



# Partners



Summer 2013 volume 28 number 3

## GDA's Puppy Raisers Are A Special Breed



At any given time, there are more than 250 GDA puppies-in-training being raised by volunteer puppy raisers throughout Southern and Central California, as well as some parts of Washington, Idaho, Colorado and Montana. Puppy raisers range from families with kids, to empty-nesters, from full-time workers, to retirees, and from people with pets, to those who haven't had a pet in many years. But they all have one thing in common; the desire to raise a puppy that will, hopefully, one day go on to help a blind individual lead a life of greater independence and mobility.

Our puppies leave GDA to live with their puppy raisers at 7 to 8 weeks of age. These volunteers have agreed to and are responsible for teaching basic obedience and socializing their puppy for the next 16 to 18 months. With

the support of GDA and their regional puppy raiser groups (11 in total), the puppies learn how to walk properly on a leash, sit, stay, lie down and come when called, along with having impeccable house manners. To socialize their puppies, the raisers take them just about everywhere they go and expose them to as many different situations as possible. When the puppy is about a year and a half, the puppy raisers bring them back to GDA, where they begin their formal training. This is when they learn the actual harness commands and how to lead a blind person.

While out and about with their adorable, irresistible puppies in their bright yellow puppy-in-training jackets, puppy raisers attract people's attention and pique their interest in the program, the school and the role of the puppy raiser. And one of the most frequently asked questions is, "What made you decide to become a puppy raiser?"

So why do these wonderful people, for whom we are so grateful and without whom we would not have the successful program that we do, decide to dedicate themselves to raising a puppy knowing they will have to give her/him up? We asked many of our current puppy raisers how they respond to that question. Several responses appear on page 2. While we were able to include quite a few of their responses, we could not include them all due to space limitations. We want to take this opportunity to thank all of those who responded and all of our past and present puppy raisers for their incredible dedication and commitment to GDA and our puppies. 🐾

## Vet's Corner

Disaster Preparedness —  
Protect Your Pet



Recent natural disasters in the news and, in some cases, in our own backyards remind many of us that we need to have a plan for our family in case a disaster hits. Our pets are beloved family members and, as such, it is important to remember to include them in our emergency preparedness plans.

Before an emergency or disaster occurs, it is important to make a plan; in fact, make two plans — one if you are able to stay in your home, the second if you need to evacuate — and then make sure everyone in your family is familiar with both.

**Vet's Corner** continued on page 3 »

# Why They Became Puppy Raisers...

After 27 years of being involved with GDA, we certainly remember why we applied to be puppy raisers. It's the fact that we love dogs and thought we could possibly help someone who needed a "partner" to guide them through their everyday experiences. How rewarding it has been and how thankful we are that a friend suggested we get involved.

— *Jacque & Jack Butler*

When our family dog passed away I decided I wanted to do something that had been in the back of my mind for many years — to raise a special service dog. We attended a GDA graduation and became reacquainted with old friends who were raising a guide dog puppy. The rest is history. We applied for a puppy and have subsequently raised three wonderful labs. Why do we do it — take a moment to speak with a puppy raiser or talk with a recipient of one of the GDA dogs, and see what a wonderful difference these magnificent dogs have made in their life.

— *Ronni & Michael Mayer*

It wasn't about me...it was about hoping to better the life of another individual.

— *Nancy Totta*

My son wasn't comfortable with dogs but I knew he would love one given the chance. I figured if he didn't, I would raise one GDA puppy without his help and stop after that. After 10 minutes with our puppy, he was smitten, and it's been a love-fest ever since. We want to keep raising guide dog puppies as a family!

— *Denise, Sam and Aidan Buckner*

After seeing how hugely having a guide dog can impact someone's life, we wanted very much to assist GDA in being able to provide dogs to those interested in receiving them. Our children were grown; how much harder could raising puppies be? Little did we realize we would be signing up for such a rewarding and life-enriching experience. Now we don't know how we managed without these precious little beings in our life.

