



SUMMER UPDATE: President's Message

What does it take to transform someone's life? The simple answer would be a highly trained service dog. But, the truth is that a lot more goes into it than meets the eye. Every life we change demands an abundance of time, money, expertise, and love.

I say this because we are growing at GDA|TLC, with graduating 27 guide and service dog teams already this year. While I am excited about the direction we are heading in, change does not happen overnight. 2020 was the merger, 2021 was the year of Kennel Renovations, and now 2022 is the Year of Programs. Our dedicated staff has been working day and night to improve the school, and I am proud of their accomplishments. As loyal donors, volunteers, and graduates, you have a share in our success. For that reason, this newsletter will look slightly different. This issue will provide a behind-the-scenes look at what we have been working on and why these changes are critical to our continued success.

PUPPY PROGRAM UPDATE

Creating more service dog teams means recruiting more volunteer puppy raisers – which has always been one of our biggest challenges. On top of recruiting new raisers, we are also focusing on improving the experience for existing raisers. At the beginning of the year, we hired former guide dog mobility instructor Mindy Romero to lead our canine development team. Her team has prioritized getting back in the field and connecting with raisers. So far this year, they have completed 100+ in-home visits, gathering plenty of feedback. From that feedback, Mindy has been busy tweaking and enhancing her curriculum. Currently, she is exploring the benefits of using head collars on puppies in training. The hope is to give raisers more control over a dog's negative behaviors, which, in turn, should provide more opportunities to reward positive ones.



Each dog in the program represents a substantial investment from GDA|TLC. While career-changing a dog is always difficult, being more proactive about the decision can save us time, money, and resources. It also prevents putting animals not inclined or fit for service work through unnecessary stress. To help with this, we have started completing medical evaluations earlier in their training. We have also added earlier BCL testing (Behavior Check List) for program puppies. The BCL is a series of tests that analyzes a dog's reaction to various environmental stimuli. Putting them through these tests helps our trainers determine if a dog is fit for service work or needs a career change. The results also give us better feedback and training plans for puppy raisers. All of these modifications will only strengthen our program for the future.

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SERVICE DOG PROGRAM UPDATE

Our new Service Dog Program director, Cheryl Herman, is an exciting addition to our team! Growing the service dog program is a big part of our future, and leading it is no small responsibility. One of her first tasks is restructuring our prison training program. We have a limited number of prison training slots, so maximizing their productivity is essential. By reducing the curriculum to 12 months, we can train twice the number of dogs each year. To further expedite the process, we will determine what track the dog enters 6-10 weeks into their training i.e., Veteran, Autism, or Facility. Deciding their line of work earlier will trim the number of cues each dog has to learn. Instead of learning upwards of 60 commands, they will learn the 40 most essential ones.

In one of our partner prisons we were dealing with a high turnover of inmate trainers due to short-term sentence lengths. The inconsistency made it a challenging environment to train our dogs. We decided it was best for everyone to discontinue the program. With the help of a warden from another partner prison we were able to move the 20 dogs to his facility. Focusing on one less institution will structure our resources more wisely, ensuring the best training for our future service dogs.

OTHER UPDATES

While I could go on about all the positive changes we have made, I thought it might be better to cover the following highlights:

- Conducted a cost analysis for holding class, leading us to contract new catering and cleaning services, creating substantial savings
- Expanded our puppy-raising groups to new areas, shortening the drive for volunteers and allowing for more one-on-one instruction time
- Installed new software to improve the student and volunteer applications process
- Added a new Registered Vet Technician to the GDA team
- Celebrated “Technician Appreciation Week” to show our hard-working vet techs how valued they are
- Testing new clicker training protocols amongst our In-For-Training dogs
- Dedicated weekly volunteer hours to socializing with adult dogs, giving our kennel staff more time to focus on essential tasks
- Upgraded our live stream system so our dedicated donors and puppy raisers can watch their favorite teams cross the stage
- Brought back our annual Open House, with over 400 attendees; new attractions like our graduate panel and service dog demonstration were a big hit
- Our silent auction raised over **\$30,000!**

So, as you can see, we have been busy! These ongoing improvements and accomplishments would not have been possible without your help, and we thank you for that! 🐾

New Faces in The Crowd



CHERYL HERMAN – DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DOG PROGRAM

Guide dogs have been in my life since I was five years old. It was not long after my family raised their first guide dog puppy that I knew I wanted to be a guide dog instructor. I volunteered to raise my own puppy when I was 12 and have raised 25 puppies since; two were for GDA!

I have fulfilled my dream of becoming a guide dog instructor, working at several schools, including one abroad in Australia. I am excited to be part of GDA|TLC and hope to grow and strengthen the service dog program with new techniques and ideas. When I am not at work, I am happiest floating in the pool with my golden on my lap.



SAVANNAH WALLACE – KENNEL MANAGER

I have been working with dogs for close to seven years! I began my dog career as a daycare attendant in Studio City and quickly progressed into management. A fun fact about myself is that I was a children's preschool teacher in a previous life. Instead of preparing children for kindergarten, I now help prepare dogs for careers. You would not believe the similarities between the two!

GDA | TLC has given me a newfound love for the animal world. After spending years in privately owned daycares and boarding facilities, it means so much to be part of such a purposeful mission. 🐾



Puppy Raising Corner

PUPPIES DO PUSH-UPS FOR PTSD AWARENESS MONTH

In June, San Diego puppy raisers supported the Department of Veterans Affairs by participating in a puppy push-up challenge for PTSD Awareness month. During the challenge, puppies worked on their "Summer Bods" and practiced obedience with their handlers. The fun and unique event showed how people can support our veterans by raising a service dog puppy.

