

GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA

# Partners

winter 2006 volume 21 number 4

## GIVING BACK: TURN-IN DAY FOR THE PUPPY RAISERS

At any given time, there are approximately 300 GDA puppies-in-training living in the homes of our volunteer puppy raisers. Among those puppy raisers are individuals and families who are raising their very first GDA puppy, others who have raised "more than a few."

"Giving him back is going to be the hardest thing I've ever done."

—First-time puppy raiser,  
Mitchell Kaufman, 17,  
with Varakei



their puppy back to GDA to begin formal training.

These "turn-in days" occur four times a year at GDA. Between 25 and 30 puppies-in-training are "called in"

"Giving Back" continued on page 3 >



## DURING THIS SEASON OF THANKS AND GIVING...

At Guide Dogs of America thanks and giving are more than the message of the season — they are the spirit of the season, and this spirit is present everyday.

In this last newsletter of the year, I wanted to share with you some of the ways GDA is touched by this spirit. You'll read about the puppy raisers expressing what it means to them to give back to GDA the puppy they have raised for the past 18 months, notes from graduates expressing how thankful they are for their guide dogs, and events that take place locally and throughout the country with the sole purpose of raising donations for GDA. These are just a few examples, but the list goes on.

I hope this newsletter provides a glimpse of how I see your generosity come to life. We are so grateful to all of you for the many ways in which we receive your support throughout the year.

Best wishes to you and your loved ones for a happy holiday season and a wonderful New Year!

With sincere and heartfelt thanks,

Jay A. Bormann,  
GDA President

I am thankful for my guide dog because...when I want to go somewhere I can go without hesitation. It's like having my eyesight back. Also, I love being with him. JOHN FAITRO & KEPLER • CLASS #324

In keeping with the season of thanks and giving, we asked some of our GDA graduates to tell us why they are thankful for their guide dogs. Their responses, like the one above, appear throughout the newsletter.

## A NEW "BEGINNING" FOR SENIOR TRAINER TRINA BEGAN

Since joining GDA, Trina Began has touched the lives of countless graduates. With her compassionate understanding and dedication, she has impacted so many people throughout her tenure. We are very thankful and extremely grateful to Trina for her many years of service to the school.



Trina's career at GDA started in 1989. She was just 18.

Trina Marie VerVooren reported to GDA for her first day as a Kennel Technician on September 21, 1989. She was eighteen-years-old, single, and just beginning her career.

Over the past 17 years Trina has risen through the ranks, first with her promotion to Assistant Kennel Lead, followed shortly thereafter by her acceptance into the three-year apprenticeship program. She was licensed by the State of California in May 1993 as a Certified Trainer and was promoted to Senior Trainer in February 2005. During her time with GDA, Trina has continued her education, supplementing her experience with classes to build on and improve her skills and abilities.

Trina is leaving GDA and relocating to Central California with her husband, Bob, and their sons (Austin, 6, and Cody, born September 2006).

We will miss Trina and wish her well as she "begins" her new life away from GDA. 🐾

### NEW EMPLOYEES

Two new employees recently joined GDA, please join us in welcoming:

**Dr. Amanda Payne-DeVega**  
Veterinarian  
**Xochitl Sanchez**  
Kennel Tech



## CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!



### Class #351.5

GRADUATES from LEFT to RIGHT (Puppy Raiser in parenthesis): Michael Girard & **Gus** (The Cody Family), Sharon Williams & **Gucci** (The Delgado Family), Paula Berube & **Pacey** (Carolyn Jordan), Valerie Evans & **Naia** (The Koalska-Price Family), Sandra Remson & **Yazzie** (Helen & Richard Lau), CJ Daniel & **Saxon** (Marilyn & Mike Doram)

