

GUIDE DOGS OF AMERICA Partners

spring 2009 volume 24 number 1

SPECIAL DELIVERIES – A DAY IN THE LIFE OF THE NURSERY

Our guide dogs are living the life they were bred, born, raised, and trained to do... and with the exception of the 18 months or so our puppies spend with their puppy raisers...everything happens at GDA.

Last year 160 puppies were born in our nursery and lovingly cared for by Meri Forman, Breeding Department Manager, and her team – Registered Vet Tech Janice Tyler, and Jan Stevens, who works weekends in the nursery.

"Every puppy is a special delivery to us. We have worked for many years to develop our own guide dog line and we have several generations in the line," explained Meri. "We bred the great, great grandparents of the dogs that are currently in the program."

There are 30 female breeding dogs and a dozen stud dogs in the program. Females are not bred until they are at least two-years-old and will never have more than one litter a year or more than four litters in total. Ninety-percent of the dogs in the breeding program are Labrador Retrievers, the rest are Golden Retrievers. Poodle-mix puppies are not bred at GDA, but are donated to the school by specific breeders that have been thoroughly screened by the breeding department.

"The gestation period for dogs is two months and we can ultrasound at 28 days," said Meri. "Sometimes we'll see seven puppies in the ultrasound and then deliver 10, or a dog that may have delivered just one puppy in a previous litter, may deliver six the next. We're always ready for a surprise."

Occasionally, the surprise is not as welcome. If Meri or her team sees that a female is ready to give birth and is having problems our vet will then safely deliver the puppies via cesarean section.



(L to R) Janice Tyler, Jan Stevens, and Meri Forman from the Nursery hold several adorable GDA puppies.

"Special Deliveries" continued on page 5 >

VET'S CORNER

IN CASE OF EMERGENCY

Disaster Preparedness for Your Dog

Emergencies can occur any time and the best thing you can do is to be prepared. This past November the Sayre Fire in Sylmar destroyed more than 600 homes, charred 8,000+ acres, and came within a quarter of a mile of the Guide Dogs of America campus. The staff quickly mobilized and carried out the school's emergency plan as it became clear they would have to evacuate the 80 dogs in the kennel.

Some emergencies may require that you evacuate, others could leave you homebound for days and without utilities. In either case, the best way to protect your family and your dog is to have a disaster plan in place. Important first steps you should take include:

Portable Pet Disaster Kit – Use a sturdy storage container (plastic storage box, waterproof duffel bag, etc.) and keep it in an accessible place. On the outside of the box, write your name, address, and telephone number. The contents of the disaster kit should be checked annually to ensure all items are up to date. Items to include:

"Vet's Corner" continued on page 3 >

At GDA we are well aware of the many amazing accomplishments of our guide dog teams. Whether it's returning to school, caring for their family, working, volunteering, or simply enjoying the increased freedom and mobility that comes with having a guide dog, our graduates are out in the community. We wanted our graduates to share a bit of their day-to-day life with you and so we asked them:

Is there an interesting place you and your guide dog work or go to volunteer?

Their very interesting responses appear throughout the newsletter.

WHAT'S IN A NAME – HOW OUR PUPPIES GET THEIR NAMES

When a litter is born at GDA it is assigned a letter. Puppy raisers are notified of which “litter letter” their puppy has been assigned before they pick up their puppy from GDA and are asked to give it a name beginning with that letter. We asked our more than 250 puppy raisers if there was a special meaning behind the name of the puppy they are currently raising or any of their previous puppies. We were overwhelmed by the number of responses we received. We could not reprint all of them here, but want to thank all of the puppy raisers for sharing their stories with us. Several of their responses appear on this page.

