



# Custard

## Settling in

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# Welcome to your February Pupdate

**The colder months are nearly behind us and spring is just around the corner.**

The UK's first guide dog partnership qualified in 1931. Since then, we have matched over 37,500 people with a guide dog – that's at least one new partnership every day for the last 94 years. Our dogs help people with sight loss to get out and about safely, providing life-changing support every single day. They help people with visual impairments to enjoy the freedom and independence many of us take for granted.

1 in 5 people will live with sight loss in their lifetime. By sponsoring a puppy, you're helping us provide vital services, from mobility training to assistive technology and more, that enrich the lives of adults and children with visual impairments. None of this would be possible without supporters like you!

I hope you enjoy reading the latest news from your sponsored puppy. Thank you for being a part of their journey.

Yours sincerely,

*Steph*

**Steph Potter**  
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



# Thank you

for sponsoring Custard



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**Hello, it's  
Jean here,  
Custard's  
Puppy Raiser**

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I've been involved with Guide Dogs for over 30 years. Fundraising, raising puppies, fostering – I love it all, it's a real buzz! Custard is my third sponsored pup. Before her, I had black Labrador, Barney, and before Barney, I had yellow Labrador cross golden retriever, Rupert. They've all had such different personalities; you really can't compare them.

I'm raising Custard with my husband, Les, and we call her 'the lady'. She's very gentle and very laid back. A dainty dog! And she'll always stop to show you her good side when you get a camera out. She's an absolute pleasure to take out and train.

## Settling in

Custard is very content and has been since the day she arrived. That night, she went to bed at midnight and slept right through to 8am! If you've had puppies, or babies for that matter, you'll know how rare that is – it just shows how comfortable and confident she is. Custard never puts up a fuss and is really eager to please too. She'd do anything for a bit of kibble, so we've started introducing basic cues using this as positive reinforcement.

One of the first things we worked on with Custard was food manners, and she's really bright so she picked them up quickly. She has a mat in the kitchen and when I give her the cue 'place', she'll happily go and wait there while I'm getting her dinner ready. Once I've put her bowl down, I release her with the cue 'okay' - and bon appetit! Custard has also learnt to leave any food she sees while we're out and about. We built up to this slowly; while walking on a loose lead, I'd throw some kibble on the ground. If she didn't go for it, I'd pick it up and give it to her, which taught her she'd be rewarded for having patience.

## Play and enrichment

Custard's favourite toy is a big sheep soft toy, which we've called Shawn! We've had it for years, but none of the other puppies we've raised have shown any interest - Shawn was obviously waiting for the right pup. I think Custard gets a lot of comfort from Shawn; she's quite quirky and sucks him like a dummy, so he's been through the washing machine a few times! We've recently started increasing the amount of time that we leave Custard on her own, and we're up to just over an hour now. When we get home, she always runs to get Shawn and shows him to us. It's very sweet!



Watch Custard demonstrate her fantastic food manners by going to:

**[guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-custard](https://guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-custard)**



Custard also loves playing with enrichment toys, like snuffle mats and feeder mazes. She enjoys working out how to get the kibble out, and whilst this is a fun game it also gives her some practice with problem solving.

## **Puppy pals**

I have a pet dog at home too, yellow Labrador cross golden retriever, Thomas. Custard has made great friends with him, and having an older dog around has taught her some social manners. She's very respectful of him. We recently met up with another sponsored puppy in training as well, Jack. It was a lot of fun to see them playing together; I'm sure they were sharing tips for their next photoshoot!

**Find out how Custard's training is going in your next Pupdate in June!  
Thank you so much for sponsoring her.**





## Our volunteers

We wouldn't be able to train our life-changing dogs without the help of our volunteer puppy raisers and fosterers. Once our puppies are 8 weeks old, they will go to live with a puppy raiser. These wonderful volunteers provide a loving home and the vital foundation needed for the pup's future role. They introduce early training, socialisation, and a variety of new environments. After 12-16 months, our dogs move on to training school, where they learn guiding skills. Evenings and weekends are usually spent with our fantastic fosterers who care for the dog, reinforce training, and drop them off to training school each day! **To find out more about volunteering, please visit [guidedogs.org.uk/GDvolunteer](https://guidedogs.org.uk/GDvolunteer).**



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