

Forward



The very best of buddies!
How buddy dog Sam changed Jago's life

Find out who's won a
Local Volunteer Award

Meet the star of our
new TV advert

Introducing a new
service from Guide Dogs



Do you need answers or advice about living with sight loss?

Visit our website for advice and tips that can help you live actively, independently and well.

Speak to our friendly staff, who can provide personalised advice on the range of support available.

Find all the information you need for getting in touch at:

guidedogs.org.uk/getting-support

Coming soon!

One phone number as a gateway to all of our services.

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A welcome from Tom



What a challenging year it's been. I'm still so impressed and proud of the way our staff and volunteers have achieved so much during what's most likely been one of the toughest years in living memory.

While we initially had to suspend our services in March, we quickly set up a Covid-19 information line. We also made 30,000 'Keeping In Touch' calls to be by the side of those who use our services as best we could. For our volunteers and service users, we introduced Covid-19 updates to keep them informed. More recently and keen not to cancel them altogether, each team held their Local Volunteer Awards virtually. I can tell you that having attended several, even though we couldn't be in the same room, the events were still extremely engaging and inspirational. We celebrate all the winners on pages 14-15.

In the hope that 2021 will be better, I wanted to remind you of what we achieved in 2019, and outline how we want to continue building on that foundation next year. Last year, we had almost **5,000** guide and buddy dog partnerships, supported more than **1,400** My Sighted Guide partnerships, and delivered more than **7,300** children and young people's services. None of this would have been possible without the help of our **17,000** amazing volunteers.

We were also lucky enough to have very strong fundraising results in 2019, allowing us to invest in things like new premises and improving our existing sites. We took on **70** new frontline staff in 2019 to build towards **1,000** new canine partnerships a year. As I write, we now have **46** trainee GDMIs (Guide Dog Mobility Instructors) to help build our future capacity. We're also updating our digital platforms to make it even easier to interact and find our help, and have just gone live with our first chatbot for canine support on the website.

The services we provide are life-changing but many others need our help. Our priorities for next year will be to reduce the waiting time for a guide dog, support and empower more people with sight loss through the breadth of services we provide, and reach more people via online platforms.

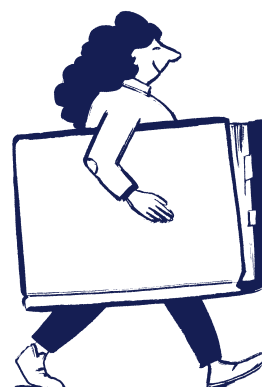
So, here's to 2021. Not only is it the 90th anniversary of the UK's first guide dog partnerships, but we'll be starting the year with seven new trustees on board. I wish them a very warm welcome to Guide Dogs, find out more about them on page nine.

And finally, by the time you read this, the guide dog mum that my family and I care for, Dolly, might be pregnant with her very first litter!

With best wishes for Christmas and the new year,

Tom Wright CBE
Chief Executive
Guide Dogs
@TomwrightUK on Twitter

News



The future of Forward magazine

In our spring/summer edition, we proposed sending out this issue of the magazine by email, except for accessible formats (large print, Braille and audio CD), due to the financial challenges we face as a charity due to Covid-19. We asked for your feedback, and listened to every single one of you who took the time to respond. While many of you supported the move, there were a significant number who told us you value having a physical magazine to sit and read with a coffee, or to take to speaking engagements or other events.

As a result, we've decided to produce a standard print version of this edition as we realise this magazine is much-loved by its readers and valued as an important tool to spread the word about Guide Dogs' work.

Covid-19 will continue to affect us financially, and we're also mindful of the environmental impact of printing (see p23), so we're investigating the best way to make sure everyone has a format they're happy with. We'll bring you more news on our progress when we can.

Guide Dogs wins at the 21st annual Charity Times Awards!

Guide Dogs has won the 'Best Social Media Presence' category at the 21st annual Charity Times Awards for our record-breaking Virtual Tea Party in April. The awards, organised by Charity Times, celebrate best practice in the UK charity and not-for-profit sector. This award recognises the innovation and incredible collaboration across so many teams in Guide Dogs in just a few weeks during a

global pandemic. Our tea party resulted in the best celebrity support we've ever seen and the largest amount of press coverage for a fundraising initiative, on top of raising nearly **£50,000**. And not forgetting that we set a new Guinness World Record for the world's largest virtual tea party! Thank you to everyone involved for helping us to be not only record breakers but now award winners as well.