INSTRUCTORS standing LEFT to RIGHT: Steve Burkman, Bob Wendler



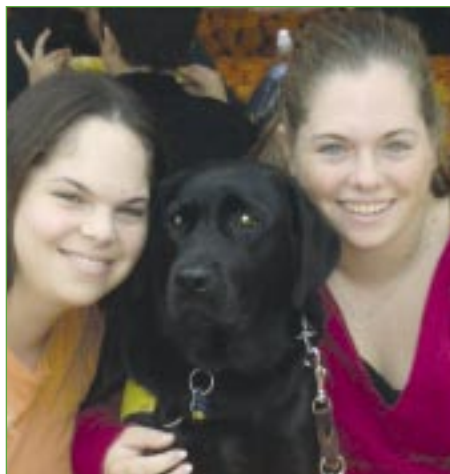
### Class #352

GRADUATES from LEFT to RIGHT (Puppy Raiser in parenthesis): Mary Heid & **Chanel** (Karen Smith & Shelley DiTommaso), Lew Wilson & **Hemi** (The Muir Family), Myrna Bell & **Harvey** (The Mackenzie Family), Ernie Chairez & **Hogan** (Anne & James Gunderson), Elizabeth Davis & **Keiko** (Tiffany Andrews), Don Jeffries & **Nesa** (Shannon & Peter Hendricks), Kristi Stone & **Capri** (Lisa Miller), Tiffany Romero & **Fina** (Judi Gomez & Miguel Ola), Steve Piazza & **Everly** (The Hemsath Family)

INSTRUCTORS standing LEFT to RIGHT: Bob Wendler, Ashley Hermans, Patti Elizondo, Steve Burkman

I am thankful for my guide dog because... not only is he my eyes and lifesaver everyday but he is my best friend and companion. CARI SHIELDS & DENVER • CLASS #341





**“We can never be without another GDA puppy.”**

—Oppenheim Family,  
first-time puppy raisers.  
From left:  
Jaci, Frasier, & Jenna

to begin their formal guide dog training. The group meets at GDA for lunch where they meet the trainers who tell them more about this next step toward becoming a guide dog. Always a highlight of the day is hearing from a guest graduate who shares his or her story and what having a guide dog has meant to them.

Even though each puppy raiser will go through the experience of turn-in day, each of them approaches it differently. With turn-in day nearing, we checked in with a few of our puppy raisers who shared their feelings.

“Giving him back is going to be the hardest thing I’ve ever done,” said first-time puppy raiser Mitchell Kaufman (17), whose black lab puppy, Varakei, will be turned in soon. “It seemed like Varakei was my puppy when I first got him, but I had to keep telling myself he is going to be a guide dog.”

—Mitchell Kaufman, 17, High School Senior  
First-time puppy raiser  
Puppy: Varakei

“The first time you don’t really know what to expect,” said Kari Weber. “Now I have the big picture. Having had a dog that graduated, I see the other end of the spectrum and how important the dog becomes to their partner. It makes it easier the next time, but it’s still sad letting him go.”

—Kari Weber, Pharmaceutical Sales, Wife, Mother  
Veteran Puppy Raiser  
Puppy: Ike (#3)

“I approach my puppies from the teacher aspect,” said Gail Leonard. “My job is to train them to go on to the next level. As one gets close to turn-in age, I begin focusing on the puppy that’s coming. It’s like my students at the end of the year. I’ve prepared them as best I can and they have to move forward with their education.”

—Gail Leonard, Teacher  
Veteran Puppy Raiser  
Puppy: Branson (#11)



**“It’s like my students.... I’ve prepared [the puppies] as best I can.”**

—Gail Leonard, teacher.  
Branson, her eleventh puppy, is pictured with her 2nd grade class.

“A year ago it didn’t seem like we even had to think about it, but now we know we’ve done everything we can do to prepare him,” said Debbi Oppenheim. “We hope that at the time we turn him in we will have another puppy. We can never be without another GDA puppy.”

