

GUIDE DOG NEWS

The Quarterly Publication of
Guide Dogs for the Blind

2019 ISSUE 2



MICAH WITH HIS
K9 BUDDY, UBU

OUT AND ABOUT

Meet our new Director of Outreach and Advocacy Rabih Dow, and learn more about the efforts and goals of our amazing Outreach team. **p4**

DIPLOMATIC DUO

Learn about GDB alum Brian Mucyo and his guide dog, *Mannix*, who recently attended the Youth Assembly Conference at the United Nations. **p6**

TEXAS ROUND-UP

Get a peek at all of the activities and festivities from the Texas statewide Fun Day held in San Antonio this past March. Y'all will love it! **p8**



Guide Dogs
for the Blind

Points of Pride



NEW INSTRUCTOR

Congratulations to our newest Guide Dog Mobility Instructor: Kerith Wells (pictured, left). She recently completed her three-year GDB instructor apprenticeship and we're so excited for her and all that she has accomplished. To read Kerith's complete bio, please visit guidedogs.com/blog.

AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Guide Dogs for the Blind is extremely proud to have won a DecisionWise Employee Engagement Best Practice award for 2019! Each year, DecisionWise recognizes organizations who exemplify best practices in employee engagement.



Guide Dogs for the Blind

A NON-PROFIT, CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION
800.295.4050 | GUIDEDOGS.COM

National Office/California Campus:

350 Los Ranchitos Road
San Rafael, CA 94903

Oregon Campus:

32901 S.E. Kelso Road
Boring, OR 97009

In Canada:

GDB International
P.O. Box 1275 STN K
Toronto, ON M4P 9Z9
866.797.6603
gdbinternational.ca

Canadian registration number:
83061 8682 RR0001

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Von Summers—Vice Chair
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Full Member

Guide Dogs for the Blind follows the guidelines recommended by the Council of U.S. Dog Guide Schools and the International Guide Dog Federation for the humane care and training of our dogs, and the instruction and services offered to our clients.



Please recycle this newsletter!

GREETINGS FROM THE CEO

Welcome Spring!

In this issue of Guide Dog News, you'll read about: a Texas-sized Fun Day organized by and for our tireless volunteers, an impressive young GDB grad and his guide dog, and some of our special donors and supporters. What unites them all is their commitment to the GDB community in support of our mission. Each person's contribution is critical to the success of this organization and for this generosity I am so very grateful!

Recently I received a lovely letter from a client's husband. His wife of 40 years recently passed away, yet he took time to write us. "We often talked about Guide Dogs for the Blind and how we could never repay what you gave to my wife," he said. "Guide Dogs for the Blind will always be in my heart."

Each of you contributed to the life-changing difference that our client's husband wrote to us about. It takes all of you: talented campus volunteers, generous puppy raisers, alumni who educate and inspire, donors who give so generously, and supporters who share in the passion for our endeavors to accomplish our mission!



So to each of you, a heartfelt thank you. We hope you'll continue to be involved, take action, and be a part of the GDB family. You are the reason we're able to do what we do!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine".

Christine Benninger
President and CEO

REACHING

In order for people who are visually impaired to take advantage of GDB's free programs and services, they first need to know about us. There are many ways that we are spreading awareness about our organization, and our Outreach Department is essential to that equation. The role of GDB's Outreach Department is three-fold: 1—Creating a pipeline of future guide dog candidates; 2—Ensuring a positive environment of inclusion for guide dog handlers through public education and advocacy efforts; 3—Cultivating support for our mission through public awareness.

To that end, the department oversees the following: programs for youth who are visually impaired (see below); the GDB Orientation and Mobility (O&M) Immersion Program (teaching clients who are visually impaired the travel skills essential to guide dog mobility); and programs for O&M professionals to assist or refer their clients who are visually impaired. The team also hosts guide dog lifestyle workshops; participates in conferences and conventions across the country; and builds and maintains relationships with agencies serving people with vision loss. Most recently, the department has been expanded to take on the role of advocacy.

"I am most excited that we are turning our attention outward a bit more to help fulfill GDB's vision of a world with greater inclusion, opportunity, and independence through our expanded advocacy efforts," said Theresa Stern, GDB's Vice President of Outreach, Admissions, and Alumni. "Probably the largest threat to people working with a guide dog is the proliferation of people representing themselves as disabled in order to gain access for their pet or emotional support animals in public accommodations. These pets, because they have not been socialized and trained to be in public places, are often disruptive and reflect

Did You Know?

GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND HAS FREE YOUTH PROGRAMS

4

K9 BUDDY PROGRAM

Our K9 Buddy Program matches specially selected dogs to become wonderful pets and buddies to children and young adults who are blind or visually impaired. We believe that a dog can make a remarkable difference in any child's life by fostering a sense of caring, companionship, and responsibility through the human/animal bond.



**CHARLIE AND
K9 BUDDY NIAGRA**

OUT

poorly on legitimate service animals, resulting in barriers being set to the access of people with disabilities who rely on their dogs for living independently.”

