

January 2025



Darwin: Bringing Calm to Nova Scotia

Darwin, a two-year-old golden lab/retriever mix, is Nova Scotia's first Facility Support Dog, and we are incredibly proud of the difference he is making. Since joining Leaside Society Transition House in June 2024, Darwin has been a source of comfort and positivity, supporting both clients and staff.

Trained and placed by our team at Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, Darwin plays a vital role in courtrooms, police interviews, and daily shelter interactions, helping victims of trauma feel calm, supported, and understood.

With his dedicated handlers, Kelsee Burke and Julia Smythe, Darwin is helping to enhance the support Leaside provides to its community, bringing a unique blend of professionalism, compassion, and comfort.

We are proud to see Darwin making such a meaningful impact in his community.

Want to learn more about [Darwin's journey](#) and the difference he's making?



Lucy and Lorna: A Journey of Bond and Service

In her heartfelt poem *Lucy and Lorna*, retired nurse and midwife Edwina Smith of Canberra, Australia, beautifully captures the journey of a Dog Guide—from playful puppy to dedicated partner. Through vivid imagery, Edwina illustrates Lucy's transformation from early training to her eventual partnership with Lorna, showcasing the profound bond they share and the vital role of Dog Guides. Edwina, who has a passion for writing poems about animals, captures the essence of this special relationship and the journey toward independence and companionship. [Read the Poem](#) about this touching story of dedication and teamwork.

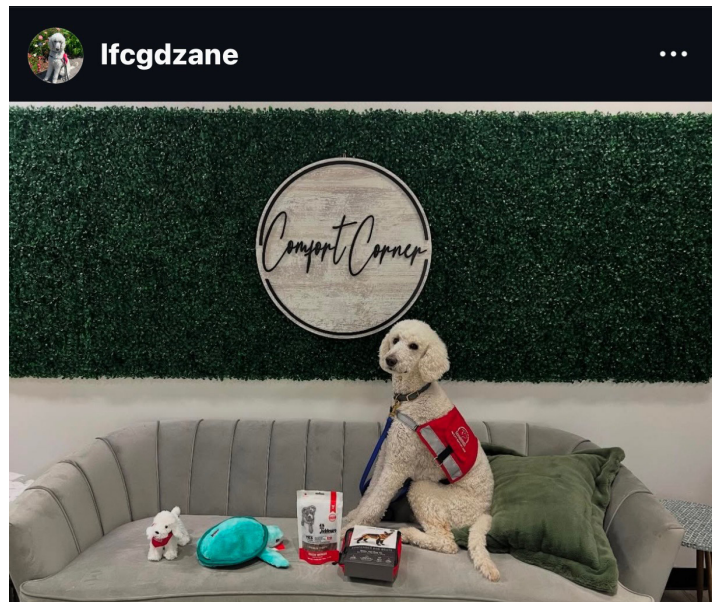
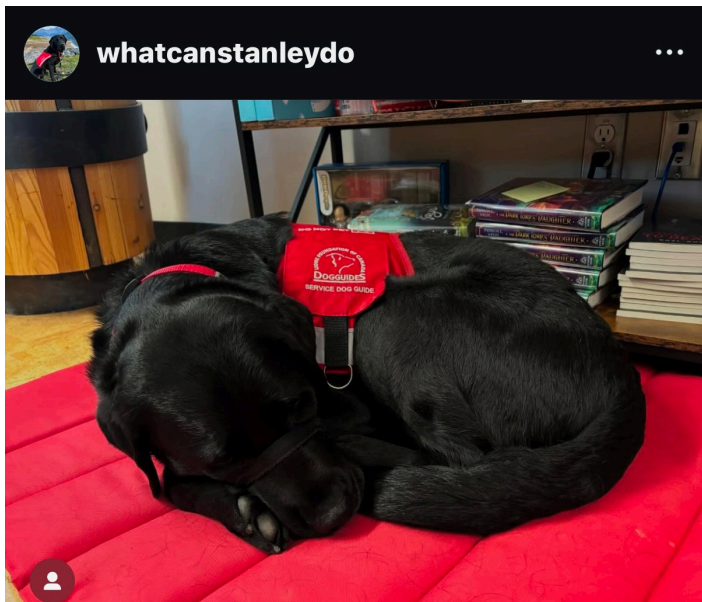
Graduate Corner

On January 28th, LFCDG proudly celebrated another in-person graduation! We are thrilled to congratulate the teams who completed our Service, Diabetes Alert, and Facility Support programs. It's inspiring to see these partnerships embark on their new journeys together, and we can't wait to witness the positive impact they will make.

