

## Born 'Leaders'

A look inside GDA's Breeding Department



What does it take to become a guide dog who will safely lead a blind or visually impaired person? It doesn't start when the dog returns to GDA for formal training or in the 16 to 18 months he or she spends with a volunteer puppy raiser. It doesn't start in the Head Start Program or Puppy Kindergarten. It doesn't even start from the day the litter

is born. All these things contribute to bringing out the very best in every GDA puppy. But where does it all start? With the breeding!

GDA's Breeding Department is overseen by Rachel Goldammer, who has served as a consultant to GDA since February of this year. It is Goldammer's charge to maintain a healthy, diverse "breeding colony" at GDA and to breed puppies with the qualities that will contribute to their success as guide dogs.

With degrees in animal production and biology, as well as many years breeding experience, Goldammer has the background that makes her especially qualified to maintain GDA's status as one of the pre eminent guide dog schools in the country. As the school expands its capacity for accommodating and graduating visually impaired and blind students, there is greater emphasis on school's breeding department.

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## Message From The President



*Russell Gittlen, President,  
Guide Dogs of America*

We have been extremely fortunate in 2018, continuing to grow our GDA family and working toward a bright future. Before I get in to all that we have accomplished this year, I think it is most important that I recognize everyone who has helped make this year a success.

We truly could not have accomplished what we did without our dedicated staff; volunteers; puppy raisers; and, of course, our graduates.

We are making changes every day here at GDA. Some of them are obvious like the renovations to our administration buildings and student dormitory. We do great work here at GDA and we want our campus to reflect the high standards that we hold. These renovations were necessary in taking GDA to that next step as one of the country's premier guide dog schools.

Over the course of this year, we had some top-notch events. Ride for Guides, Doggone Summer Auction, a magic and stand-up night, our first Casino Night, and the 38th Annual William W. Winpisinger Charity Banquet. All were huge successes and contributed significant funds to our program. Additionally, we had close to 100 other fundraisers all over the U.S. and Canada. We cannot thank enough everyone who helps put these events on for their generosity and support.

Finally, my deepest thanks to all our donors. Your generous support is ultimately what allows our school to create such amazing partnerships and empower the blind and visually impaired to live with greater confidence and independence. We could not do it without your help, so thank you!

## Mission Statement

Guide Dogs of America is dedicated to its mission to provide guide dogs and instruction in their use, free of charge, to blind and visually impaired men and women from the United States and Canada so that they may continue to pursue their goals with increased mobility and independence.



Goldammer is not alone in her mission. In the Breeding Department, she is supported by three techs and relies on a steady flow of specially trained volunteers to assist with the day-to-day responsibilities of keeping the breeding stock and puppies healthy.

"We use more volunteer hours than any other department at GDA. We have volunteers who are trained to assist our females who are ready to whelp. We call them 'mid-woofers.' These dedicated volunteers arrive late in the evening and



stay with our females overnight. They stay until the staff arrives in the morning and brief them on the condition of the dog," Goldammer said.

"There are volunteers who spend time with the newborn litters, handling them and getting them used to human touch and socialization in the first few days up until they are ready to move to the puppy department. There are also puppy housekeepers who help to keep the

nursery clean, providing an environment that promotes the health of our puppies. Our volunteers are incredibly dedicated, and we are so grateful. It is no exaggeration to say we truly could not do it without them."

At this time, GDA's breeding colony consists of 34 dogs — 10 males and 24 females. Labrador retrievers make up most of the breeders, which also includes two German Shepherds, one Golden Retriever and three Golden Retriever/Labrador Retriever crosses.

As for the breeders, females are bred no more than four times. Males typically produce 100 puppies. Both females and males are retired by age 6.

Breeding the Labrador Retrievers is not like a box of chocolates, GDA does know what to expect based on breeding its yellow and black labs or breeding a cross litter.

"Yellow to yellow will always give us yellow puppies," Goldammer explained. "Black to yellow or black to black could deliver a litter of all one color or a litter that is a mix of black and yellow puppies, as well as the occasional chocolate lab."

Goldammer also emphasized the importance of GDA maintaining a breeding program at the school.