— *Rebecca Biging*

We are very excited to be a part of such an amazing program. These dogs have an important job ahead of them and they will be quite a blessing to someone who cannot see.

— *Laura Paxson*

My desire to be a puppy raiser started when I was a child and now, after many years, this wish has finally come to pass. I know if I were blind, I would desperately want a guide dog and I know there can only be guide dogs if there are puppy raisers to raise them.

— *Fiona Nelson*

I wanted to be a puppy raiser since I was a teenager in England and watched the dogs in harness walking through our village learning how to be guides. Took me almost 60 years, but better late than never to follow my passion. I have completed three pups and, who knows, might raise more!

— *Barbara Blake*

Almost five years ago, our 15-year-old daughter, Sammy, investigated puppy raising as a project she could take on to make a difference. We soon realized that it was truly a family project which we all loved and felt such passion for. Now on our fifth puppy, we are trying to make a difference — one puppy at a time.

— *Sherrie & Matt Wette*

My friend Andrea has been blind from birth, and over the years, I have had the pleasure of watching her amazing guide dogs work. I always told her that if I got to a place in life where I could puppy raise I would. I am currently raising my third GDA puppy.

— *Jill Werner*

I became a puppy raiser simply because I love dogs and didn't think I could have one as a pet. I was looking for something to do with my life, and a good friend said, "What is your passion?" I said, "Dogs." She said, "Why don't you raise a guide dog puppy?" I said, "I can't, I work." She said, "Blind people work." I said, "But I live in a condo." She said, "Blind people live in condos." I said "But I have cats." She said, "Blind people have cats." And there is where it started!

— *Laurel Schuman*

My dear friend has a guide dog and when I saw how much her life was changed for the better, I wanted to help make that possible for more people.

— *Lisa Gifford*

Bryan was 13 years old when he told me that he wanted to raise a guide dog puppy. He had been exposed to a guide dog puppy while in elementary school by the school librarian. I asked him why and this is what he told me: "Mom, I have thought about this a lot. We take and take all of our lives, and I've decided that I want to do something to give something back to someone else, to make their life better." When he told me this, I found myself thinking, "In this day and age, here is a 13-year-old who is not thinking just about himself, but of others." How could I say no?

— *Karen Warloe*

Back in 1990, a local newscaster was doing a story at GDA and how they needed puppy raisers. My roommate and I were both ill and were home watching the news. We talked about it and contacted GDA to become puppy raisers. I continue to puppy raise to this day.

— *Judi Gomez*

After a year of volunteering at the humane society and fostering small sick dogs I needed something more to give back to the community I was invited by a friend to do the Ride for Guides. It took me two years and several visits to GDA to bring my husband on board. He has embraced the worthy cause of giving back to the community, as well as giving a blind person a better quality of life.

— *Liz Adams*

I have always volunteered in some way, whether it was for my kids' school or when they were involved in 4-H. Now that the kids are grown and gone what was going to be my next adventure? Years ago, I remembered seeing Guide Dogs of America at the Ventura County Fair. Well, there was no question where my service could now benefit someone else. With each graduation I attend, it always reminds me why I'm doing what I truly enjoy doing.

— *Missy Stayton*

- Find kennels, shelters or veterinary hospitals in your area that may be able to board your pet if you are required to evacuate and are unable to keep your pets with you. Keep up-to-date vaccine records on hand, as most of these facilities require a current vaccine history.
- Talk to neighbors, friends and family members ahead of time and come up with a plan for someone to care for your pets if you are unable to get back home to them.

It is also important to have an emergency kit — a small one in case you need to travel and a larger kit for the home. You should ideally have a minimum three-day supply of the following items:

- Food, kept in an airtight, water-proof container to prevent spoiling
- Water — remember your pets need water in addition to the supply you have for your family
- Medication — if your pet is taking any, it is especially important to keep an extra supply on hand for emergencies
- Leash, collar and I.D. tags with your current information
- Crate or carrier
- Bedding and/or a blanket
- Plastic “pick-up” bags
- Disinfectant and cleaning supplies
- First-aid kit

Another way to make sure your pets are safe in the event of emergency is to place a window decal that alerts a first responder that you have pets in your home. That way if you are away or unable to go back into your house they will know you have a pet(s) that need rescuing.

