

WELCOME TO GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

Mission Statement

Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) empowers lives by creating exceptional partnerships between people, dogs, and communities.

Vision Statement

Guide Dogs for the Blind envisions a world with greater inclusion, opportunity and independence by optimizing the unique capabilities of people and dogs.

Values and Behaviors

Mission First

- Ensure that every action or decision is aligned with GDB's commitment to the mission
- Provide superior service across all aspects of the organization

Integrity

- Demonstrate accountability, transparency (except when confidentiality applies), and honesty with all actions and decisions
- Act with and assume positive intent

Kindness and Respect

- Treat every being with dignity and sensitivity
- Balance professionalism with humor

Teamwork and Collaboration

- Encourage open communication
- Practice proactive, thoughtful and inclusive interactions

Empowerment

- Promote personal development and self-reliance
- Support learning and innovation through risk-taking

What Is Expected of You

Standards of conduct

Guide Dogs for the Blind asks that all volunteers follow its values and the corresponding behaviors as well as the standards of conduct as they apply to puppy raising volunteers. All employees, volunteers and students in training at GDB follow this code.

Employees, volunteers and students are expected to observe certain standards of performance and conduct to ensure that the GDB mission and work is carried out in a safe and orderly way and to maintain high ethical standards throughout the organization.

GDB campuses and facilities are public places. Employees, volunteers and students are expected to conduct themselves as they would in any public area. Conduct which is not appropriate in public or which disrupts the safe and orderly operation of business is considered inappropriate. Conduct that is unsafe, unethical or illegal will not be permitted at GDB functions or events. Types of conduct that could constitute grounds for immediate dismissal include: physical violence; illegal acts such as theft, use or possession of illegal drugs or weapons; sexual activity; and inhumane treatment of a dog.

The following are examples of the kinds of misconduct that will lead to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal:

- Harassment in any form
 - See GDB's Harassment Policy in the Resources section
- Animal abuse or neglect
- Falsification of records or other documents
- Possession or use of illegal drugs or controlled substances
- Permission must be granted by the Puppy Raising Manager for alcohol to be served at GDB functions or events
- Theft, destruction or abuse of GDB property or the property of others
- Possession of weapons, firearms, or other potentially dangerous weapons or materials on GDB property, or at any GDB function or event
- Involvement in or encouragement of illegal activities
- Acts of physical violence, or acts involving threats, intimidation or coercion
- Excessive absences or tardiness
- Repeated lack of cooperation or courtesy in working with others, or failure to perform reasonable duties assigned
- Unauthorized access to computer files or inappropriate use of computer networks
- Disclosing or misusing private, proprietary or confidential information about GDB
- Unethical business practices or conflicts of interest
- Undermining or subverting business decisions, unless they are reasonably believed to be illegal or unethical
- Failure to adhere to other policies and procedures at Guide Dogs for the Blind

The above list is not all-inclusive. GDB asks that everyone conduct themselves with reasonable and proper consideration for the welfare and rights of other employees, volunteers and students and for the best interests of this organization.

What is a GDB Puppy Raising Club?

The primary function of a puppy raising club is to safely and successfully raise puppies to be well-mannered socially and to be proficient at several skills. The goal is to have these dogs mature into the potential of becoming guides and partners for people who are blind and visually impaired. A puppy raising club meets under the supervision of its leader to develop the best attributes in Guide Dogs for the Blind puppies. Clubs schedule meetings, outings and events for the primary purpose of teaching skills to puppies and to socialize them to all the stimuli and distractions in the world.

A puppy raising club represents Guide Dogs for the Blind in the community. Sometimes a club or its members may formally represent GDB by taking part in publicity through their

own initiative or at the request of Guide Dogs for the Blind. Publicity opportunities may include newspaper, television or radio interviews; event appearances; or presentations before businesses, schools, or other service clubs. GDB is proud of all puppy raising volunteers, and of their commitment, knowledge and professionalism.

A puppy raising club and its members also informally represent GDB every day. When people see a raiser out with “that cute puppy in its green coat” their perception of the program is based upon the appearance and behavior of the “puppy team.” Many future students, donors and raisers are introduced to GDB programs through a conversation with a puppy raising volunteer in their community. GDB thanks all of the raisers, leaders, and club assistants who have so positively represented GDB in their communities!

The Puppy Raising Team

Even before a puppy is placed in a new raiser home, there is a dedicated group of people to provide support and guidance for any problem or question that may arise. A combination of GDB staff and volunteers make up this great team.

