ALUMNI NEWS

Volume 32 – Issue 3

Editors: Pete Berg, Kelly Egan, Maia Scott, Leigh Moss, Kirsten French, and Amy Salger,

Audio version voiced by Cliff Hahn, Cliff Hahn Sound

We love your participation in this newsletter. Send submissions to the editor via phone: (415)-755-6417; or e-mail asalger@guidedogs.com, or alumninews@guidedogs.com

Alumni Association Mission Statement

The Alumni Association will support the vision of GDB, “using our power of partnering to improve quality of life”, by building a strong sustainable community of support among our Alumni. We will work to support Alumni success with their guide, in building relationships with others, and actively participating in the greater GDB community.

The Mission of The Alumni Association Board of Directors is to support Alumni and the vision of GDB. AA Board Directors will serve on committees with focuses that includes but are not limited to: advocacy, outreach, communications, and education.

Alumni News is available in various electronic forms. The audio version of this newsletter and Guide Dog News can be found on our website, guidedogs.com.

NEW! Alumni News is now available as a podcast, you can find it at Apple Podcasts, search for Alumni Updates. Please note that the recording of the newsletter takes some time so issues will post at a later date than the email version.

We'd like to send our very special thanks to all of our Alumni who, by their efforts and their examples, refer others to our program.

Interested in a career with GDB? Check out our opportunities at: <http://guidedogs.com/careers>

Browse all GDB’s newsletters, including back issues of Alumni News at [www.guidedogs.com/news](http://www.guidedogs.com/news)

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# FROM YOUR ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## GDB Reunion Announcement

Many of you have been asking and here is the answer!

The next GDB Alumni Reunion will be held on October 16th through October 19, 2025.

The location is the Embassy Suites in San Rafael, California.

More details will be available in the future.

We are looking forward to our GDB Community gathering at the next reunion!

## July Speaker Series

Title: Who are You?

Date: July 24th, 2024

Time: 4:00 PT./6:00 CT./7:00 ET.

Description:

Join the GDB Alumni Association Board of Directors for the next GDB Alumni Speaker Series session titled, “Who are You?” The session will feature members of the Alumni Board introducing themselves and providing an overview of upcoming projects and activities. Meet the new Alumni Board officers that will lead the Board this upcoming year. Participants will have an opportunity to ask questions of the speakers.

Please see Zoom link information below. We look forward to you joining us!

When: Jul 24, 2024 04:00 PM Pacific Time (US and Canada)

Topic: GDB Alumni Speaker Series: Who are You?

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

<https://gdb-official.zoom.us/j/96439539168>

Or One tap mobile :

+12532050468,,96439539168# US

+12042727920,, 96439539168# (Canada)

Or Telephone:

312 626 6799 US

438 809 7799 Canada

Webinar ID: 964 3953 916

## Rideshare Results

In case you missed out on hearing about the results of the Rideshare survey or would like to review some tips, here is your opportunity!

In 2023, 185 of you participated in a Rideshare survey. This survey was developed by the GDB Alumni Association Board of Directors and distributed to help gather data around the continuing issue of Rideshare denials. Your efforts and participation yielded undeniable results.

Recently GDB released these results to enhance the general public’s awareness of this issue; and to promote change among Rideshare agencies and drivers.

To review the results please click [here](https://www.guidedogs.com/rideshare)

The survey and results were also part of a Michigan news broadcast:

<https://www.fox17online.com/news/local-news/the-world-becomes-a-hostile-place-rideshare-companies-denying-people-with-guide-dogs>

You can also check out this Central Bark broadcast: <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-impact-of-rideshare-denials-on-service-dog-handlers/id1603263847?i=1000657849825>

What can you do? In addition to sharing the results and information; here are tips that can help you advocate for yourself and others. As well as information for reporting a denial.

TIPS FOR NAVIGATING RIDESHARE SERVICES AND REPORTING DENIALS

When booking and waiting for your ride:

You are not obligated to inform the company or drivers that you are accompanied by a guide-dog.

You are not restricted to the “pet service” options. You have the right to ANY service options ridesharing or taxi companies offer. In addition to being unnecessary and more expensive, these options may limit the number of potential drivers responding to your request.

For your records, once a ride is booked and a driver is assigned, take a screenshot of the open app which includes the driver’s name, vehicle and license plate number, and estimated arrival time.

A few minutes prior to your estimated pickup, call or message the driver to inform them precisely where you are waiting; that you will not be able to locate them visually; and that you have a service dog. Take a screenshot of this message as proof of your efforts to communicate with your driver.

When the app informs you of your driver’s arrival, take a photo of the car with your smart phone for proof that your ride showed up (or showed up and left). If you use a live visual assistance app such as Aira or Be My Eyes, that service can assist in locating the vehicle for you to then capture a photo.

If the driver has an issue with providing a ride because you are traveling with a guide dog, DO NOT CANCEL THE RIDE VIA THE APP. If you do cancel, you will be charged a cancellation fee, and the incident will not be accurately reflected in the driver’s records as having turned down your request.

