

GUIDE DOG NEWS

The Quarterly Publication of
Guide Dogs for the Blind

2018 ISSUE 2

**PUPPY RAISER MACIE
OWENS WITH HER
GOLDEN RETRIEVER
PUPPY, ASTER.**



GRAD PROFILE

Meet Henry Diecker and his guide dog, *Tony*, and learn why Henry decided that getting a guide dog was the right choice for him. **p4**

NOTABLE NEWS

Graduates of our program are always up to interesting and fun things. Learn about some of their latest escapades in News of Our Grads. **p7**

PUPPY CENTER

Construction on our new Puppy Center is underway! Get an update on our Puppies with a Purpose campaign, and how you can still contribute. **p10**



**Guide Dogs
for the Blind**

GOING GREEN



GOING GREEN: In April, the San Rafael Chamber of Commerce honored GDB with the “Joe Garbarino Large Green Business of the Year” award for the environmentally-friendly initiatives on our California campus. In addition to our LEED-certified student residence building, we have a large number of green business initiatives on campus, including participation in the Marin Sanitary Service’s Food to Energy program in which we provide food scraps from our student residence kitchen and kennel spaces where dog food is prepared. Pictured: Accepting the award from San Rafael Mayor Gary Phillips (second from left) were members of our California campus Green Team: Greg Bailey, Karen Butterworth, Kathryn Chipman, and Keith Rosenthal.



Guide Dogs for the Blind

A NON-PROFIT, CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION
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Guide Dogs for the Blind follows the guidelines recommended by the Council of U.S. Dog Guide Schools and the International Guide Dog Federation for the humane care and training of our dogs, and the instruction and services offered to our clients.



Please recycle this newsletter!

GREETINGS FROM THE CEO

Greetings,

I hope 2018 is off to a wonderful start for you! I am often asked why I joined Guide Dogs for the Blind and what I enjoy most about my role as CEO. There are so many wonderful aspects of our organization and our mission, it's difficult to know how to answer that question or at least to answer it succinctly! One thing I can say without hesitation is that an organization is only as good as its people and we have fantastic people!

In this issue, we highlight our Human Resources (HR) team, which does such an incredible job attracting and retaining excellent employees. Did you know that 40 percent of our staff has been at GDB for over 20 years? The HR group is also charged with ensuring that GDB continues to grow and evolve. They are helping lead the way in creating a more collaborative and cohesive culture, spearheading management training, and giving employees a voice on important topics like benefits, workplace flexibility, and inclusion. Read more on page 9.

GDB also benefits greatly from our passionate and talented Board of Directors. This group's charter is to provide oversight of the organization, help serve as ambassadors, and guide our organization towards a sustainable future. In this issue, we thank five board members who are rolling off the board and profile one of our continuing members, Greg Rice, on page 5. We look forward to introducing you to several new board members in forthcoming issues. I am equally proud of our Alumni Board. They play a critical role, serving as the voice of our clients, advising us on new ways to advocate for guide dog users, and helping us continue to shape our life-changing programs and services.

Thank you to the entire GDB community for all you do to put good into the world and for making me look forward to coming to work each and every day.

Sincerely,



Christine Benninger, President and CEO



GDB BOARD CHAIR JOAN BOYD WITH CEO CHRISTINE BENNINGER AT THE SAN FRANCISCO LEGACY LUNCHEON (P. 8).

Henry Diecker of Leon Valley, Texas was born with a visual degenerative condition called Pathologic Myopia, which was correctable with very high prescription lenses for most of his



HENRY DIECKER AND TONY

life. But, as he aged his eyesight degraded until the point of legal blindness. He says, “I thought that I was going to a new specialist to find out why I was having increased vision issues and I walked out certified as legally blind. I suddenly went from correctable vision to uncorrectable vision and I was crushed.”

Henry began Orientation and Mobility (O&M) training shortly after his diagnosis, and his O&M instructor suggested

that he might be a good candidate for a guide dog. While Henry appreciated the offer, he was suffering from the recent loss of his pet dog of thirteen years and couldn’t fathom the idea of having another dog. As he became more involved in his local blindness community, he encountered numerous individuals with guide dogs. He began to see another means of mobility and he loved dogs. So he said, “Why not?”

“A highlight of training at Guide Dogs for the Blind was that there were so many volunteers, staff, puppy raisers, and others who were involved in preparing *Tony* for his life of service and wanted us to succeed as a team,” Henry said. During his training, he experienced a lot of compassion, support, and love from his classmates and instructors. “GDB will do everything in their power to remove every obstacle to your success. And, if that obstacle is you, they will just love you through it.”

His guide dog, *Tony*, has become an incredible source of love, strength, hope, independence, and freedom. “My degenerating eyesight brought with it a lot of fear and was a great challenge to my hope for the future,” Henry said. “With *Tony* I know that we can handle our business today as well as tomorrow. I don’t know what’s down the road, but I am confident that we will be just fine.” Henry has one piece of advice for potential guide dog users: “Your guide dog will be beautiful and will get noticed everywhere by everyone. If you prefer to be a wallflower, get ready to bloom.”

