

GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA Partners

Winter 2014 volume 29 number 1

GDA Training Department

Walking a mile (or three, four or five) in the shoes of GDA's licensed guide dog instructors



Back row (from left): Steve Burkman, Sean Chiles, David Ponce, Chris Medina, Nick Terrones; front row (from left): Bryan Young, Melinda Romero, Linda Hawes

Becoming a guide dog instructor takes years of training and shoes that are made for walking. All of GDA's licensed instructors have completed the three-year apprenticeship required to earn the license from the state of California. And, between the formal training to prepare the dogs to be matched with a blind individual and the 28 days of class during which they teach students

to work as a team with their new guide dog, the GDA instructors log a lot of miles, both on their feet and on the road.

The first walk of most trainers' days is from the office to the kennels where they are enthusiastically greeted with wiggles and wags from the dogs that they will work with for the next several months. Each trainer works with a "string" of 8-10 dogs from the time the dogs come "in for formal training" until they graduate with their blind partner, in about 4-6 months.

"The skills and attributes of a successful guide dog instructor go well beyond their ability to train dogs. All of our trainers have an exceptional work ethic. They are highly motivated individuals who are dedicated to bringing out the best in every dog they work with and they are invested in his success," said Training Department Manager and Licensed Instructor David Ponce. "That translates to having a lot of patience and perseverance, as well as being in shape. It's a very physical job; the trainers are literally walking these dogs through every step of their training. Some days that might be a couple of miles; other days it might be eight miles or more."

GDA Training Department continued on page 2 »

Puppy Corner

Introducing your new dog to the family pet



Adding another dog to your household can bring you and your current dog more fun and companionship. Dogs are naturally social creatures and generally enjoy the company of other dogs, but it's important to consider how to integrate the new addition into your family.

First impressions are important. To maximize the potential for a great relationship between your current dog and your new dog, GDA's Puppy Department has compiled some helpful tips to hopefully make smooth and safe introductions:

Puppy Corner continued on page 3 »

Mission Statement

Guide Dogs of America is dedicated to its mission to provide 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 continue to pursue their goals with increased mobility and independence.



Depending on the stage of training the instructors are in with their strings, they may work with the dogs in simple areas such as local neighborhoods or lightly congested areas, which includes teaching the dogs the basics of being a guide dog, such as walking in harness, crossing streets and learning new commands. The training then progresses to more complex areas, including busier cities, malls or train/subway travel where advanced skills are taught.

"Some dogs get it right away and for others it may take multiple attempts before they understand the concepts," said Sean Chiles, who has been a Licensed Instructor for two years. "Seeing a dog that hasn't been able to put everything together and the next day see the switch turn on is one of the things I enjoy most about my job."

Being out in public on an almost daily basis, the instructors also need to have exceptional communication skills.



"Our trainers are out working with the dogs in public places and they are often approached by people interested in the program. They are ambassadors for the school as well as public educators," said Ponce. "We welcome their questions and the opportunity to talk to them about our guide dogs and what to do when you meet a guide dog team."

Their frequent appearances in public places require that GDA's dogs are always looking their best.

"Sometimes a quick touch-up is necessary, but grooming is also a great opportunity for us to bond with our dogs," said Chiles. "It's important that the dogs bond with us. We start on that from the first day. The dogs need to know that we are the ones that are going to give love and be responsive to them every time they see us, until they are paired with their blind partners."

At the core of everything the instructors work on with the guide dogs in training is safety. If the dog is bonded to his partner, he will care about the team's well-being and want to keep him or her safe and clear of danger. That includes teaching the dog to apply "intelligent disobedience," which is when the dog may have to refuse a command given by the handler and/or do something else for the safety of the team. An example of this would be a guide dog refusing to go forward into the street when given the command because

he has determined it is unsafe to cross the street. This might happen if the guide dog user was to misread the traffic or if a motorist came around a corner speeding.

