

SIDE *by* SIDE

Fall/Winter 2022

Volume 37, Number 2



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Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind

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(613) 692-7777 ■ info@guidedogs.ca

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CLIENT PROFILE – SUSAN CROFT



Having lost her sight at the age of 14, due to complications from a childhood cancer that affected her eyes, Susan Croft would receive her first guide dog from Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, while still in high school.

"I first came to CGDB when I was in grade 11. I was starting to plan for university and knew I would feel more confident with a guide dog than I would with a cane," she remembers. After visiting the National Training Centre, in Manotick, Susan recalls really liking the facility and the friendly staff.

The positive experience Susan had at the open house would lead to her receiving her first guide dog, Andy, a labradoodle. Andy would be by her side through her undergraduate studies at Queen's University, in Kingston, and would also accompany Susan on a year abroad in Scotland, as well as throughout law school.

With Andy as companion and conversation starter, Susan soon adjusted to campus life. The big, black muppet of a dog, as she affectionately called Andy, was embraced by the other students, faculty, and members of the University residence building, where they stayed.

Susan said she would often play fetch with Andy in the halls. "It was much easier to meet people, having Andy, because even people who might have been uncomfortable with the disability weren't uncomfortable talking about the dog," she says.

She also remembers how incredible Andy's memory was. According to Susan, he had an impressive understanding of the campus. "I can remember going to one building twice a week, during my first year. Later, in my fourth year, one of my classes got rescheduled into that same building and I just asked him to go and find that class - because I had used the name of that class to define the building - and there we were!"

Today, Susan has been paired with her most recent dog from CGDB, Branston. She describes him as a friendly and charming dog. "He's an enthusiastic go-getter in everything he does, whether that's finding a door or step, chasing a toy, or getting some well-deserved pets," she says. A labradoodle, like Andy, she says Branston is, "a big, shaggy dog who charms everyone he meets."

"I've now received three dogs from CGDB, Andy, Xing, and Branston, and the training has consistently been top notch," says Susan. She highlights the fact that the trainers at CGDB take their time to ensure good fundamentals are learned and that they will go out of their way to tailor solutions for specific situations.

When asked about the impact of having a guide dog since she was young, Susan says, "It was an incredible difference, between having a dog and having a cane. I mean, both are essentially tools to navigate with, but nobody wants to ask you about your cane. Everybody wants to ask you about your dog," she says, recalling her days at school. She concludes that, "from a social perspective, a guide dog is just an incredible asset to have." ■



PUPPY WALKING PROFILE – DEB SMITH



When Deb Smith first joined Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind's Puppy Walking program in 2011, she was working for the City of Toronto in Parks, Forestry and Recreation. She recalls that the pups in her care, at the time, would accompany her to the office every day.

"The first challenge was getting the pups accustomed to the commute: the car ride, the parking garage, and riding the elevator," she says. Later, as they grew more

comfortable at the office, or what Deb liked to refer to as their second home, she was able to introduce more varied experiences like attending meetings, going out for coffee, and navigating the food court at lunch time.

It wouldn't be long before the pups were confident joining her on the Toronto subway or bus trips, and daily car rides to visit municipal swimming pools, parks, and recreational facilities all over the city. "Long meetings were a perfect opportunity for a nice nap - for the dog!" she kids.

Deb's husband Michael, a high school teacher, also welcomed the pups into his workplace. At the school, they had the opportunity to become more comfortable around crowds and with noise, and the pups had a chance to show off their skills. The dogs loved to visit classes and Michael would take time to answer students' questions about the Guide Dog program. Deb notes that over the years, "the students became more accustomed to seeing guide dogs working or training, and that staff, students, and parents have become more aware that they shouldn't distract or touch the dogs."

Since retiring from the City of Toronto, the puppies she helps raise have joined her on many new adventures, too. Deb is active in community theatre productions and whether she's in rehearsal, busy backstage or working in the theatre office, the pups come along - "Set painting is one activity that I've failed to master with a dog underfoot."