If you are interested in helping raise a puppy to become someone's perfect guide or service dog, you can learn more by texting "puppy" to 51555.

Shop GDA



To purchase, go to "Shop GDA" on [guidedogsofamerica.org](https://www.guidedogsofamerica.org), or call **(818) 833-6429**.

HOLIDAY CARDS

Available in packs of 10 cards with 10 envelopes. This year's card "Light in the Darkness" is a watercolor painting by longtime puppy raiser Monique Newman. The back reads "May peace come to find you this holiday season."

PRICE: \$15.00

Tax, shipping, and handling not included.

If sending in a check, please call **818-362-5834** to determine the additional tax and shipping charges required for payment.

CALIFORNIA STATE PRISON RAISES \$6,000 FOR GDA | TLC

A food sale in Facility C at California State Prison, Sacramento (CSP-SAC) raised nearly \$6,000 for GDA|TLC. The incarcerated individuals voted to donate the money to GDA|TLC because they believe in the positive impact of our rehabilitative prison program. They hope to see our program remain and expand at CSP-SAC.



SAVE THE DATE – LAS VEGAS CHARITY WEEKEND

The Rat Pack is back and performing at the 41st Annual William W. Winpisinger Charity Banquet, Nov. 17-19, 2022, to be held at Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino. Visit old Las Vegas to relive the days when Frank, Sammy, and Dean were Sin City's most famous entertainers. The week's activities include a brand new exotic car racing event, sporting clay tournament, and golf tournament, ending with the banquet on Saturday night. To register for the events visit <https://www.guidedogsofamerica.org/charitybanquet2022>



2022 QUILT RAFFLE – "DOGGIE DIVAS"

This year's beautiful and detailed quilt, "Doggie Divas," was crafted by the Quilt Squad! A friendship group comprised of members from the Orange County Quilters Guild. One very lucky person will have the chance to take it home after the drawing on **Friday, December 16, 2022**. The cost is \$2 per ticket or \$10 for six tickets. Tickets can be purchased by mail, over the phone at **(818) 833-6429**, or in person at the school! If purchasing by mail, please include your address and phone number. (Quilt measures 62.75in x 61in)

GUIDE DOG GRADUATES

(PUPPY RAISERS IN PARENTHESES)



GUIDE DOG CLASS #419

TOP ROW: Sharlene & Toddy (Gonzales Family), Deborah Debandi & McCoy (Mary & Leonard Kenney), Maybel Oo & Chrissy (Oppenheim Family), Teresa Blevins & Delilah (Lauren & Karen Troutman)

BOTTOM ROW: Matthew Cooper & Walker (Mark & Becky Robelotto), Richard Salazar & Higgins (Debbie & Larry Cross)

INSTRUCTORS: Sean Chiles & Sydney Fujishige



GUIDE DOG CLASS #420

IN ROW: Robert Bracy & Ash (Stevenson Family) Janet Montoya & Raleigh (Barbara Shoemaker), Ulando Williams & Axel (Keeley Family), Nicholas Tindall & Malibu (Slakoff Family), David Carey-Zuninga & Willow (Marty Kasman)

INSTRUCTORS: Sydney Fujishige & Kelsey Horst

SERVICE DOG GRADUATES

(PUPPY RAISERS IN PARENTHESES)



SERVICE DOG CLASS #08

TOP ROW: Chris & Fiji (Swenningsen Family), AJ & Disco (Gwen Whitson), Kaylie & Orion, Kelli & Jasmine, Montinique & Louie (Neale Family), Laura & Nala

BOTTOM ROW: Caroline & Kora (Jim & Jen Klipfel), Naomi & Rio (Carlson Family), Antoinette & Maui

INSTRUCTORS: Stephanie Santos, Erin Vejar, Nicole Maples



SERVICE DOG CLASS #09

IN ROW: Lee & Buddy (Stacey & Les Huckeba), Joe & Max, Colin & Eclipse (Monroe Family), Marc & Ned (Dodd Family & Pappas Family), Maureen & Neehi (Levitt Family)

INSTRUCTORS: Sonia Parisi, Nicole Maples, Erin Vejar, Cheryl Herman

SAVE THE DATES – 2022 EVENTS

OCTOBER

- 10/08: Guide Dog Graduation
- 10/29: Service Dog Graduation

NOVEMBER

- 11/17–19: Las Vegas Charity Weekend

DECEMBER

- 12/09: All quilt raffle entries need to be returned and postmarked no later than December 9th

IN-HOME GRADUATES



VETERAN SERVICE DOG TEAM:
Irene & Magic (Theresa & Maggie Devan)



GUIDE DOG TEAM:
Paul Jordan & Legend (Linda Loper & Lorry Rawding)



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**OUR MISSION STATEMENT:
TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS WITH SERVICE DOGS.**

Cut along dotted line

MAKE A DONATION

If you would like to make a one time donation, please fill out the information below, cut along the dotted line and use the provided envelope to mail in your donation. If paying by check, please make check payable to **Guide Dogs of America**.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Cash Check Credit Card Donation Amount \$ _____ Phone: _____

Credit Card Number _____ Exp. Date _____



Donating to GDA|TLC has never been easier. Open the QR code reader or camera app on your phone and hold your device over the QR code to give or in your web browser type, <https://give.guidedogsofamerica.org/PNL372>