



# Guide Dogs for the Blind

## Puppy Raising Department Ruff Notes – December 2017

### Raiser Monthly Reports

Thanks to CFR Linda K. in the Pacific NW for providing the topic for this month's Ruff Notes. Please share this with your raisers and hopefully they will realize that these reports are an essential part of their job as a puppy raiser. We do get a lot of very informative reports on our puppies but sometimes it is difficult to get a picture of the puppy due to lack of useful information. Thank you to you our leaders for your diligence and support!

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Monthly reports provide valuable documentation of a puppy's progress in training. Reports give leaders, CFRs and instructors valuable information related to specific challenges, behavioral concerns and trends in a dog's history. It allows Guide Dogs for the Blind to have a record of socialization opportunities, successes, and challenges the puppy faced in the raiser home; the reports also document important behavioral or medical issues.

#### **What should be included in a monthly report?**

##### *For Leaders*

Leader Comments: Make sure in your leader comments you are specific with documenting puppy concerns, and include any training advice you have given to the raiser to work on. Early intervention on problem behaviors is key to producing successful guides. Remember, GDB instructors are relying on your objective opinions and intimate knowledge of the dogs in your club. It is important for them to have an accurate history of the puppy in the raiser home; they can't do their job effectively if information is incomplete, or the raisers haven't been thorough.

Please look at each report carefully. Ask the raiser to provide more details if you get a report only stating that "Juno had another great month" or one that lists just "stores" numerous times under socialization. Determine if raisers need to give more information. For example, if you see a puppy walking into a club meeting pulling hard and lunging at other dogs or people, ensure that corresponding boxes are checked under concerns, such as **PULLING/LUNGING ON LEASH** and/or **DOG DISTRACTION**.

If the dog is truly doing well, with no problem behaviors, use the space to show examples of positive behaviors.

##### *For Raisers*

**Socialization:** It is helpful for us to see the places a puppy has been socialized so that we can understand the lifestyle and history of the puppy. Be as specific as possible when identifying restaurants, parks and stores. Include and note any relevant travel experiences including planes, hotels, trains, or bus rides. Let us know if the puppy frequents the raiser's place of employment, schools (list specific school age/type,) or if the puppy has been to any concerts, churches, shows, movie theatres, parades, amusement parks, club meetings, or sporting events.

**Medical/Health:** Please note any trips to the vet and treatment plans.

**Sit or Trade:** Please note any puppy sits or trades. Sitter reports should be forwarded to the CFR so that they can be downloaded to become part of the puppy's record.

**Concerns and Comments:** The behaviors listed under 'concerns' are undesirable behaviors in a working dog. Since we are developing puppies, it is realistic that they may display some of these behaviors as they grow and mature.

**For puppies five months and older:** Any time a YES appears next to an undesirable behavior, the raiser should provide more detail in the comments section. Be honest and objective when documenting issues and provide as much information as possible. Specifically a raiser should thoughtfully answer the following questions in the comments:

- What behaviors or concerns are occurring?
- What is the frequency of the behavior?
- What actions have the raiser and leader taken to improve the behavior?
- If sufficient time has passed, has any improvement been noted?

Some behaviors will warrant a more in-depth response. Examples of this include fearful behaviors, poor house manners, surface or body sensitivity, excitable greetings, prey-drive, major distraction towards dogs or people and relieving issues. *In these instances also try to describe the situation the behavior occurred in, include concerning body language and be specific with how you and your puppy responded.*

**For puppies younger than five months:** Any time a YES appears next to an undesirable behavior, note in the comments if the behaviors appear to be age appropriate for the puppy's stage in development and if improvement has been seen. If the raiser and/or club leader are concerned that the behaviors are more serious (growling, non-stop barking, excessive mouthing for example) refer to the questions above and include more in-depth details in the comments section.

*Note: Any perceived aggression toward people or animals and incidents of resource guarding should be brought to the CFRs attention immediately, by email or phone, as well as being documented in the report.*

**Continuity:** Make sure there is continuity between reports. Raisers should reflect on previous training issues from their last report, documenting resolutions or continued need to address the issues. If a behavior is resolved, take time to mention that.

**Positives:** Document progress and good behavior too! In the comments section we like to hear about rock-star moments! Examples may include calm greetings with kids: maintaining a loose leash when walking past numerous dogs on a neighborhood walk: no reaction to a loud garbage truck: being calm on a first bus or plane ride or ignoring their favorite person at puppy class after the raiser has worked hard on excitable greetings.

#### **Examples of Good Informational Narratives from Monthly Reports (names have been changed):**

"At the end of the month, I noticed Juno was nervous about the regular vacuum (his co-raiser and I both have robot vacuums that we usually use which he has no problem with). I rarely use the regular vacuum, so not sure if he had ever been exposed to it before. He would come towards me if I called him, but then would "run" (not very quickly) away if he got too close to the vacuum while it moved. He didn't care once the vacuum was put away. His co-raiser and I will both work on exposing him to the regular

vacuum with rewards for not reacting. Other than that, he's been totally awesome! He is content to go anywhere and is super mellow when he works and really doesn't react to anything out and about."

"I believe Fifi has made major improvement this month. While she does occasionally run in the house, the number of times has dramatically decreased. I isolated the problem (toys) and make the environment quiet without the excitement of toys. It's still a work in progress but better. She is also relaxing in the classroom much quicker and longer; in the past she was quiet but had trouble staying down under the table during the speeches. She was up and down a lot; this has changed for the better so she is able to come to school more often. These are the only two issues I've been working really hard on; her work in public remains stellar."

"I've noticed Fifi wanting to do more sniffing while we are out working. Because of this we have been using the gentle leader more. She seems to get overly excited with people when we are at home. We are working with her not jumping on them. Little kids seem to be more of a problem. She gets excited very easily. We took her out trick or treating and she did great not getting scared of any of the costumes but was overly excited with the kids running everywhere. Wanted to run with them. We tried to stay opposite side of the street and watch from afar. This last month seems to have been a little more challenging with her. When we are out working she seems to do great though. As always her recall is the best!"

"Juno had a busy month. He accompanied me on one business trip to San Francisco as well as a quick family visit to Arizona which included lots of kids. He is amazing around babies and small children. Very calm, careful and deliberate in his movement. Twice this month he barked, both times he appeared to be startled. Once was when someone was coming down a dark hallway into my office and the other was someone stomping their feet upon entering our house. He does not have any noise reactions to planes, alarms, phones etc. so not sure what to make of these two instances. He's a little solicitous especially when in an office environment, so I'm working with my coworkers to ignore him. I am also using food rewards when he waits for a release or behaves calmly when getting attention from people. Otherwise he quickly recovered from his neuter, is enjoying all the snow and his off leash recall is excellent."

"Juno went on a variety of outings downtown this month. They included time at the mall, a walk in downtown Portland, accompanying me to the nail salon that was beside the Max station. He is very confident and enjoys the busy downtown life. He is a stable dog who is eager to please, settles immediately and is easy to manage. He saw pigeons downtown and was interested in them but was easy to redirect with food. Juno experienced his first fire drill at school. The noise and the amount of children in the hallway did not phase him one bit. He is very mature for such a young puppy. He is trustworthy within the home and has full freedom within my apartment."