Harper's personality was a bit like the main character in my favorite book, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The main character's name is Scout, but since she is an “H” litter, I went with the author...Harper Lee.
– *Melanie Frampton*

When I was told I was getting a male black lab with the litter letter “F”, a light bulb went off! Since I have family and friends who are firefighters, I decided on Fahrenheit. I thought this would be a great tribute to them. Of course, they loved it!
– *Sheila Owen*

I decided to name my pup Cayla since there is a pink hybrid rose variety called Comtessa du Cayla. I later found out after I turned her in for training that Cayla means Crown of Laurel - since my name is Laurel, I thought that was quite a coincidence.
– *Laurel Schuman*

When I came to the name Drea – meaning “courage” in Greek – I knew I had it. Not for the courage the dog represents, but for the courage it must take for a person to decide to commit to a guide dog, to trust the dog, to trust the team, and to learn a whole new way of “seeing” the world.
– *Patti Hughes*

Trooper was our first. We got involved because our Girl Scout troop attended an International Guiding Eyes graduation. Within six months we got our first puppy and knew he'd be involved with the girls. They were all such “Troopers.”
– *Pam English*

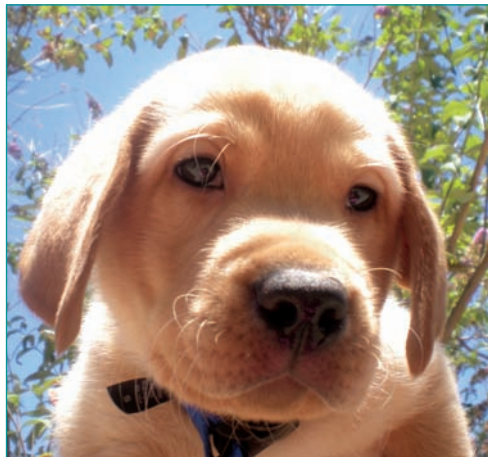
Hagrid was named after Rubeus Hagrid from the Harry Potter stories and he has proved to be every bit the “dog” Hagrid: big and tall with a dark face, friendly, soft-hearted and loyal – all characteristics attributed to the giant, Hagrid.
– *Ann Benya*

We named our second puppy Destiny because we liked it and it spoke to her future.
– *Amy Lyen*

I chose the name Leila because it means “dark as night” (appropriate for a black puppy!).
– *Laura Brennan*

I have always loved the challenge of finding a good guide dog name for the litter letter ... it can indeed be a challenge! Apollo was the pup with a special mission, Trigg – a trusted friend, Kaden – a friend and companion, and Emmett – a trustful and strong worker. Most recently my Eleah...her name means “blessings.” She is a breeder and recently had her last litter. Every one of her wee pups has indeed been blessings no matter what path they followed. GDA pups no matter what their name, no matter if they grow up to accept the challenge of a guide, are all special blessings because they all give their best!
– *Susan Renwick*

I really wanted something cute with a little something behind it. After searching for a few days I came across the name Nyah. It is from Swahili and means “purpose.”
– *Arica Parga*



My puppy Dash was named after a beautiful inspirational poem called “The Dash.” I had just read it when I spoke to Louise and found out I would be receiving a “D” litter pup. What else would his name be?
– *Lynne Pennala*

I work at a television station and we let our viewers vote. We had a list of pretty much every “W” name there is! We ran a poll with the names of the five finalists and received 1,249 votes! That's more than we received for the presidential poll! Her name is Winnie and she ‘won’ with 35% of the vote.
– *Michael Maas*

Promise arrived a couple of days after Christmas last year, and she was the best Christmas gift I got, a reminder of God's “promise” of salvation to us when Christ was born. My girl is going in for formal training next month, and she has “promise-d” me she will live up to her name.
– *Peggy Kollen*

We named our “V” litter puppy Velo. It is French for bicycle and Velo will be his partner's wheels.
– *Ann and Steve Barklow*

Lefty, our three-month-old black lab, was named because he will be on the left side one day soon and we wanted it to be a softball term since he will be raised on the softball fields. We think it's an appropriate guide dog name.
– *Judy Manzer*

We were on an Alaskan cruise when we received word our new puppy's name would begin with “D”, hence the name Dutch for Dutch Harbor, a port in Alaska.
– *Anne Gunderson*

Edison's name seemed to be a natural, as I thought if he did choose a career as a guide dog, his name meant that he would light the way for the person he would be guiding.
– *Hillary Ripps*

When I was a child I had rescued a mutt and named her Cammie. Cammie took me all through my teenage years and helped me with my kids when they were babies. I loved her so much, so when we got called to name our first black lab female a “C” name we didn't hesitate to name her Cami (different spelling) in honor of my childhood friend. – *Sonja Epstein*

PUPPY RAISERS TO THE RESCUE

When GDA's kennel and nursery had to be evacuated this past November as the fast-moving Sayre fire raged out of control and closer to GDA, the puppy raisers came to the rescue.

