



Theo

A new career

Pupdate 5

Welcome to your October Pupdate

I hope you're enjoying the start of the new season, as the leaves begin to change and the air turns crisper again.

Did you know that every day, 250 people in the UK start to lose their sight, four of which are estimated to be children? Nearly half report feeling isolated and cut off from the world around them. Together, we can change that.

Your support goes beyond helping puppies become life changers; you're also making a multitude of vital services possible. We're dedicated to breaking down barriers by providing information, advice and support for adults, children and families. None of this would be possible without supporters like you.

Thank you for your invaluable and continued support of Guide Dogs. Your generosity directly impacts the lives of people with sight loss, ensuring everyone can live actively, independently, and well. You are making a massive difference!

Yours sincerely,



Steph Potter
Puppy Sponsorship Manager

P.S. Even though Theo is partnered, we will send you one more Pupdate in February so you can meet Anna and find out how they're getting on!



Thank you

for sponsoring Theo



“
**Hello, it's
Natalie here,
Theo's
Buddy Dog
Partnership
Specialist.**

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In your last Pupdate, Theo's trainer, Emily, mentioned that he was struggling with body sensitivity and wasn't comfortable wearing the guiding harness. Emily worked hard to support him, but he was still showing signs of stress around the harness and was distracted by other dogs, so we decided to assess Theo for an alternative career as a buddy dog. A buddy dog is a companion for a child or young person with a visual impairment and helps them to build confidence and independence. Theo was a perfect candidate as he's great in the home and with people of all ages. It was an immediate yes!

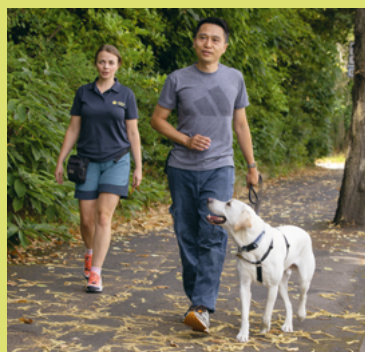
The main aim of my role is to match buddy dogs with their future families, and I do this by assessing each dog and the family's specific needs. Seeing a family meet their dog for the first time is the best part of my job. You watch their faces light up, and you know that no matter what that dog's quirks are, the family is going to love them and have their lives changed.

Finding Theo's forever family

When a family applies for a buddy dog, they go through quite a lengthy training period in which we assess what type of dog would suit them best and teach them all about dog behaviour and care. We want to make sure that families are prepared to have a dog join them, so that we can ensure the partnership is a success. While primarily intended for children with visual impairments, buddy dogs are cared for by their adult caregivers, who are responsible for their wellbeing. Both adults and children in the household benefit from the dog's companionship! Because of this, we work with the whole family when looking at partnerships.

Meet Jack

It didn't take me long to find the perfect family for Theo! He's been partnered with Jack's daughter, Anna, who's 13 years old. Anna has a rare heart condition called Alström syndrome, which causes progressive vision and hearing loss. But Anna doesn't let this stop her! She's a determined and enthusiastic young person and competes in judo competitions around the world. She was actually away with her mum, visiting family in Hong Kong, when we visited to take some photos for Theo's Pupdate! Instead, we spent the day with Jack, Anna's dad.



Learn more about Theo's new career and family by scanning the QR code with your smartphone or going to:

guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-theo



Scan me

Perfect pair

Anna has wanted a dog for a really long time! She's recently moved schools and having a constant friend at home is one of the main reasons that the family applied for a buddy dog. Theo is perfect in this role; he's such a loving boy and is always up for a cuddle! Alongside Braille, Anna is learning sign language, so we might start introducing some of this to Theo too – dogs actually find it much easier to understand signed cues than verbal ones, and it would be nice for her to be able to communicate with Theo in this way.

The partnership is still very new, but Anna's family is extremely passionate about training, so I'm excited to share how they're doing in Theo's final Pupdate in February! Thank you so much for sponsoring Theo.



Meet Anna and find out how the pair are doing in your next Pupdate in February!

Where is Theo on his Pupdate journey?



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A new direction

While most of our dogs go on to become guide dogs, for some of our four-legged family, it's simply not the right career for them. With the welfare and safety of both the dog and their future owner in mind, we assess these dogs for a career as a buddy dog. Buddy dogs are companions for children and young people with vision impairment. Rather than aid mobility as a guide dog does, instead they help to develop self-confidence, build trust and improve relationships. They make a huge difference to both the child and the whole family!



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