



Sponsor
a Puppy



Rupert

Rupert's training
school update

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

Steph Potter
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



Thank you

for sponsoring Rupert



Rupert's been making fantastic progress at training school. He's an amazing dog, and our bond has really developed over the last few months. It's incredible to see the difference between being such a sensible, calm, and focused dog when in harness and being a goofy, fun-loving dog when he's on free runs. Rupert knows when he's in harness it's work mode, and he loves to work. He's just brilliant and I've never quite known a dog like him.

Rupert's progress

Rupert's food manners have improved so much since his last Pupdate, but they still need a bit of fine tuning. Another skill that Rupert has developed is loose lead walking; he now walks beautifully on a loose lead and stays nicely by my side. I've been working hard with Rupert to help him feel comfortable at the vets. We've been on several visits since his last Pupdate and he's much happier. Recently, he had a routine check-up and his eyes and ears were checked, he did so well. I'm so proud of him!

I've noticed with Rupert that he can get slightly distracted by dogs both in harness and on free runs, so this is something

“

**Hello, it's
Rhiannon
here, Rupert's
trainer.**

”

we're working on; I'm using lots of recall and rewarding him when he focuses back on me. We play this game called 'engage and disengage' where I reward Rupert with a tasty treat and some praise when he engages and concentrates on me, and not the dog around him. He is mostly distracted by pet dogs. To help with this, my colleagues bring their pet dogs to the office to use in dog distraction training and help him to progress.

Guiding skills

Rupert's now in full harness and he's great at putting it on; it makes him enthusiastic to start the day. He's practising a lot of guiding skills and we've completed some blindfold walks. These are where I will put on a blindfold and Rupert will guide me, whilst a colleague follows closely behind to make sure we're both safe. These walks allow him to take on more guiding responsibility, and stop any subconscious signals I might give him without realising. This is great for pinpointing Rupert's strong areas and what needs more work. He's incredible at locating objects such as cash points, crossing boxes and benches. He slows himself down in busy crowds and around obstacles. Observing him taking in the environment, and adjusting his speed and route accordingly, makes me feel really proud.



Find out more about the skills Rupert's learning at training school by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:
[guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-rupert](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-rupert)



Scan me

Looking ahead

Over the next few months, I'll work with Rupert to improve his dog distraction as a main focus. I'll also be thinking about the kind of partner Rupert will be best suited to, and focus on his strengths and needs to find him his perfect match. He'd suit someone who is active and enjoys being social. He loves cuddles, so someone who will happily give him lots of fuss and affection is ideal. And who could resist giving this gorgeous boy some attention?

Thank you for sponsoring Rupert. I love working with him. Find out how he's getting on in your next Pupdate in February!



Where is Rupert on his 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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