—Debbi Oppenheim, Speech Pathologist, Wife, Mother  
First-time puppy raiser  
Puppy: Frasier

“I know the puppy raisers all are going to feel great when they start receiving reports about their puppy’s progress, but turn-in day is not easy for anyone,” said Louise Henderson, GDA’s Puppy Department Manager. “When the puppy raisers listen to the trainers and the graduate, they feel better because they are reminded of the tremendous contribution each of them has made to the program and how thankful our graduates are to them for playing such an important role in their guide dog’s life.” 🐾

If you’re interested in becoming a Puppy Raiser, and live in the Southern California area, please contact Louise Henderson at (818) 833-6441.

**“I see....how important the dog becomes to their partner.”**

—Veteran puppy raiser,  
Kari Weber.  
Ike (pictured) is the third puppy she’s raised.



# GIFTS THAT GIVE AT THE HOLIDAYS AND ALL YEAR-ROUND

## CHECK OUT HOW GROCERY SHOPPING SUPPORTS GDA

Whether shopping for a holiday meal with all the trimmings or picking up a gallon of milk, you can be making a donation to GDA all year-round when shopping at your local Ralph's or Albertsons. By using these stores' club cards and designating GDA as your charity of choice, a percentage of your bill will be donated to the school. If you currently aren't a member of these stores' club card programs, you can pick up an application at your local store. Here's how to get started:

**Ralph's Club Card** – To designate GDA, all Ralph's Club members (new and existing) need to register their Club Card number online. (For those of you who called with your Ralph's information when you received the Fall issue of "Partners," we already have entered your number online for you.) Follow these simple steps to participate in the program: Log on to [www.ralphs.com](http://www.ralphs.com). From the home page click on "Community Contributions," then click "Sign-up" in the participant box and provide the requested information. Please call GDA if you have any questions at (818) 833-6438.

**Albertsons Preferred Savings Card** – You can designate GDA as your charity of choice by calling GDA at (818) 833-6438. You will be asked to leave a voice message with the following information: your name, telephone number, and the 11 digit number on the back of the card, beginning with "42."

## UNUSED AIRLINE MILES HELP GDA STUDENTS ON THEIR JOURNEY TO INDEPENDENCE

For many of our students, who do not live near the school, their journey to GDA and the greater independence that comes with being a guide dog recipient begins with an airplane flight. Students' travel expenses, including airline tickets, are covered by GDA. Many of these tickets are "purchased" using frequent flier miles that have been donated to the school.

Three airlines participate in the program: Northwest, United Airlines, and Alaska Airlines. If you or someone you know have unused miles with any of these airline programs listed, they can be donated directly to GDA to help support our cause.

To donate your miles, have your account number ready and contact:

- **Northwest Worldperks** (800) 327-2881 or [www.nwa.com/worldperks](http://www.nwa.com/worldperks)  
*Northwest WorldPerks members also can receive 500 miles by donating \$50 or more to Guide Dogs of America. Call GDA at (818) 833-6432*
- **United Airlines Mileage Plus** (800) 421-4655 (Customer Service)
- **Alaska Airlines**  
Contact GDA at (818) 833-6432



## RING THE BELL FOR GDA BY DONATING STOCKS OR SECURITIES

Donating appreciated stock or securities is another way you can give to GDA. This can benefit you in two ways: you will receive a deduction based on the average price of the security on the date you give the gift, and you avoid paying capital gains tax by gifting the security directly to GDA. This double benefit can work for appreciated real estate as well as appreciated securities. You also can sell a security that would generate a loss, and donate the proceeds to Guide Dogs of America. That loss could be used to offset other capital gains you may have, or if you have no other capital gains, up to \$3,000 can be used to offset ordinary income.

Please consult a tax professional to verify your own particular situation. It's a great way to give a gift and minimize your taxes!

Call (818) 833-6432 for details.



## ONE PHONE CALL: A YEAR OF GIVING WITH AUTOMATIC MONTHLY DONATION

Many of our supporters donate on a regular basis to our guide dog program. We have a plan for those who would like to make a monthly donation to Guide Dogs of America, and want to avoid writing checks and the additional postage. At the beginning of each month we automatically will charge your credit card. At the year's end you will receive a thank you letter with a donation total for your tax records. Call (818) 833-6432 with questions or to participate.