During an active or confrontational denial of service use your smart phone’s video or audio-recording feature to create a record of your negative experiences with the rideshare provider

Reporting rideshare denials:

Filing a discrimination complaint with the appropriate government authority, and National Federation for the Blind (NFB), provides government regulators and watchdogs with data to address civil rights discrimination more effectively. Reporting denials directly to ride share companies helps hold the driver and the rideshare company accountable.

Share your experience with the National Federation of the Blind (NFB) Rideshare Discrimination Survey via its [NFB’s Rideshare Survey](https://nfb.org/programs-services/legal-program/uber-and-lyft-survey). (NFB led the 2016-2020 agreement with Uber to report and gather data on discrimination against guide dog teams. NFB continues to collect data for future advocacy efforts.)

As complaints of rideshare discrimination against service-dog handlers persist, advocates have reached out to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ), Civil Rights Division for better law enforcement. Reporting your personal discrimination experience to the DOJ provides needed data to justify legal actions. Visit the [Department of Justice website](https://civilrights.justice.gov/report/?utm_campaign=499a0d26-884a-47aa-9afc-70094d92e6f5) to report a civil rights violation through a simple, easy-to-use online form, or call 855-856-1247.

If a driver denies you service, inform them that it is against the law to refuse a service dog and that you will be filing a discrimination report with the company.

If denied, follow the prompt on the rideshare company’s app to report a service animal ride denial.

Contact one or more of the relevant following companies or agencies where appropriate:

Uber: [Report an Assistance Animal Issue](https://help.uber.com/riders/article/report-an-assistive-device-or-assistance-animal-issue?nodeId=5f3eac46-e977-44a0-873e-f1881d48f4cb) or call 833-715-8237

Lyft: Dedicated Service-Animal hotline: 844-554-1297.

Here are links and contact information to file reports against guide-dog discrimination in Canada:

Alberta: [Alberta.ca](https://www.alberta.ca/report-concern-about-service-dogs) or call 780-427-9136.

British Columbia: Bchrt.gov.bc.ca or call 604-775-2000.

Newfoundland and Labrador: humanrights@gov.nl.caor 800-563-5808

Nova Scotia: Email novascotia.ca/servicedogs or call 888-760-5577

Ontario: [Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario](https://tribunalsontario.ca/hrto/)

# THEME: WHO ARE YOU?

## Kirsten French

Forward from Vancouver

Two new teams join the GDB Alumni Board

By Maia Scott

The GDB Alumni Board welcomes two talented women from Vancouver, located on the west side of North America. And yet, each joins us from different countries with their own currencies and political systems. From Vancouver, we celebrate two unique perspectives on access, culture and lived experience.

Meet Kirsten French, originally from Pennsylvania, who calls Vancouver Washington her home where she traverses her busy, active lifestyle with her first guide, a four-year-old labrador named Knightley. Prior to her partnership with Nightly, Kirsten first became a GDB Alumni upon her OMI graduation. Kirsten shares a bit of home-pride trivia, “Fun fact, this is the original Vancouver!”

Kirsten shares her exuberance, connection to the blindness community, leadership skills and teamwork sensibilities to the Alumni Board. “I am the Programs Manager of Camp Spark and Sports Adaptations at the Northwest Association for Blind Athletes.”

In fact, Kirsten jockeys the line between work and play, bringing her own personal passions to her workplace. When she’s not inciting joy for the outdoors and active lifestyle through programming at work, she is indeed walking the walk preferably under the vast ceiling of sun and stars. “I love being outdoors as much as possible.” She says, “especially with Knightley.”

Kirsten and Knightley have adventures for every season. “We love to hike, snowshoe, kayak, paddleboard, and anything!” Sadly, Knightley can’t join in EVERY adventure - yet. “I also love to bike and am just waiting for the day when Knightley learns how to captain a tandem bike.” Well, hay. A gal can dream.

Partnership with Knightley empowered Kirsten to revisit outdoor adventures anew. “This past year, for my birthday, we went snowshoeing on Mt. Hood. This was my favorite place to go when I could drive and I so missed being able to get out in the snow and adventure up the mountain.” They had a great time taking public transit all the way there, then snowshoeing up to Mirror Lake. “It was so quiet; there was no one else out there and I loved being able to do this again with just my guide!”

A forthcoming adventure will harness Kirsten and Knightley’s partnership across the drink. “We are currently training for a hike in Scotland that we will be doing this Fall.”

Regarding adventures of the guide dog lifestyle kind, the Alumni Association and the sense of community it fosters weighed in on Kirsten’s decision to apply for training at Guide Dogs for the Blind, “And the alumni association board is central to this.” She goes on to share, “I am so excited to be a part of such an impactful board, to be able to continue the support that I have gained so much from possible.”

How about Vancouver, Canada? Kirsten adventured there as well, wag-end warrior style to boot. Last year, they took a tour around the city that included traversing suspension bridges through the trees and over a deep ravine. “It was so wild and the bridge was swinging a bit.” Kirsten goes on to share the wonders of her guide, “However, Knightley crossed it like this was something she did all of the time and had always been training for.”