Save the date for our Christmas Wishes Virtual Event



On **Saturday 12 December** join us for our Christmas concert and auction. Get ready for an evening of yuletide cheer, heart-warming stories and incredible celebrity performances, including Classical Reflection and Aled Jones, from the comfort of your living room!

Despite the devastating impact of Covid-19, this year we've continued to make wishes come true with our life-changing partnerships and support. We've given the gift of independence, freedom and companionship to thousands of children, adults and families across the UK. We need your support now more than ever and the cost of your ticket will help us make even more wishes come true next year.

Visit guidedogs.org.uk/christmaswishes for your £10 ticket. Then snuggle up on your sofa and let the entertainment come to you, as we celebrate all the incredible wishes we've made come true this year for people living with sight loss.

Collaborating against Covid-19

A dog can't work as a guide dog if he can't keep his nose off the ground. So, what do we do with the puppies that just can't resist tracking a scent? A change in career is an excellent option.

The charity Medical Detection Dogs has been hard at work training a small number of their dogs to identify coronavirus through smell. It's hoped that very soon they'll have this elite team working in transport hubs around the country, sniffing through crowds and picking out any positive cases of Covid-19.

Guide Dogs has sent three dogs to join their ranks – Ivan, Maple and Spencer – who all love working with their noses. They've been thriving at Medical Detection Dogs's centre in Milton Keynes and are progressing through their training brilliantly, passing their initial assessment with flying colours.



Scrubbing up well at the NBC

Staff at our National Breeding Centre (NBC) donated spare scrubs to South Warwickshire NHS Foundation Trust to help during the first peak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The NBC cares for around **1,400** guide dog pups each year, and staff wear scrubs around the puppies for hygiene reasons. After seeing a local appeal online, staff arranged to donate 50 tunics and 20 pairs of trousers.

Janine Dixon, the centre's Dog Care and Welfare Manager, said:

“

We've recently updated some of our scrubs, so had some items we weren't using any more. When we saw the appeal, we felt this was a great way to help support local NHS staff during the Covid-19 pandemic and put our extra scrubs to good use. We hope that our Guide Dogs scrubs helped NHS staff during this challenging time.

”

Born to Guide

Every puppy is born with a purpose at Guide Dogs: to grow up to support someone with sight loss. We're always looking for new ways we can give our puppies the best chance of success and our pioneering new research project, Born to Guide, could provide some fascinating insight into how to breed future generations.

Born to Guide is a long-term study into the complex relationship between a dog's genes and its health and behaviour. Saliva swabs from 3,000 of

our dogs will be collected, allowing us to capture their unique genetic data and map this information against their development. We're aiming to better understand the genetics of certain behavioural traits and complex health conditions. Hopefully this will influence the already rigorous selection process for our breeding dogs, and produce happier, healthier puppies best-suited to life as working guide dogs. To find out more, search 'Born to Guide' at guidedogs.org.uk.



Who's a good dog?

In September we launched our new monthly subscription box, Good Dog!, expert advice for making life with your dog a walk in the park. Good Dog! is a 12-month subscription from Guide Dogs to support the relationship between happy, well-behaved dogs and the owners who love them. Subscribers receive monthly emails and seasonal packs through

the post full of training videos, top tips and inspiring reads from our experts at Guide Dogs, along with regular treats which will help owner and dog on their Good Dog! journey. We have a limited number of subscriptions available in 2020 and have plans to roll it out further in 2021. For more information go to guidedogs.org.uk/good-dog.



Introducing...

The Guide Dogs Shop

Dogalogue has had a makeover, including a new name! The new Guide Dogs Shop launched in early September with exciting new products you will love, including gifts for Christmas and new Guide Dogs-branded merchandise.

You can browse and buy online at guidedogsshop.com, or request the Guide Dogs Shop Christmas catalogue via the website or by calling **0345 143 0197**.

The last postage date for Christmas delivery is 16 December and, as ever, all proceeds go towards helping people with sight loss to live actively, independently and well.

Among the items available are a Guide Dogs-branded range of face coverings, perfect for those who want to show the world that they support our charity when they're out and about.



Emma West



Lynne Hill



Jennelle Tilling



Mark Johnstone



Michael Olaye



Mike Wroe



Paul Baker

A warm welcome to our new Trustees



At our AGM in September, seven new Trustees joined Guide Dogs ahead of our 90th anniversary year. The seven new Trustees are Paul Baker, Lynne Hill, Mark Johnstone, Michael Olaye, Jennelle Tilling, Emma West and Mike Wroe, and you can find out more about them by searching for 'Trustees' on our website. All are committed to enabling our **By My Side** strategy to support more people with sight loss to live the life they choose.