# GIFTS ALL YEAR-ROUND

## AMAZON-LY EASY WAY TO HOLIDAY SHOP FOR EVERYONE ON YOUR LIST

If online shopping has made your holiday shopping easier, then it just became easier for you to give to GDA, too. Every time you shop on Amazon.com a percentage of your purchase is automatically donated to the school – making everyday a holiday at GDA.

Amazon.com is one-stop shopping for just about everyone and everything on your gift list. Simply log on to our site [www.guidedogsofamerica.org](http://www.guidedogsofamerica.org), click on the Amazon logo, and start shopping.



## YOUR DONATION WORKS TWICE AS HARD WITH EMPLOYER MATCHING GIFT PROGRAMS

Increase your next gift to GDA by checking with your employer! If gift matching is available through your company, it is an easy way to double your gift to GDA. Ask your employer if they match gifts, if so:

- Ask for a matching gift form from your Human Resources department.
- Complete the form and mail it with your donation to GDA
- GDA certifies the gift and the company's guidelines, then returns form to the company
- The company verifies eligibility of the employee and GDA, then sends a check directly to GDA

### ...For Added Incentive

Some businesses also have Volunteer Incentive Programs where they will donate to a charity when their employees complete a number of volunteer hours. Contact your Human Resources department to make the time you spend at GDA even more valuable!

Call (818) 833-6432 with questions.



## VET'S CORNER

# KEEPING THE HOLIDAYS HAPPY AND SAFE FOR YOUR DOG

Before you deck the halls with boughs of holly or buy the chocolate gold coins or the dreidel, remember your four-legged family member and take special care when having these decorations and treats in your home.

The holidays can present special dangers for your dog. Here are some of the ways you can keep this celebratory season enjoyable for both you and your dog:

- **ID Tags and Collars** – With parties, guests, and the merry chaos that comes along with holiday festivities, doors and gates can be inadvertently left open and dogs may wander out in the confusion. Make sure your dog is wearing a collar with an ID tag to make a happy reunion.
- **Keep a Routine** – Dogs do not understand all the holiday commotion; providing the security of a normal routine will help them feel calm. Take some time to ensure they have a quiet place to rest and retreat from all the excitement the holidays bring. Make time for exercise and play for your dog even though you are busy – it's something you will both benefit from and enjoy.
- **Holiday Plants** – Particularly poinsettias, mistletoe, holly, and amaryllis – can be toxic to dogs and should be kept out of reach.
- **Decorations** – All the extra cords for lighting can be tempting targets for chewing by dogs. Items such as ornaments and candles can be choking hazards or cause intestinal blockages. Even the preservatives in Christmas tree water can be toxic – keep these and other items out of your dogs' reach.
- **Gift Wrap** – Avoid tying yarn or ribbon around your dog's neck. If you want to dress up your dog for the holidays, buy a festive, seasonal collar.
- **Holiday Treats** – Rich holiday foods and desserts can make dogs extremely ill – chocolate, poultry bones, and high concentrations of sugar can be especially dangerous. Splurge on healthy dog-designated treats if you must, and remember that giving them attention is much more important than treats!
- **Travel** – If you're traveling for the holidays, bring along your dog's favorite blanket, toy, and foods so he/she feels as comfortable as possible. Bring your veterinarian's phone number with you, in case of an emergency.

With just a bit of planning and sensitivity to your dog's needs, you can keep your dog safe, secure, and happy throughout the holidays. 🐾

# 2006 GDA PARTNERS AWARDS DINNER EXTRAVAGANZA IS A DOG-GONE SUCCESS!

More than 380 guests and 40 very well-behaved puppies-in-training joined us for our first *Partners Awards Dinner* held at The Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Air Force One Pavilion on Saturday, August 12. Proceeds from the dinner netted an impressive \$74,000...all to benefit the puppies and graduates at GDA!

