



TM

GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA

Partners



VOLUME 19
NUMBER 4
WINTER 2004

How Can You Give Them Up?

It's the question Guide Dogs of America Puppy Raisers hear most, "How can you possibly raise a puppy and then give it up?" It's a good question, and one that goes to the heart of GDA's mission.

At 8 weeks of age, our GDA puppies go home with dedicated Puppy Raisers to live until they return to GDA for formal guide dog training at 15-18 months. During those months, the role of the Puppy Raiser is crucial. They ensure that the puppy is properly socialized and taught basic obedience skills. But there's more.

GDA puppies wear a special jacket that identifies them as a guide dog puppy-in-training. By taking a puppy to work, school, stores, restaurants, on public transportation, even family gatherings, Puppy Raisers show the puppies how to behave at all times.

Of course, the puppies become part of the Puppy Raiser's family, and it's impossible not to fall in love with them. That's why giving them up is so hard to do. So we posed the question to our 300 Puppy Raisers: "How Can You Possibly Give Them Up?"

[continued on page 2](#)



Blindfolded for Nine Days... Part II

In the last issue of *Partners* we explained GDA's unique blindfold training experience whereby eight participants wore blindfolds for nine days and underwent guide dog training without sight.

Judy Reilly, a Puppy Raiser for GDA, explained why she wanted to take part in the program. "When I think about what it was like to be blind, words like *uncertain, tentative, insecure, and vulnerable* come to mind. I decided I was going to follow my dog and trust that it knew more than I did. The highlight for me was when I told my dog to find the elevator in a mall and she did. I practically burst into tears. I can't stop talking about it!"

Judy and her fellow participants committed the time for what proved to be a difficult, but ulti-

mately rewarding week. All of them struggled with the challenges of getting along without sight. They experienced disorientation, confusion, and even fear. But in the end, they learned that there are ways to cope without sight, and that a guide dog can make a huge difference.

Here's what the other participants had to say about their experience:

- **Andi Krusoe** is GDA's Admissions and Graduate Services Manager: "The instructors were incredible. They are strong, kind, professional, funny, principled, generous, and open. When I had no faith in my abilities, I had total trust in them. Of course, the

[continued on page 3](#)



See page 6
for special
Holiday
gifts.



PARTNERS NEWSLETTER

Published by:
GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA

13445 Glenoaks Blvd.
Sylmar, CA 91342
818/362-5834
818/362-6870 fax

EMAIL:
mail@guidedogsofamerica.org

WEBSITE:
www.guidedogsofamerica.org

EDITOR:
Lorri Bernson

CONTRIBUTORS:

Jay Bormann
Rhonda Bissell
Meri Forman
Andi Krusoe
Debbie Sands
Bob Wendler
Rachel Utiger

How Can You Give Them Up? continued from page 1

Cindi Weldon says that what makes it possible for her is “I went into the program knowing I would be giving up the puppy. Sometimes it seems that people think we are cold-hearted because we are willing to let the puppies go. Nothing could be farther from the truth!”

Kristin Pitt certainly isn't cold-hearted, as the loving puppies she has raised could attest, but she is very straightforward about her role. “It's easy for me to give the puppies up because it's what I've been working towards. I was given it to raise and give back for training.”

They are Needed ...

Susan Renwick sums up the feelings of many Puppy Raisers. “When people ask me how can I give them up, I say, ‘How could you not give them up?’ Each of my pups has truly been a Gift of Love to me and will become the Gift of Sight to another.”

Catherine Berent says, “It's not easy to give them up! Only by knowing of a blind person's need and appreciation for their guide dog can I let him go.”

Kim Lambert seconds that idea. “We have been so inspired by the work that GDA does that we gladly gave Diamond up so she can do what she was born to do: help blind people.” And Kathy Bocain agrees, “This puppy will someday give someone the independence you and I take for granted.”

Jim and Sherry Miller have found inspiration in the people they meet while out with their puppy-in-

training. “It's because of the woman at the car wash who cried as she petted my puppy and told me she had just found out her two-year-old was going blind,” Sherry insists. “That's why we can give them up and that's what keeps us going back for more.”

Going off to College ...

Many Puppy Raisers see raising a puppy and returning it to GDA for formal guide dog training as similar to raising a child knowing they will someday leave you. “It's the same as sending your child off to college,” says Lisa Fletcher. “You miss them, but you still get news about how they are doing. And if everything goes right, they get ‘married’ and start living their own lives.”

