



Guide  
Dogs

Sponsor  
a Puppy



# Margo

Advanced  
training

Pupdate 5

# 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 Margo



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**Hello, it's  
Hannah here,  
Margo's  
trainer.**

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I'm a Guide Dog Mobility Specialist and have been at Guide Dogs for two years. I'm training Margo with the support of David, a Technical Learning Specialist. In my role, I match the dogs to their new owners and look after their partnership going forward. I love working with the dogs, watching them learn, progress and helping them to become qualified guide dogs. Seeing the difference each dog makes to the life of a person with sight loss is incredibly rewarding.

Margo and I have formed a great bond; she's such a lovable dog. She enjoys training, and her easy going yet keen nature means she gets along with everyone. What she lacks in size, she sure makes up for in enthusiasm. She loves to guide; her tail is always wagging!

## **Advanced training**

Emma, Margo's previous trainer, has done an amazing job training her. My job now is to fine-tune Margo's skills, build her confidence in areas it may be lacking, and understand the kind of partner she will suit. I've been adding in more challenges for her to make sure she is confident in her decision-making while guiding.



These include me purposely changing my walking style to encourage Margo to take on more guiding responsibility. For example, I might walk a bit slower or act a bit off balance. I want her to notice this and be able to get me back on track safely. When I first got Margo, she would often look back at me for reassurance, but now she's confident in her guiding decisions. I'm so proud of the progress she's made.

I've also been doing some blindfold walks with Margo. This is when I wear a blindfold and ask her to lead me on a familiar route we've been practising together. A colleague will always be close by to make sure we're both safe. Blindfold walks also encourage Margo to make her own decisions and keep me safe without any help from me.

## Perfecting skills

Margo is fantastic on public transport; I've been practising travelling on the London Underground with her, as a potential match could use this mode of transport. She takes it all in her stride and is doing great. She's the perfect size for public transport as she easily tucks away under your legs!



Find out how Margo's learning to travel on the London Underground by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:  
**[guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-margo](https://guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-margo)**



Scan me

Margo picks things up quickly and enjoys locating objects like chairs and crossing boxes. She has made great progress with her dog distraction, especially barking dogs. She can still sometimes get a bit distracted and stop to look, but she walks past them nicely and quickly refocuses.

## **Margo's perfect partner**

Over the next few months, I'll be finding Margo's perfect match. She would suit someone who is energetic, has a busy lifestyle and enjoys being out and about, as she loves to guide. Margo has a fantastic personality so I'll be looking for someone who will appreciate Margo for all that she is, especially her fun-loving character. She's a great dog and I'm looking forward to finding her 'pawfect' partner.

**Thank you for sponsoring Margo. I'm enjoying working with her.  
Find out how her training's going in your next Pupdate in June!**



## Where is Margo on her Pupdate journey?



1

2

3

4

5

6



## Key skills

Did you know our dogs need to learn 37 key skills to qualify as a guide dog? These range from those designed to help with health checks to those more specific to guiding. 'Chin rest' (where we ask the dog to rest their head on a surface so that their ears or eyes can be checked) is an essential welfare skill, while learning to walk with the correct guiding tension is important to ensure they can guide their owner around obstacles safely, without pulling.

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