This year's *Partners Award* recipients were Bob & Pam English and Charlie & Sylvia Hall. Both couples were honored for outstanding volunteer service to GDA. Between them, the couples have raised 37 puppies and devoted hundreds of hours volunteering at events benefiting GDA.

Highlights of the evening included live and silent auctions, tours of Air Force One, and a very special guest speaker – John Barletta (puppy raiser and retired U.S. Secret Service Agent to President Reagan).

For helping to make our first-ever local fundraising dinner such a huge success, we want to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to our sponsors:



Photo credit: Joe Scavo

Michael & Suzanne Tennenbaum, Macki Singer, Randy Brooks, Edwin & Martha Elliott, Steve & Jackie Gittleman, and The Connors Family. Also, thank you to the committee who made this a memorable event — Joe Scavo, Mark & Tammy New, and Judy Reilly (and her artistic silent auction committee).

Plans for the Second Annual *Partners Awards Dinner* already are underway. We will keep you posted as the date and the details are confirmed. 🐾

*Top photo:* Our beautiful awards dinner venue

*Middle photo:* (from left)

Debbie Sands, Jay Bormann, Pam & Bob English

*Bottom photo:* (from left)

Debbie Sands, Jay Bormann, Sylvia & Charlie Hall



I am thankful for my guide dog because...he keeps me safe, he is my best buddy, and I have grown to love him in a very special way. We are a team, working together, living and enjoying life. I thank you for such a gift. BRAD ROLLINSON & E.J. • CLASS #343

## WISH LIST

As you are making your list and checking it twice this holiday season, please remember all the GDA puppies (and, yes, our kennel cats) that have been extra nice this year!

### Kennel:

- Super Thick Orthopedic Dog Beds (available at PetSmart)
- Large sterilized bones
- Heavy duty rubber toys
- Large compressed rawhide bones and rawhide chews

### Vet Department/Recovery Room:

- Elevated Dog Beds – “Pipe Dreams Pet Beds,” size: large (available at [www.dog.com](http://www.dog.com) – Item #020801)
- Kirkland Pet Throws – one side fleece/one side fabric (available at Costco)
- Slumber Pet Fleece Beds – Quantity needed: 6; size XL (available at [www.petedge.com](http://www.petedge.com) – Item #ZW25048)
- Charlie Bear Treats
- Oster Cordless Rechargeable Clippers

### Puppy Department:

- #300 and #400 size crates (10 each)

### Nursery:

- The Merck Veterinary Manual\*\* (available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com))
- Large-size cat tree for kennel cats\*\*

*\*\*Please call us at (818) 833-6431 before ordering, to make sure this “wish” hasn’t been filled yet, as we only need two of each*

- Stainless steel puppy feeder pans - 15 inch size
- Stainless steel, flat-sided, six-quart, water buckets
- Blitz Sporty – pet travel feeder and watering bowls
- Large beef bones stuffed with various fillers
- Main Stays Twin/Full print blankets (available at Wal-Mart)
- Wal-Mart gift card – for miscellaneous needs



## PARTNERS IN TRUST SOCIETY

### Putting Their "Trust" in GDA



By thoughtfully naming GDA in their wills, trusts, and life insurance policies, the members of the Partners in Trust Society ensure their support of GDA will continue for years to come. We are forever grateful to them for remembering GDA in their estate plans, in any amount, and we are honored to be a part of their legacy:

Janice Baxter  
Dr. Jonathan Wilson

Virginia Quintana  
John & Lin Riggs

Anonymous (5)

#### BECOME A MEMBER OF THE PARTNERS IN TRUST SOCIETY

Just as blind men and women partner with GDA's remarkable dogs for more independence and mobility, generous friends and supporters partner with GDA to help us carry out our work. Become a member of the Partners in Trust Society by naming GDA in your will or trust and receive this beautiful crystal biscuit jar. Call Rhonda Bissell for more information at (818) 833-6432.