"I am frequently asked why GDA needs a breeding program and why can't we use dogs from outside breeders or shelters," Goldammer said. "Guide dogs are 'purpose bred.' We have a tremendous amount of data about all of the dogs in our breeding program, from health to temperament — even something like harness sensitivity is an inheritable trait that has been bred out of our breeding colony. With shelter dogs, we don't know anything about their background. They can go on to be a service dog but it is difficult to make them a guide dog."

According to Goldammer, the matching of a breeding male and female takes place only after a thorough review of volumes of data collected on each dog, from the time he or she was born at GDA and going back to the dogs' lineage. Only then, is it determined which pairing presents the most desired qualities.

"We look at breeding from a very scientific point of view, and all of our dogs have the same potential to graduate as guide dogs," Goldammer said. "We have a computer program that analyzes all of the data for every dog in our breeding program. It gives us everything we need to know before deciding on a match. Genetic DNA, health tests, and in-breeding coefficient; the overall success of the breeders and their progeny; as well as allergies, harness sensitivities, and if a dog was career-changed and why."

In addition to GDA's breeding colony, the school belongs to Assistance Dog International North American Breeding Cooperative, or ABC for short.

"We are one of 32 guide schools in the co-op," Goldammer said. "It's a great way to introduce genetic diversity into our program from breeders at other schools that have proven success with guide dogs and that meet our same rigorous standards."

"There have been a lot of changes in the Breeding Department this year, and I am very excited and happy for the future of GDA's program," Goldammer said.



# Congratulations Graduates

Class #405



**Graduates (Puppy Raiser in parentheses):**

Front row left to right: Cheryl "Sheri" Mirliss and Bynum (*Steve & Judi Hoppes*), Adelard "Al" Legace and Dango (*Jonathan & Lonnie Raimond*), Derek Rabelo Souza and Serenity (*Bob & Gwen Whitson*), Jerica Mayberry and Milo (*Ciaran Webster*), Mollie Baland and Ferris (*The Park Family*), Daniel Walukiewicz and Nate (*Sarah Jane & Chantal Chelin*)

**Instructors:** (back row) left to right: Kim Geczi, Kelsey Horst

**Not shown: In-home Training:** Dorothy Graham and Teagan (*Sam & Christy Anderson*)



## Thoughts From A New 'Dorm Mom'

In addition to the GDA staff that helps to make our graduates comfortable during their three weeks on campus, there are also "dorm moms" who stay on the weekends. One of the most recent additions to the dorm mom team, Donna Higashida, shared her thoughts about what her first overnight meant to her.

"It's been six hours since I got here. I am in awe of being able to experience, full circle and firsthand, what GDA is all about.

I spent time right after I got here getting the tour and run down of duties from the trainers. Then, I had such a good time having a wonderful sit-down talk with three of students.

I lucked out being here with this class. All first-timers. To see the joy on their faces, to hear their stories, and witness their happiness and confidence with their new guides is so inspiring. They are funny, upbeat, grateful and a joy to hang out with. They have changed my life in a few short hours."



## A Goodbye Wag Of The Tail

It is with bittersweetness that we congratulate Sue Chiles on her retirement from GDA after 17 great years. For those of you who know Sue, you know that you will never find her without a smile on her face. Please join us in wishing Sue a long and happy retirement, and congratulations on an outstanding career. We hope to see her back on campus volunteering soon!

## Kid's Questions

GDA Puppy Raisers Share School Kids' 'Questions Asked and Lessons Learned'

Many times, we get calls to have a speaker go out to schools or we have children who come out to tour the Guide Dogs of America campus. Our volunteer puppy raisers and their puppies-in-training teach the students about what it takes to become a guide dog. After the presentation, the kids are encouraged to ask questions and share what they have learned. We asked our volunteers to share some of the most memorable questions and lessons learned. What follows is a collection of some of the comments that have made them smile:



### ...Lessons Learned

People don't need a dog in the shower.

GDA dogs own two collars.

The guide dog's owner had to go to school.

You can't pet the guide dogs.

A good guide dog does NOT chase cats.

A guide dog cannot be lazy or always be tempted by things or be scared when a noisy thing comes.

If the guide dog is not perfect, it cannot go to college.

My dog would never go to "Guide Dog College" because she is WAY too crazy!

### Questions Asked...

How does a dog put on its harness?