## Betty Nobel

Now leaving visions of Kirsten and Knightley swaying in the trees to head across Vancouver, Canada and meet our next new board member…

We’re excited to welcome Betty Nobel as one of our newest members of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Alumni Association Board. Betty recently sat down with current board member Leigh Moss to share more about herself and her dedication to our community.

Betty grew up in Vancouver, BC, and continues to call this vibrant city her home today.

She is a seasoned guide dog user, having partnered with six dogs from GDB. As we chatted, Betty fondly recalled her last guide dog’s uncanny ability to find elevators in unfamiliar stations and locate the correct classrooms during school visits, showcasing the remarkable bond and trust between them. Currently, she is eagerly awaiting her seventh guide dog, with nearly a year on the waitlist. She’ll be joining our next “While We Wait” panel discussion on August 6, tailored for those out there waiting for their first (or next) guide.

Betty’s passion for community service shines through her extensive volunteer work. She chairs her choir board and serves on the boards of Accessible Media Inc. (AMI) and Vision Loss Rehab. Additionally, she is an active member of the American Council of the Blind (ACB) and two Canadian consumer groups, all driven by her commitment to accessibility.

A self-proclaimed lover of chocolate and sports enthusiast, Betty avidly follows the Toronto Blue Jays, the Seattle Mariners, the Vancouver Canucks, and the BC Lions. She also loves to read! Books about strong women overcoming adversity, as well as about dogs working in search and rescue, and law enforcement, are some favorite genres.

When asked about her inspiration for joining the GDB Alumni Association board, Betty noted she is deeply motivated to support alumni facing challenges with independent travel and to advocate for accessibility, which she feels is more critical now than ever before.

We are thrilled to have Betty on the GDB Alumni Association Board, bringing her wealth of experience, dedication, and passion to our community. Please join us in welcoming her and celebrating her commitment to enhancing our collective journey toward independence and accessibility

## Pete’s Playlist

[Who are You?-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYb_nqU_43w) The Who

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LYb_nqU_43w>

[Say My Name-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQgd6MccwZc) Destiny's Child

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sQgd6MccwZc>

[We are Family- Sister Sledge](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyGY2NfYpeE)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyGY2NfYpeE>

[Who Can it Be Now?-](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SECVGN4Bsgg) Men at Work

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SECVGN4Bsgg>

[Say Your Name](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cRe9DWzaqc)- Plumb

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cRe9DWzaqc>

[Name Game](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MJLi5_dyn0)- Shirley Ellis

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5MJLi5_dyn0>

[Gave it a Name](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65zDkm-Z_VQ)- Bruce Springsteen

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65zDkm-Z_VQ>

[Who Do You Think You Are](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YriinrRGug)- Spice Girls

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YriinrRGug

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-YriinrRGug>

[What's in a Name?](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCpvDEflVH4) - The Airborne Toxic Event

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uCpvDEflVH4>

[Ain’t No Mountain High Enough- Diana Ross](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjCz_sUVZ5U)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EjCz_sUVZ5U>

## Ice Cream Recipe

Guide Dog Nightly enjoys this tasty ice cream treat. Sometimes, may even share with Kirsten!

Ingredients

1 cup of plain yogurt

1 overripe banana

½ cup peanut butter

Instructions: Throw all ingredients together in a blender and blend until smooth.  Pour it in a airtight container, put the lid on, and freeze.  Whenever you are ready to give your pup a frozen treat, scoop a bit out!

For an even easier grab and go treat, freeze it in small muffin tins or silicone molds and pop one out!

# THE WAY WE SEE IT

## Martinez Summer Treat

By Martinez via Cheri Owen

Martinez loves these treats, and they are perfect for a warm or hot day. They are super easy to make with only three ingredients! Enjoy!!

Ingredients:

1 chicken stock cube – reduced salt

About 400 to 500 ml of water

About a cup of chopped fresh parsley

Once you have all your ingredients, follow the instructions below to create your icy delight.

Instructions:

Take you reduced salt chicken cube and dissolve it in the water and set aside.

Make sure your parsley is finely chopped and stir it in the chicken stock.

Then, pour your mixture into ice cube trays or silicon trays (I have one that gives 12 treats that come out looking like a dog biscuit) and put them in the freezer.

Wait a few hours and they will be ready!

Martinez loves the flavor, and the parsley is great for his breath!

# FROM GDB

## Ken Altenburger

Dear GDB Alumni,

It is with deep sadness that we share news of the passing of our beloved colleague of 27 years, Ken Altenburger. Ken was a cherished member of the Support Center team and a devoted handler to his three guide dogs: Honcho (LABBM), Bristol (LGXYM), and Jabari (LGXYM). We will deeply miss Ken's presence, his wisdom, and his friendly spirit. Ken’s contributions to the GDB community were invaluable, and his impact is felt by everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.

If you would like to express your condolences to the family please click on the following link: igraduatesupport@guidedogs.com and GDB will collect and pass along your sentiments.

## GDB Holiday Luncheon

Save the Date or purchase your ticket today!

