



Guide
Dogs

Sponsor
a Puppy

Albus

Training
continues

Pupdate 4

Welcome to your February Pupdate

We're excited to share your sponsored pup's recent news!

We can't thank you enough for supporting Guide Dogs by sponsoring one of our incredible dogs. Did you know that nearly three quarters of people of working age who are registered blind or partially sighted are unemployed? At Guide Dogs, we are determined to support the independence of people with sight loss by providing them with the skills and services they need to pursue the life they choose. It's because of kind people like you that we're able to continue doing this. Your support really does make a huge difference!

In 2022, we supported over 4,060 guide dog partnerships and nearly 700 My Sighted Guide partnerships, a service which connects a locally trained volunteer with a person with sight loss. Our fantastically trained dogs and our wonderfully dedicated volunteers help people get out and about while also boosting their confidence. We couldn't provide these services without supporters like you – thank you.

I can't wait for you to read your puppy's latest Pupdate, and I hope you enjoy finding out what they've been getting up to!

Yours sincerely,

Steph

Steph Potter
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



Thank you

for sponsoring Albus



Albus has been making good progress since your last Pupdate. Our bond has grown so strong; he's such a lovely dog. He's sometimes like a big puppy and adores a cuddle, all of us at the training centre love him for that!

He has a real zest for life and is always up for anything. Now that he understands his training routine more, he gets excited when we practise different skills and is really enjoying learning new things.

Out and about

Since your last Pupdate the biggest change for Albus is that he does all his training in a brown training harness; he's progressing well with this. I've introduced him to obstacle avoidance and have taken him around the obstacle course at the training school a few times. He's learning how to safely navigate himself and me around different things such as cones, lamp posts, and people.

Albus has a few set routes he's confident with and knows well. Currently, I'm doing harness walks with him in quieter areas and will slowly progress to busier ones. He's getting the hang of this and I see him progress every time we do this type of training.

“
**Hello, it's
Ellie here,
Albus'
trainer.**
”

Managing distractions

Albus has been making progress with his dog distraction but can still sometimes lose focus when dogs are around, especially if they're close to him. To help with this, I play the 'engage and disengage' game. This is where we introduce a distraction, such as a dog, and I will reward him every time he focuses (engages) on me rather than the dog - I'm noticing improvements.

Albus' biggest distraction is squirrels. We're addressing this by using a soft toy squirrel that we tie onto a remote-controlled car. This moves around the room as I do different training skills with him, such as walking in a straight line between platforms. I reward him when he focuses on me and his training, it's a work in progress.

New skills

Albus is fantastic at finding objects such as button boxes at crossings and benches. He picked this up quickly and is regularly practising this skill during training walks.

I've recently started teaching him to indicate kerbs by pausing with two paws on the kerb; this is important to ensure that his future owner won't trip over when out walking.



Hear how Albus has been mastering new skills by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:

[guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-albus](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-albus)



Scan me

When introducing kerbs to Albus, I found a quiet location where they are defined. It took him a while to grasp this skill, but with a lot of repetition he's beginning to understand what I'm asking.

Looking ahead

Over the next few months, I'll be looking at extending Albus' training routes and taking him to new and busier environments. I'll continue to work on his obstacle avoidance and distractions. I'll also start thinking about the sort of partner Albus would make a good match with. He's an amazing dog. I'm looking forward to watching him progress!

Thank you for sponsoring Albus. Find out how he's progressing in your next Pupdate in June!



Where is Albus on his Pupdate journey?



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What is STEP?

Standardised Training for Excellent Partnerships (STEP) is the bespoke programme we use to train our dogs. STEP uses the same principles as PREP and adds in the 37 key skills that are required of every guide dog. It is a scientifically evidenced way of training which places each dog at the heart. It harnesses the power of positive reinforcement so our dogs understand that learning new skills is rewarding, meaning they're more eager to engage. STEP helps us produce more confident guide dogs, which improves the life-changing impact they have on their owners.

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