



Grace

**Grace has started
training school!**

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 Potter

Puppy Sponsorship Manager



Thank you

for sponsoring Grace



“
**Hello, it's
Ann here,
Grace's
trainer.**
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I've been training dogs for 29 years and I love my job. Working with so many of them, I've learnt that each dog has a unique personality. It's great to teach them new skills and see how they grow and improve. The most gratifying thing is seeing the difference qualified guide dogs make for their new owners.

Welcoming Grace

Grace's as gentle as a princess, she's laid back and takes everything in her stride. She also loves affection and cuddles. When she first arrived, I spent a couple of days helping her get accustomed to the new environment. She walked around, sniffed new smells, and rested in her pen. Grace's puppy raisers brought her bed and toys, which were familiar to her and helped her feel at ease. She's doing really well at her fosterers' too; she settled in quickly. Currently, I'm training three dogs at three different stages, and she enjoys making friends with them all.

Training begins

Every morning begins with a little excitement from Grace. After our initial greeting, I take her for a walk. I usually bring her with me wherever I take the other dogs I'm training.

Grace is food motivated, which is very helpful when training her. At Guide Dogs all our dogs are trained using positive reinforcement. It's a training approach that builds trust and cooperation by rewarding dogs with something that motivates them, like toys or food. She has very gentle manners!

Our bond is growing stronger each day; I keep her days varied, teaching her different skills. We've been working on chin rest; I ask her to rest her head on a blanket on my lap or on a chair, which is useful for checking her eyes and ears. I've also introduced her to platforms, and she's learned to move from one low platform to another. This skill will teach her to walk in a straight line while guiding. She's also learning to pause at each kerb and avoid obstacles. She always gets a reward and waits for the cue to continue walking. She's fantastic!

Grace is confident in new environments and doesn't get distracted by other dogs. We've been on and off trains together and have visited busy environments like the town centre and shops. I'm teaching her the cue 'under' so she can find a safe space beneath my legs when I sit somewhere at a bus stop or in a café.

I've introduced Grace to the brown training harness and she's happy to wear it. We're starting to use it to do training walks.



Hear how Grace has settled into training school with Ann by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:
guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-grace



Scan me

Looking ahead

I'm really happy with Grace's training. Over the next few months, I'll continue to practise the skills she has already learnt, gradually increasing the difficulty and introducing new challenges. I'll also work on her guiding tension, which is about providing enough tension through the harness to lead without pulling. I'll teach her new routes, and travel more on public transport.

**Thank you for sponsoring Grace. I'm really enjoying training her.
Find out how she's progressing in your next Pupdate in June!**



Where is Grace
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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