

MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Puppy raisers play a huge role in building the GDB brand, whether it is serving as an ambassador in the community or sharing news via social media. It is important that puppy raisers and GDB work together to build GDB's brand in a consistent and compelling way. Here are some key things to remember:

Media Opportunities

If a reporter reaches out to a puppy raiser, they should let GDB's marketing team know. Marketing staff can either work with the reporter directly or coach the volunteer on the best way to manage the opportunity. If a club is interested in having the media cover a puppy delivery or other special event, please contact marketing@guidedogs.com.

Photography

Puppies make great subjects and everybody loves to see photos of them. Puppy raisers' photos are used in GDB's newsletters, web sites, gift shop items, and beyond. The best way to submit photos is via the group photo pool on Flickr: www.flickr.com/groups/GDB. Photos should have the highest resolution/largest file size available, e.g. send 2mb file vs. 600kb version. Ideally puppies should be wearing their jacket in any photos. Images of puppies in GDB-branded gear cannot appear in other organizations' materials or for anyone's profit or commercial gain without marketing's permission. Using images to raise funds for individual puppy clubs is not allowed.

Corporate Partners

GDB continues to develop exciting partnerships with corporations. Often times, there will be opportunities for puppy raisers to enjoy the benefits of these partnerships and/or help advance them. These relationships must be managed carefully and clubs and volunteers are asked to consult with marketing first rather than contacting the partner directly.

GDB has developed some tools and guidelines to help. Please review the following materials available in the *Forms and Resources* section:

- About GDB paragraph
- GDB Brand Guidelines for Puppy Raisers
- GDB Fact Sheet
- GDB FAQs for Puppy Raisers

For any questions or comments about marketing, please contact marketing@guidedogs.com.

GDB Social Media Guidelines

Here are some great ways to stay updated on what's new at GDB:

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/guidedogsfortheblind and GDB Puppy Central: www.facebook.com/gdbpuppycentral (feel free to share posts)

- Twitter: GDB_official
- Instagram: GDB_official
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/guidedogsaregreat
- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/guide-dogs-for-the-blind
- Blog “No Bones About It”: <http://guidedogs.blogspot.com>
- Flickr images:
 - Group Photo Pool (uploading images) - www.flickr.com/groups/guidedogsfortheblind
 - Public GDB Galleries (accessing GDB photos) - www.flickr.com/photos/guidedogsfortheblind

The following are guidelines for the use of social media platforms to ensure volunteers can help GDB build a consistent and compelling brand.

Help Us Build the GDB Brand

Primary branding for a club’s social media page should be the puppy club name and logo NOT GDB’s logo. It is important to reference that the club raises puppies for GDB and link to its Facebook page and/or website. Of course, pictures of pups in their jackets that show GDB’s name/logo are wonderful to share (clubs and raisers are encouraged upload any favorites to the GDB Flickr photo pool – link above). Clubs and volunteers may not promote any non-GDB related products with GDB branded puppies or with the use of hashtags (e.g. #guidedogsfortheblind), as it should not appear that GDB itself is endorsing them. If a volunteer sees misrepresentations made about Guide Dogs for the Blind in the media, they are encouraged to share their concerns with the GDB Marketing team by contacting the marketing team (marketing@guidedogs.com).

Posting Photos/Video

Everyone loves to see puppies! All photos/video depict must show puppies being handled in an appropriate manner (e.g. a photo should not show a puppy being held upside-down or in potentially harmful situation). Volunteers should consult with their leaders prior to posting videos with a GDB puppy on social media.

Obey Copyright Laws

It is critical that all volunteers demonstrate proper respect for the laws governing copyright and fair use or fair dealing of copyrighted material owned by others. Content shared should always be attributed to the original author/source. It is a good general practice to link to others’ work rather than to reproduce it.

Respect the Audience and Guide Dogs for the Blind

The public in general and GDB volunteers, and employees, reflect a diverse set of customs, values, and points of view. It is important that all posts by clubs and volunteers are consistent with GDB website, policies, or publications. Volunteers are encouraged to express themselves as individuals but they should do so respectfully and think about potential consequences of their posts. This includes not only the obvious (no ethnic slurs, offensive comments, defamatory comments, personal insults, obscenity, etc.), but also the proper consideration of privacy and topics that may be considered objectionable or inflammatory - such as politics and religion.

Handling Controversial Issues

GDB prefers that clubs and volunteers avoid arguments (brawls may earn traffic but nobody wins in the end – don't try to settle scores or encourage others into inflammatory debates) and make sure what is posted is factually correct. Volunteers should use their best judgment and be sure to make it clear that the views and opinions expressed are theirs alone and do not represent the official views of Guide Dogs for the Blind. *Please refrain from sharing medical advice regarding puppies or dogs; let's leave that to the professionals.*

Protect GDB Graduates, Employees, and Other Volunteers

Graduates, employees, volunteers, and someone else's puppy/dog should not be cited or obviously referenced without their approval. Never identify a graduate, employee, or volunteer by name without permission. Volunteers should be sensitive about posting images or using names of dogs that might have been recently career changed, switched out of class, or have just retired (it's important for GDB staff to be able to communicate directly with the appropriate parties prior to such information being released in a public forum).

Privacy Protection

Privacy settings that might allow others to post information or see information that is personal should be set to limit access. Volunteers should be mindful of posting information that they would not want the public to see.

Be Honest

Volunteers should not blog anonymously, using pseudonyms or false screen names. They should not say anything that is dishonest, untrue, or misleading. If a volunteer has a vested interest in something they are discussing, this should be pointed out. What is published will be around for a long time, so it is important to consider the content carefully and also be cautious about disclosing personal details.

Be the First to Respond to Mistakes

If an error occurs, the volunteer should be up front about the mistake and correct it quickly. If an earlier post is modified, make it clear that this is so. If there is an accusation of posting something improper (such as copyrighted material or a defamatory comment about them), deal with it quickly - better to remove it immediately to lessen the possibility of a legal action. Also, it is never a bad idea to have a friend proofread the page to catch errors that spell check won't catch.

One Final Note

Social media is a great way to share information about GDB but it should be done in a way that reflects the guidelines above. It's wonderful that everyone (puppy raisers, graduates, breeder custodians, volunteers, etc.) is connecting so much over social media, because it ultimately creates a stronger network and community around GDB's mission. GDB puts a lot of time and expertise into matching the right dogs with the right people, so it's good to remember that when a raiser thinks their puppy/dog might be a good match for someone, they should refrain from any "matchmaking" and leave those decisions to the staff at GDB. Please contact the marketing for any questions or concerns: marketing@guidedogs.com
Policy violations will be evaluated and potentially subject to disciplinary action.