Join us at the 48th ANNUAL HOLIDAY LUNCHEON

Friday, December 13, 2024 | 11:00 am

The Westin St. Francis Hotel - Union Square, San Francisco

11:00 am - Reception, Raffle, and Gift Boutique

12:00 noon – Luncheon, program and puppy parade

Tickets: $200 per person

[For event or sponsorship information click here](http://www.guidedogs.com/holiday-luncheon)

Or, please contact Debi Morgen at 415.488.2340 or  dmorgen@guidedogs.com or scan the below QR code for more details.



If you are interested in entering a drawing for a free ticket, please let Debi Morgen know by September 1st. We will be giving away 4 seats!

Or purchase a ticket and register by September 1st to be entered into a special raffle drawing to win one free ticket for a friend! A $200 value.

## Holiday Luncheon Top Dog

Guide Dogs for the Blind

 Top Dog of the Holiday Luncheon Fundraiser

A Philanthropic Competition

Will you be Guide Dog for the Blind’s next Top Dog? Can you encourage your friends, families and colleagues to donate to GDB in place of knitting another holiday scarf?

Join other alumni for this 6 week online challenge to raise funds for the life-changing mission of Guide Dogs for the Blind.

The Top Dog award will be presented at the Holiday Luncheon on Friday, December 13th in San Francisco to the alumni team that raises the most funds by event day.

Peer-to-Peer fundraising is a method of fundraising where individuals or teams raise funds on behalf of GDB. Participants leverage personal connections like family, friends, colleagues, clubs and social groups to help GDB raise funds. Using Guide Dogs for the Blind’s online peer fundraising platform, PAWSitive Impact, you will have all the tools you need to share your story - inspiring your network to support your efforts to help individuals who are blind or visually impaired to live the life they want to live.

Getting Started:

Any GDB alumni chapter that would like to participate, should designate a Team Captain and email Amy Salger, Alumni Engagement Manager at asalger@guidedogs.com by September 1.

If you are not part of a chapter or if your chapter does not want to join in the fun, we still hope you will participate. Everyone interested will be assigned a group – it is a great way to make new friends and help GDB. Email Amy Salger if you want to join a team.

Once you have signed up and are part of a team, we will contact you about building your fundraising pages through the [Get Creative portal of PAWSitive Impact](https://fundraise.guidedogs.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=donorDrive.event&eventID=526). We will provide a step-by-step guide to get you up and running if you’re unfamiliar with this type of do-it-yourself online platform.

Important Dates:

Sign up by September 1, 2024

The Top Dog contest will run from November 1 to December 12, 2024.

Acknowledgement and Recognition:

The Top Dog will be announced and celebrated live, during the Holiday Luncheon and will receive the honor of naming a GDB puppy and future Canine Hero!

Use of Funds:

All donations are unrestricted contributions to support Guide Dogs for the Blind’s life-changing programs and services.

Funds raised through the PAWSitive Impact platform cannot be restricted to Alumni Chapters.

Thank you for fundraising on behalf of GDB and good luck!

## National Guide Dog Month Fundraiser

Here is another Fundraising Opportunity

Every September, during National Guide Dog Month, Guide Dogs for the Blind celebrates the life-changing impact of guide dogs. This year we will be introducing a Day of Giving on September 25, 2024, providing our supporters a special day during a special month to rally around these important partnerships. Because when everyone is empowered to participate, our communities are stronger!

National Guide Dog Month, and GDB’s Day of Giving, are wonderful opportunities to share your story and fundraise for GDB through our online fundraising platform [PAWSitive Impact](https://fundraise.guidedogs.com/). It’s fun, easy, and impactful.

Whether you decide to start a fundraiser on your own, or form a fundraising team with others, [PAWSitive Impact](https://fundraise.guidedogs.com/) is a one-stop portal providing everything you need.

If participating in our Top Dog Holiday Luncheon Fundraising Competition is not for you, please consider doing something during National Guide Dogs Month.

For more questions, please email us at fundraise@guidedogs.com or call us at 415-755-6420.

## CDC FAQ’s

GDB FAQ on CDC update

What is the CDC rule change taking place on August 1, 2024?

The CDC issued a statement that dogs entering the United States will need to meet minimum criteria and require additional documentation in order to cross the border. These criteria include:

Healthy upon arrival.

At least 6 months of age.

Have a current microchip that is International Organization for Standardization (ISO)-compatible

Have a complete CDC Dog Import form receipt. This form also requires a current photo of the dog to be uploaded. It is to be complete in addition to a vaccine record, the current DOT travel forms, and USDA-issued health certificate signed by a veterinarian.

Who does this ruling apply to?

This regulation is to control the entry of dogs into the United States from other countries. These rules apply to all dogs, including puppies, service animals, and dogs that left the United States and are returning. They also apply whether you are a U.S. citizen, legal U.S. resident, or foreign national. ([cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov))

What do GDB constituents need to understand about this ruling?

Dogs entering the United States, including guide dogs and other service dogs, need to be up to date on vaccines, microchipped, appear healthy, and be at least 6 months old.

