



Guide
Dogs

Sponsor
a Puppy



Walter

Time for training school

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Welcome to your June Pupdate

We hope you've been enjoying the longer days and warmer weather that June brings. We're so excited to share what your sponsored pup has been getting up to!

Did you know that we breed and train more dogs than any other organisation internationally? We have a world-class breeding and training programme which focuses on dog health, behaviour and genetic merit. This helps us set our pups up for careers as future life changers. But none of this would be possible without kind people like you! By sponsoring one of our special puppies, you're helping us support the 1 in 5 people affected by sight loss in their lifetime.

Beyond our wonderful dogs, we also provide a range of services for people of all ages. From mobility skills to children's large print books, we're here for anyone who needs us. Your donations make this possible!

Yours sincerely,

Steph

Steph Potter
Puppy Sponsorship Manager



Thank you

for sponsoring Walter



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**Hello, it's
Sian here,
Walter's
trainer.**

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I've been a trainer at Guide Dogs for around three years, but before that, I worked in the Dog Care team. Both jobs have been amazing because it means I get to play with dogs! I also love working with our volunteer fosterers and seeing the joy our dogs can bring to their lives too – as well as the final owner! The fact that the work I do goes towards helping people is really special.

Settling in

Walter has only just arrived at training school, so our focus recently has been on helping him to settle in. At the moment, he stays at home with his fosterer in the mornings, and then he comes to school in the afternoons. When Walter arrives, we head to the training room to work on a few skills and then go for a training walk around the site before he has a free run. Initially, we're working on easy tasks that allow him to succeed quickly. For example, we work on the cue 'touch' which is where I make a fist and ask him to touch his nose to it. We use this skill later in training when we're teaching dogs to indicate things like button boxes or seats, so it's a good foundation.

By practising these skills, it also helps Walter feel confident in his new environment, while the praise and kibble he receives from me helps us build a strong bond.

Challenges

As Puppy Raiser Vicky mentioned in Walter's last Pupdate, he can sometimes be unsure about jumping into vehicles. To help him with this, we've been spending time together around my training van so that he can investigate it at his own pace without any pressure to hop in. Sometimes, I put some kibble inside the van beforehand – but it's still up to him if he wants to get inside. If he does decide to jump in, it's important that the food was inside the van and didn't come from me, as this helps him build a positive association with the space rather than thinking it's a task that will be rewarded. He can still be a little reluctant sometimes, but he's making great progress!

Walter is struggling to settle and can be a bit vocal when he wants attention too. There's a pen by my desk where Walter will relax between training sessions, and I've started giving him a Kong toy filled with food to help him settle there.



Watch how Walter is settling in at training school by going to:

guidedogs.org.uk/puppy-walter

Once he's quiet, I leave him for a while and then make sure that I take him out of the pen just before the Kong is finished, when he would usually become impatient. This is helping him realise that he will get attention without having to ask for it. It's a work in progress, but I can already see an improvement.

Puppy pals

I'm currently training three other dogs too, and Walter has made fast friends with all of them! He's such a fun and lovable boy, and he really enjoys playing with his new pals on free runs.

Keep an eye out for an update on Walter's progress in your next Pupdate in October. Thank you so much for sponsoring him.





The training harness

After around 12-16 months with their puppy raiser, our pups move to training school to learn more specific tasks related to their future career. Introducing a young dog to their brown training harness is one of the first milestones at training school. Most dogs have previously worn their puppy coat, meaning they're familiar with the body sensation. With this as a foundation, we build up to placing the harness on the dog's back and fastening it. Once a dog is partnered, they will wear the iconic white guiding harness.



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