Seven GDA vans transported the puppies (some as young as four weeks) and dogs from the school to the Rose Bowl. Waiting in the parking lot to meet the more than 80 evacuated dogs were more than 100 puppy raisers.

"As we pulled into the Rose Bowl parking lot I saw all of the puppy raisers that had gathered and were prepared to take the puppies home," said Louise Henderson, Puppy Raiser Coordinator. "The turn-out was overwhelming and very heartwarming. To see all of the raisers waiting for the vans was a sight to see. I keep telling everyone that we have the absolute best puppy raisers, well, this proves it." 🐾



More than 100 puppy raisers gathered at the Rose Bowl.

PAULA ABDUL SHARES THE PUPPY LOVE WITH GUIDE DOG SCHOOLS

Paula Abdul, a judge on the hit reality TV singing competition "American Idol," is singing the praises of a new national campaign that will help to raise money for GDA, along with a few other guide dog schools throughout the country. Abdul has teamed up with Dick Van Patten's Natural Balance, Petco, and independent pet stores as spokesperson for a month-long promotion in which Natural Balance will donate 50 cents from every marked bag sold during the month of May. Funds raised through this program will help to raise money that will support guide dog programs throughout the country. Two years ago the program raised \$125,000 with only the state of California's participation in the promotion. Now it's national! Please help us to make this a very successful fundraiser for our school and purchase your Natural Balance dog food during the month of May. 🐾



Photo by Enk Asla

Paula Abdul with GDA graduate Lorri Bernson and guide dog Nigel.

"Benny and I do GDA speaking on guide dogging and pro-active living. Every October, for the past five years, we have been invited back to speak at Disability Day at our local elementary school. The 6th graders love Ben and seeing my adaptive technologies." BILL SCHLEY

"Vet's Corner" continued from page 1...

- Extra collars, tags, and leashes for all pets
- Three-day supply of food, water, and any medications your dog is taking
- Toys or blankets the pet will find familiar
- Paper towels, plastic bags, and disinfectant for waste clean-up
- Copies of your pet's medical and vaccination records and your vet's telephone number
- Emergency information sheets for each pet including a photo with the name, age, breed, sex, identification (microchipping information), and any health problems

Microchip – A microchip can be the one thing that will reunite you with your dog if you become separated – all of GDA's dogs are microchipped. Shelters scan pets to detect the presence of a microchip. The information from the microchip is sent to a national database and provides contact information for the registered owner.

Door Decal – Display a decal on your door or in a window to alert emergency personnel that there are pets inside. Include the number and the types of animals.

I.D. – Keep your pet properly fitted with a collar and current I.D. and rabies tag at all times. Local phone lines often are out of service during a disaster, so consider adding a tag with an out-of-area phone number. Tag all carriers, too. In case you and your pet are separated during a disaster, make sure you have proof of ownership, such as a health certificate and photos of your pet.

Health Records – Keep vaccinations up-to-date and keep a copy of their health certificate on hand in case you have to board your pet or leave the state.

Home Away from Home – List friends and relatives who could care for your pet for an extended period of time if you lose your home. Identify nearby hotels that accept pets.

We cannot be reminded often enough how important it is to have a disaster plan in place. Your dog depends on you for his safety and well-being. Being prepared will help to reduce anxiety and help you to better respond in case of emergency.

LET THE GOOD TIMES ROCK N' ROLL

28th Annual Charity Banquet and Golf Tournament



Elvis was in the building.

The good times rocked and rolled at Bally's Las Vegas Hotel when GDA celebrated its 60th anniversary during a weekend of fun and fundraising.