Cathie and Frank Jewitt echo that sentiment. “This is our first puppy, and we know it will be hard. We decided in the beginning just to think of it as we did raising our child. We know she will grow up and hopefully go to ‘college.’” And Diona Durham likens raising a puppy to her role as a schoolteacher. “It's similar to how I feel when one of my 8th grade students graduates. I know I have given them a solid foundation anchored firmly with lots of love, support, and care. My tears are both sad and full of joy.”

An Empty Leash is a Bad Thing ...

There's no doubt that giving up a GDA puppy is a difficult thing. The tears flow pretty strongly on Turn-In Day. But in the end, it's amazing how many of our Puppy Raisers want to repeat the experience, despite all the heartache. In fact, some have found that the best way to soften the loss is to get a new GDA puppy as quickly as possible.

As Bev Adams explains, “It's hard, but it's much easier to give them up than to lose a pet. After all, we know all along they aren't our dogs. I think of them as going off to learn to be a hero. And we do try to have a new puppy before we give one up. An empty leash is a bad thing!”

For information on how you could fill up an empty leash by becoming a Puppy Raiser for Guide Dogs of America, call Louise Henderson at (818) 362-5834, ext. 234. 🐾

Your Privacy and GDA

Because we hold our relationship with you, our donors, volunteers and supporters, in such high regard, we want to assure you that we zealously protect your name, address and any other information we may have about you. At no time does GDA sell, rent or share any of its lists. Your privacy is protected at GDA.

Your Everyday Shopping Can Help GDA!

This special fund raising program has been so successful for GDA that we wanted to make certain all our friends heard about it.

Some stores that you probably already patronize contribute to GDA every time you shop with them. It couldn't be any easier for you to help GDA. Here's all you need to do:

Albertson's and Savon Drugs - Call GDA at 818-362-5834, ext. 311 to request a Community Partners Card. Simply show your card at when you check out, along with your Albertson's Preferred Savings Card, and 2-5% of your total purchase amount will be donated to GDA!

Ralph's Groceries - If you are a Ralph's Club Card Member, call GDA at 818-362-5834, ext. 311 with you card number to enroll in Ralph's donation program. Ralph's will donate 2-4% of your total purchase amount to GDA. 🐾



essence of trust is the guide dog – a heart driven, precision mobility machine that will do anything for you. You can feel their excitement when the harness goes on. They love what they do.

- **Mike Carland** works in the Maintenance Department at GDA: “The most difficult part for me was putting faith in my dog. It was amazing how confidently my dog guided me down sidewalks, when I wasn’t sure what was ahead of me or where I was headed.”
- **Nancy Hayes** is GDA’s Data Systems Administrator: “I learned how the trainers’ jobs go far beyond training the dogs. They have unbelievable patience and give constant encouragement and praise. To step into the world of a blind person and see how life changes and how a guide dog really opens up the world was an awesome experience.”
- **Rhonda Bissell** is GDA’s Development Coordinator: “Two things stick with me. First, how important the job of Puppy Raiser is. The basic obedience training they give is the foundation on which the trainers build. The second is what an overwhelming experience it is to go from feeling limited to feeling freed by the dog. And it gives you exhilarating confidence because they know exactly what they are doing.”
- **Dona Carruth** has worked in GDA’s kennels for nearly 15 years: “Having a person lead me into a restaurant or onto a bus gave me a feeling of safety, but it was uncomfortable and inconvenient. When the trainers would allow me to let go of their arm and pick up my dog’s harness, my heart would soar, and so would my feet. Working with the dog gave me an amazing sense of freedom!”
- **Kristin Pitt** is a Puppy Raiser for GDA: “The class was exciting and emotional for me because I was so impressed with what the dog could do. My dog was amazing, not just taking me up the street, but stopping to avoid hazards and prevent cars from running into us. I

left the class with a deep appreciation for everyone at GDA.”

- **Louise Grim** is a kennel technician at GDA: “I had heard about how moving ‘Dog Day’ was for blind people. But I never expected it to affect me so strongly after just a few days without sight. When Yvonne brought in my dog I could not hold back my tears. We immediately formed a relationship of love, faith, and friendship. Even though I knew I was getting back my sight at the end, the thought of giving up my dog shook me to my core. I have gained an immense respect and admiration for guide dogs, and their partners.”

