



# Training is Learned, Trust is Earned

## GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA GRADUATES SHARE STORIES OF LOVE AND TRUST

TRUST IS SOMETHING EVERY GUIDE DOG WILL HAVE TO WORK HARD TO EARN FROM HIS OR HER NEW PARTNER AND THE WORK BEGINS THE FIRST DAY THE TEAM MEETS. For Guide Dogs of America graduates, trust starts to develop during

the three weeks of class and continues to build over the next weeks and months. Here, several graduates share stories about the events that led to them putting complete trust in their guide dogs.

GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA has already accomplished so much in 2019. We completed our student dormitories and administration building renovation projects, celebrated four graduation ceremonies, held two major fundraisers on campus (Dinner in the Dark and Ride for Guides), and for the first-time ever, we participated as a charity partner in the LA Marathon with 14 runners.

The year is going strong and I am excited about what's on the horizon, which includes three more graduations, two on-campus fundraisers (Open House and Casino Night), and our annual Las Vegas Charity Weekend in November.

We always welcome you to visit our beautiful campus and we look forward to showing you all of the changes. I am confident that you will be impressed by our campus. We thank our staff, volunteers, and generous donors for supporting the growth and future of Guide Dogs of America.

I encourage you to visit our website to learn about the many fundraising events across the country that you can participate in. The website will also keep you updated on other ways we could use your help, items available for purchase, and how to include Guide Dogs of America in your planned giving.

I am proud of our endeavors, and appreciative of your support. Thank you for being a member of the GDA family.

—Russell Gittlen, President



Russell Gittlen, President,  
Guide Dogs of America

“Roughly three weeks after receiving my guide dog, I was walking alongside a sighted friend and we were chatting away. Out of nowhere, a very aggressive dog came at us growling and snapping. I later found out that the dog was a mere six inches away from my guide dog's face. My dog never missed a beat. He pushed me to the left and just kept guiding. We crossed the street we had been approaching safely, and when I got to the other side and was safe, I dropped to my knees and praised my dog for a job well done. He had my full trust from that point forward.”

—Cari Shields

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"I've had five guide dogs and I have always bonded and had complete trust in my dogs after a very short time, often even before leaving class. The most dramatic and telling moment came with my first dog Lilly. The first time I picked up her harness and said 'forward' I knew I could trust her. I felt free and almost like I was flying. But this trust was completely cemented during the second week of class when one of the instructors was purposely driving in a way that was meant to distract my dog and show me how well she would respond to the challenge. Lilly stopped on a dime and kept us safe."

—Sharlene Wills

"Shortly after graduating, Brie and I traveled to another city. While walking back from a restaurant we had to negotiate through some construction. Brie calmly maneuvered around the obstacles and at exactly the right spot, she stopped and showed me the curb and led us back to the hotel. At that moment, I realized that Brie was special and my trust in her went from being strong to knowing that she truly loved her work. There have been many similar incidences since that day, but that was the 'aha moment' for me in our relationship."

—Andy Leach



"I knew I could put my full trust in Gracy about three weeks after we got home. We were walking to work after a bad rain and wind storm the night before. Without hesitation, Gracy directed me through the toppled cones,

sawhorses, and tree branches to reach the office. It wasn't until we reached the intersection that someone commented on how amazing it was that Gracy directed me safely through the many obstacles. He said he could tell she was concentrating hard on getting us to where we needed to go safely. It's seven years later and we have never looked back!"

—Mike Moore

"Within a month after graduating from GDA, Archie and I walked to the local Senior Center. It was a walk I had practiced many times with my GDA instructor. After conducting my business and starting our walk home across the parking lot, Archie and I heard and stopped for a bus. The bus passed and I attempted to proceed again, but Archie held me back and stepped in front of body. My forward progress was blocked. 'Come on, let's go,' I told him. It was then I realized there was a second vehicle passing an electric vehicle that I did not hear but Archie saw. In that moment I realized how I could depend on Archie to lead me safely anywhere and everywhere. Thank you, GDA!"

—James Jay 🐾





# Puppy Corner

**ALL WORK AND NO PLAY... NO WAY!!!**

TRAINING YOUR DOG, ESPECIALLY BASIC OBEDIENCE AND GOOD HOUSE MANNERS, is an especially important and responsible part of being a pet owner, but all work and no play may not be the path to the greatest success.

Yes, teaching important life skills and manners is important but adding playtime will make training much more fun and effective. Play, either with another dog or with you, is not only fun, but also important to your pup's overall well-being. Like humans, dogs get cognitive, physical, and social benefits from play, and it can be a stress reliever. Incorporating various forms of play into your dog's daily routine is key to helping him develop a healthy, loving personality.