The three-day event got off to a roaring start on Thursday with the 8th Annual Nevada Hawgs for Dogs ride. More than 50 riders enjoyed the 70 degree weather as they travelled from the glitz of the strip to Bonnie Springs, Nevada, a replica of an 1880's mining town, where they stopped for lunch, enjoyed an old time

western show, and were awarded their raffle and door prizes before heading back to town.

On Friday morning 280 golfers got into the swing of things showing off their "greatest hits" at Angel's Park in Las Vegas.

Bringing down the house on Saturday night was the 28th Annual William W. Winpisinger Charity Banquet. This year's theme was "60 Years of Rock n' Roll." There were



Attendees are all smiles and peace signs.



Feeling groovy!

plenty of Elvis impersonators in attendance, but the guests' enthusiastic support of GDA was genuine. With more than 1,000 fans in attendance, the event broke fundraising records again this year.

GDA's Annual Fundraising weekend is one of the most successful ways in which GDA raises money in support of its mission to provide guide dogs at no cost to those without sight. Throughout the weekend, puppy raisers and puppies-in-training were there to meet all those who had gathered and thank them for their support. Three outstanding supporters of GDA were recognized at the banquet and presented with the prestigious Guide Dogs of America "Gift of Sight" award. Honored at this year's banquet were Warren Mart, Joyce A. Day, and The Boeing Company.

Tournament Sponsors

John Granger
Meketa
Helen Morton
Morton Foundation
United States Sugar Corporation

Hole Sponsors

District Lodge 24
IAM Crest
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Potomac Air Lodge 1976
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K&R Industries
Kelly Press
Rainier Investment Management
Salter & Company
Suntrust Bank

GIFT OF SIGHT AWARDEES FOR 2008



Warren Mart

A member of the IAM for more than 40 years, Warren Mart has been a long-time supporter of GDA and has been involved in many fundraising events for the school, including serving on the banquet committee for this year's charity banquet. Warren joined the IAM in 1966 and has been actively involved ever since. Warren held several local and district positions before being elected in 1997 as a General Vice President and assigned to direct IAM programs and activities in the union's Eastern Territory. He has served as IAM General Secretary-Treasurer since 2003.

Joyce A. Day

Honored as the first woman to receive the "Gift of Sight" award, Joyce Day has been a loyal and active member of the IAM for more than 41 years. She also has served as a volunteer to the Guide Dogs of America

Charity Golf Tournament all 24 years since its inception. A union member since the age of 18, Joyce has worked for eight Directing Business Representatives during her tenure. After a long and rewarding career, Joyce retired in February of this year to spend more time with family and friends.



The Boeing Company

(Represented by Rick Stephens)

The Boeing Company and its employees are actively involved in making positive contributions within the communities where the company has a presence. Each year, Boeing members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers generously support Guide Dogs of America through employee payroll deductions and fundraising events.

“Special Deliveries” continued from page 1...

For the first 2 – 2 ½ weeks, the puppies’ eyes and ears are closed and the mothers do most of the work, and then soon after the puppies get moving.

“The puppies start doing their clumsy walk just before they are three weeks old, and at three weeks they begin eating puppy food...three times a day,” said Meri. “The puppies are fully weaned from their mothers when they are 6 – 7 weeks.”

So with all those puppy paws running around, what is a typical day in the nursery?

“Clean up, laundry, feed, clean up, laundry, laundry, laundry,” said Meri. “We feed the puppies three times a day and we do 15 – 20 loads of laundry a day. Each morning starts with two hours of cleaning and at 3 p.m. we begin cleaning up again.”

Between the feedings and the cleanings, everything is done to ensure the health of our puppies and their mothers.

“Entry into the nursery is extremely limited. Anyone entering the nursery is outfitted with scrubs to ensure no outside germs or illnesses are brought into the facility that could compromise the health of our puppies or our breeding stock,” said Meri. “We also make sure all

the puppies are wormed and receive their vaccinations before going home with their puppy raisers.”

But before the puppies can leave, the nursery department conducts health evaluations and gives medical clearance. Then the Puppy Department evaluates each puppy with a series of tests.

“The puppy department tests the puppies at seven weeks. They are tested for a willingness to please with a retrieval test. To test if a puppy is dominant or shy we put him on his back. If he ‘fights back’ the puppy might have a tendency toward independence,” explained Meri. “Shaking coins in a can tests if a puppy is sensitive to or scared of sounds. To see how a puppy reacts to surprise, we’ll pop open an umbrella.”

