



2016 / 2017
Annual Report

Formerly International Guiding Eyes, Inc.





A MESSAGE FROM RUSSELL GITTLEN

There have been exciting changes at our school during 2016 – 2017. I am grateful for the staff, volunteers, the Machinists union, community partners, and donors who help Guide Dogs of America fulfill our life-changing mission, and I am pleased to share our achievements with you.

Over the past 12 months, GDA provided guide dogs to blind and visually impaired individuals across the country and in Canada. With a new training schedule in place and an increased number of classes offered, our new goal is to graduate 60 teams of clients and guide dogs each year.

Whether they are big city dwellers or small town residents: whether they work for a major corporation or are students: whether they are 20-years-old or 80-years-old, GDA staff get to know our clients personally and provide the best guide dog for each individual's needs.

“GDA staff get to know our clients personally and provide the best guide dog for each individual's needs.”

In addition to providing our clients with outstanding guide dogs and services, this year GDA expanded our efforts in education. Our new Macki and Phil Singer Visitor and Education Center enables us to host seminars and events for our volunteers and community members who want to learn about and develop the human/dog bond.

As always, our efforts and achievements are only possible because of the support of committed and compassionate individuals, like you. Thank you for standing with Guide Dogs of America and those we serve.

Russell Gittlen

Russell A. Gittlen
President/Director

OUR MISSION

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





FUNDING OUR MISSION

From “Pennies for Puppies” to “Partners in Trust,” GDA depends upon the generosity of individuals and organizations to provide the gift of greater independence to visually impaired men and women.

Thanks to hundreds of devoted volunteer organizers, during the past 12 months more than 60 community events raised funds for our program. Fundraisers hosted by GDA included:

- **GDA's annual Online Silent Auction** offered 160 items across 15 categories. The auction attracted 1,366 visitors from 45 states and 10 countries and their participation made the online silent auction a great success, with **\$36,897 raised**.
- **Our annual motorcycle Ride for Guides** was the first big event held in our new visitor and education center and nearly **450 riders attended**. GDA puppies-in-training and their puppy raisers greeted riders on campus and along the 90-mile poker route. After the ride, participants joined us for lunch and several went home with fabulous raffle prizes. GDA is proud to be many of the riders' favorite ride of each year!
- **The 36th annual Las Vegas Charity Weekend** drew **1,100 attendees** who enjoyed golfing, GDA's Hawgs for Dogs motorcycle ride, and sporting clays. The finale to the weekend was the William W. Winpisinger Charity Banquet, during which staff, puppy raisers, GDA graduates, honorees, volunteers, vendors, and corporate executives enjoyed a lovely evening and celebrated another great year of fundraising efforts.

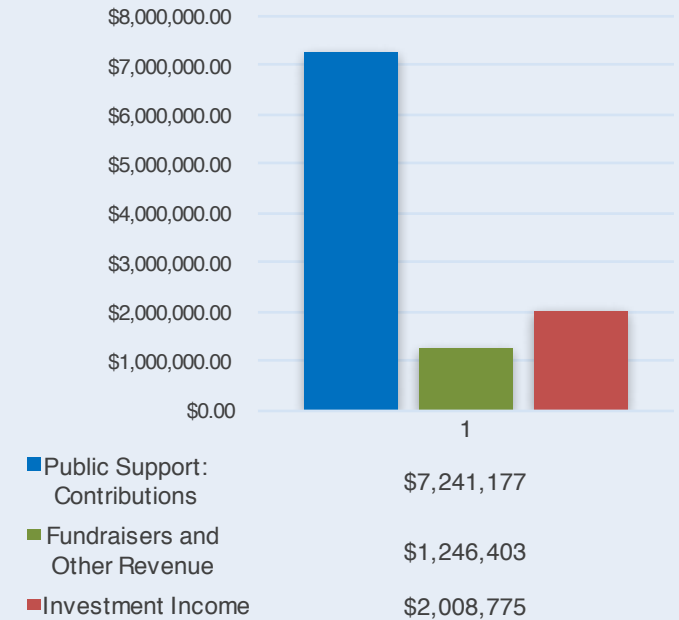
We are deeply grateful for every gift, no matter the amount, as it helps us provide our blind students with transportation to GDA, room and board on our campus, a guide dog, and 21 days of training – all free of charge.