There will need to be an additional form to complete prior to travel. According to the CDC website, the form will need to be completed “ideally 2-10 days before arrival; however, it can also be completed right before travel (even in line at the border crossing) if you have internet access.” ([cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov))

Why did the CDC change their ruling?

The change is being established to limit dogs that enter the United States who may be carrying DMRVV, otherwise known as dog rabies. The rabies variant carried by dogs was eliminated in the United States in 2007 and the CDC wants to prevent the re-introduction of the disease.

The CDC is trying to reduce the overall instances of falsified papers for imported puppies

The standardization of the dog importation process, including standard requirements for the minimum age of imported dogs, microchips, the CDC Dog Import Form, and other documentation, will streamline the importation process and allow for safer and more efficient entry of dogs into the United States. ([cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov))

How will this affect the different operations within Guide Dogs for the Blind?

Breeding contracts made with other countries often have puppy exchanges as a term of the contract. With this new ruling, the terms of these contracts cannot be met as written.

Additional resources abroad will be needed to care for a puppy until it is 6 months old if it is to be brought to GDB as a potential breeding dog.

An additional burden is placed on GDB’s guide dog clients to complete additional documentation each time they enter the United States with their guide dogs.

Additional documentation will need to be completed for staff traveling between the US and other countries (such as Canada and Mexico) who will be traveling with a guide dog.

What is the new process for traveling abroad with my dog?

Exiting the United States remains the same. The DOT travel form and USDA health certificate are unaffected by this change.

Entering or re-entering the United States will require the above-mentioned forms as well as the CDC’s digital form (not yet released), which is to include a recent photograph of the dog traveling that includes its head and body.

What is the process for traveling domestically with my dog?

Travel within the United States does not change.

How does this relate to the DOT forms used for travel?

These forms are in addition to the DOT forms and the USDA health certificate signed by your veterinarian.

How does this affect Mexican and Canadian travelers entering the United States?

The CDC’s importation requirements apply to all dogs, including dogs that leave the country for short trips, such as to visit family or friends, or to receive veterinary care. Both Canada and Mexico are rabies-free countries.

Dogs traveling from a low-risk country (such as Canada or Mexico) will still need to complete the CDC dog import form each time they enter the United States. No additional rabies vaccinations or titering is necessary outside of the scheduled 1-year or 3-year vaccine.

What is GDB’s opinion on the rule change?

Guide Dogs for the Blind has taken the position that this ruling is a discrimination against people with disabilities in that it will impede the ability of guide dog users to travel outside of the United States. GDB’s clients often need to travel for work or personal reasons and the extra time and expense it would take for them to schedule and attend veterinary appointments and complete CDC dog import forms under the new rule would place undue, unreasonable, and unnecessary hardships on them.

This additional documentation is redundant, as clients of GDB as well as all accredited members of IGDF and ADI are already required to provide proof of rabies vaccination to maintain public access.

This ruling will have a negative impact on our breeding program and the genetic diversity vital to produce guide dogs.

What lobbying efforts have been made by GDB against the ruling?

Guide Dogs for the Blind has reached out to the appropriate legislators with our concerns, as has Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF).

What can I do to help?

Please write to your local representatives to make them aware of this policy change and the undue burden it puts on guide dog clients as well as breeding dog contracts.

What are the key dates to know?

August 1, 2024 is when the new system goes into effect. There is a 1-year grace period, with full transition occurring on July 31, 2025.

Where can I go for more information?

<https://www.cdc.gov/importation/bringing-an-animal-into-the-united-states/dogs.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/importation/bringing-an-animal-into-the-united-states/faqs-about-high-risk-dog-ban.html>

University of Guelph’s Ontario Veterinary College blog: <https://www.wormsandgermsblog.com/2024/05/articles/animals/dogs/new-us-dog-importation-rules/>

## GDB Gift Shop

Whether you are out on summer adventures or trying to beat the heat, take a moment to see how you can update your GDB Swag!

Reminder: You can order Gift Shop merchandise online 24/7 at [www.guidedogs.com](http://www.guidedogs.com), or you may call our customer service number at 503-668-2115 and leave us a message. All orders are subject to applicable tax and shipping fees. We return phone calls and ship online orders on Tuesday and Thursday mornings from our Oregon campus.   For faster service, order 24/7 at [www.guidedogs.com/shop](http://www.guidedogs.com/shop)Gift cards can be purchased and redeemed online, as well as in person and over the phone.

Please check our website periodically for new merchandise updates.

If you have product suggestions, feel free to email me at mmcnew@guidedogs.com.

# IN MEMORY AND TRIBUTE

Angora, a female black lab died January 15, 2024. Her partnership was with Vivian Berkeley and they resided in Onterio.

Timber, a black lab male, died June 25, 2024. His partnership was with Leslie Bruckner and they resided in Santa Barbara, CA

# SPECIAL DATES

July is Disability Pride month and the ADA Anniversary.

September is National Guide Dog Month.

# ALUMNI ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Emiliano Smith Jr.

Congratulations to Emiliano Smith Jr. and his guide dog Etcher who graduated from UC Davis with a bachelor’s degree in political science with honors. Emiliano plans to attend Law School

## Hollywood Bowl Event

It’s time for the annual get-together for Guide Dogs for the Blind Teams, puppy raisers and supporters of GDB.