The decision was made to appoint seven new Trustees to replace those retiring this year and those who will be stepping down in 2021. The new Trustees succeed David Anderson, David Bagley and Pat Stafford, who retired from the Board at the AGM and create a succession for the Trustees retiring in 2021.

Guide Dogs in the media

In late August we launched a media campaign called Back To School, calling for more support for pupils with sight loss as they return to classrooms and raising awareness of our children and young people's services. The campaign led to more than 100 pieces of coverage and focused on young service user Nell, the star of our new TV advert which premiered at the same time (see page 27). Among the media covering the story were the Daily Mail Online and CBBC Newsround's website, while Times Radio reported the campaign in its hourly news bulletins across one day. Channel 5 News also featured the topic during their early evening bulletins.

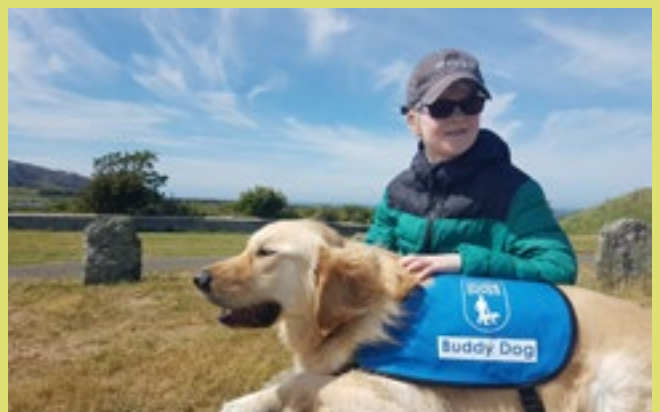


Numerous national media and more than 50 regional outlets covered our role in the Government publishing a consultation on pavement parking. We found that 32% of people with vision impairments and 48% of wheelchair users are less keen to go out alone because of anti-social pavement parking. Among the national outlets covering our research were The Daily Telegraph online, CBBC Newsround's website, The Independent, The Guardian online, Daily Express online, Metro online, the Daily Mirror online and ITV News online.

Our campaigning work to end guide dog owners being refused access to taxis, restaurants and other businesses was highlighted on Rip Off Britain. The segment, broadcast on BBC One in July but filmed before lockdown, included two guide dog owners telling their own access refusal stories. Presenter Julia Somerville visited our Redbridge Regional Centre to find out how well-trained our dogs are, and spoke to Public Affairs Officer Kat Copperthwaite about assistance dogs and the law.



CBBC's Newsround featured buddy dog Ralph and his owner, Ellis, from Holyhead in north Wales (see page 16). Ellis explained he has sight loss due to albinism and talked about a buddy dog's role. The 11-year-old told viewers that "the best thing about having Ralph is that he makes me laugh every day".



Which celebrities have shown Guide Dogs some love in 2020?

Great Guide Dogs Virtual Dog Show

Lots of famous faces supported the Great Guide Dogs Virtual Dog Show over the summer by sending in photos of themselves with their own furry friends including John Nichol, Claire Skinner, Sean Fletcher, Dame Jenni Murray, Laura Robson, Sally Phillips, Phil Daniels, Ainsley Harriott, Nicola Walker, Russell Watson, Katrina from Katrina and the Waves and Cathy Shipton. Joining in the fun were Paul O'Grady, Clare Balding and Anna Richardson, who sent in pictures to support the show's Pride Dogs for Guide Dogs category.



Jay's Virtual Pub Quiz

Countdown's lexicographer, Susie Dent, recorded word-related questions for two editions of Jay's Virtual Pub Quiz in aid of Guide Dogs in July. The online quiz series, which is broadcast on Facebook and YouTube and gained popularity across the UK after pubs closed due to lockdown in March, raised more than £16,700.



Celebrity MasterChef

The Celebrity MasterChef team visited our National Breeding Centre in early March with the final eight contestants for their mass catering challenge, cooking in two tents in the grounds. Some 120 volunteers, staff and special guests enjoyed delicious food prepared by Sam Quek, Phil Daniels, Thomas Skinner, Riyadh Khalaf, Amar Latif, Judi Love, Sir Matthew Pinsent and Gethin Jones. The episode was broadcast on BBC One in late July and the series is watched by an average of more than five million people.



