



Guide
Dogs

Sponsor
a Puppy



Niko

Niko's training
continues

Pupdate 5

Welcome to your February Pupdate

I hope that you and your family are well and had an enjoyable start to the year.

Thank you so much for supporting Guide Dogs by sponsoring a puppy. We can't thank you enough for your continued commitment and support. At any one time, we're responsible for over 8,000 puppies and dogs, and are one of the only organisations worldwide that breeds and nurtures them throughout their lifetime. Without you, we couldn't train life-changing dogs like your sponsored pup – you truly are making a huge difference.

Did you know that one in five people will live with significant sight loss in their lifetime? We're committed to providing the support needed to ensure that everyone with sight loss can live their life exactly as they choose. By sponsoring a puppy, you're helping to transform the lives of both adults and children with visual impairments. Thank you.

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

Yours sincerely,

Steph

Steph Potter
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



Thank you

for sponsoring Niko



“
**Hello, it's Zoe
here, Niko's
Guide Dog
Mobility
Specialist.**

”

I've worked at Guide Dogs for about four years as a Guide Dog Mobility Specialist. My role is slightly different to Niko's previous trainer Nat, as I also match dogs in training to their new owners and look after their partnerships going forward. One of the best parts of my job is witnessing the partnerships going from strength to strength and seeing what they achieve together.

Advanced training

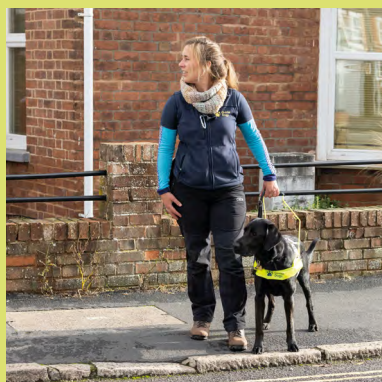
Niko has recently moved into advanced training with me, and although we're at the beginning of our training journey together, he's getting on really well! Nat has done an incredible job of teaching Niko all the skills that he needs to know, and I'm working on transferring these to real-life situations. In your last Pupdate, Niko was learning to avoid obstacles, which is a crucial skill to replicate in the real world. Obstacles can be anything from cars parked on the pavement to roadworks on a footpath. I'm helping Niko to develop the confidence to navigate me around these obstacles safely.

So far, he is doing really well, and I'll continue this training over the next few months.

Niko really enjoys training and loves finding anything we ask him to. During our training walks, I ask him to 'find me the post' of a crossing box or the 'door' to a shop and he loves it – his tail wags constantly! Although he is so proud to be able to complete the task asked of him, sometimes he can be a bit too speedy in guiding me to the crossing box. So, I'm working on asking him to slow down and maintain a steady pace whilst guiding me to the target. It's a work in progress, but I'm confident that it's something we can overcome.

The matching process

Over the next few months, I'll be starting to look for a potential match for Niko. To do this, I'll look at Niko's profile; his likes, the speed he walks at, and the amount of work he would be comfortable doing whilst guiding his new owner. Next, I'll look at our 'Ready to Train' list and find a potential owner who has the same walking speed and workload as Niko, and who would be happy giving him the type of affection and praise he prefers – chin scratches are his favourite! Once the match has



Find out more about how well Niko is doing in his training by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:

guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-niko



been found they will meet and start an intensive training course for three weeks. During this time, Niko will learn the regular routes of his new owner and they will get to know each other. I will be on hand to help keep Niko settled whilst he gets to know his new owner. I suppose you could say I'm a bit like 'Cupid'!

Looking ahead

Over the next few months, I will be looking to develop Niko's confidence when making guiding decisions. He's a very smart dog, so I'm sure he'll get on well with this.

Thank you for sponsoring Niko. Find out how Niko's journey is progressing in your next Pupdate in June!





Don't forget, you can find even more exciting updates by joining Niko's exclusive Facebook group.

Visit www.facebook.com/groups/puppy.niko



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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.

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