Deb recalls that, "attending rehearsals at the theatre was one of Georgie's favourite activities. Duncan, however, slept through every rehearsal he was at unless there was music and singing - then he sat up and listened intently." And what about performances? "An audience clapping always startles the pups the first time," she says, "but the dogs soon learn to ignore it."

In March of this year, Deb and Mike welcomed 12-week-old Winnie to their home. After having an older pup, Deb says they needed to think back to earlier days and puppy-proof their home, again. "It's so important to provide a safe environment and to maintain close supervision - not only for the health and safety of the puppy but also so we don't have to say no all the time. I like to give praise and say, "Yes!" to keep building the puppy's confidence." Deb believes that having happy, social adventures together makes the learning fun. "And the odd Kibble reward is a bonus!" she adds.

When asked if sending a puppy back to CGDB to train is hard, Deb says, for her and Michael, "It's like sending your teenager off to college. You say good-bye and hope they settle in at school, make friends and impress their teachers."

Deb sums up her experience as a Puppy Walker by saying that, "The biggest thrill for me is watching the dogs working, once they've been fully trained by the amazing staff at CGDB. It's a long journey from the clumsy, cuddly puppy we first knew to becoming a focused and skilled working dog. Though I always shed a tear or two saying good-bye to a puppy, seeing them work and knowing they make a real difference in someone's life is the best feeling ever." ■



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CLIENT PROFILE – KRISTEN SPRING



Kristen Spring of Kingston, Ontario graduated with her first guide dog in 1992, and is now with her sixth guide dog from Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, a golden retriever named Terra. Kristen tells us about her experience with Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind over the past thirty years.

"I was working as a dental assistant and on my way to work when a school bus coming off a dirt road onto the main road, I was travelling on, hit my vehicle. I don't really remember the actual accident because I was unconscious. There were many injuries including a head injury. Instantly, I was legally blind.

The mobility instructor that taught me how to use my White Cane suggested I might find a guide dog helpful. I researched organizations, and Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind was the only guide dog school I applied to. It seemed as if they really wanted to find a dog that would genuinely help me, and they would always be there to help if needed.

I have loved every one of my guide dogs and they have all been unique and changed my life for the better in so many ways. The training I received for each of my dogs has been very helpful and since each dog is different, I never feel as if it is a repeat of the training. The training course allowed me to bond with and get to know my dogs in every way and for them to get to know and bond with me. There is always some free time when we can groom and play with our dogs.

Each client gets a lot of individual time with the trainers to learn specific things that may only pertain to our own lives, ask questions, and gain the confidence we need to be safe guide dog users



as well as bond with our dogs. We go to different locations, so we understand the differences of working our dogs in different locations and situations such as a country road or a city sidewalk with light crossings, or an escalator or elevator inside and around a shopping mall. We are taught how and where we might free run our dogs, an important fun activity for a working dog.

After we have finished our training course, a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor visits our home area and works with us there on the usual routes we primarily use. The school is always a phone call away if we need help in the future and once a year an instructor will come for a visit to make sure all is going well. We are expected to make sure vaccines and the health, including the weight, of our dog is kept under control and up to date. CGDB always make certain each dog is being well cared for by its user.

I have been fortunate in being able to keep my retired dogs, but I also know that CGDB will always find the perfect home for a retired dog when it is needed. This shows how important every dog is at Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind.

From the very first guide dog I trained with to the wonderful guide dog I am using now, I have always come home from training feeling confident knowing that my dog and I were a team. I could never EVER imagine going anywhere else to train with a guide dog. Thank you, Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind! The dogs are all wonderful just as every one of the staff in every way. I know that I am safe every day when I use my guide dog and I know that it is because every part of the training I have always received is a fantastic gift provided so I will be safe and as independent as I can be." ■

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- 576 Ritsn Road South, Unit 7, Oshawa
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- 241 High Street, London
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- 383 Elgin St. N, Unit 14, Cambridge
- 230 Sandalwood Pkwy, Unit 4, Brampton
- 792 Kennedy Road, Scarborough
- 1151 Dundas Street W, Unit K1, Mississauga
- 700 Balmoral Dr, Brampton
- 8 Midtown Drive, Unit 1, Oshawa
- 891 Campbell Ave, Windsor
- 221 Ferndale Dr. S., Barrie
- 343 Wellington Road, London
- 574 James Street, Unit 108, Hamilton
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Tickets are \$20 and are available online by visiting our website; by phoning (613) 692-7777; or during regular business hours at the Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind's National Training Centre, 4120 Rideau Valley Dr N, Manotick, Ontario. No entry limit per person. Only 705 tickets will be sold.