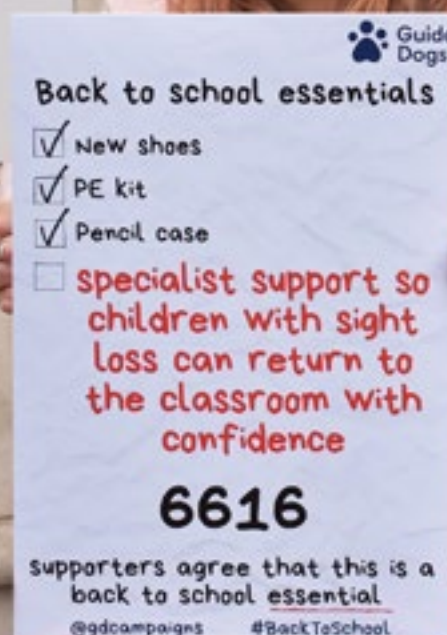
Adam Henson meets Uma the buddy dog

Countryfile star Adam Henson met buddy dog owner Evie Gormley in a heart-warming video to promote our buddy dog service. Sixteen-year-old Evie, from Aberdare in south Wales, and her buddy dog, Uma, met Adam at his Cotswold Farm Park near Cheltenham in August to chat about sight loss and their shared love for animals. To watch, visit the video section of our Facebook page.



On the campaign trail

Campaigning for more support for children and young people



We provide a wide range of services for children with sight loss and their families. From CustomEyes books and buddy dogs to family events, habilitation work (teaching children key living and mobility skills) and technology grants, these services provide vital support for children and young people with a vision impairment.

The difference specialist support can make to a child with sight loss is life-changing. But our latest report revealed that large numbers of children are not being referred for vital habilitation support. Our research with the Thomas Pocklington Trust has uncovered a fractured and confusing system that we believe is failing to address significant amounts of need. We're campaigning for all children with sight loss to be able to access this support, no matter where they live in the UK.

In the summer, Guide Dogs handed in a petition to the Department for Education saying that this specialist support was a 'back to school' essential, as schools prepared for the return of their pupils. It has never been

more important to ensure that children can enter the classroom with confidence. We've since met the Minister Vicky Ford to discuss what she can do to ensure children with sight loss are supported with their learning during Covid-19.

Preparing for Brexit

From January 2021, the process of taking dogs abroad – including guide dogs – will depend on whether the UK and EU reach an agreement on pet passports. If there's no agreement, dog owners will have to take extra steps at least four months in advance of travel.

Guide Dogs is continuing to ask the government for clarity, but the outcome remains uncertain. In the meantime, we'd recommend all guide dog owners planning to travel to the EU next year talk to their vet as soon as possible about the requirements.

We would also suggest guide dog owners follow the latest official government advice at gov.uk/guidance/pet-travel-to-europe-after-brexit, or email pettravel@apha.gov.uk or call 0370 241 1710.

Micro-volunteering is as easy as 1-2-3

We're excited about the potential impact micro-actions, or micro-volunteering, can have on our mission to help more people with sight loss to live actively, independently and well.

So, what's micro-volunteering? It's volunteering on a small scale. It's simple actions or tasks that you can do from anywhere - while you're waiting for a bus, sitting in a taxi, or from the comfort of your own home - all it takes is just a few clicks or taps. It's a great way to spend a spare minute or two (or more) to help Guide Dogs and people with sight loss. There are no set times, no forms to fill in or training to complete.

It can be as simple as sending a template letter to your MP to ask for their support in our campaigns, sharing our messages on social media, or reporting broken streetlights to help people with sight loss get out and about safely.

What's in a name?

The early experiences of nurturing, upbringing and care our puppies and dogs receive from all their volunteer families are crucial to helping them become confident, secure and well-mannered dogs. That's why we're reviewing some of our volunteer names to make sure they more accurately reflect the true nature of each role. We'll be updating our staff and volunteers about the changes over the coming months, so watch this space.

With just a few minutes of your time, you could be making a big difference through micro-volunteering.

We've created a new page on our website called '**How You Can Help Us From Home**', dedicated to micro-volunteering activities. It contains different types of micro-actions that can be completed in a few minutes (eg sharing our social media posts), 10 minutes, 20 minutes or longer. Alongside this, each week on the 'Volunteers at Guide Dogs (UK)' Facebook page, we'll be sharing different spotlight actions that you can support with a click.

Just think that in the time it takes to read this, you could have made a difference to Guide Dogs by doing one simple action. For more information, please visit [guidedogs.org.uk](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk) and search '**how you can help us from home**'.





The results are in!

Guide Dogs Volunteer Awards 2020

Our Local Volunteer Awards celebrated the valuable contributions and achievements made by our dedicated volunteers. This year, the awards were delivered virtually for the very first time throughout August and September.

