

A close-up portrait of a black Labrador puppy named Margo. She has dark fur, floppy ears, and bright orange eyes. She is wearing a blue and white patterned collar. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green.

# Margo

**Margo's school  
report**

**Pupdate 4**

# Welcome to your October Pupdate

**I hope you're enjoying these beautiful autumnal months.**

Thanks to supporters like you, we can provide our incredible life-changing services. It's estimated that six million people in the UK live with sight-threatening eye conditions, and more than two million of these are living with sight loss that has a significant impact on their daily lives. At Guide Dogs, we want to support as many people as possible through these life-altering changes, providing the right services to help everyone.

Did you know that training and partnering our wonderful guide dogs isn't all we offer? We also provide support to adults through our My Sighted Guide service which partners trained volunteer guides with a person with a visual impairment. For children and young people, we offer a fantastic range of support, from companion dogs via our buddy dogs scheme to personalised, large print books through CustomEyes Books. Our expertise means we can make life-changing differences to those affected by sight loss, enabling them to live actively, independently, and well – however they choose. Thank you for helping us to do this with your generous support.

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

Yours sincerely,



**Steph Potter**  
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



# Thank you

for sponsoring Margo



“  
**Hello, it's  
Emma here,  
Margo's  
trainer.**  
”

Margo's making great progress at training school; she still picks things up quickly and we've bonded well. Margo enjoys learning and I enjoy teaching her, so we're a great partnership. She'll happily be taught by anybody and is very adaptable. Margo is full of fun and loves spending time with people.

## **Making progress**

Margo's been introduced to a few new skills since your last Pupdate. She's learnt chin rest, which is used for health checks on the ears and eyes, and helps when administering medication. She's fantastic at demonstrating this skill and will happily rest her chin on a chair when asked to do so.

When it comes to dog distraction, Margo has really improved. She's great at acknowledging that she's seen a dog by looking back at me to check in. She still struggles a little when dogs bark, but we're working on this and making some progress. Although Margo's general self-control is great, she can be a bit cheeky when sniffing on walks sometimes, but this isn't something I'm worried about as she's already come a long way since arriving at training school.



We've been heading out and about more and been working in new environments. I've taken Margo to shopping centres where we have been in glass lifts and on spiral staircases. We've also been doing more training on trains and buses. She takes it all in her stride and has been amazing. Taking Margo to busier environments like shopping centres where there are many more people encourages her to think and navigate a safe route.

## Training harness

Margo's made fantastic progress with her training harness. She's now wearing the full harness, and we're working on all the guiding behaviours. I've started teaching Margo to indicate kerbs. When introducing kerbs to Margo, I found a quiet location where they are defined. Margo looks and begins to slow down as we get closer and eventually stops once we reach the kerb. Then, it's all about the repetition of approaching them. Margo's wonderful with kerbs and picked this up quickly.



Hear more about Margo's progress at training school by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:

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



**Scan me**

## Looking ahead

Over the coming months, I'll focus on getting Margo to take on more responsibility and decision-making when guiding. I'll support her less and take her to busier environments, so she has to concentrate more. I'll be adding in more active interference during guiding walks too. A guide dog owner won't always follow Margo perfectly or instantly so there could be a delay or more tension in the harness handle sometimes. This means we need Margo to build her resilience and confidence in her decisions to be able to get her future partner back on track if needed.

**Thank you for sponsoring Margo. I really enjoy working with her.  
Find out how her training's going in your next Pupdate in February!**



## Where is Margo on her Pupdate journey?



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## 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 PREP and adds in the 38 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.



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