no-brainer. The freedom, safety and confidence my previous dog had given me was enough of a draw for me to want to put in the hours of sometimes grueling work to keep a service dog at top performance.

When I used to go out before I got my dog, people would stare at me. My wheelchair was all they'd see. Unless they knew me, they wouldn't really engage. After I got my first service dog, people would pass me in the mall and smile at us, moms and dads would take the opportunity to explain to their child about service dogs – and that they weren't to be petted, and people on the bus would strike up conversations with me about my dog.

Because I'm in a power chair, there are certain practical things I cannot do for myself. After I got my dog, I no longer needed help to pick up things off the floor, as he could do it for me including pony holders, my cell phone and full water bottles. I became independent getting outside as we tied ropes on the doors for my dog to pull open and closed, and in public, he could trigger the automatic buttons for me. If I got stuck somewhere, no longer did I need to struggle to get enough air in my lungs to yell for help; I simply needed to give a command or a hand signal and my dog would start barking.

Having a service dog isn't for everyone. There are many challenges including hard-set rules to follow, training regimens to set and keep, and discipline to give. Service dogs are still dogs. Mine ate a glass cleaning cloth, orange peels, sandwich crusts, and Kleenex. There were



good days and bad days. We learned we had to put lids on all our garbage cans. One of the greatest challenges I have found is depending on others to do the pooper scooping daily, as I can't do this from my wheelchair.

However, despite the hard parts of working with my service dog, I deemed it worthwhile to have a dog around. I hope I always have one, as they're a part of me and give me freedom. ■

Editor's Note: To learn more about Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind's Assistance Dogs Division visit the page on our website at www.guidedogs.ca. Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind has trained and provided guide dogs for the blind nationally since 1984 and mobility assistance dogs in Eastern Ontario since 2010.



Claire Reed-Cassells with Bocelli

Ten years of puppy walking

When Claire-Reed Cassells became good friends with a woman who is blind, she understood how much a guide dog can help. The new friendship and life-long love of dogs led Claire to volunteer for Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. "I just saw how much freedom she has (with a guide dog)", said Claire.

Claire started volunteering soon after retiring in 2009 and recently finished raising her ninth puppy, Winston, in July 2020, surpassing ten years of volunteering.

Many people think about this volunteer opportunity but are hesitant due to having to give up the puppy. Claire is a prime example of someone who has overcome that initial challenge and continues to take new puppies into her home, teaching obedience and socialization skills that are vital to each pup entering formal guide dog training. "Who doesn't love a puppy?", Claire said. It isn't easy giving up the dog after a twelve to eighteen month relationship. Claire said, "The first one was really hard. It's a commitment and, yes, you do get attached and, yes, you do have to give them up."

Claire receives supervision from Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. She walks her pups at least three times a day, including to the mall, using stairs and elevators. They are also usually a big hit at her local coffee shop, with most customers getting to know the pups by name.

Claire is retired, but volunteers don't necessarily have to be. Each volunteer incorporates the puppy into his or her daily lifestyle, taking the dog nearly everywhere. It takes a lot of time and patience. Volunteers are asked to leave the puppy at home as infrequently as possible and only for a few hours when necessary. Otherwise, the puppy accompanies the volunteer everywhere.

The volunteer opportunity is perfect for retirees, stay-at-home parents, part-time workers, shift workers or business owners or employees who can take the dog to work, people who work from home, and college and university students. One adult must be responsible for the dog, but Puppy Walkers have included individuals, couples and families with children.

To learn more visit the volunteers section at www.guidedogs.ca. ■

Christmas Chocolate Fundraiser Ottawa Area Only

for Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind



Order chocolate for the holidays from Purdy's Chocolatier in support of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. Order and pay online, and take advantage of our contactless pick up at our National Training Centre in Manotick, Ontario. Prices are the same as in Purdy's stores, but this way you get to support the training of guide dogs and assistance dogs at Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind.



Here's how:

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Log into group 33353 - Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind.
Place your order by November 25, 2020.
Pick up your order anytime from December 21-24.

Start a workplace campaign or order corporate gifts and we'll deliver to your office. (613) 692-7777 for more info.

Donate your Aeroplan miles to Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind

How do Aeroplan miles help?

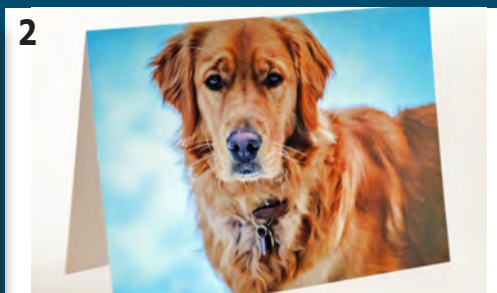
In 2020, a working guide dog had to undergo serious medical treatment at Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. After recovery, we used our donated Aeroplan miles to fly a gentleman, who is blind, from Nova Scotia to Ottawa and back, to reunite with his healthy guide dog. John can now get back to being independent thanks to his guide dog by his side and our generous Aeroplan Beyond Miles donors.



beyondthemiles.aeroplan.com/charity/1320#/

Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind Gift Shop

If you live in the Ottawa area, you may call us and order by phone.
We'll assemble your order and have it ready for curbside pick up.



1. **CGDB toque**, fleece-lined, khaki with black trim

\$20.00 x _____ = \$ _____

2. **Golden retriever with blue sky notelets**
(package of 10 cards with envelopes)

\$12.00 x _____ = \$ _____

3. **Lime green sweatshirt**
Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ XL _____ XXL _____

\$30.00 x _____ = \$ _____

4. **Christmas cards - yellow Lab with Santa hat**
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5. **2021 CGDB Calendar**

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6. **CGDB Face Mask**

Please note that face masks are sold at cost and include free shipping.
It's our way of giving back to our generous supporters.

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Call us and order by phone and we'll assemble your order
and have it ready for you at our National Training Centre.

The Newsletter of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind

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