## IN MEMORY

We note with sadness the recent loss of GDA family member:

**Randy Hayhurst**  
GDA graduate

We also note with sadness the passing of the following **GDA guide dogs**, who dedicated their lives to ensuring the safety and independence of their partners:

**Clia** – Class #306  
**Hanson** – In-home  
**Lightning** – Class #312  
**Liza** – Class #299  
**Palomar** – Class #307  
**Whitley** – In-home

**I am thankful for my guide dog because...she gave me freedom, independence and courage.**

**SUE BURDYSHAW & GIDGET • IN-HOME**



## Partners

### newsletter

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**I am thankful for my guide dog because...he is so intuitive. He only has to be shown a route once, such as to the Green Line Station, and leads me straight to the platform, and to the nearest open door to the train.** JULIE CANTRELL & COHEN • CLASS #350



## "HAWG" HEAVEN!

A delighted **Carole Mertens** of **Minnesota** held the winning ticket in this year's fund raising raffle. Carole is shown here with her prize – a 2006 Harley-Davidson Street Glide, custom painted by Mike Robbins. Congratulations, Carole!

**I am thankful for my guide dog because...she gives me another personality, one better than the one I had before and helps me break the ice with other people who would never notice me otherwise. She is my ambassador of understanding & immediate acceptance.** LAURE NOBEL & VIENNA • CLASS #346





**GUIDE DOGS  
OF AMERICA**

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## 2007 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS AT GDA

### GRADUATIONS 2007

February 4

May 6

July 29

October 21

*Graduation celebrations take place four times a year on Sunday mornings at GDA. Graduations begin promptly at 10:00 am.*

### 4TH ANNUAL "RIDE FOR GUIDES" MOTORCYCLE RUN

May 20, 2007 (Sunday) - for information call (818) 833-6431

### OPEN HOUSE

June 9, 2007 (Saturday)

**I am thankful for my guide dog because... my guide dog gives me mobility that cannot be equaled by the cane or sighted guide. I can go anywhere, anytime. I have mobility without stress and total freedom to be an independent traveler.** SHARLENE ORNELAS & WHISPER • CLASS #347

## TAKING A PAWS FOR THANKS.

Throughout the year and across the country, big and small, fundraising events are held with all proceeds earmarked for GDA. As is our tradition in every issue of the newsletter, we'd like to take a "Paws for Thanks" and recognize these organizations and individuals, whose desire to support GDA continually demonstrates their ability to combine fun and hard work to benefit GDA!

### A SPECIAL WAG OF THE TAIL TO GDAF

The Guide Dogs of America Foundation (GDAF) held two of its annual fundraising events recently. The Annual GDAF Golf Tournament in Calabasas, CA in August was a great success and raised a lot of "green" for GDA. The Foundation kept the ball rolling in October with its Annual GDAF Bowl-A-Thon in Canoga Park, CA. The event was a "striking" success with almost 100 bowlers raising fun and funds for GDA!



### OCTOBER

- District 60 – 1st Annual Golf Tournament – **Detroit, MI**
- "Hawgs for Dogs" Motorcycle Run – **Columbus, OH**
- Sacramento Classic Auto Show – **Rancho Cordova, CA**
- 13th Annual West Coast "All Harley Motorcycle Poker Run" – **Redwood City, CA**
- 4th Annual Poker Run Charity Ride – Golden State Glendale H.O.G. Chapter – **Glendale, CA**

### NOVEMBER

- 1st Annual Autumn Classic Golf Tournament – **Wichita, KS**
- 6th Annual Las Vegas "Hawgs for Dogs" Motorcycle Run – **Las Vegas, NV**
- 26th Annual GDA Charity Golf Tournament – **Las Vegas, NV**
- 26th Annual William W. Winpisinger Banquet – **Las Vegas, NV**