Purchase your tickets by December 29, 2022, at 12 pm to be eligible for the draw on December 30, 2022, at 10 am.

All bookings and travel must be completed by December 29, 2023. Winner is responsible for fees, taxes & surcharges. Valid for any domestic/international destination that WestJet flies to, at the time of booking. Blackout days apply. Visit guidedogs.ca for full contest details.

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Raffle open to Ontario residents 18 years or older, only. Raffle#M83644. ■

PUPPY WALKING AND BREEDING PROGRAM

The following litters were born from March 1, 2022 to August 31, 2022:

Jeanne (BLB) bred to Striker (BLM)
Dottie (YLB) bred to Bert (YLM)

YLB – yellow Labrador, bitch YLM – yellow Labrador, male
BLB – black Labrador, bitch BLM – 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, 2022 to August 31, 2022:

Sarah Armstrong, Diane Carkner, Matthew Cox, Michel Dallaire, Brenda Deugo, Lindsay Fewtrell, Kelly Ford, Bruce Gernon, Gordon Giffin, Lydia Hamilton, Patricia Jenkins, Diane Lyon, Kim Poaps, Lisa Schmidt, Heather Sheldrick, Sylvia Sirett, Penny Woolsey, Tracey Wright. ■



OBITUARIES AND GUIDE DOG MEMORIAL TRIBUTES

Our People...

Dr. Clifford Amundson passed away on March 17, 2022, at the age of 94. Predeceased by his wife, Peggy, "Dr. Cliff" spent three decades volunteering for Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. Cliff had a medical practice in Saskatchewan for 28 years before moving to Ottawa in 1979, where he had accepted the position of Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Medical Protective Association. Cliff and Peggy whelped over twenty litters of puppies in their home for CGDB. Cliff also reviewed medical files for guide dog applicants and helped with the donation dog program, even after moving to Wasaga Beach in 2009. We will sorely miss Cliff, a "legendary" volunteer for CGDB.

Kwesi Baffoe passed away on March 24, 2022, at the age of 79. Kwesi had two guide dogs from CGDB: Fran from 1994-2003 and Nita from 2003-2010. After practicing as dentistry for just over two decades, Kwesi returned to his first passion, studying, and entered law school at the University of Manitoba. In 2010, after years of diligence and dedication, Kwesi graduated with his Ph.D. in Law from the University of Ottawa. Kwesi personified the ideal that anything is possible when you put your mind (and heart) to it. We offer condolences to Kwesi's family.

Wendy Carroll passed away in April 2022 after many health battles. Wendy was a familiar face to those who attended our bake sale for many years. She also volunteered at other events and spent some time driving clients to training destinations. Always smiling and kind, we will greatly miss Wendy and her positive energy and spirit. We offer condolences to Richard.

Irene Stepniak passed away on April 19, 2022, at the age of 79. She was always available to lend a helping hand to those in need. Irene began her career with Bell Canada as a teenager, retiring as a manager after over 30 years of service. She continued her friendships with the Bell Pioneers over the years, and it was through her connections with Bell Pioneers that she started volunteering with Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind, looking after donation dogs in the area of Chatham, Ontario. Irene was committed to continuing her volunteer work even through her major health battles, never wanting to stop helping others. We offer condolences to Henry and family.