Check out our [YouTube page](#) to watch past graduations and stay tuned for this month's grad ceremony upload!



Share Your Dog Guides in Action!



If you would like to be featured, share your photos or tag us on social media! Follow us on our social media accounts:



@lfcdogguides



@lfcdogguides



@Lions Foundation of
Canada Dog Guides



@dogguidescan

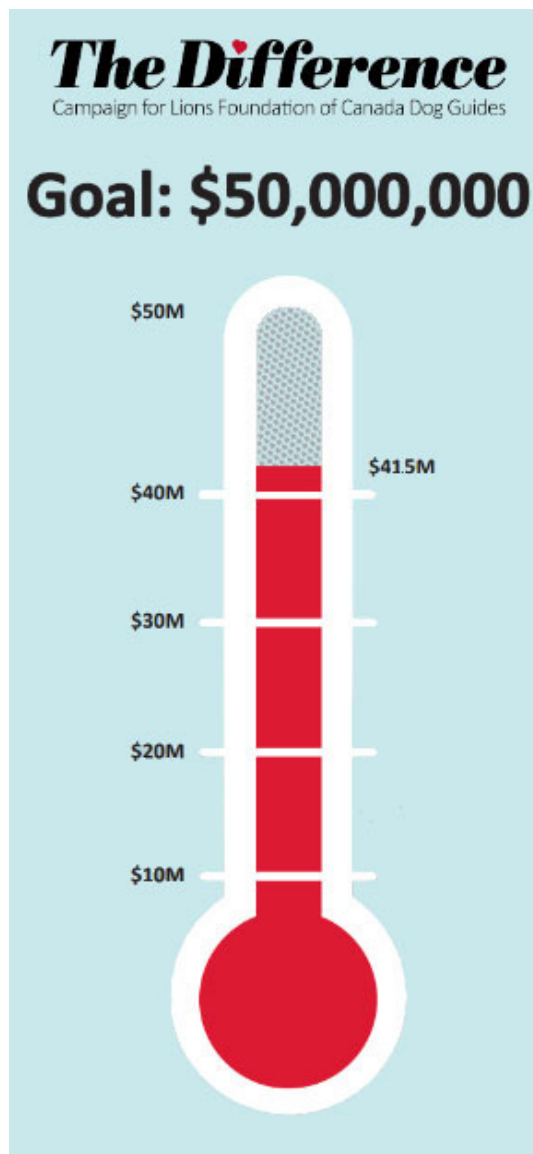
LFCDG Happenings

The Difference Campaign

The start of 2025 brings LFCDG one year closer to opening the doors of its new national training school! The Difference campaign has currently secured a total of \$41.5 million towards the \$50 million goal. There is still lots of work to be done and help needed to make the new school a reality, but LFCDG is excited for the progress that 2025 will bring.

With the cold weather, icy conditions, and snowy days upon us, it becomes even more exciting to think about how the increased accessibility and comfort features of the new school will benefit all guests. The underground parking lot is one of the new features many clients and visitors will enjoy, especially in the winter. The underground location offers protection from the elements with indoor access to staircases and elevators. Increased parking availability provides necessary space for clients, volunteers, foster families, and staff to access the school. Plus, the heated ramp into the parking lot means there will never be any ice or snow to contend with! With a naming opportunity at \$1.5 million, this is a wonderful opportunity for someone to leave their legacy by naming this vital and high-traffic space in the new training school.

To be a part of The Difference Campaign and the future of Dog Guides, please visit The Difference campaign website, or email thedifference@dogguides.com or call (905) 842-2891 or 1 (800) 768-3030, ext. 218.