Can you train my dog?

Does he miss his mom?

Is he a Vanilla Lab?

Is he always this calm?

How does your dog help a blind person cook?

Why don't you use Chihuahuas?

What does the dog do when the blind person is driving?

How does your dog tell a blind person how to drive a car?

Can the dog read Braille?

Does the dog go to the movies?

How does the dog know where to go in the supermarket?

# Donor Profiles

## From Donating Baby Blankets to Donating Dollars

Donor Makes her Contributions Last a Lifetime as Partner in Trust



Donna Cohen has been donating to Guide Dogs of America (GDA) since she first learned about the school when she worked at the post office and oversaw the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) beginning in 1996.

“There were thousands of charities to choose from but the description of GDA caught my eye,” Cohen said. “I began donating through CFC and made it a point to learn about the school and the great work it does. Training guide dogs to be the assistants and companions of blind people is so admirable.”

Cohen expanded her contribution beyond the CFC pledge when she became involved in the school’s annual silent auction. For several years, she donated her beautiful handmade baby blankets to the silent auction.

“An aspect I love about GDA is how interactive it is with the community and how creatively it raises money,” Cohen said. “Most organizations send out fundraising

letters. GDA sells merchandise and Christmas cards; hosts graduations and open houses; conducts raffles, motorcycle runs, and, my special favorite, the silent auction. It’s a wonderful creative outlet for those of us who like to do crafts and put baskets together. It’s so exciting to watch people compete for the baskets, confidently knowing that the money spent will be used for such a worthwhile purpose.”

A decades-long supporter of GDA, Cohen made the decision to become a Partner in Trust to ensure that her donations would continue for years to come.

“I feel proud to be a member of such a worthwhile organization and encourage everyone to learn more about GDA and consider becoming a Partner in Trust,” Cohen added.

Guide Dogs of America is privileged to benefit from the generosity of caring individuals like Cohen. Gifts to our endowment will continue to support our mission to place extraordinary guide dogs with the visually impaired to enhance their lives. If you would like information about becoming a Partner in Trust, please contact Rhonda Bissell at (818) 833-6432.

## Partners in Trust

The Partners in Trust Society was established by GDA as a way to recognize and honor the generosity of those who have included the school in their planned giving.

By thoughtfully naming GDA in their wills, trusts and life insurance policies, the members of the Partners in Trust Society ensure that their support of GDA will continue for years to come. We are forever grateful to them for remembering GDA in their estate plans — in any amount — and we are honored to be a part of their legacy.

For additional information about how you can leave a future gift to GDA, go to [guidedogsofamerica.org](http://guidedogsofamerica.org), click on **How to Help**, then click on **Gift Planning** — or call Rhonda Bissell at (818) 833-6432.

Please note: The names that appear on this list indicate those individuals who have included GDA in their estate plans during this past GDA fiscal year (July 1, 2017 to June 30, 2018).

Anonymous (2)	Linda Harmon	David Jerome Lawless	Cynthia Provinse & Brian Olsen
Steve Barklow	Bonnie Kramer & Kathy Shamey	Kristin & George Pitt	Heather Stewart

We are saddened that these Partners in Trust are no longer with us and we honor their memory here for their gracious act of giving to GDA that will support the school long into the future:

Marjorie Aquilino	Beverly F. Gale	Marie A. McKinnon	Albert J. Salera
Mordechai Arditti	Marilyn J. Gunther	Pauline F. Miles	Virginia Scrinopski
Cathleen Bartley	Roger & Dorothy Harmon	Mark Alan Nichols	Mary Tozzo
Mary Louise Bateman	Catherine S. Huffaker	Ruth E. O'Rourke	
Sharon Conkling	Sharon Hutton	Frances Price	
Marilyn J. Devitt	Norman Kalson	Lowell Alvin Rose	

# Merchandise

Check out new and popular merchandise from Shop GDA! Go to [guidedogsofamerica.org](http://guidedogsofamerica.org), then click on **Shop GDA!** Merchandise is also available for purchase by calling (818) 833-6429 or at GDA's new retail store. Several of our newest items, including our holiday cards, are featured here.