We received an amazing **571** online nominations, and a further **80** 'Pat on the back' nominations based on our new 'PEOPLE' behaviours (Person-centred, Expert, Optimistic, Partner, Lead-by-example, Engage) – the qualities and attributes rooted in Guide Dogs' heritage, which make up each of the six award categories.

We were truly inspired by all the touching stories of volunteers who have gone out of their way to help people with sight loss and each other, especially during these challenging times. For example, we heard from My Sighted Guide service users who were relieved to hear from their My Sighted Guide partners during lockdown on a regular basis via phone or WhatsApp/text message. It's stories like this, and many more, which made the virtual awards a wonderful moment to come together, recognise and celebrate our volunteers for their role in supporting Guide Dogs.

Here are all the winners from across the UK for each of the six award categories:

Person-centred

Phil and Jackie Barnett, Mike and Anne Clifford, Jackie Handley, Jennifer Cain, Tom Keenan, Malcom Craggs, Sally Ann Short, Christina Sumpter, John Wells, John Herman, John Thatcher, Patricia Reilly, Steve Winter, Phil Murray, Sophia Ng, Terry Matthews, Stephen Clarke, Reading My Sighted Guide volunteers, Nottingham My Sighted Guide Lead Vol Team, Wallasey Fundraising Group, Denice Cole.

Expert

Ivor Horsell, Gwyneth Wilkins, Margaret Hainsworth, Janet Smith, Suffolk Guide Dog Forum, Marian Boyden, Fiona Byers, Judith Stephenson, Brood Bitch Holders Whelping During Lockdown, Helen Sergison, Rebecca Gallacher, Forfar Dog Behaviour Assistants, Terry Geater, James Hodgkins, Alicia and Melissa Huntley, Jackie Brigden, Kim Jones, Sue Cook, Tammy and Nicolas Sparkes.



Optimistic

Helen McCann, Claire Hiles, Terry Leefar, Cathy Pitney, Ruth and Arthur Brown, the late John Taylor, Gill Brown, Sarah Bailey, Keith and Christine Boothman, Tour Guides and Puppy Helper Experience Team, Daniel Cragg, Southside fundraising group, Keith and Rosie Hannah, Stuart Donaldson, John Lynch, Zara Figlio, Stephen Norris, Charlie Strong, David Newsham and Graham Bland, Lee and Jess Hodgson, Ian and Marion Court.

Partner

Carolyn Farler, Sian Healey, Catherine Booth, Tony and Rosina Privett, Nicholas Hughes, Kate Leaf, Beverley Morgan and Michael McNichol, Mike Marsh, Michael and Jeanette Stewart, Lynn Richards, Jen and Dan Rutherford, Robert Blackwood, Jean MacDonald, Andrea Gorrie, Paul Harman, Sara Burrell, South Belfast fundraising group, Lockdown boarders, Boston fundraising group, Jan and Bryan Hobday, Anita Williams.

Lead-by-example

Susan Underwood, Ceredigion Group, Antonia Swift, Michael Druitt, Bryan Garnham, Lynne and Paul Dean, Christopher Bewick, Kate Bosley (see page 22), Eunice Renshaw, Janet Evans, Jon Devaney, Catriona and Neil Macaulay, Jane and Steve Ekins, Jon Attenborough, Sue McCulloch-Marshall, Brenda Weaver, Dawn Raine, Lynne and Philip Highy, Alan Cupitt, Karin Snape, Debbie Holt.

Engage

Andrew Goddard and Sammy, Hilary Lester, Val Sherrad, David and Danielle Herbert, Cynthia Easeman, Simon and Vicky Debonis, Theresa Chandler, Kieron Taylor, Denise Whitehead, John Herman, Bernard Kelly, John Hannigan, Heather Gelder, Nicole Donnachie, Cath and Paul Mercer, Jacqui Peachey, Phyl Francis, Stephanie Billington, Amber Valley Group, Ruth Horsley, Debbie Pitts.

Congratulations to everyone who received a nomination and to all our winners! Overall winners from each regional event will be entered for consideration into the annual People Awards taking place in 2021.

Please visit our website and search 'Awards and Recognition' for the full list of winners and runners-up for each category, including their regions.



**Marian Boyden
Expert**



**Keith and Rosie Hannah
Optimistic**



**Kate Leaf
Partner**



**Jane and Steve Ekins
Lead-by-example**

Will you help us spread the word about our buddy dog service?