Wayne Corrigan passed away on May 1, 2022, at the age of 74. Wayne was a volunteer with a familiar face to many. He often controlled parking at CGDB for on-site functions and was a regular at the Dollars for Dogs walk as route marshal, with his wife Mary Lou. Wayne looked after our donation dogs in Kemptville, Ontario. Wayne served proudly for 32 years in the Canadian Forces, Canadian Foot Guards and as a proud member of Scouts Canada for 40 years. We were proud to have him as a volunteer and offer our condolences to "Lou".

Our Dogs...

Niobe was the fourth guide dog for Hugh Saunderson of Ottawa, Ontario. She was the best dog ever and we miss her so much. Niobe passed away in February 2022 at the age of ten. She was a loving and loyal guide dog, and everybody loved her.

Submitted by Hugh & Val Saunderson

Sofie, retired guide dog, passed away just days before her 12th birthday in May 2022. Sofie brought much joy and freedom to me and lots of love and playtime with our family. We said our goodbyes to Sofie as she had not been well. My family loved her till the end.

Submitted by Sharon Brant

Mia was a beautiful Lab who enabled me to do a lot of walking, about a mile a day, and she had one heck of a personality. I trained with and received Mia, my guide dog, in June 2017, but she unfortunately passed away in June 2022. She became 'the love of my life' and will always hold a special place in my heart.

Submitted by Rick Johnson

Tosca II. You came to us full of life, love and energy. You gave me confidence and trust on our walks. You fit into our family so perfectly, you left an impact on everyone you met. You're missed at home.

Submitted by the Hodgins Family ■

Only submitted tributes are published. Please limit to 25 words.

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.

CANADIAN GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND EVENTS

Past Events

CGDB Virtual Trivia - March 11

On Friday, March 11th we once again hosted an online virtual trivia. The field was tough, and the top scores went back-and-forth a few times, but ultimately, we found a winner. Congratulations to our top 3 winners: Kevin, Lara and Stephanie! We all had a great time playing for a good cause, and we hope to see you at the next trivia showdown! ■

Inspirations Art Show & Sale - Manotick Art Association – April 22-24

CGDB was honoured to be chosen as the charity of choice for the Manotick Art Association's 2022 Inspirations Art Show & Sale, held in April at the Manotick Curling Club. The event featured some wonderful pieces from local artists and live music. Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind thanks the MAA for collecting donations on our behalf, and we hope to see you at next year's show! ■

International Guide Dog Day at Morning Owl Manotick



Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind was welcomed by the staff and customers of the Morning Owl coffee shop on Manotick Main Street on April 27th for International Guide Dog Day. Members of our staff and our guide-dogs-in-training spent the day chatting with customers about CGDB's programs over delicious in-house brewed coffees – but the dogs were clearly the star of the show! Each coffee served came with a CGDB coffee sleeve and Morning Owl collected customer donations on our behalf. Thank you to Morning Owl, their staff, and the very generous people of Manotick. ■

38th Annual Dollar\$ For Dog\$ Fundraising Walk



The 38th annual Dollar\$ for Dog\$ walk at Andrew Haydon Park marked a return to our customary in-person event. On the morning of May 29th, staff, volunteers, and our amazing fundraisers were greeted by beautiful late-spring weather and CGDB was pleased

to welcome back many walkers from years past - and some new faces as well!

Once again, thanks to the efforts of our generous fundraisers, this year's walk was a great success. CGDB would like to thank this year's top fundraisers and everyone who attended the main walk and those who joined us at home, in their own neighbourhoods. ■

Westboro Real Canadian Superstore



It was our great pleasure to be invited by Justin and the Loss Prevention team at the Westboro Real Canadian Superstore to visit and meet members of the public on May 28th. We spent the day interacting and speaking with shoppers, while collecting funds for CGDB. The Superstore team were very welcoming, and we had a great time speaking to customers about how CGDB helps Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast! We are grateful to the store staff and for the very generous donations from the public. ■

Chances R Dining in the Dark



Chances R Restaurant, Ottawa held their 12th Annual Dining in the Dark experience this year. The event is always sold out and the diners have the experience of eating their meal under blind-fold –also not knowing what the meal is! CGDB is so grateful for this partnership, and it is one of the highlights in our calendar each year. We thank everyone involved especially the owners and staff for their time and hospitality. This is truly a unique experience and if you have not attended you should plan on joining us in 2023. To date this event has raised over \$45,000 for CGDB. ■

