



Frank

Mastering guiding skills

Pupdate 4 of 6

1

2

3

→ 4

5

6

Welcome to your June Pupdate

We hope you've been enjoying the longer days and warmer weather that June brings. We're so excited to share what your sponsored pup has been getting up to!

Did you know that we breed and train more dogs than any other organisation internationally? We have a world-class breeding and training programme which focuses on dog health, behaviour and genetic merit. This helps us set our pups up for careers as future life changers. But none of this would be possible without kind people like you! By sponsoring one of our special puppies, you're helping us support the 1 in 5 people affected by sight loss in their lifetime.

Beyond our wonderful dogs, we also provide a range of services for people of all ages. From mobility skills to children's large print books, we're here for anyone who needs us. Your donations make this possible!

Yours sincerely,

Steph

Steph Potter
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



Thank you

for sponsoring Frank



“

**Hello, it's
Merry here,
Frank's
trainer.**

”

In your last Pupdate, Frank had only been at training school for a few weeks and was still settling in. Since then, our bond has grown, and I've gotten to know him so much more. He's such a lovely dog and really enjoys training school; his tail is constantly wagging.

Training progress

Frank's an enthusiastic dog and great fun to work with. We were previously working on guiding tension and platforms, and I'm really pleased to say that Frank has mastered these skills. We've progressed from the training room to doing training walks where he demonstrates his skills in real-life environments, such as towns and cities. When I first began taking him into towns, I provided lots of reassurance and positive reinforcement through tasty treats, ear scratches and cuddles. As he's become more confident while out and about, I've reduced how often I reward him with food so that he continues to concentrate and not look at me expecting some treats.

Frank has mastered obstacle avoidance, which we were working on in your last Pupdate. He's also mastered blindfold walks, which is when Frank guides me while I'm wearing a blindfold on a training walk in a town.

I always have a colleague with me to keep me safe while he's still learning. He's making fantastic progress, and I'm really proud of him. He's also accompanied his fosterer to work, and he wasn't bothered by the new location. Hearing that he was so confident gave me a great boost. Frank's also wonderful in busy environments with loud noises and lots of cars; he's just completely unfazed by city life.

Distractions

One of the things that I'm working on with Frank is overcoming his distractions. The main one we're working on is when he sees squirrels, birds, cats or other dogs, and wants to chase after them. If Frank encounters any of these on a training walk, he loses focus, which wouldn't be safe for a guide dog owner. To help him overcome this, I ensure he gets lots of time to meet this chasing need in an appropriate way, through downtime, free runs, and toy play in distraction-free environments. Plus, during training sessions, I work alongside another trainer to decrease Frank's distraction level while slowly introducing distractive elements. This begins with the other trainer standing at a distance with a dog on a lead. I then walk Frank past this distraction from point A to B and praise him for focusing on the task. Slowly, the other trainer brings the dog closer while I continue to walk Frank between these points.



Check out Frank's great progress with Merry by going to:

guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-frank

He's doing amazingly well with this, and I'm seeing some improvements already. Frank's also distracted by food on the ground, so I'm using the same technique to help him with this: every time he walks from point A to B ignoring the food on the floor, I'll reward him with fuss.

Looking ahead

Over the next few months, I'll continue to work with Frank to overcome his chase and food distractions, and apply his training to real-life situations. I'll prepare him to move on to advanced training, where he'll learn the final skills before being matched with a guide dog owner.

Thank you for sponsoring Frank. He's a lovely boy and so much fun to train. Find out how his training is going in your next Pupdate in October.





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 Puppy Raising for Guide Dogs 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.



/SponsorAPuppy



GuideDogsUK



/sponsorapuppygd

Find out more about how we manage and respect your data at **guidedogs.org.uk/privacy** or call **freephone 0800 953 0113** to request a printed copy. Please use this number to tell us if you have changed your mind about how we contact you; including telling us that you do not wish to receive occasional direct mail about Guide Dogs.