While this year has certainly brought challenges, one piece of fantastic news is that we've relaunched our buddy dog service. This service allows children with a vision impairment (and their families) to enjoy the benefits and friendship of a well-behaved dog. Having a buddy dog builds confidence, which can help children to improve their relationships with others, their wellbeing and gives them a sense of fun and trust – both in themselves and their dog.

That was certainly the case for 11-year-old Ellis. He was diagnosed with oculocutaneous albinism when he was just three months old. His vision was severely affected by his condition, with extreme sensitivity to light and nystagmus (involuntary movement of the eyes back and forth).

From a young age, Ellis' mum, Sian, describes him as "dog mad". In 2015, Ellis was matched with Tweedie, a German shepherd. Sian said: "She was absolutely lovely, very calm and caring."

Ellis has good friends, but having Tweedie gave him the confidence to do a talk at his school about her and explain more about his eye condition. "He took such pride in her," Sian added, "and was always drawing pictures and telling stories about her. He had to take her for a walk every day and that got the whole family out walking."

Sadly, in 2019 Tweedie had to be put to sleep and the family were distraught. Part of the healing process has been welcoming a new buddy dog, golden retriever Ralph, into their home. Ralph has settled in with the family so well that he and Ellis have even appeared on CBBC's Newsround together (see page 10).

Sian said: "Ellis loves having a dog. They're such fun and the companionship is really important, particularly when Ellis can't always go outside with his friends, especially on bright summer days. Ralph makes him feel a lot better, someone to talk to, who's special to him when he's missing out on other things."



“

He had to take her for a walk every day and that got the whole family out walking.

”

We've relaunched buddy dogs to make sure that everyone gets the same dedicated level of support across the UK that you'd expect from Guide Dogs, and also to ensure we're using more of our dogs than ever to help those with a vision impairment and their families. Buddy dogs are dogs that we breed that aren't suited to being guide dogs. We give them a career change so they can continue to support someone with sight loss.

Our newly redesigned service makes sure that families have all the information they need to decide whether the service is right for them. We invite families to attend several training sessions (which have moved online for the time being due to Covid-19) and an in-person experience day.

These sessions give families the chance to meet and speak to other families with the same experiences, and to find out what a buddy dog is and isn't, what the benefits of having a buddy

dog can be, and all they need to know about dog ownership - from behaviour to health. We've had lots of lovely feedback on these training sessions and know that they've helped people make informed decisions on whether or not a buddy dog is right for their family.

A dedicated team of Canine Assisted Partnership Specialists (CAPS) provide the training and match families to their perfect dog.



By having an in-depth knowledge of the family's requirements, CAPS can identify the dog which will best fit into their lives.

Our CAPS will provide ongoing support to our buddy dog families throughout the life of the partnership. Through these conversations we can make sure both dog and family are enjoying the partnership and making the most of its benefits, as well as preventing any issues from arising and providing expert advice if a problem develops.

Help us to spread the word about this life-changing service: if you know a child or young person who you think could benefit from a buddy dog, please ask them and their family to get in touch with us. They can either search for 'buddy dogs' at [guidedogs.org.uk](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk) or call 0800 781 1444.

- Read the heart-warming story of Jago and his buddy dog, Sam, over the page.

Jago's story

When Guide Dogs reopened its buddy dog service for children earlier this year, Suzanne thought a dog might help her 10-year-old son, Jago, who has anxiety linked to his vision impairment. When yellow Labrador Sam joined their family in June, he instantly became Jago's best friend, giving security and companionship that has completely transformed their lives.



Suzanne explained: "Jago was five when I started to wonder if there was a problem with his sight. He'd always struggled to see in dim light, and I assumed that was normal. But in winter, when the days got shorter, I noticed he would stand still when he got out of the car after school, or run his hands along the car or house to the front door. He also began to panic if he couldn't see me, unless I was standing under a bright streetlamp.

"In 2016, after a series of eye tests, Jago was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa (RP). It was a complete shock. There was no support in place for us and I've worried about him every day since.

"When he asked me what the doctors said, I knew I had to tell him the truth. I told him that something wasn't working in his eyes. Jago doesn't know what other people can see, so he doesn't know to tell me when he can't see something. In fact, he's never wanted to talk about his vision impairment, to me or anyone.

“

When we brought Sam home the difference in Jago was instant.

”

"As Jago has got older his eyesight has got worse and so has his anxiety. We got to the stage where he didn't want to leave the house. He felt unsafe whenever we went out and became really nervous and withdrawn. He wouldn't talk to friends or even his grandparents.