We all hope that we never have to put our disaster plans into action, but having one in place will give you peace of mind should you find yourself in an emergency situation.

## Microchip To Maximize “Returns”



If you and your dog become separated for whatever reason, this microchip offers the best way for the two of you to be reunited. To hasten the reunion, be sure that your dog's microchip information is current. If you have moved and/or changed your home, work or cell numbers, take the time to update that information now.

If your dog does not currently have a microchip, this simple procedure can be done in your vet's office. Once your dog has the microchip, it can be identified throughout your dog's life with this one-of-a-kind number. The identification cannot be lost or altered.

## Donor Spotlight — Mary Matthiessen



Partner in Trust Mary Matthiessen doesn't recall exactly how she and her husband first learned about GDA. It may have been the many puppies-in-training, in their bright yellow jackets, that the two animal lovers encountered in their community. "I remember seeing them and thinking what a wonderful thing that is," said Matthiessen, who lost her husband, Bob, several years ago, "If I had known about being a puppy raiser 20 years earlier, I would have become one. It would have been so fulfilling to help these puppies achieve their higher purpose and help a blind person to lead a more independent life."

The couple found another way to support the school. They decided to include GDA in their will and become Partners in Trust. "It was a decision we were both very much in agreement on. It's such a good feeling knowing that we're helping the dogs and the people too. I couldn't think of a better place to give our money when the time comes."

Matthiessen has been a GDA Partner in Trust for the past 14 years and she encourages others to do the same. "I would tell anybody that they would never be sorry if they decided to make GDA a part of their trust. It's a wonderful and steadfast organization. I am so happy that we are able to support the school's incredible work."

## Cerebral Palsy Doesn't Keep Tania Finlayson From Completing 300-mile “Dash For Puppy Cash”



Tania Finlayson was born with cerebral palsy, and is confined to a motorized wheelchair but she doesn't let that stop her from living a full and exciting life (she is a certified sky diver with more than 40 jumps to her credit) and helping to enrich the lives of others.

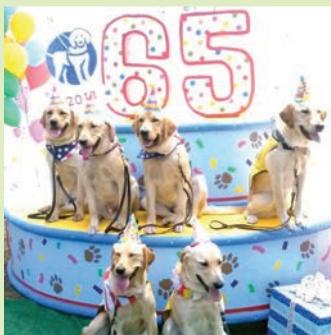
Finlayson's giving spirit was behind her decision to raise money for Guide Dogs of America. This past June, with support from her family and members of Machinists Union District Lodge 751 in Seattle, Finlayson set out from her home in Kirkland, Wash., on a 300-mile, four-day road trip in her wheelchair, which she steers with her chin, in a "Dash for Puppy Cash." Her goal was to raise \$42,000, the amount it costs to raise, train and pair one guide dog with a blind or visually impaired person.

Finlayson said she wanted to raise that much money to "help someone to gain increased mobility and independence, which is something I cherish every day."

At ride's end she was more than half way to her goal. Her husband Ken Finlayson said, "She's not going to stop fundraising until she reaches her goal."

If you would like to support Tania and help her to reach her goal, please visit <http://DashForCash.kintera.org> or [www.IAM751.org/Dash4Cash](http://www.IAM751.org/Dash4Cash).

# Hundreds Wished “Happy 65<sup>th</sup> GDA” At Annual Open House



It was a very happy 65<sup>th</sup>, indeed, at Guide Dogs of America’s annual Open House held at the school on Saturday, June 8. What better way to celebrate than with a birthday cake? An oversized, festively decorated cake provided a wonderful photo opportunity for people and pooches. Other highlights of the day included the Puppy Trials; another record-breaking year for our Silent Auction; and the guide dog demonstrations, during which trainers

showed how our exceptionally trained dogs bring greater mobility and independence into the lives of their blind partners. Here are a few photos featuring some of the highlights from the day. We hope that you’ll make plans to join us next year.