Meri and her team have been incredibly busy the past several months. In January there were six litters in the nursery that had been born in November and December! By the end of January all six litters had gone home with their puppy raisers, leaving the nursery empty. But in February – just in time for Valentine’s Day – another litter was born...filling the nursery full of puppy love, once again! 🐾

GDA SPRING MERCHANDISE

Don't forget to shop GDA's Web Shop. We have several new items – all with the official GDA logo. Plus, shipping & handling is free with all purchases! Click on the link from the GDA web site (www.guidedogsofamerica.org) to shop. Here are just a few of the many items available for purchase to show your support of GDA.

2009 GDA Lapel Pin

GDA is the star in our 2009 collectible lapel pin. Gold and red stars on a blue background surround an adorable puppy face. The pin measures 1" X 5/8". \$8.00 (includes shipping & handling).



Previous year's pins and a special collector's edition boxed set also are available in limited quantities. See order form.



GDA Paw Prints Polo

GDA's new polo shirt is gray with the GDA logo and black paw prints on the front. Made in the U.S.A., the polo shirt is 50% polyester-50% cotton, and is machine washable. Adult sizes: Small – 3X. \$35.00 (includes shipping & handling). See order form for sizes.

GDA “Our Family” Sweatshirt

Be a part of the GDA family with the new “Our Family - Guide Dogs of America” puppies design on a black sweatshirt. Made in the U.S.A., the sweatshirt is 50% polyester-50% cotton and is machine washable. Adult sizes: Small – 3X. \$25.00 (includes shipping & handling). See order form for sizes.



MERCHANDISE ORDER FORM

Questions? Call (818) 833-6429. ****ALL SHIPPING & HANDLING IS FREE****

GDA Paw Prints Polo (Unisex sizing, men order one size larger)	\$35 per shirt
Indicate quantities in box next to chosen size(s).	
<input type="checkbox"/> SM <input type="checkbox"/> MED <input type="checkbox"/> LARGE <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> XXL <input type="checkbox"/> XXXL	\$
GDA “Our Family” Sweatshirt (Unisex sizing, men order one size larger)	\$25 per sweatshirt
Indicate quantities in box next to chosen size(s).	
<input type="checkbox"/> SM <input type="checkbox"/> MED <input type="checkbox"/> LARGE <input type="checkbox"/> XL <input type="checkbox"/> XXL <input type="checkbox"/> XXXL	\$
GDA Lapel Pins	\$8.00 per pin
<input type="checkbox"/> 2009 GDA Puppy Star Lapel Pin	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> 2008 GDA 60th Anniversary Lapel Pin	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> 2007 GDA Yellow Lab Lapel Pin	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> 2006 GDA German Shepherd Lapel Pin	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> 2005 GDA Chocolate Lab Lapel Pin	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> 2004 GDA Golden Retriever Lapel Pin	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> 2003 GDA Black Lab Lapel Pin	\$
<input type="checkbox"/> 2003 -2007 Collector's Edition Boxed Set – \$35.00	\$

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____
 Phone _____
 Credit Card (check one) VISA MasterCard Discover
 Expiration Date: ____/____/____
 Card Number: _____
 Signature: (required for credit card purchase) _____

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

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

OWN YOUR OWN "HAWG" AND SUPPORT OUR DOGS – ANNUAL BIKE RAFFLE

Customized 2009 Harley-Davidson FLHX Street Glide

There will be no mistaking where your loyalty lies when you ride up on this one-of-a-kind customized GDA Harley-Davidson FLHX Street Glide. The vibrant GDA blue and black bike was custom painted by Donnie Smith and features a stunning collage of three breeds – Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever, and German Shepherd on the ferring. On the gas tank is an eye-catching rendering of the GDA logo stylized with added wings and our trademark "Hawgs for Dogs."