"I first heard about buddy dogs from Guide Dogs when I searched Google after Jago's diagnosis. When we brought Sam home the difference in Jago was instant. I was worried that I was expecting a dog to change everything, but I can truly say that he has. Until we got Sam, everything connected to Jago's eye condition felt negative, but Sam has been a huge positive. Jago is so proud of him.



"For the first time in years, Jago is now able to talk about his sight, through talking about how his buddy dog helps him. He used to always say how he felt unlucky that he couldn't see or that I was an unlucky mum. Now he says he's the luckiest boy in the world, because Sam is his dog, given to him because of his vision impairment.

"Jago is connecting with his friends again and has had his first proper conversations with his grandparents. For the first time, we're now able to go out without a battle. Jago knows that Sam wants to go for a walk, and he wants Sam to be happy. Sam is so calm, gentle and well-behaved that we can be confident to take him anywhere with us.



“

Things are really looking up and I'm hopeful about the future. For me, Sam has lifted a huge weight off my shoulders.

”

"Jago has always been particularly anxious at bedtime. He hates the dark at night and sleeping in his own bed. Bedtimes were always late and stressful. Now, Sam sleeps in Jago's room, on his bed. They share a pillow! Knowing that Jago feels calm and safe with Sam beside him is a huge relief.

"Things are really looking up and I'm hopeful about the future. For me, Sam has lifted a huge weight off my shoulders. I've had huge amounts of worry, but now I know Jago is happy and feels safe with Sam beside him."

Your Guiding Star can truly light up someone's life

Dedicate a star this Christmas

Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, it's uncertain what Christmas will look like and what plans will be possible this year. However, one thing that remains the same is that this Christmas, like any other, is a time to remember those we love who are no longer with us.

With this in mind, we'd like to invite you to take part in this year's Guiding Stars appeal by dedicating a star to commemorate someone special. This year you can download the star via guidedogs.org.uk/guidingstars or request a pack by calling 0800 953 0113.

Once you have written your dedication on your star, you can either add this to our beautiful online dedication page by visiting the link above or post the star to Guide Dogs to be displayed at our central office.

Last year we received more than 2,000 beautiful Guiding Stars and, thanks to the kind donations that people chose to include with them, were able to name a guide dog puppy who will one day be a 'Guiding Star' to someone with sight loss, helping them live their life to the full.

This can be a wonderful way to remember a beloved person, pet or guide dog at this special time of year.

To find out more,
call
0800 953 0113
or visit
**[guidedogs.org.uk/
guidingstars](https://guidedogs.org.uk/guidingstars)**



Kate rises like a Phoenix thanks to her guide dog

Kate Bosley was matched with her guide dog, Phoenix, in 2016 after losing some of her sight in a serious cycling accident while on holiday abroad. Kate is married with four grown-up children, and Phoenix was named by The Swindon Phoenix Rotary Club through our Name a Puppy scheme.

Kate, from Kent, said: "It was at a rehabilitation unit back in Britain that we realised I had eyesight problems. I was found to have a large blind spot caused by my head injury. I had to move around slowly in fear of walking into things and I relied on friends and family to get around.

"I realised I needed help. I went to a meeting about sight loss where Guide Dogs had a stall. I didn't think my sight was bad enough for a guide dog but the staff encouraged me to apply. A year later I was introduced to Phoenix, and what a difference she's made to my life! I'm so happy to be working with her.

"Before Phoenix I was scared of walking into things. I never think that now, I feel safer with her and I can walk at normal pace. I'm physically very fit and Phoenix has made me enjoy walking again.

"I also volunteer. I was a successful CEO of a hospice and used to working long hours. After my accident, I found not being able to work very difficult, so I enjoy volunteering as it keeps me busy and I can use my skills again.

- **Stop press:** Kate has won a Local Volunteering Award in the Lead-by-example category (see pages 14-15).

“

My family also feel secure knowing I'm safe. I'm never alone now. People interact with me and I enjoy telling them what a star Phoenix is. In so many ways she has made such a difference to me and my family and we love her and what she has done for us.

”



To find out more about naming a guide dog puppy, visit guidedogs.org.uk/nameapuppy.

A Day in the Life Of...

Hannah Laywood, Sustainability and Energy Manager



Hannah Laywood started at Guide Dogs in 2009 as a Support Worker, but her passion for sustainability saw her find her way into a role where she could really make a difference to the charity's impact on the environment. Now Sustainability and Energy Manager, Hannah's initiatives are helping Guide Dogs not only to dramatically reduce its carbon footprint, but also save thousands of pounds which can be used to change the lives of people with sight loss.

