



Hazel

Ready for training!

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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 Hazel



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**Hello, it's
Mollie here,
Hazel's
trainer**
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I've been working at Guide Dogs since 2021. Thanks to my role, I get to witness the amazing transformation the dogs I train go through; seeing them progress, overcome challenges, and become life-changing partners is incredibly rewarding.

Settling in

Hazel has such a cuddly nature, and her fosterers adore her. I was so pleased to hear she slept right through her first night! She still has her favourite soft toy, Pinkity Pink, from when she was with Puppy Raiser Noreen – it helps her feel at home. Hazel loves to play with her fosterers' children, and she's even learnt to stay calm around their pet guinea pig.

When a new dog arrives at training school, I always make sure to give them plenty of time to acclimatise, but Hazel settled in quickly. I've been giving her lots of enrichment activities, like puzzle games and frozen stuffed Kongs, to keep her entertained. The best part of Hazel's day is having free runs! She likes to run with Geoffrey, a golden retriever cross Labrador, and Flora, a yellow Labrador, who are around the same age. Hazel has a cheeky side and it's so funny to see them playing together!

Current sessions

A typical day for Hazel involves morning and afternoon training sessions, with plenty of breaks where she can relax and get ready for what we'll practise next. She's doing well. I've introduced a new skill called platforms. This teaches her how to walk in a straight line as we move from one low platform to another, and will help her identify surface differences, such as kerbs, when training outdoors. I'll gradually introduce obstacles such as cones and teach her to navigate around them safely.

Another skill I'm teaching her is the chin rest: Hazel will rest her chin on a towel on a chair, or on my lap, allowing me to check her eyes and ears. This skill is fundamental for routine vet checks, and will be used as a basis to teach her how to find empty seats for a future guide dog owner.

I've introduced Hazel to the brown training harness, and she's been a star! She's been confident putting her head in right from day one. Soon, I'll progress to short training walks in harness, getting her used to stopping at kerbs and navigating different environments, from quieter residential areas to noisier towns.



Watch how well Hazel is settling in at training school by going to:

guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-hazel

Next plans

Hazel loves to learn, but she can get a little distracted by other dogs. This is something I'm working on, and I'm confident she'll catch on quickly. To desensitise her to their presence, I'll arrange sessions where she will walk past another dog.

Hazel has such a fun personality, it's wonderful to see her character shine through during training. I can't wait to see her confidence grow as we start applying her skills out and about!

Thank you so much for sponsoring Hazel. I look forward to updating you on her progress at training school in her next Pupdate in June.





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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