BOARD PROFILE

Guide Dogs for the Blind is very fortunate to have Greg Rice as a board member—not only once, but twice! Greg served as a board member from 2007 to 2010, and returned in 2018 to serve a second term.

Greg brings a diverse set of academic and professional experiences to bear in his board role. After receiving an undergraduate degree in Business/Accounting from Regis University in Denver, Greg married his wife Linda and joined the US Army, working in the intelligence and finance areas. He further honed his skills with Fireman’s Fund Insurance and Armour and Company, before joining the Intelligence Division of the Treasury Department. While with the Treasury Department, Greg tackled some interesting challenges, investigating the financial and tax implications of narcotics trafficking and organized crime activities, among other things. During this time he also earned his Masters in Business Administration at Golden Gate University.

Greg also has a strong entrepreneurial bent and commitment to service.

In the ‘90s he built the first of three facilities designed to handle the needs of individuals suffering from Alzheimer’s disease and other dementias and in 1983, he left his governmental role and formed a tax practice with two attorneys. He has actively supported many organizations beyond Guide Dogs for the Blind including disaster relief and veterans groups, among others.



Greg and his wife Linda are celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary this year and are commemorating this milestone by enjoying extra time with family, traveling, and on their boat moored in beautiful San Diego.

Greg was originally drawn to Guide Dogs for the Blind as his daughter has diabetes and has experienced vision loss over time as a result. His commitment to GDB has consisted not only of his stewardship on the board, but his family’s care of career change dogs Lab/Golden Cross *Midori* and yellow Lab *Odessa*. We are thrilled to have him back on the board!

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS JOAN BOYD, GEORGE KERSCHER, JACK SCOTT, STEPHEN MANSFIELD, AND LAURA SCARBOROUGH IMESON FOR THEIR VALUABLE SERVICE TO GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND.

FUN TIMES AHEAD!



GDB Fun Days are events that bring together our volunteer puppy raisers and their pups for a day of education, camaraderie, and, of course, FUN! In March, a statewide Texas event was hosted by our Houston puppy club and included a socialization outing to Space Center Houston (above), and in April, our San Diego puppy raisers held a regional event at Ruocco Park along the picturesque San Diego Bay, with the city's skyline as a backdrop (below). We can't thank the organizers enough for all that they do to produce these events in support of GDB's mission!



NEWS OF OUR GRADS

- It seems that Michelle McGrew's retired guide dog, *Garvey*, is starting a new career, or at least trying out a new one! *Garvey* played the role of Helen Keller's pet dog in a recent production of "The Miracle Worker" at the Tabard Theatre in San Jose, Calif.
- Danelle Umstead competed with her husband, Rob, in five alpine skiing events in this year's Paralympics in South Korea. They came away with a 6th place finish in the Super-G and 8th place finishes in the Super Combined and Giant Slalom. Her guide dog, *Aziza*, cheered on the duo the entire time!
- Some members of GDB's Paws of Fame Los Angeles Alumni Association Chapter received a VIP descriptive tour of an exhibit entitled "The Art of Motion Costume Design" at the Fashion Institute of Design & Merchandising/FIDM museum in March. Their tour guide was fashion designer and educator Nick Verreos, of *Project Runway* fame.
- Jake Koch, with guide dog *Forli*, has been invited to serve on the Disability Advisory Board for Alaska Airlines. The board guides the implementation of best practices for assisting customers with disabilities who travel with Alaska Airlines.
- Camille Jassny and her Golden Retriever guide dog, *Egan*, were featured on the popular HiHo Kids YouTube channel in a segment called "Kids Meet: A Guide Dog." Camille answered some unfiltered—but adorable—questions from the curious children about her guide dog, being visually impaired, and other informational topics.
- Guide dog *Georgina* ("Georgie") had the exciting job of cheering on her handler, Becky Andrews, as Becky ran in her second Boston Marathon this year. In addition to *Georgie*, Becky said that she had amazing support and encouragement all along the course in the pouring rain and howling wind from friends, family, and race spectators. Way to go Becky!

APPLAUSE, APPLAUSE!

Congratulations to our newest Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, Mallary Paoli. Mallary recently completed her three-year GDB instructor apprenticeship, which required practical, hands-on experience in training both our dogs and our clients, as well as a comprehensive academic course of study.

TO READ MALLARY'S COMPLETE BIO, PLEASE VISIT OUR BLOG AT [GUIDEDOGS.COM/BLOG](https://www.guidedogs.com/blog).



MALLARY
PAOLI

LABS LIVE AT ANDREI'S

More than 140 people attended a wonderful luncheon hosted by GDB's Orange County Friends Committee in March at Andrei's Restaurant in Irvine. Almost a third of the guests were new to GDB, and everyone enjoyed puppy cuddles and a delicious lunch of Andrei's signature "conscious cuisine and cocktails." The event's keynote speech was by GDB's Outreach Manager Jane Flower with her guide dog, *Pilaf*. Many thanks to the event's sponsor, The Andrei Olenicoff Memorial Foundation. Pictured: GDB grads Valerie Ormont with *Radar* and Paula Pinheiro with *Joanie*, with GDB's National Major Gifts Officer Janet Benjamin.