Manotick Community Garage Sale – June 11

The Manotick Village & Community Association, invited Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind to participate in their annual Community Garage Sale. We were blessed with a beautiful day, and many a great deal was had! We had an excellent time mingling with

garage sale patrons on the grounds of the Manotick Community Church and thank their members for assisting us in setting up. Proceeds from our sales table and the donations of community members were much appreciated. ■

CGDB Welcomes OC ParaTranspo – June 30

On June 30th, CGDB welcomed staff members from OC ParaTranspo and members of the media to our National Training Centre for a day of ParaTranspo training for our mobility assistance dogs. Many of our clients may wish to use ParaTranspo's by-appointment service and it is important that our dogs are trained and accustomed to the vehicles used; to the noises, the movement, the lifts, and all that comes with riding public transport. CGDB thanks OC Transpo for their assistance and continued support of our training programs. ■

CGDB at the North Gower Farmer's Market – July 23

We were happy to accept the invitation of the North Gower Farmer's Market to set up a stall at the market on July 23, and participate in a great local tradition, since 1994. There were hand-crafted goods, local produce, and delicious local fare – and our guide-dogs-in-training were a huge hit with market goers! Thank you to the organizers and the local shoppers who stopped by to say hello. ■

Upcoming Events

Paint The Town – Oct 22 & 23

The non-profit group Artists of Stonebridge, a collective of talented local artists, will be hosting their 12th annual Paint The Town Art Show & Sale in October. The group formed in 2010 and is comprised of local residents from the Barrhaven community, who share a passion for visual arts and giving back. CGDB has been selected as the charity of choice for the Artists of Stonebridge's Paint The Town, again this year, to be held at the Cedar Hill Golf & Country Club, in Nepean, on October 22nd & 23rd. Donations will be collected at the event for Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. The Show runs from 10 AM to 4 PM, and parking & admission are free. ■

Howl-O-Ween Dance & Fundraiser – Oct 29

The first annual Howl-O-Ween Dance & Fundraiser to benefit Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind will be held Saturday, October 29th at the lounge in the Smiths Falls Curling Club. The inaugural event will bemuse ghost and ghouls alike with music, dancing, games, and a horrific costume contest – with cash prizes!

Tickets for the adults only (19+) Howl-O-Ween Dance & Fundraiser are \$20/person and are available for purchase at Special Greetings (8 Russell St East, Smiths Falls – cash only), by calling 613-692-7777 or by emailing events@guidedogs.ca. ■

Thank you! to the following businesses that have donated goods or services to CGDB:

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Holiday Gift-wrapping Stations – Bayshore & Place D'Orleans Shopping Centres - December



This December, CGDB will be spreading holiday cheer at gift-wrapping stations this December at both Bayshore and Place d'Orleans Shopping Centres. We are looking for volunteers to staff the booths, so if you're a busy little elf or you know someone who may wish to be, please reach out to us at events@guidedogs.ca for more details! ■

Purdy's Holiday Chocolate Fundraiser

Once again, CGDB has partnered with Purdy's Chocolatier to spread some holiday cheer! Treat your family, your friends or even yourself to some delectable sweets from Purdy's and 25% of your purchase will go directly to Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind. ■

Holiday Wine Fundraiser

Pick up some truly fantastic Henry of Pelham Estates wine support CGDB at the same time! Order before December 9th for pickup at CGDB in Manotick, beginning December 19th. Details and this year's promo code will be available at guidedogs.ca, so check back for more details after October 17th. ■

WestJet Raffle

The December 29th deadline to purchase your tickets for the WestJet Gift of Flight Raffle is fast approaching! This is your chance to win round-trip airfare-for-two to any destination that WestJet regularly flies. Purchase your tickets online or give us a call at 613-692-7777. Full contest details available on our website at guidedogs.ca. ■

The Newsletter of Canadian Guide Dogs for the Blind

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