Career Change Dogs looking for Homes

Interested in giving a Dog Guide a new home?

Not every puppy is destined for a career as a Dog Guide—some simply aren't the right fit for the demands of the role. These amazing dogs, with their loving personalities, are now searching for forever homes.

Please visit our [Career Change](#) section on Dog Guides' website to learn more about these wonderful dogs.

Dog Guides Program Update

Our Diabetes Alert, Seizure Response, and Facility Support programs remain open for applications! If you're interested, visit our website to explore the discovery package for each program, which includes qualification criteria.

Diabetes Alert Dog Guides are trained to assist Canadians (16 years or older) diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes with hypoglycemic unawareness by providing specific tasks and advanced scent work. These Dog Guides are trained to detect sudden drops in their handler's blood sugar and alert them.



Seizure Response Dog Guides are trained to assist Canadians (16 years or older) diagnosed with intractable epilepsy through specific tasks. These Dog Guides are expected to maintain the highest level of behavioural obedience and help their clients manage their epilepsy.



Facility Support dogs assist Canadian professional agencies working with vulnerable people who have experienced trauma which could be a result of criminal behavior. These dogs are specifically trained to provide a non-judgmental, attuned presence and calming influence to reassure a person experiencing a stressful situation.

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

Empowering Bright Futures. Unlocking Countless Possibilities



Bright Futures. Countless Possibilities.

- The Pet Valu Family of Stores -



The 2025 Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides is back, launching a movement to create brighter futures for Canadians living with disabilities.

Save the Date: Sunday, May 25th, 2025

In celebration of our 40th anniversary, we're aiming to raise \$1.6 million to help raise, train, and match life-changing Dog Guides—at no cost to those in need—thanks to your incredible support.

Here's Where You Come In:

Every donation to the Walk makes a direct impact. Whether you walk, donate, or spread the word, your support helps provide life-changing Dog Guides and unlocks endless possibilities.

Ready to make a difference?

Register today at [Walk For Dog Guides](https://www.dogguides.com) and find a Walk near you.

Check out [Kelly & Co YouTube's show](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...) promoting the Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides!



Contact us • www.dogguides.com



Early Registration Deadline for Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides Approaching!

The deadline for early bird registration for the Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides is fast approaching! By signing up before February 5th, you're not only securing your spot in this impactful event, but you're also helping to support Canadians living with disabilities.

Plus, when you register early, you'll be automatically entered to win an Apple iPad Pro 11" with Ultra Retina XDR Display, M4 Chip, and 256GB storage!

How to Enter the Giveaway:

- Register for the Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides by February 5th.
- Make a minimum donation of \$20 to be entered.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to make a difference and win big!

pet valu WALK FOR DOG GUIDES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Kickstart 2025 With an Early Bird Registration

Chance to win

The graphic is decorated with colorful fireworks and confetti. On the left, a woman in a purple shirt sits in a wheelchair next to a white dog wearing a red harness. The dog has a small red tag on its collar. The iPad Pro is shown in the center-right, with a blue arrow pointing to it from the text 'Chance to win'.

Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides Community Champions' Program

We need your help to find inspiring individuals who can spread the word about the 2025 Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides!

Do you know someone who:

- Goes above and beyond to make a difference?
- Is passionate about giving back?
- Is a local celebrity, influencer, or community leader?

We're looking for people who embody the values of the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides to help raise awareness. This could be a politician, firefighter, police officer, journalist, teacher, or another community leader.

If selected, you'll receive an exclusive Walk for Dog Guides T-shirt—and a chance to share your selfie with us! Plus, enjoy a Dog Guides Community Champion swag bag, filled with surprises you won't want to miss!

Do you know someone who fits the bill? Nominate them today.



Gift Shop Updates

The Gift Shop is now open on Wednesdays and Fridays, with exciting new colors and offers available. Visit our [website](#) to see the ever-changing updates.

Mark Your Calendars! Our 2025 Spring Open House is Blooming Soon!