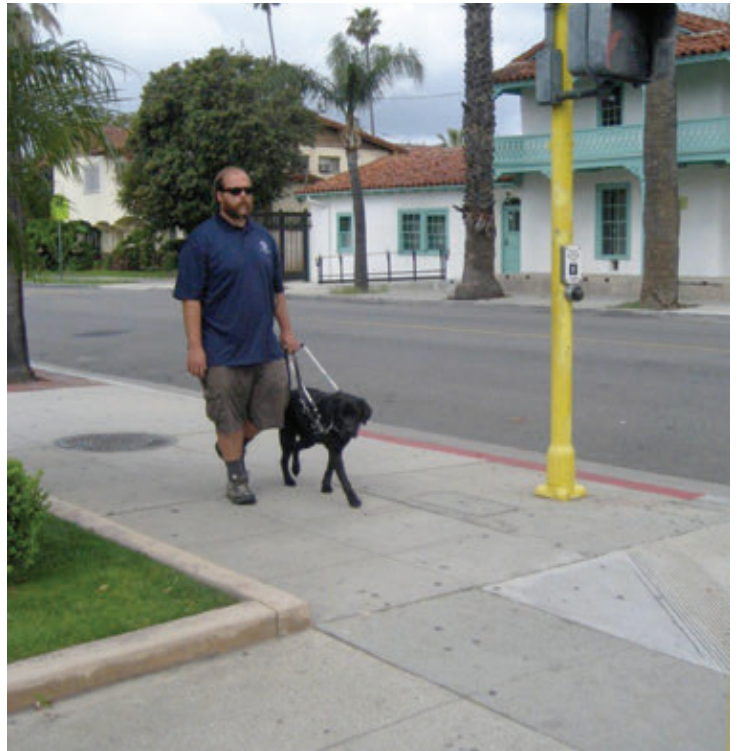
In the final stage of training, the instructors will work the dogs under blindfold, which GDA Licensed Instructor Nick Terrones said he finds the most rewarding.

"We see the work we as trainers have so diligently put into the dog's education come to life in a very realistic way," said Terrones. "Working these dogs under blindfold is exhilarating. I train these wonderful dogs, but I have learned from them that I am always growing in my profession and there are always ways to continue to learn as an instructor."

At the end of a day of training, the instructors return to the kennel with their dogs and get them settled in for the night. Then they return to the office to write daily reports about each dog in their string. Before the last short walk back to her office, Licensed Instructor Mindy Romero says one last thing to the dogs. "When I leave at the end of the day, I like to tell them, 'Good night and see you tomorrow.' Maybe they don't get it, but I do. I fall in love with each of the dogs as if they were my own," she said.

"A lot of people think of us as dog trainers. We are more than that. We are instructors who teach students to use the guide dogs we have trained so they can live the life they choose," said Ponce. "Speaking on behalf of all the instructors, the most rewarding part of our job is getting updates, emails and photos from the graduates. That is fantastic. That is what gives us purpose." 🐾

If you would like to spend a day in the shoes of a GDA instructor you can buy tickets for our popular "Day with the Trainer" raffle. Information and order form on page 7.



- Before considering bringing a new pet into your home, make sure your dog has been well socialized with other dogs and people first; if your dog has not been socialized or you are unsure, take a public obedience class before bringing a new pet home
- If it is a young puppy, start off by holding the puppy and letting your dog approach at its own pace, rather than forcing the older dog to greet the puppy
- Don't allow a new dog to run right up into your dog's face; slowly introduce the two by doing an on-leash walk by; then have the dogs approach each other and "sit" at a safe distance; progress to walking the dogs past each other, stopping midway for the humans to greet briefly and then continue to walk past
- When introducing two dogs, an ideal area would be big enough to let both dogs move away from each other if needed
- When introducing dogs, remove all food sources and dog toys prior to the introduction

Keeping both dogs happy and ensuring your first dog still feels loved and has his same place in the family can ease him into accepting a young puppy or adult dog. Taking a few extra steps to make everyone feel good about the new arrangement will help get your dogs' relationship off to a great start.



Donor Profile – Susan De Antonio



charge to blind individuals, but the group wanted to contribute to the school as its thank you for giving Brown his dog.)

Two years later, Brown and his guide, Newby, visited the club to personally thank the members for their kindness and generosity. De Antonio said to him, "If you ever need anyone to take care of your dog for you, I would be happy to." When it became time for Newby to retire, she soon found a new career with De Antonio, who was a fire investigator for the city of Rancho Cucamonga. Newby was specially trained to detect accelerants at fire scenes and she became the city's first arson dog. She was the first of three GDA career-change dogs to be partnered with De Antonio during the last 15 years of her 34 years with the department.

De Antonio learned about and became a Partner in Trust in 2002. "It is the least I could for GDA. They have the best dogs, facilities and trainers," she said. "I feel very comfortable giving a percent of the assets in my trust to GDA. I would tell anyone that they couldn't find a better cause to support. It is an altruistic and well-managed organization."

For information about becoming a Partner in Trust, please contact Rhonda Bissell at (818) 833-6432.