Financials for the Year Ended June 30, 2017

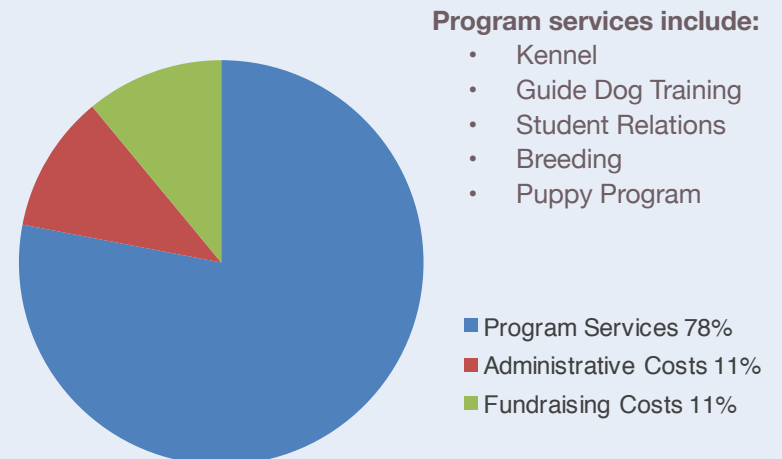
Total Public Support and Revenue for 2017: **10,496,355**

Public Support: Contributions	\$7,241,177.00
Fundraisers and Other Revenue	\$1,246,403.00
Fund Dinners	\$684,849
Tournaments	\$474,732
Raffles and Silent Auctions	\$82,558
Merchandise and Cards	\$4,264
Investment Income	\$2,008,775
Unrealized Gains (Losses)	\$1,472,433
Interest and Dividends	\$554,911
Realized Gains (Losses) on Investments	\$53,180
Oil Rights Income (net of depletion)	\$27,478
Less Investment Expenses	(\$99,227)

Revenues 2017



2016 – 2017 Fiscal Year



DONOR SPOTLIGHT: PARTNERS IN TRUST SOCIETY



PAT CUSTER



Her Thrift Became Sizable Gift to GDA

Those who knew **Pat Custer** were aware of her thriftiness, but they were amazed by the large donation she gifted to Guide Dogs of America. It was a wonderful surprise that she left her estate of more than \$1 million to GDA.

Custer began her career as a secretary at NBC in Hollywood. In 1973, she became the book-keeper for the newly formed Corporate Productions Inc. and stayed with the company the rest of her career.

After retiring, she still spent time at CPI, tending to the company's garden every weekend until her passing. Being a quiet and private individual, one could not have known that Custer had quite a history within her own family. She left behind archival information showing she was a direct descendant of General George Armstrong Custer.

Custer participated in the production of several fundraising videos for GDA. She always found it heartwarming to hear clients talk about the transformation they saw in themselves as they bonded with their guide dog partners.

Donor's Support of GDA is a Hole in One

Avid golfer **Joleen Janssen** first became familiar with Guide Dogs of America when she played in a GDA golf tournament. She won the tournament several times, but it is GDA that came out the big winner when Janssen included GDA in her planned giving and become a Partner in Trust.

A dog lover, Janssen admits to spending extra time during the tournaments at the tee, petting the GDA puppies-in-training that greeted golfers. That extra time helped deepen her understanding of and appreciation for the school and the work it does.

Janssen has been a donor since 2002, but wanted to do more and ensure that her support of the school would live on. "I have no children so I needed some place to leave my money when I'm gone," Janssen said. "I felt GDA was very worthwhile. It's a cause I believe in."

"Over the years, I have explained to many people all about the service GDA provides," Janssen said. "I tell them if you have any faith in dogs at all, I think it's just a perfect place to make a donation or leave your money."

"I felt GDA was very worthwhile. It's a cause I believe in."



JOLEEN JANSSEN

GDA BY THE NUMBERS



Did You Know?

The most brain growth in a puppy occurs between the ages of 6 weeks and 4 months.