Get ready for an unforgettable night of music and cinema with MARVEL STUDIOS Infinity Saga, A Concert Experience!

Date: Saturday August 31 2024

Time: 8:00 pm

Location: the Hollywood Bowl 2301 North Highland Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90068

You may think you’ve seen these stories before, but never like this. Join the Los Angeles Philharmonic as we embark together on a live concert and cinematic journey through the Marvel Infinity Saga—beginning with the Tesseract being hidden on Earth by the Asgardians all the way to Tony’s ultimate sacrifice—from an all-new perspective.

IF YOU HAVE ANY TROUBLE WITH THE WEBSITE CALL ME: 909.539.7196

Ticket purchase deadline: July 20, 2024
Picnic: 6:00 pm to 7:30 pm | Performance starts: 8:00 pm
Ticket Price: $19.50 includes the ticket, picnic area and bench cushion
Transportation: [Hollywood Bowl Shuttle and Park & Ride](https://www.hollywoodbowl.com/visit/getting-here/park-ride-and-bowl-shuttle) or your own transportation. You can purchase your shuttle tickets here to save the service fee.
[Picnic Area 14](https://www.hollywoodbowl.com/visit/when-youre-here/picnicking): has also been reserved for us. This is a great time to meet and greet other attendees.
A Free space is provided for each dog!
Assistive Listening Devices will also be available for free.
Reserve your seats: [Here online](https://maryannepstein.com/tickets/) or call Mary Ann at 909-539-7196 or
email maryann@realpro.la

Mary Ann Epstein
909-539-7196
maryann@realpro.la

## Ski for Light

Goes For Gold in Celebration of Golden Anniversary

 Ski for Light, Inc. (SFL) celebrates its 50th anniversary at Soldier Hollow, January 26 through February 2, 2025. Ski for Light, an all-volunteer, non-profit organization, hosts an annual, week-long event where adults with visual or mobility impairments learn the basics of cross-country skiing.

Participants will stay at the Provo Marriott Hotel & Conference Center, and ski on expertly groomed trails at Soldier Hollow, near Midway, Utah.

Each visually or mobility impaired participant is paired with an instructor guide for a week of skiing, sharing and learning.

First year participant Lucas Rice enthusiastically sums up his experience; “For me, Ski for Light was very freeing and adventurous.”

For SFL 2025 Event Chair Sheri Richardson, there's no better setting for a golden anniversary than the storied Olympic trails of Soldier Hollow. "In addition to the amazing location, we are planning a fun-filled week of new activities and past reminiscences," Richardson says. "Come and catch up with old friends while we all make new ones, and help us set tracks for the next fifty years of Ski for Light.”

Join the celebration by participating as a skier, a guide or a volunteer. Applications and additional information will be available in the summer at www.sfl.org; meanwhile, join our community on Facebook (Ski for Light, Inc.), and check out our YouTube channel (Ski for Light International).

# CHAPTER CHATS

The early winter months of 2024 featured lots of cool topics amidst warm company within our diverse geographical and topical chapters. Here, you will find updates and highlights from some of our illustrious chapters.

GDB Bibliophiles Alumni Chapter has been reading their way through new and exciting adventures. In February they read the book "Lost Moon: The Perilous Voyage of Apollo 13" by Jeffrey Kluger and Jim Lovell. In March they enjoyed “The violin Conspiracy” by Slocumb, Brendan and had a great discussion.

If you want to read along over the next months: April's book is: “The extraordinary life of Sam Hell” by Dugoni, Robert that tells the story of Sam Hill who was called "Devil Boy" as a child because he was born with red eyes. May’s book is: “Horse” by Brooks, Geraldine; the amazing story, history, and legend of an amazing horse over the generations. June’s book is “The sign for home: a novel” by Fell, Blair; a young man’s story of not only being blind, but also deaf and the tumultuous twist and turns life takes him on

GDB Desert Dogs of Arizona Chapter, in March, held its annual Spring Snack & Chat in Scott Wilcock’s backyard.  Eight handlers and two perspective handlers attended and all had a great time.  Fun-time frolics ALMOST became a pool party, so let’s leave it at what happened in Scott’s yard stays in Scott’s yard.

GDB Foggy Doggies of the San Francisco Bay Area hosted Ray Wright, proprietor of Wright Turn Only as their guest speaker.  He shared his story of transitioning from working in the movie theater business and being a graphic designer as a sighted person to being a totally blind woodworker and instructor. During their March Meeting, presenter Preston shared tools and tricks for navigating Zoom and all it’s functions, including generating agendas using their AI function and disabling the annoying “Safe Driving function since driving is moot. Preston is also working to build a repository of screen reader demos for various Zoom products.