Tickets are \$5 each or five tickets for \$20. Complete and return the order form on this page (postmarked by Nov. 1, 2009) to purchase tickets. Tickets can also be purchased at GDA or from our secure web site (www.guidedogsofamerica.org) through Nov. 15, 2009. The winning ticket will be drawn on Nov. 21, 2009 at the Guide Dogs of America Annual Banquet in Las Vegas. (Winner need not be present to claim prize.)

"A DAY WITH THE TRAINERS" The Experience of a Lifetime

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

Use the order form included in the newsletter or purchase tickets at GDA before or on June 13, 2009 (Open House). Tickets are \$5 each or five tickets for \$20. Winner will be notified on June 17, 2009. Training day date to be announced after the drawing.

GIVE THAT "HAWG" A HUG

Nash B. Gillis of Gray, Georgia hugs his wife, Shannon, and son, Shayd, in front of his new, brilliant red Donnie Smith-customized Harley-Davidson FLHX Street Glide that he won in the annual GDA custom bike raffle.



The winning raffle ticket was drawn at the 28th Annual William W. Winpisinger Charity Banquet in Las Vegas on Saturday November 22, 2008.

"Rawhide really enjoys volunteering at local elementary schools demonstrating his good behavior and guiding skills to all of the children. He is most especially proud when the puppies-in-training that are with us try to be just like him. The children love it and get so much out of learning about guide dogs and blind people." PAUL JORDAN

RAFFLE TICKETS Order Form

Questions? Call (818) 833-6429.

Mail this entire form with your payment. Please note the deadline dates for the raffle ticket purchases to ensure your eligibility.

A DAY WITH THE TRAINERS RAFFLE

To be eligible entry must be postmarked by June 6, 2009.

Ticket Price: 1 ticket for \$5.00 or 5 for \$20.00 QTY \$

CUSTOMIZED HARLEY-DAVIDSON FLHX STREET GLIDE

To be eligible entry must be postmarked by November 1, 2009.

Ticket Price: 1 ticket for \$5.00 or 5 for \$20.00 QTY \$

TOTAL ENCLOSED \$

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

Credit Card (check one) VISA MasterCard Discover

Expiration Date: ____/____/____

Card Number: _____

Signature: (required for credit card purchase) _____

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

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

MEET MARK & BRIAN



Popular L.A.-based radio deejays "Mark & Brian" met their puppy-in-training counterparts during a recent radio interview at the KLOS-FM (95.5 FM) studio. Mark is shown with his namesake black lab and Brian with the yellow lab. Both puppies are being raised by GDA puppy raisers, who will make on-air visits to the deejay duo and report their puppies' progress and announce upcoming GDA events. Stay tuned!

"SPORTS DAY AT GDA" – OPEN HOUSE

Team up with GDA at our annual Open House on Saturday, June 13, 2009 when it will be "Sports Day at GDA." Dress in your favorite sports attire – whether it's a pro sports team jersey, referee (things get a little "ruff" during the puppy trials), Little League uniform, or as a cheerleader – we're going to have a ball!

Admission to the Open House is free, and there is food available to purchase. Gates open at 11 a.m. and close at 4 p.m. Events begin at 11 a.m. and end at around 3 p.m. We do ask that you leave your personal pets at home.

CONGRATULATIONS GRADUATES!



Class #360

GRADUATES from LEFT to RIGHT

(Puppy Raiser in parenthesis): Socorro Arroyo-Merchain & Ninya (The Chavez Family), Stacey Dunton & Houston (Kathy Tallant & Art Richardson), Tina Glen & Noelani (Heather Hill), Adam Lawrence & Escort (Melissa & Joe Hyams), Brittney Mejico & Harvard (BobbieJo Dean), Christian Padilla & Salem (The O'Gorman Family), Eve Pimentel & Memphis (The Pitt Family), Sharlene Wills & Maisy (Rachel Conway), Deryal Wilkerson & A.J. (Kristie Bret-Harte)

INSTRUCTORS standing L to R: Annmarie Esposito, Dave Ponce, Patty Elizondo

Partners in Trust

Just as blind men and women partner with GDA's remarkable dogs for additional independence and mobility, generous friends and supporters partner with GDA to help us carry out and maintain our mission.