“What a puppy takes in within this time period will stay with him for the rest of his life,” GDA Breeding Department Manager Meri Forman said. “We expose our puppies to different people, sights, and sounds on a daily basis. When they leave GDA they are ready to take on challenges.”

At 8 weeks of age, our puppies go home with their GDA volunteer puppy raisers and those challenges start soon after at GDA's Puppy Kindergarten classes, which focus on developing good canine manners and responses.



- 23 litters of pups born each year
- 163 puppies-in-training in foster homes
- 46,515 pounds of food per year
- 3,940 loads of laundry washed per year
- 2,080 miles a trainer walks per year
- 4 pairs of shoes each trainer goes through per year
- 1,925 vaccinations per year
- 200 spays/neuters per year
- 43 full and part-time employees
- 133 on-campus volunteers & tour guides



A GDA puppy patient and GDA Director of Animal Health Ainjil Bills, DVM, look cool in their protective eyewear during a cold laser therapy session in our on-campus clinic.

This therapy is new to our clinic and is used to decrease inflammation, speed wound healing, provide pain relief, and even eliminate the need for surgery.

Puppy Raisers

Our 300 volunteer puppy raisers are the backbone of our organization.

They open their homes and their hearts to our puppies to raise, socialize, train, and love them until they are returned to GDA for their formal guide dog training at around 18 months of age. We deeply appreciate the time, devotion, and generosity of our new and returning puppy raisers.



Mmm, Enrichment!

During approximately six months of formal guide dog training, our dogs are cared for by GDA staff in our on-campus kennel and enjoy newly enhanced enrichment activities such as pool parties, puzzle toys, and homemade parfait snacks with seasonal fillings.

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS

GDA has increased its number of client training classes to six per year and streamlined our in-residence team training, emphasizing weekly goals.

WEEK 1: Fundamentals and basic mechanics

WEEK 2: Learning how to effectively motivate and relate to your guide dog

WEEK 3: Prepare to transition from GDA to traveling in home area



Mark Dresen and Francie

“Not a day that goes by that I don’t think about how much fuller my life is with Francie by my side.

I work at a 100-acre corporate campus. It’s a maze of interconnected buildings, hallways, and cubicles. Francie navigates it all much easier than I ever did with my cane. She has given me a level of normalcy and comfort that I haven’t experienced in years. The activities that I can participate in, and the level at which I can participate, is so much richer. She gives me a feeling of ease that I had long forgotten. Francie has been such a blessing, which followed another blessing – that I found GDA.”



Sebastian Williams and Sooner

“Sooner has given me the will to be adventurous and do things like get on a plane and fly to Kentucky to visit family.

The confidence he gives me, it’s just so awesome. I feel like I can do anything. Before Sooner, going around the block was a challenge. Now we just go and do what we want. Sooner has removed a lot of obstacles and doubt. I don’t put off things until later. Having Sooner has been life changing. Thank you GDA.”



Beth Roff and Emmett

“Emmett is my second guide dog and my first from GDA. My experience at GDA was so positive.

The trainers did a very good job of explaining and demonstrating how to work with our dogs and they would go over things until they were confident that we were comfortable. I had a year in between guide dogs and Emmett has given me back the independence that I lost. Emmett and I went to an IAM&AW fundraising event and people couldn’t believe that GDA provides these wonderful dogs at no charge. I assured them that they do. I couldn’t be more grateful.”

GDA Supporters

The cost to provide one professionally trained guide dog and train the guide dog and blind partner to work together as a team is \$48,000.

Since GDA receives no funding from local, state or federal governments, we depend upon individuals, foundations, organizations, and businesses to help us fund our mission.

Thank you to all those who provide philanthropic support for Guide Dogs of America through fundraisers, donations, matching gifts, sponsorships, and future giving through a will or trust. Your gifts change lives by helping others live more independently with the loving partnership of a guide dog.



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Visit Us

“Any prospective donor who steps on the grounds of GDA will see the work that has gone into training their guide dogs, from puppy to graduation day.”

— GDA client Vivian Younger

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<http://www.guidedogsofamerica.org>

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A special thanks to Matthew Musick for the front and back cover photos!