Partners in Trust



Make your gift to Guide Dogs of America last a lifetime and beyond. The Partners in Trust Society was established by GDA as a way to recognize and honor the generosity of those who have included the school in their planned giving. Providing life income gifts and bequests lets your gift continue working beyond your lifetime to help others achieve their goals with increased mobility and independence through a partnership with a loyal and loving guide dog. Charitable organizations are not subject to gift or estate taxes so your gift continues to

support the causes close to your heart, like Guide Dogs of America, without being diminished by the IRS.

You will receive our special "Partners In Trust" crystal jar as a way of thanking you that you can display proudly, knowing 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.

GDA Annual Las Vegas Charity Weekend



It was a wet, but wonderful, weekend in Las Vegas at the Guide of America 33rd-annual Charity Weekend. More than 1,100 attendees, including 42 members of the board, convened in Las Vegas for the annual fundraising weekend and took part in the activities and festivities for the school's largest fundraiser of the year. All of the funds that were raised during the weekend help support the school in its mission to provide guide dogs, at no cost, to those without sight.

Rain may have dampened some of the outdoor activities, but it didn't hamper participation.

The weekend kicked off Thursday, Nov. 21 with the 13th-annual Hawgs for Dogs motorcycle ride — the biggest to date, with 61 bikes and 98 people.

The afternoon rain presented a challenge for the riders but, thanks to the Southern Nevada HOG road captains, they all made it through the wet trip safe and sound. The 2nd-annual USA Skeet & Trap Shoot at the Clark County Shooting Park event attracted 50 shooters. On Friday morning, all 272 golfers (68 foursomes) teed off at the 33rd-annual Golf Tournament at Angel Park Golf Course, but more rain arrived and only 31 foursomes completed the round.

"I am grateful to all of our sponsors, attendees and volunteers for their generous support of the Charity Weekend," said GDA President Dale Hartford. "Please know how greatly we appreciate your continued commitment. It was incredibly successful weekend of events, and we couldn't do it without every one of you."



Throughout the weekend, graduates, puppy raisers and puppies-in-training greeted all those who had gathered and thanked them for their participation.

The fundraising weekend culminated at Bally's Hotel and Casino with the 33rd-annual William W. Winpisinger Charity Banquet. At the banquet, three outstanding members of our GDA family were recognized for their support of Guide Dogs of America and were presented with the prestigious "Gift of Sight" Award.





Bike Raffle Winner

It was love at first sight for bike raffle winner



"Talk about a 'wow' moment in your life. I almost dropped my phone in disbelief when I heard the voicemail telling me, 'You won the bike!'" said Jack Flynn, IUOE (Retired) of Annapolis, Maryland, the excited winner of this year's GDA bike raffle. Flynn's winning ticket was drawn at the Charity Banquet.

The "bike" was a 2013 Harley-Davidson Road Glide. Flynn said that he had fallen in love with the candy apple red custom bike after seeing it at the AFL-CIO Metal Trades Convention in November.

"I was just happy to make a contribution by buying chances and look what happened," added Flynn. "I look forward to many a great ride on the bike with the beautiful guide dog painted on its nose. Thank you to all of you at Guide Dogs of America for the wonderful work that you do."

Congratulations Jack!

Gift of Sight Honorees



Phil Gruber

Phil Gruber has been a member of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Union since his initiation into Local Lodge 688 in October 1972. It was then that he began his apprenticeship. He became a journeyman tool & die maker in the spring of 1976 and served as Steward, Chief Steward, Treasurer and President of Lodge 688. Gruber is an active member of District Lodge 9 in St. Louis, Missouri, and has served in various appointed and elected local lodge positions. He has served as Chairman of the District 9 Joint Apprenticeship Committee, was a member of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Law Committee, and on the Board of Directors of United Way of Greater St. Louis. In 1987, Gruber joined the staff of District Lodge 9 as a Business Representative. He steadily moved up through the organization and, on July 1, 2006, he was named General Vice President of the Midwest Territory. Gruber has been holding fundraisers and donating to GDA for the past 30 years.



Philip M. Zanella, Jr.