To address this issue and others, the role of Director of Outreach and Advocacy was created to provide greater leadership in developing and implementing GDB’s strategies, policies, and programs, as well as to advocate for policies, laws, and programs that support GDB’s mission.



Rabih Dow joined us in that role this spring. Rabih came to GDB with more than 20 years of experience as a rehabilitation teacher for the blind, rehabilitation services director, and director of international training for professionals in the field of vision rehabilitation. His guide dog, a Labradoodle named *Gunner*, is from Freedom Guide Dogs based in New York. “I have an exciting opportunity to reach out to potential clients as well as to leverage GDB’s exceptional resources for advocacy,” Rabih said. “Blindness community leaders and service administrators are constantly frustrated with the difficulty of reaching end users. I thrive on challenges, and on empowering someone who is struggling because of a disability. This job engages both my energy and my passion. I’m excited to join such a storied, forward-looking organization, and I love being around so many dogs and dog lovers!”

CAMP GDB

Every year GDB invites youth ages 14-17 who are visually impaired to apply for our camp program. At Camp GDB, participants explore the companionship, independence, and responsibility of having a guide dog. Campers receive hands-on guide dog instruction with an emphasis on understanding the specific O&M skills and fitness required to be a successful guide dog handler.

WORKSHOPS

Hands-on lifestyle workshops for youth interested in guide dog mobility. Workshops are held throughout the year in locations across the U.S.

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THESE EXCITING PROGRAMS, PLEASE VISIT GUIDEDOGS.COM/YOUTHPROGRAMS.



BRIAN MUCYO AND MANNIX. THE DUO IS PICTURED AT THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK (RIGHT).

To say Brian Mucyo is accustomed to juggling a lot is probably an understatement. We caught up with Brian and his guide dog, *Mannix*, following their trip from Arizona to New York City where Brian was invited to attend the 23rd session of the Youth Assembly Conference at the United Nations (UN). This conference, which is organized by the Friendship Ambassadors Foundation in collaboration with the UN, brings together young leaders from around the world in an effort to promote the exchange of cultures, ideas, and knowledge that leads to action.

Brian is a college honors student majoring in Finance and Economics with minors in Christian and Legal studies at Grand Canyon University. He is fluent in four languages and is currently creating a local K-12 English empowerment program. *Mannix* shares this busy schedule, and Brian credits *Mannix* for serving as an excellent conversation starter! In New York, Brian and *Mannix* participated in keynote talks, thematic discussions, skill-building workshops, field trips, and networking opportunities. While at the conference, Brian said, “I was able to have some great conversations about what GDB does and the usefulness and abilities of a guide dog, with people from countries where programs like those at GDB are non-existent.” *Mannix* also earned the nickname “Secretary General of the Doggy Mission” as the first guide dog to attend the Youth Assembly!

Speaking about their bond, Brian has this to say: “*Mannix* is not just my guide or my companion who greets me every morning with exuberant energy, cries when he goes too long without seeing me, and keeps me safe in a giant city and large school. He is a guide dog that is making history. And we plan on continuing to do so together.”

Continue reading more about Brian on our website: [guidedogs.com/blog](https://www.guidedogs.com/blog).

SAVE THE DATE

- **CANINE HEROES GALA**
September 21, 2019 (San Francisco)
- **HOLIDAY LUNCHEON**
December 6, 2019 (San Francisco)

For more info or to register for these fundraising events, visit guidedogs.com/events.

- **GDB ALUMNI REUNION** October 18-20, 2019 (Portland, OR)
Celebrate and share tales of the trails with fellow alumni, puppy raisers, volunteers, GDB staff, family, and friends. Workshops and activities will highlight inspiring and informative stories shared by the GDB community. All tall tales and wagging tails are welcome!

For Reunion info and registration, visit guidedogs.com/reunion.



SHOP TIL YOU DROP!

From apparel and dog supplies, to GDB-branded accessories, we've got something for everyone in our online gift shop. Check it out at guidedogs.com/shop.



**OVERALL WINNER/PET POOCH CATEGORY:
WALLY BOCCALINI**

PUPARAZZI!

Thank you to everyone who participated in our annual online Puparazzi photo contest! Winners are determined by the number of votes that the photos receive, and each vote costs \$1. Because of your generosity we were able to exceed our \$35,000 goal! All of the money raised will go toward our life-changing programs and will make a huge impact on our organization. These are the winning photos in each of the five categories.



CATEGORY WINNERS (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT)—WORKING GUIDE DOG: JEWEL; GDB CAREER CHANGE DOG: ZAZZY; GUIDE DOG PUPPY IN TRAINING: LAKESHORE; GDB BREEDER: RADLEY AND ANTHEM.

TEXAS FUN DAY

The Texas statewide Fun Day held in March in San Antonio had everything you would expect from an event in the Lone Star State: line dancing, barbecue, and big adventures! It was a weekend of educational and fun-filled activities for our puppy raisers, clients, volunteers, and dogs.