Puppy Raisers

It takes a lot of people to produce a successful guide dog team. There are more than 2,000 puppy raising volunteers who donate their time and effort in the care and socialization of GDB puppies. GDB puppy raisers are youths, adults, and youths affiliated with the 4-H and FFA programs. Guide Dogs for the Blind places puppies with raisers living in ten states: California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, Nevada, Idaho, Utah, Colorado, Texas, and New Mexico.

Puppy Raising Leaders

Puppy club leaders are volunteers who have a great breadth of responsibilities. They recruit new volunteers into their clubs and teach and support them as they learn their new roles, skills and responsibilities. They work with their Community Field Representative to maintain GDB guidelines for training puppies as well as keeping them healthy. Leaders also facilitate club meetings and outings to promote each puppy’s development and learning. Depending on the size of a club, there may be one, two or more leaders to provide this support.

Community Field Representatives (CFRs)

CFRs are GDB staff members that provide hands-on training, advice and support to leaders and raisers in their territories to develop an understanding of the socialization and training standards required by Guide Dogs for the Blind. CFRs attend club meetings and outings. They also evaluate puppies, either at an evaluation site, in the puppy raisers’ homes, at a GDB facility or in evaluation homes. CFRs determine if a puppy is a good prospect to become a guide dog and whether they should remain in the program.

California Campus Puppy Raising Office Team

The team working in the Puppy Raising office at the California campus is responsible for:

- Coordinating the naming of the puppies
- Assigning puppies to new raisers
- Issuing puppy raising supplies
- Scheduling puppy deliveries (air and ground) and local pick ups

- Scheduling the recall dates to the Oregon or California campus to begin their formal training
- Electronic communications with the puppy raising community, including “Leader Links” and “E-Barks.”
- Maintaining the Puppy Raising section of the website: www.guidedogs.com/forms
- Maintaining the GDB Puppy Central Facebook page: www.facebook.com/gdbpuppycentral

GDB’s Dogs

The breeding program at Guide Dogs for the Blind was established in the late 1940s. Labrador Retrievers represent the majority of dogs produced. GDB also breeds Golden Retrievers and Lab/Golden crosses.

The finest dogs are chosen for the breeding program. They have been carefully selected for the unique characteristics that are required to produce successful working guides. Only those dogs that have met the organization’s highest physical and temperament standards are included in the breeding program at GDB. The selection of breeding stock is done by the Breeding Manager together with input from members of Puppy Raising, Training and Veterinary Departments and outside consultants.

Broods are retired from the breeding program by age 7 or after having a maximum of 5 litters. Only the most successful broods have 5 litters, with most broods having 4 litters during their breeding career. Stud dogs are used for breeding more frequently and are retired due to age or when their production does not meet the colony standards.

Life in the GDB Kennel

The Canine Welfare and Neonatal Department is responsible for the majority of dogs that are not in training, which includes: puppies, boarding dogs, the breeding stock, newborn puppies, and most career change dogs awaiting placement. The dogs and puppies are under the supervision of professional GDB staff 24 hours a day. This round-the-clock care allows for the monitoring of all births as they occur, care and feeding of newborn puppies, and the efficient administration of medications and veterinary care.

Puppies

The gestation period of the female is ~63 days. Expectant mothers are brought to the whelping kennel five days before the official due date of her puppies. The stall has a closed circuit camera allowing monitoring from the kennel kitchen or the on-campus studio apartment. During birth, the kennel staff assists when needed.

The puppies spend their first three weeks with their mother to nurse. Socialization begins shortly after birth with volunteers and staff gently handling and cuddling them daily. At 3 weeks of age, the wading pool is removed and the puppies are free to move about the floor covered with shredded newspaper. At this time they start eating solid food. The puppies’ daily socialization with volunteer Toddler Puppy Socializers increases as well. They are exposed to new people, toys of different textures, as well as new and interesting scents.

At 6 weeks of age the puppies are brought to the puppy kennel. It then takes another 10 days to 2 weeks until the mother’s milk has completely dried up and she can return home to

her custodial family.

While in the puppy kennel, the pups share stalls with their littermates. Each puppy in a litter is identified by the mother's name, a shaved area on its coat that is unique to that puppy in its litter and a microchip. Generally, all puppies in a litter have names that start with the same letter of the alphabet. The puppies are given names taken from a list provided by the puppy raisers and breeding custodians of the sire and dam and other sources.