This unusual undertaking proved to be very worthwhile for the participants as well as the employees and Puppy Raisers who heard about the experiences of the blindfolded students. Everyone came away reminded of the importance of our work on behalf of the blind men and women who come to rely on our remarkable guide dogs. 🐾



PARTNERS IN TRUST...



The following Partners in Trust Society members recently informed us that they have named Guide Dogs of America as a beneficiary in their will or trust. We are very grateful to them for their thoughtful generosity:

- Ms. Beverly Gale
- (4) Anonymous

If you have named GDA in your will or trust, or you plan to, please call Rhonda Bissell at (818) 362-5834, ext. 229 to make certain that you are thanked and recognized for your support. 🐾

WISH LIST

We’re wishing and hoping that some of our friends will be able to donate:

- NEW STANDARD PILLOWS for our dorm – 20 needed
- LIVING AIR PURIFIER
- THERMAL DOG CUSHIONS (XL – 36”x54”)
- TWIN SIZE BLANKETS (comforter or flat type)
- STERILIZED BONES AND NYLABONES – large 10”-12”
- COMMERCIAL OUTDOOR HEATERS – six needed
- TALL COMMERCIAL STANDING FANS – five needed
- E-Z UP SHADE COVERINGS – 10’ x 10’ (available at Costco)
- NEW CRATES – ten #200 crates and ten #300 crates needed



TAKING A PAWS FOR THANKS

In addition to the many friends who make regular contributions by mail or payroll deduction, GDA is grateful to those who conduct special events or donate goods or services to help us carry out our work.

Cool Wheels for Great Paws

The 5th Annual Labor Day Car Show for Guide Dogs held in Folsom, CA was a terrific success. With more than 140 cars, ranging from 1926 coupes to muscle cars and new trucks, it was a chance for those who love vehicles with four wheels to get together to raise money for our wonderful friends with four paws. In fact, the event raised nearly \$15,000 to help provide guide dogs to people who are blind.



Our thanks to all who helped to make this motorful event a roaring success.

Island Golfing for GDA

Okay, so the island wasn't in the Caribbean. In fact, it was Middle Island in New York. But still the 7th Annual New York Guide Dogs of America Golf Tournament held at the Middle Island Country Club was a fantastic day of golfing. More than 230 players enjoyed the beautiful course and made this tournament a record breaker in terms of participants and the amount of funds we raised to breed, raise and train our remarkable dogs for blind men and women. Thanks so much to all who helped organize the event and to **International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers District Lodge 15 and Servisair/Globeground** for their sponsorship.

Pining for Guide Dogs

Our thanks to Mark and Bonnie Bailey, owners of Madd Bailey's Pub in Pine Mountain, CA, for sponsoring the first (soon to be annual) Ride to the Pines Bike Motorcycle Show and Poker Run. Mother Nature provided a gorgeous day, and nearly 100 riders greatly enjoyed the 90 mile round trip ride to and from Pine Mountain Club. GDA Trainers Linda Hawes and Yvonne Martin brought along a guide dog-in-training and demonstrated his guide dog skills to the amazement of the crowd. Many thanks for the generosity of the participants, led by donations from local merchants, and the support of two local motorcycle clubs, The Road Dogs and OFMC.



We're Glad to be His Project

When scout Dan Brimberry needed a community service project to complete the requirements for Eagle Scout, it was only natural he'd turn to GDA. After all, his parents, Kellie and Kurt have raised eight puppies for GDA. We're so grateful to Dan for refurbishing nine grooming tables our students use while in training. And Dan, his family, and some fellow scouts created a **Graduation Garden** with beautiful roses and other flowers for the enjoyment of our graduates and visitors. Thanks to Dan, and congratulations on attaining Eagle Scout!



Thanks to all who donate, volunteer or raise money for GDA. We are so grateful for your dedication and hard work!! 🐾

IN MEMORY

Guide Dogs of America has recently lost some wonderful guide dogs and some breeding dogs who gave a lifetime of service to blind men and women who want to live more independently.

