

September 2024



September is Guide Dog month

Did you know that September is National Guide Dog Month? During this special month, we celebrate the incredible four-legged heroes who assist the blind and visually impaired. These dogs play a crucial role in helping their handlers navigate obstacles and everyday routes, providing independence, safety, and companionship. With over 131 active Canine Vision teams across Canada, we dedicate this newsletter to honour all Canine Vision Dog Guides teams for their accomplishments.

Just look at everything Jennifer has accomplished with the help of her Canine Vision dogs. Currently she is matched with Braden.

[Learn more!](#)



Graduate Corner

Grayson & Lapis – Back To School

For years, Grayson struggled with basic tasks like staying in his room at night or going for a simple walk. Diagnosed with autism, even attending school seemed like an overwhelming challenge. His parents constantly worried about what the future might hold for Grayson without the ability to learn and engage.

But everything changed when Lapis arrived.

The most remarkable change has been in school. With Lapis providing comfort and companionship, Grayson's anxiety has decreased, allowing him to stay in class longer. His vocabulary has grown, and he's developed a passion for learning. Grayson now takes pride in his work and enjoys discovering new things.



Through Lapis, Grayson has found confidence, independence, and joy that his family once feared would never be possible.

Salome with Canine Vision Dog Guide, Oliver

As the school year begins, it's not just students who are heading back to class—Oliver, a remarkable Canine Vision Dog Guide, will eventually be starting his own journey alongside a dedicated Registered Early Childhood Educator, Salome.

"Before Oliver came into the picture, navigating the classroom and school environment was filled with challenges," explains Salome. Struggling with tasks as simple as using a Chromebook or reading a whiteboard, this teacher often found herself masking her visual impairment, leading to feelings of anxiety and isolation.

But with Oliver by her side, everything changed. *"Oliver has turned my life around, making it richer and more connected."* His presence speaks volumes without a word—making it clear that his handler is visually impaired, which eases the awkwardness of explaining her situation to others.

Unfortunately, not every part of life has become easier. Accessibility issues, particularly with services like Uber, continue to be a significant hurdle. Despite Uber's claims of being

accessible, Salome has faced repeated discrimination, with drivers canceling rides upon learning that she has a Dog Guide. This experience has been disheartening and frustrating, making it clear that there is still much work to be done in ensuring that those with disabilities are treated fairly and with respect.

"I am hopeful that his presence will not only assist me but also serve as a valuable lesson to my students. Oliver will help them understand that disabilities do not define a person's abilities or potential. He's more than just a Dog Guide—he's a symbol of resilience, education, and the importance of inclusivity."



Surveys

We want to share details about some ongoing surveys related to Dog Guide users. Your participation will help shape the updates to make public spaces more inclusive and accessible for everyone.

Prince Edward Island (PEI) Survey

This survey is looking for PEI residents but also those who may have visited in the past or plan to visit in the future. This survey has been created to solicit more feedback from Dog Guide handlers.

[PEI Survey](#)

ADI and IGDF Joint Survey on Access Refusal

Data is key when advocating for better access and improving accessibility for graduate teams - which is why Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) are carrying out a joint survey of all graduates on their experiences of access refusals.

Every single experience - good or bad - will help plan strategic initiatives for greater awareness and advocacy for guide and assistance dog teams around the world. The survey will remain open until October 15, 2024.

[ADI & IGDF Survey](#)

LFCDG Happenings

Upcoming Graduation

Join us on September 19, at 7 PM (EDT) to honor our graduates. We are so proud of the teams graduating and all their hard work and accomplishments.

This graduation will premiere on our [YouTube](#) channel and will be available for viewing afterward in case you are unable to watch it live.



Canine Vision Program Waitlist Open

We are excited to share that the Canine Vision program will be opening its waitlist on September 16th at 9 am (EST) until September 30th at 9am (EST). Please take the time to review the updated [Discovery Package](#) document before you submit an Expression of Interest. Currently, we have 15 spaces available on our waitlist. If we receive more expressions of interest than available spots on the waitlist, we will randomly select a limited number and process those [expressions of interest](#) only. Those who are not selected will need to wait for the next time the waitlist reopens to reapply. Applicants interested in receiving a Canine Vision Dog Guide, either a Labrador Retriever or Golden Retriever, will be able to submit an Expression of Interest. If you're unable to complete the Expression of Interest online, please contact our client services team for support at client-services@dogguides.com.

Please note that waitlists are currently closed for our other programs. We will, however, continue to accept re-applications from our successor clients who have previously had a Dog Guide from us.

Upcoming Events

A huge shout out to our incredible community partners, fosters, and volunteers! Thanks to your support, we've had a fantastic summer full of successful events.

Event Highlights:

- Sparky's Dog Days of Summer raised an impressive \$5,735! Your contributions are greatly appreciated.
- Our Gift Shop is now open every Wednesday at 152 Wilson Street from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM. Check out new items and deals, and support our Dog Guides Merch. Plus, stay tuned for the launch of our new online Dog Guide Gift Shop!