- **Physical Health.** Active play helps keep your dog's heart healthy, keeps the joints lubricated, and improves his overall balance and coordination.
- **Mind Games.** Mentally stimulating activities (often referred to as brain games) are a fun way to enrich our dogs' lives by giving them something meaningful to do. These activities alleviate boredom and decrease the likelihood of your dog developing behavioral issues such as excessive barking or chewing.



- **Social Skills.** When your dog plays with other dogs and people, it helps improve his overall social skills. He learns basic rules and how to play by them.
- **Bond Building.** Even if it's only for a few minutes a day, playtime is one of the best ways to strengthen the bond between you and your dog.
- **Boredom Buster.** When dogs get bored they'll come up with their own ways to entertain themselves — and that often involves undesirable and often destructive behaviors. Use their regular daily routines, like feeding time, to your benefit by feeding meals in a food dispensing toy, hiding some of the kibble in the yard for your puppy to search, or doing a bit of obedience training to make a five minute meal turn into a boredom buster!
- **Make Training Fun.** Mixing play with obedience helps teach your puppy patience while performing training cues.
- **Benefits for Both of You.** Playing with your dog after a busy day at work or school is a great way to unwind for you and a lot of fun for him. A woof-win for both of you.

Remember, reward your dog when he does well when you're teaching him a new game. Rewards don't have to be tasty treats (although these usually work well); a favorite toy, scratch on his favorite spot, and/or praise are just as effective. Mix up the rewards depending on how hard the game is. 🐾

## IN LOVING MEMORY

With sadness, we note the passing of the following guide dogs. Along with their partners, we thank them for their years of dedicated service and companionship:

- **Fremont**, Class #347
- **Rosco**, Class #351
- **Kingston**, Class #364
- **Wink**, Class #361

# Donor Spotlight

## DAUGHTER FOLLOWED PARENTS' EXAMPLE

JANET SWANSON'S PARENTS STARTED DONATING TO GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA IN THE 1970s. Their nephew had been born with disabilities, including visual impairment, and they wanted to support organizations that would help him, and others like him. Although their nephew never used a guide dog, it was Swanson's parents' way of helping others who would benefit from having a four-legged partner helping them to navigate their world.

It was her mother's example that Janet Swanson followed starting in 1999 when she became a GDA donor.

"The cause is close to my heart and if my contribution can help to make the life of a blind or visually impaired person better and easier that is what I want do," said Swanson. "Guide Dogs of America became part of my estate plan and will benefit from my gift for years to come.

I think Guide Dogs of America is a very well-run organization and I have been so impressed with all my communication with them, both through the literature I receive and the personal contact I have with their Development team," said Swanson. "They do such valuable work to provide these dogs that give support to the visually impaired and blind."

Guide Dogs of America is privileged to benefit from the generosity of caring individuals like Swanson. Gifts to our endowment will continue to support our mission. If you would like information about becoming a Partner in Trust, please contact Rhonda Bissell at (818) 833-6432. 🐾

## GRADUATES



### Class #409

Graduates (Puppy Raisers in parentheses) Cesar Leal Morales and Waldo (Judy and Tom Kovaric), Amethyst Lines and Wally (George and Lisa Lopez), Amanda Stine and Vargo (Matt and Sherri Wette), Aisha McKinney-Wendt and Bacchus (Chris Roth), Ann Palley and Erin (David and Deborah Prough), Bette Hazard and Bowie (Aimee and Jason Semeleng), Diana Turley and Garnet (Suzette and Kathryn Davis), Vivian Conger and Sallie (Robert and Jean James), Sara Nordstrom and Dean (The Heaner Family), Frank Estrada and Cooper (Scott and Debbie Oppenheim)

**INSTRUCTORS:** Alejandra Maldonado, Sean Chiles, Tiffany Brundy



### Class #410

Graduates (Puppy Raisers in parentheses) Laura Zumbro and Garmin (Sydney Stevenson and Family), Dianne Logan and Jetty (Denise Brown), Henry Panick and Charley (Vikki and Louis Mele), Peggy Madrid and Harrison (Megan Wilson), Debbie Paul and Eliza (Katherine So and Family), Gary Simmons and Walter (Glyn and Marilyn Judson), Latonya "Toni" Carr and Cassidy (Bob and Alison Schooley), Donna Austin and Tia (The Ramirez Family), Liz Whitlock and Greta (Mary and Leonard Kenney)

**INSTRUCTORS:** Linda Hawes, Kim Geczi, Kelsey Horst

### In-Home

BJ Campbell and Magnum (Susan Thorburn);

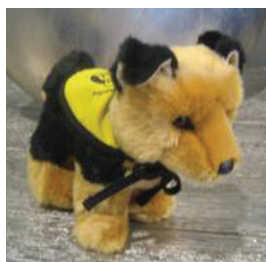
**INSTRUCTOR:** Jamie Hunt



# Merchandise

## SHOP GDA

Check out new and popular merchandise from Shop GDA! For additional product information or purchase, go to [guidedogsofamerica.org](http://guidedogsofamerica.org), then click on Shop GDA! Merchandise also is available for purchase by calling (818) 362-5834 or at GDA's retail store. Several of our newest items are featured here.