Since joining the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers in 1970 at Transamerican Freight Lines, Philip M. Zanella, Jr. has advanced through the ranks of Local 1363. Starting his career as a garageman, he moved up to apprentice and journeyman mechanic. He served as the Business Representative for Local 1363 from the early '70s. In 2004, he was promoted to Directing Business Representative and has expertly managed Local 1363 — including contract negotiations, arbitrations and grievances, for the betterment of working men and women and their families. He proudly carries on the legacy begun by his late father, Philip M. Zannella, Sr., who faithfully served the IAM & AW for more than 50 years. In addition to serving as the Secretary-Treasurer of the Northern Ohio Chapter of Guide Dogs of America, Zanella also gives generously of his time to a variety of farm, livestock and conservation organizations.



Seth Mersky

Since joining Onex in 1997, Seth Mersky has led a number of private equity transactions, including the acquisition and subsequent realization of BC Sugar, the acquisition of Sitel Worldwide, the purchase of Spirit AeroSystems, and the investment in Allison Transmission subsequent IPOs. Most recently, he spearheaded the acquisition of Tomkins, Plc. Mersky is resident in Onex's Toronto office and is a senior member of its flagship buy-out fund, Onex Partners. Prior to joining Onex, he was a Senior Vice President of The Bank of Nova Scotia, where he worked for 13 years. During his banking career, he worked in Houston, San Francisco, New York and Toronto. Mersky serves on the boards of Sitel Worldwide, Allison Transmission, Gates Corporation, Mount Sinai Hospital Foundation and Village Community Schools. Mersky's support of and donations to GDA stems from what he says is the "remarkable nature of the founding and steadfast support of GDA by the IAM & AW."

Congratulations Graduates

Class #380



Graduates (Puppy Raiser in parentheses):

Left to right: Paul Dang & Ticklish (*The Smith Family*), Rae Howell & Kramer (*Mary Charlton & Mike Cohen*), Mindi Murray & Waverly (*The Mrohs Family*), Arnetta Bradford & Tessa (*The Delvasto Family*), Erin Magoon & Nels (*Butch and Karen Reyburn*), Edwin Valle & Cassia (*The Heffernan Family*), Richard Fiel & Winzer (*Jim and Bridget Winnett*), Deedee Mann & Sally (*The Vessella Family*), Patricia Rasmussen & Nara (*The DeBruno Family*), Jose Rodriguez & Vivi (*The Ansite Family*)

Instructors: Left to right: Sean Chiles, Melinda Romero, Tiffany McKillop, Nick Terrones

Class #381



Graduates (Puppy Raiser in parentheses):

Left to right: Rhiannon Ballinger & Aiden (*The Wette Family*), Michael Nelson & Bauer (*The Reints Family*), Maria Deer & Domino (*Jay Skowronski*), Karen McIntyre & Honey (*Denise Brown*), Diane Morton & Wyland (*Tanya Saunders*)

Instructors: Left to right: Steve Burkman, Linda Hawes

In-Home Graduates (not pictured):

Gebrial Berry & Willa (*The Robb Family*), Debbie Kalfin & Dutch (*Angel Biezeman and Brian Bigley*), Toni Smith & Cici (*Don and Rita Tayenaka*), Katrina Stanley & Rosie (*Paul and Diane Niesen*)

Instructors: Steve Burkman, Linda Hawes, Melinda Romero

Class #382



Graduates (Puppy Raiser in parentheses):

Left to right: Deon Upshaw and Gypsy (*The Cohen Family*), Wesley Varden and Neeka (*Tom and Judy Kovaric*), Veronica Hernandez and Nala (*The Ramirez Family*), Robert Bracy and Halle (*The Fujishige Family*), Yegue Bedigue and Guinness (*The Miller Family*), Richard Mero and Hasley (*The Erhardt Family*), Theresa Klein and Henna (*The King Family*), Kevin Morton and Jayla (*Bob and Moira Wunderlich*), Juan Romero and Gunner (*Jerry and Sydney Cain*)

Instructors: Left to right: Bryan Young, Chris Medina, Nick Terrones



2014 Graduations

Most graduations are held on Sundays and take place at Guide Dogs of America. Graduations begin promptly at 10 a.m.

Jan. 26; April 13; July 13;
Oct. 19; Dec. 20 (Saturday)

In Memory

With sadness we note the passing of GDA family member:

Leon Paris – Class 366

We also note with sadness the passing of the following guide dogs:

Axel — Class 347.5
Benny — Class 336
Caleb — Class 348
Cheyenne — Class 337
Gucci — Class 351.5

Hoshi — Class 359
Lali — Class 334
Nitro — Class 349
Pasha — In-home
Vader — Class 342

2014 Raffles

Quilt Raffle



Detail

This year's quilt is being crafted and donated by the Orange County Quilters Guild. It is a work in progress, but they shared a sneak preview. Artist Laurel Burch designed the adorable embroidered dog duo that will be

used throughout the quilt design. This quilt, with its intricate embroidered canine designs, consists of 36 pieced blocks that will be hand-stitched together to reveal a beautiful blue whirlpool. When completed the quilt will measure 60" x 60" (approx.).