Become a member of the *Partners in Trust Society* by naming GDA in your will or trust and receive a beautiful, crystal biscuit jar. Please contact Rhonda Bissell at (818) 833-6432 for more information.

Have You Visited Our Financial and Gift Planning Web Site?

1. Go to www.guidedogsofamerica.org.
2. Click on the "Gift Planning" link under "How You Can Help."
3. Click on "Partners In Trust."



IMPORTANT REMINDER: RE-REGISTER YOUR ALBERTSONS PREFERRED SAVINGS CARD

If you have previously registered your Albertsons Preferred Savings Card indicating that you would like Guide Dogs of America to be your charity of choice, you will need to re-register your card to continue to support the school. Visit our website (www.guidedogsofamerica.org) and click on the "Albertsons Community Partners" link located on the left side of the home page. You also can register at www.alberstonscp.com or call Albertsons customer service at: (800) 696-6419.



Partners newsletter

Published by: **Guide Dogs of America**
13445 Glenoaks Blvd.
Sylmar, CA 91342
(818) 362-5834 FAX: (818) 362-6870

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GET REVVED UP AND READY TO RIDE

Save the Date for our 6th Annual Motorcycle "Ride for Guides"



The annual "Ride for Guides" continues to grow in popularity – from 135 riders in our first year to more than 600 riders last year. Sunday, May 17th is the date for this year's ride, which will take you on a scenic 100-mile route that begins and ends at GDA.

Riders registering before May 1, 2009 will receive a discount and a bonus. Early registration is \$25 and includes a free ticket for the raffle of the bike shown in this issue. Registration after May 1 is \$30.

For registration forms, information, sponsorship opportunities, or if you'd like to donate new items for our prize drawings, please call Lorri Bernson at (818) 833-6431. Registration forms also are available at our web site: www.guidedogsofamerica.org by clicking on the "Events Calendar."

SAVE THE DATE! – 4TH ANNUAL "PARTNERS" AWARDS DINNER

Saturday, October 3, 2009 is the date of this year's "Partners" Awards Dinner. The dinner will be at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library in Simi Valley, CA. Sponsorship opportunities are available. For information, contact Debbie Sands at (818) 833-6433.



**GUIDE DOGS
OF AMERICA**

13445 Glenoaks Blvd.
Sylmar, CA 91342



NON-PROFIT
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VAN NUYS, CA
PERMIT NO. 190

"The places I enjoy volunteering with Zinnie are the home for the elderly and the elementary schools. For the children, it teaches them to be understanding about people who are different and why they are that way. They also learn how they can help one another. As for the elderly, it makes their day." DEE DEE MANN

NEW EMPLOYEES & NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Please join us in welcoming a new employee and congratulating two current employees.

Joanna Wilkenson – Apprentice

Linda Hawes – Apprentice Coordinator. Linda has been with GDA for the past 24 years. In her new position she will help design the new "Basic Apprenticeship Course" and lead apprentices through their three-year program.

Tiffany Andrews – Apprentice. Previously a kennel tech, Tiffany has been with GDA for a little more than a year.

IN MEMORY

It is with sadness that we note the loss of a member of our GDA family:

Ralph Botello — Class 336

With sadness we also note the passing of the following guide dogs for their dedication to ensuring the safety and independence of their partners:

Cherry — Class #334

Rex — Class #343.5

Gina — Class #322

Shyla — In-home training

GIVE TO GDA WITH PETGIVE.COM

Before you shop online, register with PetGive.com and you will be giving to GDA. To get started, visit: www.PetGive.com. Once you've registered, you will be asked to "select your pet charity." Scroll down and click on "Guide Dogs of America"...that's it...you're ready to shop at hundreds of participating retailers (Nordstrom, Barnes and Noble, eBay, etc.). GDA will receive a percentage (varies by retailer) of the total purchase amount. So every time you shop online, go first to PetGive.com and shop the online retailer from that starting point.

Here's an example of how GDA can receive money this way:

If 500 people make three purchases of \$75.00 each month, based on the average percentage of purchase received, that would bring in about \$3,374.00 for the month or approximately \$40,488.00 for the year. Happy shopping, and don't forget to always go first to www.PetGive.com!