### PLUSH PUPPY

Cuddly German Shepherd plush sports the "official" Guide Dogs of America puppy-in-training jacket.

PRICE: \$20.00\*

### ROYAL TRI-BLEND HOODIE (UNISEX)

Heather blue, front-zip hoodie.

PRICE: \$50.00\*



### LET'S PLAY BALL!

Light grey graphic t-shirt (GDA logo on front pocket, graphic on back).

PRICE: \$25.00\*

### FETCHING DOG COLLARS

Available in pink/chocolate and green/navy.

PRICE: \$20.00\*



### 2019 GDA LAPEL PIN

Made in the U.S.A.

PRICE: \$8.00\*

\*Tax, shipping and handling not included



## LEAVE A LASTING LEGACY

### STUDENT DORMITORY RENOVATION PROJECT

Several naming opportunities are currently available for the newly renovated Student Dormitory. This is a truly unique and special way to support our programs, memorialize your commitment to our mission, and leave a legacy of giving for generations to come.

Naming donors will receive a tax acknowledgement letter upon receipt of your gift and a prominent donor recognition plaque will be placed outside the area you select to name.

Please see the naming opportunities below and contact Lisa Peterson at (818) 833-6429 if you are interested in being a part of this important project. Unless otherwise noted, all naming opportunities are individual sponsorships.

Thank you for your support.

<b>BUILDING:</b>	<b>NAMED</b> <del>\$300,000</del>
<b>STUDENT LOBBY:</b>	\$125,000
<b>STUDENT DINING HALL:</b>	\$100,000
<b>STUDENT LEARNING CENTER:</b>	\$75,000
<b>KITCHEN:</b>	\$50,000
<b>STUDENT OUTDOOR LOUNGE:</b>	\$35,000
<b>DORMITORY ROOMS:</b> (12 remaining naming opportunities)	\$25,000
<b>TRAINER OFFICE:</b>	<b>NAMED</b> <del>\$20,000</del>
<b>ENTRANCE AWNING:</b>	<b>NAMED</b> <del>\$10,000</del>
<b>DORM LAUNDRY ROOM:</b>	\$5,000
<b>DORM ROOM PATIO:</b> (14 remaining naming opportunities)	\$5,000

Gifts in the amounts listed below will be acknowledged on the renovated dorm's dedicated Donor Recognition Garden Sculpture:

- **LEADERS** \$3,000 up to \$5,000
- **PARTNERS** \$1,000 up to \$2,999
- **FRIENDS** \$500 up to \$999



# Guide Dogs of America

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NON-PROFIT  
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U.S. POSTAGE

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LOS ANGELES, CA  
PERMIT NO. 2181

## GET PARTNERS DIGITALLY!

If you would like to receive Guide Dogs of America'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](http://www.guidedogsofamerica.org) and click on the "Partners" icon, located on the right side of homepage. Fill out the form with your email address and mailing address so we can remove you from the postage newsletter list.

## 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Guide Dogs of America William W. Winpisinger Charity Banquet



**Saturday, November 23, 2019**  
Bally's Las Vegas Hotel & Casino

## SAVE THE DATE

Mark your calendars for the annual Guide Dogs of America Las Vegas Charity weekend Nov. 21-23, 2019. This year's theme is "Woofstock," so get in the groove, grab your tie-dye or favorite rock band t-shirt, bell bottoms and beads! For three days you'll be feelin' groovy at this far out experience full of Peace, Love, and Puppies.

The weekend will kick off Thursday, Nov. 21, with the Hawgs for Dogs ride and the Sporting Clay event. Friday morning, golfers will tee off at Revere Golf Club. The weekend will conclude on Saturday evening with the 39th-annual William W. Winpisinger Charity Banquet at Bally's Las Vegas Hotel & Casino. This year, we will offer online registration for all events! Hardcopy invitations will also be available and mailed early this summer and details will be posted on the GDA website. 🐾

**MISSION STATEMENT:** Guide Dogs of America empowers people who are blind and visually impaired to live with increased independence, confidence and mobility by providing expertly matched guide dog partners.