GDB HaRT (Handlers and Raisers Together) created a Facebook group for our new chapter. After answering questions about GDB affiliation and more, approximately 239 people join the group in the first month. In February thirty-seven members joined their inaugural meeting via Zoom to introduce themselves and talk about meeting content ideas. The March meeting tapped into their pool of new ideas and featured “The Call” raisers get when they learn their dog is graduating and students receive to receive their class dates. Mallory from the Boring campus will join their next meeting to talk about the puppy recall process and how raisers can prepare their dogs for the big change ahead.

GDB San Diego guide Dog handlers alumni group meets virtually every month, staying consistently active. In February, the San Diego chapter held their annual elections over Zoom.

 GDB Washington State Alumni continues to connect on a monthly basis. During this quarter, Charles Nathan came to talk about the changes in the field management in their area. A couple other field reps also joined the conversation. The general consensus is that the new arrangement now allows them to serve more people in the area.

GDB Windy City Alumni Chapter met to discuss the Accessible Chicago screening that featured cultural venues across the city and how they are encouraging access for individuals with an array of disabilities to visit each of them. One of our own, Cyndi Fosco was featured with her guide visiting Steppenwolf theater. To learn more, here are links to both Cyndi's video and all of the videos that Fun4TheDisabled puts out:

<https://lnkd.in/gi5K52RU> -- Our very own Cyndi Fosco at the Steppenwolf theater

<https://fun4thedisabled.com/> -- Fun4thedisabled all videos

 Additionally, we discussed plans for May to visit one of the featured venues, the Garfield Park Conservatory.

# PARTICIPATION RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Below are opportunities to participate in outside research studies and surveys related to blindness and the guide dog lifestyle. The following opportunities are not affiliated with or endorsed by Guide Dogs for the Blind in any way and the links will lead you to third-party sites that are not associated with our organization.

## Empowerment Mentorship

Have you ever thought about volunteering to be a mentor to support juniors or seniors in high school who have visual barriers?

If yes, here is a virtual platform opportunity.

The Empowering Youth with Visual Impairment team is recruiting for adult Mentors with visual impairment for our EMPOWER VI Mentoring program. Mentoring from adults with visual impairment can provide a supportive bridge for transition-aged youth with visual impairment, helping them build confidence, skills, and a path toward a successful future. With guidance and support from EMPOWER staff, Mentors with visual impairments can draw upon their lived experiences and expertise to encourage Mentees with visual impairments to successfully navigate their postsecondary goals.

More information can be found on our website: [Mentorship (empowervi.org)](https://www.empowervi.org/mentorship)

Or to apply: [Application for Mentors](https://redcap.link/EMPOWERVImentor)

## Service Animal Workplace Interview

ILRU and Southwest ADA Center at TIRR Memorial Hermann

SERVICE ANIMAL& ESA STUDY

We are carrying out research into the use of service animals and emotional support animals by people with disabilities in the workplace and are currently looking for individuals to interview.

Whether you use a service animal or emotional support animal at work, we would like to hear from you.

The interview will take about 30 minutes to complete.

You do not have to answer any questions that you do not wish to answer.

The information collected for this study does not contain identifiable information about you or your employer.

You will be compensated with a $25 gift card to participate in the interview.

If interested in participating, please see the below contact information.

Contact Information:

Jocelyne.Fajardo@memorialhermann.org 713-797-7129

Vincent.Sokhon@memorialhermann.org 713-797-7131

# ALUMNI ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers:

Chair – Claire Stanley / Tulane

Rockville, MD

cstanley@guidedogs.com

Vice-Chair – Maia Scott/*Gleam*

San Francisco, CA

(415) 290-6242

mscott@guidedogs.com

Secretary - Chris Yoon/*Sadie*

Bellevue, WA

cyoon@guidedogs.com

Members at Large

Peter Berg / Lloyd

Naperville, IL

pberg@guidedogs.com

Deborah Cook/ *Praline*

Clarkston, WA

dcooklewis@guidedogs.com

Derek Daniel/Koa

Indianapolis, IN

ddaniel@guidedogs.com

Kelly Egan/*Caspian*

San Diego, CA

kegan@guidedogs.com

Kirsten French/Nightly

Vancouver, WA

kfrench@guidedogs.com

Leigh Moss/*Aviva*

Austin, TX

lmoss@guidedogs.com

Betty Nobel

Vancouver, Canada

bnobel@guidedogs.com

Melba Velez Ortiz/*Chad*

Allendale, MI 49401

 mvelezortiz@guidedogs.com

EX-Officio Members

Cheri Owen/Martinez*– GDB Board of Directors Liaison*

Santa Barbara, CA

cowen@guidedogs.com

Amy Salger/*Marsala – Alumni engagement Manager*

Vinton, IA

asalger@guidedogs.com

# GDB ALUMNI CHAPTERS

USA

Arizona

GDB Desert Dogs of Phoenix

Location: Phoenix, Arizona

President: Scott Wilcock, stitchbert@gmail.com

Vice-president: Michael Woody mwoody03@gmail.com

GDB Northern Arizona High Country Walkers

Location: Northern Arizona

President: Patricia Clingman, patriciaclingman@yahoo.com

California

GDB Alumni Foggy Doggies Bay Area Chapter

Location: San Francisco, California

Co-president: Lauri Shay, laurishay@gmail.com

Co-president: Jan Robitscher, jbrobit@aol.com

OC Guide Dogs for the Blind Alumni Chapter

Location: Orange County, California

Web Site: ocguidedogs.com

President: Alan Holst alanholst@me.com

Vice President: Paul Brennan pbrennan@daylemci.org

Secretary: Carla Ross, Jross4@cox.net

Treasurer: Cindy Barekman, drcindybwade@gmail.com

GDB Paws of Fame Guide Dogs for the Blind Alumni Chapter

Location: Los Angeles County, California

Web Site: www.pawsoffamela.com

President: Joseph Landau, jklandau@yahoo.com

GDB San Diego Paws and Peeps

Location: San Diego, California

President: Ethel Miranda- emiranda966@gmail.com

Vice-president: Monique Fenton, Moniquegdb14@gmail.com

Colorado

GDB Colorado Rocky rovers

Location: Denver, Colorado

Rocky Rovers email: GDB-RockyRovers@outlook.com

President: Richard Faubion and Lute

Vice-president: Andre van Hall and Crimson

Secretary: Sharon Greenberg and Nabi

Treasurer: Debbi Scott

Board At Large: Beth Gustin, Aziza Rodriguez and Penn Street

Florida

Sunshine Guide Dog Teams of Florida

Location: Florida

Description: We talk about our guide dogs and support each other with once a month calls and a once a year in person meeting.

President: Jim East, jim.east.mhs@gmail.com

Vice President: Marsha Bukala, mjbukala@yahoo.com

Secretary: Joanne Schulz

Illinois

GDB Windy City Alumni Chapter

Location: Chicago, Illinois

Description: Chicago and Northern Illinois

President: Maureen Reid- maureen.shenberger@gmail.com

Vice-President: Cyndi Fosco cyndifosco@comcast.net

Secretary: Ethan Edwards- eedwards008@gmail.com

Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, Ohio

GDB Guide Dog Handlers of the Midwest

President: Deanna Lewis, Deannakay03@gmail.com

Vice-president: Paul Walker, herospaw2002@gmail.com

Secretary: LuAnn Bowers

Montana

GDB Montana Alumni Chapter/Montana Dog Guide Group

Location: Montana

President: Ed Worrell ed.worrell@icloud.com

First Vice-President: Jacob Krissovich

Second Vice-President: Lisa Chamberlain

Oregon

GDB HaRT (Handlers and Raisers Together)

Location: Portland, Oregon

Description: Join Handlers and Raisers as we learn, have fun, and strengthen our shared bonds.

Web Site: https://www.facebook.com/groups/gdbhartoforegon

Co-president: Chari Chauvin, finn986@gmail.com

Co-president: Jenny Collins, puppycruisedirector@gmail.com

Utah

GDB Greatest Paws on Earth Alumni Chapter

Location: Utah

President: Jenny Jones

Co-vice-presidents: Patty Mueller and Jenny Thompson

Secretary: Alethea Martin.

Washington

GDB Washington State Alumni

Location: Washington State

Description: Supporting each other and keeping everyone up to date about GDB

Co-president: Holly Turri, holly.turri9@gmail.com

Co-president: Danette Dixon, danettedixon63@gmail.com

Canada

BC Dogwoods Alumni

Location: British Columbia

Email: BC Dogwoods Alumni Group talkadvocacy@hooh.ca

President: Heather Walkus

Advocacy: Lisa Bentz

Outreach: Matt Salli

GDB Isee Paws Guide Dogs

Location: Montreal, Quebec

President: Kim Holdbrook, kimholdbrook3@gmail.com

Special Interest

GDB Bibliodogs

Description: The GDB book club. Meets on the third Thursday of each month at 4:00 pm Pacific.

President: Sue Wilkening, smsw57@gmail.com

Vice-President: Lindsey Tilden, mariposa517@sbcglobal.net

GDB Creative Tails writing group

Description: Writing

Email: GDBCreativeTails@groups.io

President: Lisa Gilmartin, lsg1144.lg@gmail.com

GDB Paws Around the World

Description: Travel

President: Keith Ellis, keith.r.ellis@gmail.com

Vice-president: Erika Wolf, wolf67120@gmail.com

Secretary: Sue Wilkening, smsw57@gmail.com

GDB Tech Dogs

Location: International, meets via Zoom

Description: Sharing tips, tricks, and techniques related to technology

Email: techdogs@groups.io

Web Site: www.tech-dogs.net

Co-President: Marcia Yale, dragoncatmc@gmail.com

Co-President: Deborah Kendrick, Kendrick.deborah@gmail.com

Vice-president: Paul Walker, herospaw2002@gmail.com

Secretary: Terry Ann Saurman, saurmann@access4less.net

GDB Stitch and Bitch

Description: Needlecrafting of all types

President: Dorianne Pollack, Doriannepollack@gmail.com

Vice-president: Jack Heim, john@johnheim.com

Secretary: Deanna Lewis, Deannakay03@gmail.com

Send updates and questions to Pete Berg at pberg@guidedogs.com

Updated March 2024