SAVE THE DATE

- **CANINE HEROES AUCTION**

October 13, 2018 (San Francisco, CA)

- **HOLIDAY LUNCHEON**

December 5, 2018 (San Francisco, CA)

For more information or to register, please visit guidedogs.com/events.



LEGACY LUNCHEONS

It is always a celebration when we have the opportunity to bring together our Legacy Society members and share our mission stories. We recently held Legacy Society luncheons in Sacramento and downtown San Francisco. We are thankful to the alumni who came to tell their stories and the volunteers who brought the puppies they are raising. Our Legacy Society members are a special group of people who have let us know they will continue to support GDB beyond their lifetimes. We are honored to have the chance to recognize and thank them. Pictured (left) at the San Francisco event: Janice Carter, Melissa Hudson with guide dog *Camry*, and Terry Goblirsch.

STAFF PROFILE

We are so lucky to have such an experienced and dynamic Human Resources (HR) department that serves both of our campuses and our field staff every day. This talented group of women is responsible for not only recruiting new talent, they are also responsible for all of our staff members' human resource necessities and requests. These items include employee compensation, benefits, training, and organizational development—just to name a few!

Here at GDB, we have a wide range of talented and professional staff covering a very diverse group of departments, which definitely differs from the standard workplace. Unlike most workplaces, our two campuses hold not only our administrative offices; they are also nationally renowned training facilities with full kennels, vet clinics, facility operations, and client dormitories.

All of these areas require staff who are highly specialized and require our HR team to constantly adapt to and continue to learn about so many different fields of work.

It is because of the expertise and the dedication exemplified by our HR department that GDB continues to carefully select candidates who we know will directly assist us in fulfilling our great mission. "Our staff is so amazing at the work that they do. We truly work with the top in the industry," said Vice President of Human Resources Katie Petcavich. "I am honored to work at GDB and support the amazing staff that brings so much to the organization's incredible mission every day."

We are proud to have our workplace full of great people working together and supporting each other as we continue as a leading guide dog school. With a commitment to diversity and equal opportunity, we offer competitive wages, a comprehensive benefits package, and a dog-friendly work environment.



GDB'S HUMAN RESOURCES TEAM. PICTURED FROM LEFT TO RIGHT—BACK: LORI FROMM, ALIMA CONNAN; FRONT: KATIE PETCAVICH, MELISSA BRADFORD.

INTERESTED IN JOINING OUR TEAM? VISIT OUR JOB PORTAL AND APPLY AT [GUIDEDOGS.COM/CAREERS](https://www.guidedogs.com/careers), OR EMAIL RECRUITING@GUIDEDOGS.COM.

BE SURE TO SEND YOUR COVER LETTER AND RESUME.



PUPPY CENTER

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We are making significant progress on our Puppies With a Purpose campaign. Thanks to the generosity of 657 donors to date, we are happy to report that our state-of-the-art, 28,000 square-foot Puppy Center is becoming a reality! We began construction last August and the foundation is now well underway. We expect a completion date of February 2019 and a grand opening sometime in the fall of 2019.

The Puppy Center will provide a safe, warm, and enriching environment for our puppies as they begin their life journeys, providing:

- Bio secure, healthier, and more nurturing habitats for mothers and their pups
- Improved early socialization and enrichment areas for puppies
- Educational displays and interactive learning opportunities for the public
- Improved working environments for staff and volunteers

The new Center will include a Puppy Nursery, where our puppies will be born and live with their mothers for the first six weeks of life; a Young Heroes Academy, where the pups will experience enhanced socialization and enrichment; and a Learning Lab where the public can view our volunteer puppy socializers as they work with our pups, as well as access a series of interactive exhibits about our programs. A key goal of this project is to help build greater confidence in our puppies during the critical first ten weeks of life, an outcome we believe will increase the percentage of puppies that become guides.

To date we have raised \$18.2 million toward our \$20 million goal—the end is in sight! There are still a few key naming opportunities available such as the Learning Lab and outdoor courtyard area. We hope to complete our fundraising campaign by the end of this summer. Many heartfelt thanks for your support of our new Center and your continued support of GDB.

IF YOU OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW IS INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING OR LEARNING MORE ABOUT THIS PROJECT, PLEASE CONTACT THERESE JACOBSON AT 415.499.4046 OR TJACOBSON@GUIDEDOGS.COM.

THANK YOU TO OUR NEW & CONTINUED SUPPORTERS January 1-March 31, 2018

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Guide Dogs for the Blind will, on occasion, share donor information with like-minded non-profit organizations in an effort to better fulfill our mission and serve our clients. If you do not wish to have your information shared, please contact us at 800.295.4050 ext. 4160 or email us at donations@guidedogs.com.

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