GUIDE DOGS

- **Danous**—Class #311
- **Elina**—In-home training
- **Floyd**—Class #306
- **Pepsi**—In-home training
- **Ruff**—Class #288



BREEDING DOGS

- **Peri**—Black Labrador
- **SpringLee**—Golden Retriever

KENNEL CAT

- **Ricky**

GRADUATE GUIDELINES

Matching a Changing Picture

Sharon Hutton is no stranger to guide dogs. She has had very little vision for many years and had guide dogs before Kodak, BUT Kodak was the right dog for Sharon at the right time.

"I was sitting on my bed at GDA, waiting to meet my new guide dog. The anticipation had been building for months. When the instructor brought Kodak in, and I reached out to pet him, he immediately put his nose in my hand. Our bonding was instant."

"I had guide dogs before. One with another school and two with GDA. I'm convinced that GDA dogs are the best, but Kodak goes even beyond that. I knew from the beginning he was special and time just proves it."

Sharon has multiple disabilities, including terrible arthritis that continues to get worse. When she first got Kodak, she still had some minimal vision left, but now even that's gone.

There is no way to prepare a guide dog for unpredictable changes, of course, but so many of them seem to know just how to modify their behavior to fit the needs of their partner. *"I'm amazed at the way GDA matches the dogs to their partners ... and the way the dogs adapt themselves to fit."*

"When I first got Kodak, he was already slower than other guide dogs I have had. This was really helpful to me because I was moving pretty slowly. Today it's even worse, but Kodak seems to know."

"The incredible thing is how he has adapted to the changes in my health. One of the trainers told me that this is highly unusual. That's my Kodak ... he's highly unusual. He's my guiding angel!" 🐾



PUPPIES COUNT ON KIDS



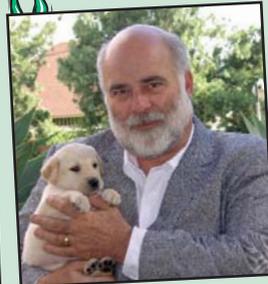
Sponsoring a puppy is a significant donation, so it's surprising that one of our most dependable sponsors has been the kids of Stephen S. Wise Temple Elementary School in Los Angeles.

It costs \$4,000 to sponsor a puppy, which covers the cost of our breeding program, food, veterinary care, obedience training, support for Puppy Raisers, including a manual, leash, and other equipment. In return, the Puppy Sponsor gets periodic updates on the progress of the pup as it works toward becoming a guide dog.

continued on page 7

My Holiday Thank You

from GDA President Jay Bormann



The two front page articles in this issue of Partners give me the perfect point to begin to express my gratitude to everyone in the Guide Dogs of America family at this special time of year.

I never cease to be amazed at how much people are willing to give to help provide the love, companionship, and independence that a guide dog brings to people who are blind. Our Puppy Raisers, who give so much from their homes and their hearts to raise such wonderful dogs are just incredible. GDA simply could not function without all the other volunteers who also give so much. And the many people who contribute to GDA by mail, or at our fundraising events, are the foundation on which everything we do is built.

Our blindfold training experiment this past summer turned out to be a wonderful success because it gave all of us with sight a chance for a better understanding of the world without sight. And it gave us an even better appreciation of what our guide dogs mean to people without vision. The experience is an inspiration as we continue to breed, raise, and train some great guide dogs.

So as we end this very successful year and prepare to begin another, I want to express my gratitude to the supporters, volunteers, Puppy Raisers, and employees of Guide Dogs of America. What you are doing is so greatly needed and so deeply appreciated.

Jay A. Bormann

Welcome to our New Employees

Yes, our dogs are important, but our success would not be possible without some fine staff members. Welcome to Sean Chiles and Angel Gonzalez, our newest part-time kennel techs. And the cheerful voice you hear when you call GDA is that of our new receptionist (and former kennel tech), Louise Grim.

We bid a fond farewell to Dona Carruth who worked in GDA's kennels for over 15 years. Thanks, Dona, for your commitment to GDA and the hundreds of dogs you cared for over the years. 🐾

PLEASE NOTE PLEASE NOTE PLEASE NOTE

If you receive multiple copies of *Partners*, Please contact us at newsletter@guidedogsofamerica.org or drop us a note using the enclosed envelope. Please list all the names under which you receive the newsletter and let us know which one is the correct one. Thanks!