## In Memory

With sadness, we note the passing of GDA family member:

Steven Hazzard – Class #355

Patricia La France Wolf –  
Class #296 & #331.5

We also note with sadness, the passing of the following guide dogs and a breeder:

Bently – Class #340

Gage – Class #338

Hannie – Breeder

Marshall – Class #346

Tess – Class #327

## New Opportunities For Two GDA Employees

Kennel Tech Chris Medina and Vet Tech Tiffany McKillop have recently begun the three-year apprenticeship program to become licensed guide dog instructors. Please join us in congratulating them on their new positions.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Ride For Guides Is Its Most Successful To Date



Befitting a milestone anniversary for an annual event, the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Ride for Guides broke records for participants and money raised. On Sunday, May 19, more than 550 riders on almost 400 bikes left GDA for an 80-mile

round trip ride that included a scenic drive along the Angeles Crest Highway. At each of three stops along the route, riders were greeted and cheered on by graduates, volunteers and lots of puppies-in-training. Back at the school, a barbecue and raffles brought the day to a most successful close. Thank you to everyone who participated and volunteered. We are already looking forward to next year’s ride.



## Partners in Trust



The Partners in Trust Society was established as a way to recognize and honor the generosity of those who have included GDA in their planned giving. Providing life income gifts and bequests lets your gift continue working beyond

your lifetime to help our students through a partnership with a guide dog. Charitable organizations are not subject to gift or estate taxes so your gift will continue to support Guide Dogs of America, without being diminished by the IRS.

You will receive our special "Partners in Trust" crystal jar as our thank you for the difference you are making in the lives of others through supporting Guide Dogs of America. Please call Rhonda Bissell at (818) 833-6432 for more information.

## Merchandise



### Polo Shirt

Red, knit polo shirt with red embroidered GDA logo in men's and women's styles.

Men's polo available in adult sizes: S-XL. \$38. Size 2X-3X. \$40. (Price includes shipping and handling)

Women's polo available in adult sizes: S-XL. \$38. Size 2X-3X. \$40. (Price includes shipping and handling)

## 2013 Holiday Cards



The winning photo from the Third Annual Holiday Card Contest was taken by GDA puppy raiser Lynne Pennala of puppy-in-training Bentley. Outside Message: "Tis the Season." Inside message: "Peace, Love and Joy to All."

Holiday cards measure 5" x 7" and are bundled 15 cards (with

envelopes) to a pack. Price: \$18 per pack, INCLUDES SHIPPING AND HANDLING. Please use the order form on this page to place your order. Questions? Call (818) 833-6429.

## Raffles



### 2013 Quilt Raffle

"Love Comes in All Sizes" is the quilt that has been donated to GDA for this year's quilt raffle. And we "love" the talented and creative women of the Santa Clarita Valley Quilt Guild who crafted and donated this

beautiful quilt. The quilt, which measures 100"x 108" (approx.), features a pooch in every panel. This size will work for a double or queen-size bed.

Purchase tickets using the order form on this page and mail it to GDA postmarked by Nov. 30, 2013. Tickets are \$2 each or six for \$10. The drawing will be held at the GDA December puppy raiser meeting on Dec. 14, 2013. Winner does not need to be present.



### 2013 GDA Motorcycle Raffle

This year, the GDA motorcycle raffle is for a 2013 Harley-Davidson Road

Glide. The winning ticket will be drawn on Nov. 23 at the Guide Dogs of America's Annual Banquet in Las Vegas. (Winner need not be present to win.) Visit the GDA website ([www.guidedogsofamerica.org](http://www.guidedogsofamerica.org)) for additional details and photos."

## SUMMER 2013 Order Form

Questions? Call (818) 833-6429. \*All Shipping & Handling is included\*

Mail this entire form with your payment.

