



Fern

Training school!

Pupdate 3

Welcome to your June Pupdate

I hope you're well and enjoying the longer days and warmer weather as we begin to welcome summer!

We can't thank you enough for your continued commitment and support. Because of supporters like you, we've been able to create over 36,000 life-changing partnerships to date. That's more than 400 lives transformed each year for 93 years – and counting!

Did you know that 2 million people live with sight loss in the UK, and this number is set to double by 2050? We're committed to providing support to as many people as possible, for as long as that support is needed. With the cost of living continuing to rise, we appreciate your help now more than ever. Thank you so much for supporting Guide Dogs.

I'm pleased to share your sponsored puppy's latest Pupdate, and I hope you enjoy reading it.

Yours sincerely,

Steph

Steph Potter
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



Thank you

for sponsoring Fern



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**Hello, it's
Neil here,
Fern's
trainer.**

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I've been at Guide Dogs for 20 years and have worked in many different roles within the charity. I started in dog care and welfare, and I'm now a Guide Dog Trainer. I love my job. Working with the dogs is great, but knowing that I've played a part in so many incredible guide dog partnerships is even better!

Settling in

Fern is a gorgeous and happy pup. She's very new to training school, and our bond is still developing. I'm focusing on helping Fern to settle in and making her transition as comfortable as possible.

A massive part of helping her settle in is making sure she has good puppy pals. I'm currently training five dogs, including Fern. A black Labrador called Freddy was the first dog I introduced her to, and they played together brilliantly! Freddy is a calmer dog and a bit older than Fern, so they balance each other well. I've also introduced her to Prince, a German shepherd/golden retriever. He's a gentle giant, and they love going on free runs together.

Fern has quickly relaxed into life with her lovely fosterers. She had a fun weekend full of play time with them before coming to the training centre for the first time. Her fosterers have children, a pet cat and a dog. This was a big change for Fern, but instead of being fearful or reserved, she was excited and inquisitive. This was great to hear as it helps me understand how she copes with new environments and situations. Fern adores all the attention and enjoys playing with the fosterers' pet dog.

Getting started

I've been busy helping Fern become familiar with the training rooms, free run areas, vets' rooms, and offices at the centre. She has amazing energy and has been adapting well to all the changes training school has brought so far.

I've prioritised giving Fern the time to feel as comfortable as possible in these early stages and will begin introducing guiding skills when she's ready. I've been building on the skills and cues she learnt with her amazing Puppy Raiser, Paul. This includes focusing on getting her to hold cues such as 'sit' for extended periods until she hears the release cue 'okay', as she can be a little impatient.



Hear more about how Fern's settling into training school by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:
guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-fern



Scan me

Fern has also been in my training van. Although it has a different layout to a car, she will happily jump in and out of it and travel. Her first journey in the van was to the training centre for a free run which helped link it with a positive experience.

I've begun introducing Fern to the brown training harness by putting it on the office floor when she's settled. I also put a treat or a toy by it to help build a good association.

Looking ahead

Over the coming months, I will begin introducing Fern to different guiding skills and build upon what she's already learnt with her puppy raiser. I'm looking forward to watching her progress.

**Thank you for sponsoring Fern. I'm enjoying getting to know her.
Find out how she's getting on in your next Pupdate in October!**



Where is Fern
on her Pupdate
journey?



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The training harness

After around 12-16 months with their puppy raiser, our pups move to training school to learn more specific tasks related to their future career. Introducing a young dog to their brown training harness is one of the first milestones at training school. Most dogs have previously worn their puppy coat, meaning they're familiar with the body sensation. With this as a foundation, we build up to placing the harness on the dog's back and fastening it. Once a dog is partnered, they will wear the iconic white guiding harness.



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