The puppy kennel is also the place where the puppies first experience the outside world. Seven days per week, they are socialized by volunteer Puppy Socializers. From age 6 weeks until they leave for their new homes, the puppies begin learning many new skills. Each puppy is introduced to polite taking of food rewards while walking on leash, going up and down stairs, as well as exposure to crates and different surfaces. Puppies also interact in a group play session to experience socialization with other pups, as well as playing on various play structures. Daily handling includes body massages and exposures to mouth, tail and paw handling. Puppies are discouraged from chewing on inappropriate objects, such as hands, clothing and leashes. When the puppies are about 8 weeks old, they are ready to be placed with their raiser families.

GDB's Training Methods

GDB is the foremost guide dog school in the world utilizing positive training techniques. The Training Department pioneered clicker training after trials showed that dogs trained operantly with food rewards, learned much faster and were more engaged in the training process than dogs trained in a traditional manner. Puppy raisers were introduced to the benefits of rewarding their puppies with food in addition to physical and verbal praise, shortly after the successful change of methods in the Training Department. Guide Dogs for the Blind is committed to maximizing the power of positive reinforcement in raising guide dog puppies. Raisers are shown how to modify the behavior of puppies by management techniques and an abundance of positive reinforcement for desired behaviors. Emphasizing positive puppy rearing results in confident, willing puppies that bond closely with their handlers and grow into happy working guide dogs.

Veterinary Care

GDB has full-time veterinarians and other veterinary technician staff. The veterinarians and technicians are supported by outside specialists whenever needed, as well as volunteers. Veterinary staff is also on-call when emergency care is needed. Veterinarians assist in whelps by performing caesarian sections, if needed. When puppies are 3 weeks old, they are dewormed and given nasal drops to protect them from developing kennel cough. At 5-6 weeks, they begin receiving a series of vaccinations for Parvovirus and other diseases and they are microchipped. In the event that a GDB dog ever becomes lost or stolen, the microchip will alert any veterinarian or rescue organization to the fact that the dog is from Guide Dogs for the Blind. At 8 weeks, the pups are ready to be placed with raisers and will continue receiving vaccinations and care from veterinarians in their local areas.

When the pups return to the campus for formal training at 13-18 months, their hips and other joints are x-rayed, their eyes and hearts checked, and they are given complete physical exams including any needed vaccinations and heartworm tests.

How Puppies Are Chosen For Placement With Raisers

Members of the Puppy Raising team generally place puppies on a first-come, first-serve basis. Placement by special request from raisers is discouraged because doing so may leave puppies unplaced during critical developmental stages.

Puppy Packets and Equipment Needs

Puppy raisers receive a puppy packet for each puppy they raise; however, the contents of the packet will vary based on whether they are raising their first puppy, and the location in which the puppy is being raised.

Puppy Packet Contents

- Puppy & Raiser Information Sheet
 - Raiser Monthly Progress Report Information
 - Veterinary Packet - includes Vet Forms, Puppy Raising Nutritional Policy, etc.
 - Puppy Raiser ID Card
 - 1 Puppy Collar
 - 1 Adult Collar
 - 1 Puppy Nylon Web Leash
 - 1 Adult Leather Leash
 - 1 30" Cable Tie-down
 - (2) Boxes HeartGard Plus*
 - (1) Green Box 26-50 lbs.
 - (1) Brown Box 51+ lbs.
 - (2) Boxes Frontline flea & tick control*
 - (1) Blue Box 23-44 lbs.
 - (1) Purple Box 45-88 lbs.
 - **Note: raisers in Utah, Colorado, and Arizona will not receive Frontline.*
 - Puppy toothpaste and brush kit
 - Chlorhexis Ear Wash
 - (5) Puppy Raising Information Cards with Instructions
- } *Please note: leashes and tie-downs are only supplied with the first puppy and are used for subsequent puppies.*

Ordering Additional Equipment and Supplies

If a club needs additional supplies or to replace faulty equipment, the leader will fill out a request on-line for the items via the Survey Monkey link available in the leader section of the Forms page (www.guidedogs.com/forms).

Important reminder about Heartgard and Frontline: heartworm prevention and flea control is a year-round process. Raisers must give these preventatives at the first of every month. GDB supplies these materials; raisers should not purchase these products from their local veterinarian. GDB purchases these products in large quantities thereby receiving an overall discount in price. If purchased from the veterinarian, GDB pays full retail price for products it currently stocks.

Additional leashes or tie-downs for subsequent puppies can be purchased via the online Gift Shop (www.guidedogs.com/shop).