HOLIDAY SHOPPING WITH GDA

Orders **MUST BE** received at GDA by December 10 to ensure Christmas Delivery

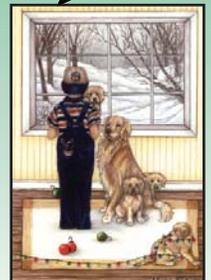
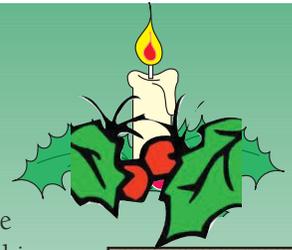
K-9's in the Kitchen—GDA's "official" cookbook

A. This fun cookbook features 300 great recipes for the enjoyment of both people and puppies and is the perfect stocking stuffer of the cook on your shopping list. Each book is \$20 or two for \$35, plus shipping and handling.



GDA Holiday cards...

are a fun way to spread holiday cheer. Our cards are printed on high-quality paper stock and come in packages of 15 cards with matching envelopes.



E. Boy by Window (inside message: blank) This charming card created from an original illustration features a young boy with his five Golden Retrievers and is ideal for your holiday thank-you notes. \$10 per package plus \$3 for shipping & handling.

E

GDA's Exclusive Breed Lapel Pins

These 1" x 1" lapel pins of the dog breeds we breed, raise and train are high-quality, American-made pins that are fun to collect and wear. See below for price, shipping & handling is FREE. A great stocking stuffer!



B. **NEW!** 2005 Lapel Pin – Chocolate Labrador (#3 in series of 5 pins) \$8

C. 2004 Lapel Pin – Golden Retriever (#2 in series of 5 pins) \$5

D. 2003 Lapel Pin – Black Labrador (#1 in series of 5 pins) \$5



F. Two Pups (inside message: blank) Surrounded by snowflakes, these two yellow Lab puppies will help you send your holiday greetings to friends and loved ones. \$15 per package plus \$3 shipping & handling.



F

GDA FUN STUFF ORDER FORM

Orders **MUST BE** received by December 10 to ensure delivery by Christmas.

Mail this entire form with your payment in the enclosed envelope.

PAYMENT INFORMATION:

Check: Please make payable to Guide Dogs of America.
 Visa MasterCard Discover

Your purchases help support the work of Guide Dogs of America. Please allow 2 weeks for processing and delivery. Complete and mail this entire form with your payment in the enclosed envelope. THANK YOU!

Item	QTY	Price	Subtotal
A. K-9's Cookbook	1	\$20.00 ea.	
	2	\$35.00	
B. Chocolate Labrador Pin		\$8.00 ea.	
C. Golden Retriever Pin		\$5.00 ea.	
D. Black Labrador Pin		\$5.00 ea.	
E. Boy by Window Card		\$10.00 ea.	
F. Two Pups Card		\$15.00 ea.	

*Shipping and Handling
TOTAL ENCLOSED:

Signature _____ Exp. date ____/____

Card Number _____

Telephone Number (____) _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

*SHIPPING AND HANDLING

FOR COOKBOOK

1-3 books Add \$2.50
4-6 books Add \$3.50
7 or more books Call GDA at (818) 362-5834, ext. 321 for custom rate.

FOR PINS

shipping and handling cost is FREE

FOR CARDS

1 package Add \$3
2-4 packages Add \$6
5-10 packages Add \$8
10 or more packages Call GDA at (818) 362-5834, ext. 0 for custom rate.

Every year, the students in each grade at the school undertake a Hesed Project. In the Jewish tradition, the word “hesed” means giving of oneself for the sake of others. Some classes visit the elderly. Others work to protect the environment, or to help the homeless. For more than 12 years, it has been tradition that the four sixth grade classes, a total of nearly 90 students, raise money to sponsor a puppy at GDA.

One requirement is that the money cannot come from the students’ parents. So they hold bake sales throughout the year. The Annual Jogathon is the major fundraiser, and the Sixth Grade Dance also raises money towards the goal.

All through the year, the students follow the progress of guide dog puppies sponsored by previous sixth grades. They receive photos and visits from the puppies and their Puppy Raisers. They take a field trip to GDA and get a “behind the scenes” tour of the campus. And the sponsored puppy and their Raiser attend the Sixth Grade

Graduation in June, at which the students present their sponsorship contribution to GDA.