We're also thrilled to introduce our new team members:

- Anna Harris, our new National Event Coordinator, who will be supporting the Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides.
- Sara Bawar, our new Event Coordinator, handling day-to-day inquiries and overseeing third-party and community events.

Donor Recognition

The Difference Campaign: Foster to Fundraiser

Nancy Chiasson does it all. From fostering future Dog Guides to acting as Treasurer for the LFCDG Board, we can't thank Nancy enough for the time and support she has committed to empowering Canadians living with disabilities.

One of Nancy's most important (and adorable) roles is taking care of future Dog Guides before they begin their training programs. Nancy is one of many fosters who give LFCDG puppies a loving home while they learn obedience skills and socialization. Nancy is a valued foster who has recently taken in her 10th puppy for LFCDG, a handsome black lab named Ranger. After meeting the confident and polite pup even once, it is clear Nancy strives to give her foster puppies the best start possible:



"When I look back on my pups and when I think of how the little, tiny pup I started with is now changing someone's world, I am inspired to keep going and raise even more pups. I am part of changing the world one puppy at a time and there is nothing I have ever done that is so rewarding and enjoyable."

Nancy's time with LFCDG means she knows firsthand the restrictions faced in the current facility. The current building doesn't offer the necessary space for all 7 Dog Guide training programs and lacks updated accessibility and comfort features for clients. Nancy knows how important a new national training school is for everyone involved with LFCDG, including LFCDG foster families and puppies:

"The new school represents an exciting future for Dog Guides. A future where more people can be helped, where more dogs can fulfil the Dog Guide dream. As a foster family I also love that the new building is being built with the well-being of the dogs in mind... The inclusion of better spaces for the puppy program, dogs in training, and an improved vet clinic will also impact the day to day lives of puppy raisers in positive ways."

That is why Nancy has decided to take LFCDG's future into her own hands by personally donating \$10,000 to The Difference campaign. Not only is she helping Canadians for years to come, but her legacy as a foster and wonderful friend to LFCDG will be commemorated on the new training school's donor wall.

"It is not very often that you get the opportunity to be part of something that can have so much power to change people's lives in such a tangible way, but supporting The Difference is one of those. Supporting The Difference is more than supporting the construction of a new building, it is supporting the many people across Canada who currently have Dog Guides, those waiting for Dog Guides and those who may in the future need a Dog Guide."

If you would like to join foster Nancy in changing lives for years to come, please visit The Difference campaign website. For more information, you can also reach out to thedifference@dogguides.com or call 1(800) 768-3030 or (905) 842-2891 ext. 218.

LFCDG has partnered with Will Power and So Can You

LFCDG has partnered with Will Power, a free online resource for Canadians. Adding a charitable gift to your Will is easier than you think. You'd be surprised by how much of an impact you can have by leaving a charitable gift in your Will, while still supporting those you love.

Try Will Power's legacy calculator to see how much of an impact a gift in your will to LFCDG can have: willpower.ca/legacy-calculator

Creating a gift in your will is a special way to have a lasting impact and make a difference in the lives of many people with disabilities in the years to come.



Rexall Care Network – Making a Positive Impact

At Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, we train incredible Dog Guides to empower Canadians living with disabilities to gain greater independence, confidence, and safety. It takes a village to raise, train, and place these remarkable Dog Guides, and we are so grateful that the Rexall Care Network is a part of ours.

With their incredible support and generosity, the Rexall Care Network has provided two full sponsorships for not one but TWO future Dog Guide puppies, Rex and Luna! They even held a fun employee naming contest to choose Rex and Luna's adorable names! Rex and Luna were stars of the show when we recently participated in the Rexall Care Network's Golf Tournament, meeting many of the supportive Rexall employees.

Thank you, Rexall Care Network, your commitment means that two Canadians living with medical or physical disabilities will soon gain the independence, confidence, and safety that only a Dog Guide can provide.

Want to learn more about how your company change a life? Please contact our Director of Resource Development, Marilyn DeFazio, at mdefazio@dogguides.com



Volunteer Corner

Turner Construction Foster Family to Future Dog Guide Turner

Turner Construction, our partner in building our new national Dog Guide training facility, are also fostering Turner. She is only a few months old but is very curious and interacts with everyone.

Turner loves playing on site, with employees taking turns caring for her. She is being exposed to the sights, sounds, and smells at the construction site, which will prepare her for what she may encounter as a working dog. They are helping her to become a confident and fearless Dog Guide for somebody with a disability.

Turner has quickly become a beloved member of our team, and they are committed to giving her the best care and support to prepare her for Dog Guides University. Thank you, Turner Construction, for everything that you are doing!

[Watch Video](#) on Turner Constructions's LinkedIn page!

Litter Updates

We are pleased to announce the arrival of 7 new LFCDG puppies. Welcome to the Dog Guide world little ones!

- P Litter: Link and Freddy – 7 puppies born July 24th

These little puppies will soon be looking for foster homes, would you be interested in helping us raise them? For the first year of their lives, you can take them into your home, care for them, socialize them, and teach them good manners. You will be preparing them for their careers as Dog Guides.

If you are interested, and live no more than 45 minutes away from our Oakville or Guelph facilities, please apply online at www.dogguides.com