Purchase tickets using the order form on this page and mailing it to GDA postmarked by Nov. 22, 2014. Tickets are \$2 each or six for \$10. The drawing will be held at the GDA December puppy raiser meeting on Dec. 10, 2014. Winner does not need to be present.

"A Day with the Trainers"

This extremely popular annual raffle prize takes you behind the scenes of GDA, where you will observe the trainers working with our incredible dogs. Two lucky people will spend "A Day with the Trainers," accompanying them on training routes; observing daily training exercises; and, after being blindfolded by a trainer, taking harness in hand and being led on a route with a dog to experience how it feels to walk with a guide dog. Winners must be at least 18 years of age and able to walk 4-5 miles in one day near our campus.

Use the order form included on this page or purchase tickets at GDA before or on June 30. Tickets are \$5 each or five tickets for \$20. Winner will be notified on July 10. Training day date to be announced after the drawing.

2014 GDA Bike Raffle

This year, the GDA motorcycle raffle is for a 2014 custom Harley-Davidson. The winning ticket will be drawn on Nov. 22 at the Guide Dogs of America Annual Banquet in Las Vegas. (Winner need not be present to win.) Visit the GDA website (guidedogsofamerica.org) for additional details and photos. Tickets are \$5 each or five tickets for \$20.

Winter Merchandise

Merchandise available for purchase online at ShopGDA.org (guidedogsofamerica.org/howtohelp) or for purchase by phone, call 818-833-6429.



2014 GDA Lapel Pin

This year's pin honors the German Shepherd, which is the same breed that was used by GDA Founder Joseph Jones. Made in the U.S.A., the gold metal pin is 3/4" round. Stamped around the edge of the pin is "Guide Dogs of America" and the year. Price: \$8 (includes shipping & handling).



Navy Fleece Jacket

Soft and snuggly (just like our puppies and guide dogs), GDA's new fleece jacket is navy blue with the GDA logo embroidered in white. Features: front pockets and draw string waist. Material: 100% polyester. Unisex style; available in men sizes: Small-3XL. Price: \$55 (includes shipping).

WINTER 2014 Order Form

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

Mail this entire form with your payment.

Merchandise

☐ 2014 GDA Lapel Pin — \$8 per pin \$

Navy Fleece Jacket — Size S-3XL \$55

☐ SM ☐ MED ☐ LRG ☐ XL ☐ 2XL ☐ 3XL \$

Raffle Tickets

☐ 2014 Quilt Raffle — \$2 per ticket or \$10 for 6 \$

☐ 2014 GDA Bike Raffle — \$5 per ticket or \$20 for 5 \$

☐ A Day with the Trainers — \$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: _____

required for credit card purchase

3-4 digit code

☐ **Check** (make your check payable to **Guide Dogs of America**)

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

Partners newsletter

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GDA Welcomes Two New Employees

Training Department: Please join us in welcoming Nick Terrones. Nick recently passed both portions of his state test and is a licensed instructor.

Veterinary Department: We are pleased to announce that Dr. Lori Prater has joined our staff as part-time veterinarian. Please join us in giving her a big GDA welcome.



Bidding For Good

Online bidding for great goods to benefit GDA

Bidding on items in GDA's ever popular annual Silent Auction is now easier than ever with our new bigger and better online auction. Log on to GDA's Bidding for Good auction page (biddingforgood.com/guidedogsofamerica) from your computer, smartphone or tablet and let the bidding begin. Choose from an array of items including travel, sporting events, dining and many other fun activities and items. The site will be open for bids from June 5-15 only.

Amazon Gives GDA Something to Smile About

amazon.com


If you are shopping on Amazon, please go through: smile.amazon.com. GDA will receive .5% of your total amount purchased all year round (on most items). The first time you visit the site you will be asked what charity you would like to support, type in: Guide Dogs of America. Every time you shop Amazon in the future, go through smile.amazon.com; as long as you log in from the same device (computer, smartphone or tablet) you used previously, the site will remember GDA as your charity of choice, and GDA will receive a contribution based on your purchases. If you are shopping from a different device, you will need to choose GDA the first time you use it. Please feel free to share this information with your family, friends and co-workers. Thank you!