Spring is just around the corner and so is one of our most anticipated events of the year! Save the date for Saturday, April 5th, 2025, because you won't want to miss this exciting day.

We're keeping all the details under wraps for now, but you can expect a day full of fun, inspiration, and surprises that will leave you feeling like spring has officially sprung.

Stay tuned for more announcements, we promise it'll be worth the wait!

See you there!

Help Shape Ontario's Accessibility Standards

Ontario is reviewing its customer service accessibility standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). These standards apply to businesses and organizations that serve the public, ensuring services are more accessible to people with disabilities.

One key recommendation focuses on the use of service animals. Since AODA is Ontario-specific, these updates will directly impact accessibility across the province.

Ontarians have until February 6th to share feedback via email or an online survey. Don't miss this chance to have your voice heard!

Learn more: Consultation: [Improving accessible customer service standards | ontario.ca](#)

Volunteer Corner

Join Us in Making a Difference: Volunteer with Dog Guides

We're looking for dedicated volunteers in a variety of areas to make a meaningful impact at Dog Guides. Whether it's with our Toronto Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides Committee, Ride for Dog Guides Committee, Diabetes Alert Dog Guides Transitional Home Program, or as a Foster, Sitter, or Day School volunteer, there are many ways you can get involved.

Learn more about these incredible volunteer opportunities below:

Toronto Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides Committee

Join our committee to help ensure the success of the Toronto Pet Valu Walk. Committee members will assist with various tasks before, during, and after the event to create a memorable experience for all.

- Hours: 20-80 annually
- Meetings: Monthly (virtually)
- Commitment: February 2025 - June 2025
- Key Dates:
 - National & Oakville Walk (Celebrating 40 Years) - May 25, 2025
 - Toronto Walk (Celebrating 40 Years) - May 23, 2025



Ride for Dog Guides Committee

Help ensure the success of the Oakville Ride for Dog Guides. Committee members will assist with event tasks and activities.



- Hours: 20-30 annually
- Commitment: April - June
- Event Date: September 27, 2025
- Desired Experience: Legal, Finance, Sponsorship, Hospitality, Fundraising, Technology, Event Management, Brand Activation

To get involved or learn more, please contact Evelyn Marshall at emarshall@dogguides.com or visit <https://www.dogguides.com/how-to-help/volunteer/>

We look forward to your support!

Diabetes Alert Dog Guides Transitional Home Program

Do you have Type 1 Diabetes? We're looking for volunteers to participate in our Diabetes Alert Dog Guides (DADs) Transitional Home Program!

By volunteering, you'll host one of our trained DADs for 7-14 days, providing them with a real-life environment to refine their skills in detecting diabetic lows. It's a wonderful opportunity to make a significant impact in the lives of those with diabetes while helping to train these incredible dogs.

What's involved?

- You must have Type 1 Diabetes and be 18+
- Provide care, training, and feedback on the dog's progress
- Commit to a minimum of 1 week
- No other dogs in the home (other pets are fine)
- Live within 1 hour of the Dog Guides' Oakville facility

This is your chance to make a meaningful difference and be part of a life-changing program.

To learn more or sign up, email us at volunteer@dogguides.com, or visit our website: Transitional Home Program.

Hands-On Volunteer Opportunities with Dog Guides

At the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, we're looking for passionate individuals to help train the next generation of life-changing Dog Guides! Whether you're drawn to puppies or want to work hands-on with dogs in training, we have a volunteer role for you.

Here are a few ways you can get involved:

Foster Program: If you love puppies, this is for you! Care for a future Dog Guide for a full year, helping them grow into confident, well-trained companions.

Day School Program: Enjoy working with dogs in training? Take a dog on evenings and weekends, providing essential support as they continue their journey toward becoming a working Dog Guide.

Sitter Program: Have limited time? Become a sitter and care for a dog temporarily, helping them progress on their path to transforming lives.

No matter which role you choose, your time and dedication will make a lasting impact. You'll be part of an incredible journey, helping these remarkable dogs fulfill their vital role.

Ready to make a difference? [Learn more](#) and sign up today.