## GDA Backpack



Made in the U.S.A., this durable backpack is made from 600-denier polyester made with 50% recycled materials. Features:

- Double-zippered main compartment
- Gusseted front pocket with zippered sleeve pocket
- Two side pockets with hook-and-loop closure

- Carry handle at top
- Adjustable padded backstraps
- Color-matched straps with webbing and sturdy plastic hardware

The backpack is navy blue with a large GDA logo and measures 16" x 13" x 6". Price: \$25 (does not include tax or shipping and handling).

## 2018 Quilt Raffle



This year's quilt, "Doggie in the Window," was made by The Orange County Quilters Guild. The group continues the tradition of providing a raffle quilt to benefit GDA. The patterns for each of the dogs were created and donated by Maryann Hertel of Made by Marney. The quilt measures 60" x 70".

Tickets are \$2 each or six for \$10.

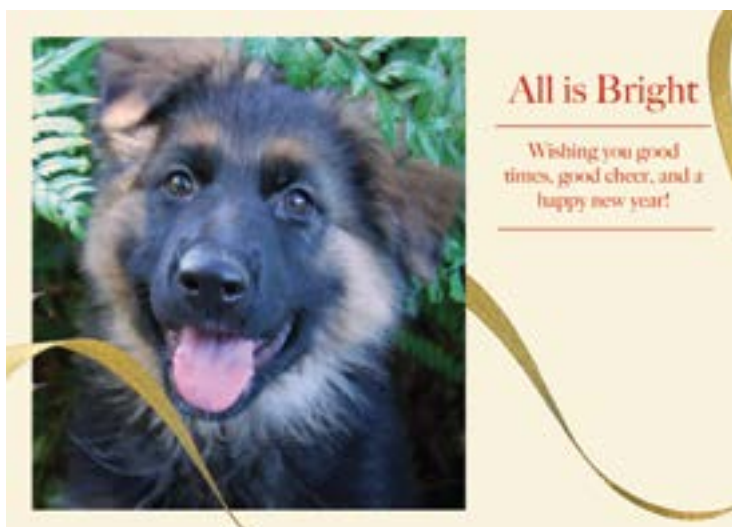
Tickets are available for purchase at GDA. Tickets can also be purchased by mail or phone. Send your check to GDA postmarked by Dec. 1, 2018 or call GDA at (818) 833-6429. Tickets will be mailed to you using the return address on your check or the address provided at time of purchase. Include your phone number on your check. Drawing will be held at the GDA December puppy raiser holiday party. Winner does not need to be present.

## 2018 GDA Holiday Card



### All is Calm

Wishing you a holiday season filled with warmth and happiness.



### All is Bright

Wishing you good times, good cheer, and a happy new year!

Congratulations to Guide Dogs of America volunteer puppy raiser Karyn Paul. Her photos of GDA puppy-in-training Ziva are featured on not one, but two versions, of GDA's annual holiday card. We received so many great photos.

**Card 1 message:** All is Calm. Wishing you a holiday season filled with warmth and happiness.

**Card 2 message:** All is bright. Wishing you good times, good cheer, and a happy new year.

**On the back of each card is a message from GDA:** Our wishes for a peaceful new year.

This year, the cards are 5x7 postcards and are bundled 10 cards (with envelopes) to a pack. Price: \$10 plus tax and shipping and handling. Please order by Dec. 5, 2018.

## In Memory

With sadness, we note the passing of the following graduate, guide dogs and a breeder:

### Graduate:

Ray Wilder — Class 392

### Guide Dogs/Breeder:

Cash — Class 360.5

Louie — Class 370

Walden — Class 351

Willow — Breeder

# 'Bone' Appetit

Chef Jamie is GDA's Top Dog Top Chef



At graduation, students express their gratitude to the trainers — individually and as a group, the entire GDA staff, volunteers, donors... everyone who had anything to do with them receiving a guide dog. But when all the general thank yous have been shared, it is quite clear that one person has

the hearts and stomachs of the graduates — and that is Chef Jamie. No one gets more “shout outs” at graduation than GDA's very own top dog top chef.

Chef Jamie joined GDA just over a year ago and she has been pleasing the palates of our graduates ever since. And no wonder. She is a graduate of the prestigious Le Cordon Bleu with a degree in culinary arts.