AN "AMAZING RACE" THROUGH THE STREETS OF DOWNTOWN SAN ANTONIO CULMINATED IN A PHOTO OP AT THE ALAMO. NEARLY 500 PEOPLE AND 200 GUIDE DOG PUPPIES ATTENDED THE EVENT.





SUBARU SHARES THE LOVE WITH GDB

Recently, several of our Texas puppy raising clubs (Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth, and Byron Nelson High School FFA), helped raise funds through Subaru's annual "Share the Love" event. The proceeds donated to GDB totaled more than \$126,000. Our heartfelt thanks to the puppy raisers, as well as Sewell Subaru (Dallas), Superior Subaru (Houston), and Subaru of Clear Lake (Houston) for this incredible support and commitment to our mission!



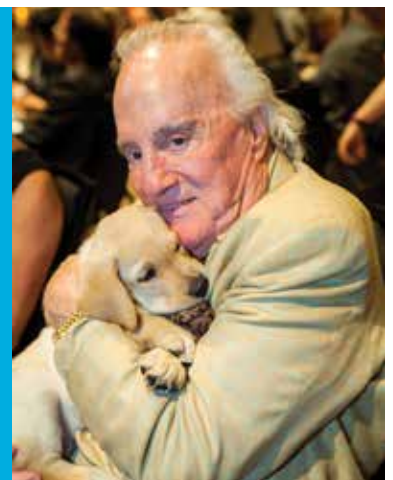
Leslys Garrow Vedder has long admired Guide Dogs for the Blind and appreciates that guide dogs are far more than excellent mobility aids: they provide companionship as well as enhanced confidence and independence. Her involvement with GDB is also a result of her late husband's visual impairment. Dr. James Forrest Vedder, Ph.D, was a physicist, archeologist, and scholar. He lost an eye at 15 months old and received a prosthetic eye while he attended the University of California, Berkeley for graduate work.

He loved animals, and she has a passion for helping people, especially children. "For many years, Jim and I had always supported organizations that were important to us," she said. "And now, years later, I am able to do more. My charitable gifts are in memory of him." Most recently, Leslys generously provided GDB with a special fundraising opportunity in tribute to Jim. She contributed \$100,000 toward our special spring match. So thanks to Leslys, for every dollar donated to this effort, Leslys matched it.

With this generous donation, Leslys is not only honoring her beloved husband Jim, but is also helping GDB create exceptional partnerships between people, dogs, and communities. Her support continues the efforts of GDB to remain a leader in guide dog training for the blind and visually impaired. And for those who contributed to the spring match, you are supporting these initiatives as well. Thank you Leslys for your incredible support, and thank you to all for helping us reach our goal.

Interested in making an honor or memorial gift? Visit [guidedogs.com/donate](https://www.guidedogs.com/donate) to learn more.

IN MEMORIAM—Longtime GDB supporter, Howard H. Hedinger, of Portland, Ore., passed away in February. We would like to recognize and honor Howard's incredible dedication and commitment to our life-changing mission, and offer our condolences to his family and friends. He was a beloved member of the GDB community and he will be greatly missed.



PUPPY CENTER UPDATE

Our contractors are making substantial progress in completing the Puppy Center and we currently expect a completion date in the Fall of 2019. Stay tuned for more information about a grand opening that will follow completion!



THANK YOU TO OUR NEW & CONTINUED SUPPORTERS January 1-March 31, 2019

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE MEMBERS Honoring the generous donors who contribute **\$5,000+** annually.

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Recognizing the vision of those who have included GDB in their estate plans.

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Additional benefits of a CGA include:

- Avoiding market uncertainty and investment worries by offering a constant annual income.
- Capital gains tax savings if appreciated securities are used to fund your annuity.



| Age | Rate |
|-----|------|
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| 70 | 5.6% |
| 75 | 6.2% |
| 80 | 7.3% |
| 85 | 8.3% |
| 90+ | 9.5% |

Two life and deferred rate annuities also available.

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- **SEND A DONATION TODAY**
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Name GDB in your will, trust, or as a beneficiary of an annuity, life insurance policy, IRA, or retirement plan.

Guide Dogs for the Blind will, on occasion, share donor information with like-minded non-profit organizations in an effort to better fulfill our mission and serve our clients. If you do not wish to have your information shared, please contact us at 800.295.4050 ext. 4160 or email us at donations@guidedogs.com.



GIFT ANNUITY PROPOSAL

How would a charitable gift annuity work for me?
(Minimums: age 50, \$5,000 gift)

My birthdate: _____ #2 Annuitant's birthdate: _____

Sample gift amount: \$5,000 \$10,000 \$25,000 Other: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Return to Joan Scott, Planned Giving Coordinator
Guide Dogs for the Blind, P.O. Box 151200, San Rafael, CA 94915-1200
800.295.4050, ext. 4073 | jscott@guidedogs.com