“It’s a great connection for the kids,” says Sixth Grade Teacher Diane Perlich. “They all love dogs, so that’s a big motivation. It’s a thrill to them that the puppy wears a jacket that says, ‘Sponsored by Stephen S. Wise Temple Elementary School.’ And to be able to change a person’s life in such a profound way, as their sponsorship of a guide dog does, is a perfect example of the Hesed principle. It’s wonderful!”

These dedicated sixth grade students are currently sponsoring Frida, a black lab puppy, and GDA is enormously grateful. Such generosity and determination from these young people is gratifying.

If you or an organization with which you are involved would like more information about sponsoring a puppy, call Debbie Sands at (818) 362-5834, ext. 226. 🐾



Class #343.5

Seated from left to right—Agustin Moreno & **Shadow**; Dave Wolfe & **Shiloh**; Wayne Aikin & **Vector**; Don Brown & **Rex**

Instructor kneeling – Steve Burkman

Puppy Raisers (not pictured)

Shadow—The Walcker Family;

Shiloh—Suzanne & Jeff Brew;

Vector—Teryn & Seth Hartnett;

Rex—The English Family

Class #344

Seated from left to right – Kevin Flaherty & **Andy**; Luella Knapp & **Maddy**; Lina Tanner & **Hunter**; Karin Richards & **Cleat**; Vicki Reesnes & **Courage**; Ernesto Tabarez & **Jackson**



In-Home Graduates

(not pictured): John Albarran received **Ava**, raised by Nancy Ayers; Rebecca Albarran received **Chela**, raised by Tess Atkinson; Julie Rivas received **Kassie**, raised by Sandy and Larry Vaughn; Christian Conway received **Vikayla**, raised by The Ostrin Family. 🐾

GRADUATION DAY



Instructors standing – Yvonne Martin, Wendy Roof

Puppy Raisers (not pictured)

Andy—Walt & Jackie Walker; **Maddy**—Vivian &

Katelyn Cooper; **Hunter**—Barbara & Dave Reed;

Cleat—Kari & Cory Weber; **Courage**—The Kollen

Family; **Jackson**—The Polson Family 🐾





What's Black and Yellow and Full of Love?

GDA Labrador puppies, of course! Here are our recent births:

Breed	# of Puppies	Date of Birth
Black Lab pups	8	8/21/04
Black Lab pups	7	8/19/04
Black Lab pups	9	9/19/04
Black and Yellow Lab pups	9	9/21/04

If you'd like to be a puppy raiser to one of these future guide dogs and live on the west coast, please call Louise Henderson at (818) 362-5834, ext. 234. 🐾



GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA

13445 Glenoaks Blvd.
Sylmar, CA 91342

Address Service Requested

NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
VAN NUYS, CA
PERMIT NO. 190

IMPORTANT 2005 Dates

Mark Your Calendar!



- ☑ **Graduation Dates** for 2005 (all graduations take place at Guide Dogs of America at 10:00am)
 - Sunday, Feb. 6
 - Sunday, May 1
 - Sunday, July 31
 - Sunday, Oct. 23
- ☑ **Second Annual "Ride For Guides"** Sunday, May 22nd
- ☑ **Annual OPEN HOUSE** Saturday, June 11th

Guide Dogs of America Foundation

The GDA Foundation is grateful to all who helped organize and all who participated in two great events in recent months.

Our **14th Annual Golf Classic** was held at the Valencia TPC Course on September 13th. One hundred and eight players, including two guide dog users, had a great day of golf.

Two participants even qualified for the \$10,000 Helen Harris 65-foot challenge putt. Unfortunately, this year's contestants both missed. But there's always next year. Hamer Toyota also promised a car for anyone who hit a hole-in-one, but there were no takers. All in all, it was a great day on the links, and golfers got to meet many puppies-in-training who were out for a day of socialization and education.

Our sincere thanks to the Trasatti Family for their generous Silver Sponsorship of the tournament this year. The newest addition to our trophy



presentations is the "Margot Trasatti Memorial Cup" which was awarded to four lucky ladies who won the "low gross" category. This special perpetual cup will be awarded annually and is named after Margot Trasatti, a long time Foundation

member and wonderful friend to Guide Dogs of America for many years. The Memorial Cup will be kept on display at GDA.

We also held our **Annual Bowlathon** at Canoga Park Bowl on October 17th. We had a great time bowling, eating good food, and playing with all the puppies-in-training.

Thanks again to all who helped to make these fundraisers such a rousing success! Watch for details of future events! 🐾