“I have always wanted to run my own kitchen so to be given the opportunity to be the chef here at GDA has made my dreams come true,” Chef Jamie said. “Working here has changed me in so many ways. My co-workers are so much more than co-workers, they're like family. The students that I meet in every class hold a special place in my heart. I love getting to know them over the meals that I create for them.”

During the three weeks each class spends on campus, Chef Jamie and her team, including Chef Carlos who covers the weekends, are responsible for creating menus and cooking meals for the students and the trainers. Because many students have special dietary needs due to medical conditions, it is also Chef Jamie's responsibility to consider food sensitivities and allergies and work around those ingredients, while making sure that every meal is satisfying and delicious.

There is no need to “beg” for one of Chef Jamie's recipe. Included here from Chef Jamie's kitchen to yours is one of her most popular recipes among students and staff. Bone appetit!

## GDA Casserole

**Ingredients** (serves 10–12)

- 6 eggs
- 3 cups of milk
- 1/2 tsp dry mustard
- 1/4 tsp sea salt
- 1/4 tsp pepper
- 12 large croissants (cubed)
- 10 oz shredded cheese
- 2 cups of breakfast meat (ham, bacon, sausage — just one or a combination)

## Instructions

- Beat eggs, milk, salt, pepper and dry mustard together in a bowl.
- In a greased 9x13" pan, layer croissants, cheese and meat.
- Repeat
- Pour egg mixture over croissant mixture
- Cover with parchment paper then foil. Refrigerate overnight.
- The next day, bake at 350 degrees for 45 minutes, rotating once.
- Take the foil and parchment paper off and bake for 15 minutes uncovered until browned.



## Get Partners In Your Online Mailbox

If you would like to receive GDA's *Partners* newsletter in your email inbox rather than your home mailbox, let us know. It will save more than trees; it will save printing costs and postage so, even more of every dollar donated can go to our program. Simply go to [www.guidedogsofamerica.org/e-mail-newsletter-signup](http://www.guidedogsofamerica.org/e-mail-newsletter-signup) and fill out the form with your email address, as well as your mailing address, so we can take you off the postage newsletter list.



# Partners newsletter

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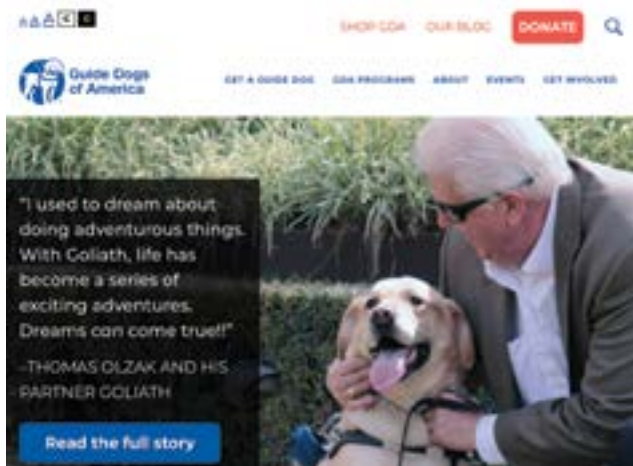
## Employee Promotions

Kim Geczi, Apprentice Coordinator

Jamie Hunt, Assistant Director of Programs

## Check Out Our New Website

Our new website has been refreshed! It has a new updated look, with user-friendly navigation and fresh content. Take a look at [guidedogsofamerica.org](http://guidedogsofamerica.org).



## GDA Is Now One Of Charity Pro Travel's Charity Partners!



"You take the vacation, we make the donation!" is the motto of Charity Pro Travel an on-line travel booking organization that works with **Priceline.com**. The organization helps to raise money for charities, and now your travel can benefit Guide Dogs of America.

Every time you book a hotel, airfare, rental car or vacation package at Charity Pro Travel the organization will donate up to 50 percent of the commission to Guide Dogs of America as your selected charity of choice. Simply visit their website ([charitytravelpro.com](http://charitytravelpro.com)) and under **Select Your Charity** on the **Make a Reservation** page, choose **Guide Dogs of America**.

You also can visit [guidedogsofamerica.org](http://guidedogsofamerica.org) for a link to the **Charity Pro Travel** website under **Other Ways to Give** and get booking!