### Merchandise

**Men's polo — Size S-XL \$38. Size 2X-3X \$40** (includes shipping & handling)

SM  MED  LRG  XL  2XL  3XL \$

**Women's polo — Size S-XL \$38. Size 2X-3X \$40** (includes shipping & handling)

SM  MED  LRG  XL  2XL  3XL \$

**Holiday Cards — \$18 per pack** (includes shipping & handling)

2013 Holiday Cards \$

### Raffle Tickets

2013 Quilt Raffle — \$2 per ticket or \$10 for 6 \$

2013 GDA Bike Raffle — \$5 per ticket or \$20 for 5 \$

**TOTAL ENCLOSED \$**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**Credit Card** (check one)  Visa  MasterCard  Discover  AMEX

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ CVC: \_\_\_\_\_

**Check** required for credit card purchase (make your check payable to **Guide Dogs of America**)

3-4 digit code

**Mail to:** Guide Dogs of America ATTN: Summer Merchandise Order Form, 13445 Glenoaks Blvd., Sylmar, CA 91342 **Or use the enclosed envelope.**

# Partners newsletter

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## Get Social With GDA

"Partners" is published four times a year, but we post news and photos to our Facebook page and Twitter account often. Follow us on Facebook (Guide-Dogs-of-America) and/or on Twitter (twitter.com/GuideDogsUSA) or @GuideDogsUSA.



## Congratulations Graduates

Class #378



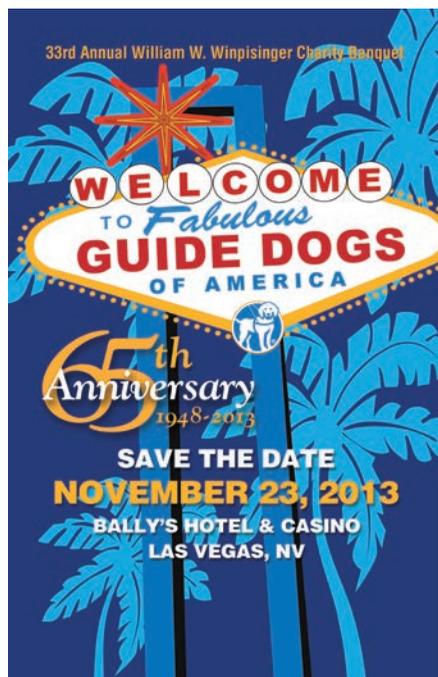
**Graduates (Puppy Raiser in parentheses):** left to right: Joy Wolf & Chicago (*The Carlton Family*), Chris Sirna & Rosie (*Paul & Diane Niesen*), Zoila Silbas & JoJo (*Dave & Mary Brow*), Karen Lemmon & Sal (*Glyn Judson*), Peggy Kohler & Poet (*Naval Consolidated Brig Miramar*), John Vandervort & Chace (*Lori Montigel*), Sean Landgraf & Lexy (*The Shoup Family*), Dan Kysor & Harry (*The Semeleng Family*), Ann Sylvia & Hope (*Lauren Amendola*), Brian Collins & Gibson (*Harry & Nancy Steck*)

**Instructors:** left to right: Sean Chiles, Mindy Romero, Steve Burkman

**In-home Graduates:** Carla Dawson & Henry (*Bill and Kelley Green*)

## Save the Date

## GDA Las Vegas Charity Weekend Will Celebrate GDA's 65<sup>th</sup> Anniversary



Our biggest fundraising event of the year is just a few short months away. Be sure to mark your calendars and join us in Las Vegas on Nov. 21-23 for our annual charity weekend and the 33rd Annual William P. Wimpinger Charity Banquet. The weekend gets started on Thursday, Nov. 21 with the 13th Annual Hawgs for Dogs motorcycle ride and the 2nd Annual USA Skeet & Trap Shoot event. Friday morning golf foursomes will hit the links for the 33rd Annual Golf Tournament at Revere Golf Course. The weekend concludes Saturday evening with the charity banquet, which will be held at Bally's Hotel & Casino. We hope to see you there.