Hannah's so determined that, during the six years she's been in post, she's used distance learning to complete a Masters degree in Carbon and Energy Management at Heriot-Watt University. All while still working full-time.

Hannah said: "I've always been someone who's passionate about sustainability. I think it's important not only to preserve what we have, but also try to reverse some of the damage we've caused. It's a beautiful world, and we have to save it for future generations."

"Guide Dogs is a large charity in terms of staff numbers and the sites we occupy, and my role was created because we wanted to take responsibility for managing our environmental impact and ensure we're complying with new environmental laws and regulations brought in for businesses and organisations. For example, every four years we have to report how much energy we're using to the Environment Agency. There's also the Government's legislation for the UK to be carbon neutral by 2050.

"One of the first things I did was look at the amount of energy used at our six biggest sites – the National Breeding Centre, Central Office and the Regional Hubs in Forfar, Atherton, Leamington and Redbridge. We've reduced electricity usage by at least 30 percent at each site, which is great – and we're always looking at ways to bring it down further."

"Another success has been reducing the amount of printer paper we consume as a charity. In 2017, we challenged staff to use less and by 2019, we'd printed 19 percent fewer sheets – that's more than half a million pieces of paper, equivalent to 66 trees!

"Now our staff have risen to the challenge, we'd love our service users, volunteers and supporters to help too, by doing things like signing up to receive Forward by email instead of getting a printed version."

"As a charity, we're keen to demonstrate that we care not only for the people we support with our services but also for the wider world, too."

Forward is printed on Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified paper, and the bag containing the standard print version is biodegradable under landfill conditions.

Thank you to our supporters



Maria Novell

Maria Novell

Director of Fundraising

Dear supporters,

I've been so heartened by your incredible tenacity when it comes to raising and donating money for our charity in 2020, despite how Covid-19 might have affected you personally. This year has presented the biggest challenge to delivering our services and to fundraising we've ever known.

I want to thank each and every one of you who's decided to help us change the lives of people with sight loss. I do hope you and your loved ones are safe and well and I want to take this opportunity to wish you a merry Christmas, and send my very best wishes for a happy new year.



Ian West, the intrepid Guide Dogs fundraiser who collected more than **£7,000** in 2018 by walking around the entire coast of Britain, set himself another challenge over the summer. This time Ian, from Nottingham, walked for three days - a 72-hour challenge made up of 66 hours of walking and a few short breaks, raising more than **£1,300**.



Two nine-year-old members of 1st Cawdor Brownie Pack in the north of Scotland, **Rhona McLaren** and **Caitlin Smith**, raised **£225** and **£146.50** respectively. The pair chose Guide Dogs for their Fundraiser Badge after hearing all about our charity's work from puppy walkers Margaret Woodward and Anne Simpson. The girls collected donations by baking, doing chores and taking on a cycling challenge during lockdown.

What began four years ago as a clear out to raise money for Guide Dogs has turned into eight named guide dog puppies for puppy walker **Nicky Frewin** and her family in Berkshire. Nicky hoped to raise £250 at the time, but over the years she's been joined by puppy walker friends who've now collected **£21,300!**



Katrina O'Halloran from Doncaster organised a Grand Prix-themed fundraiser to celebrate what would have been the British F1 race's original date in July, raising **£90**. Katrina invited friends for socially-distanced coffee and cakes in her garden – with her garage cleared in case of rain. The event was split into two small groups to keep everyone safe, with Lap 1 in the morning and Lap 2 in the afternoon, and plenty of washing up and disinfecting in between.



Sue Helyar, from Northampton, asked for donations to Guide Dogs instead of presents when she celebrated her 70th birthday in September, raising **£141.50**. We hope you had a lovely birthday, Sue!



Despite lockdown, **Brian Doherty** organised his fifth annual 'The Doc's Big Walk' at the end of August in aid of Guide Dogs Northern Ireland. There was a limit of 30 socially-distanced participants and a track and trace system in place at the event, from Cushendall to Ballycastle. The walk raised more than **£1,300**, and took the five-year total to more than **£20,000**.

Thank you to our supporters



Cardiff guide dog owner **Sian Healey** set herself a lockdown challenge to create pieces of artwork to sell in aid of Guide Dogs Cymru, raising more than **£300**. Sian said: "Even when I was unwell with suspected Covid-19, I sketched pencil drawings in bed. Entitled 'Artist's C-19 Recovery Room', one of my pieces represents how my garden turned into my private recovery ward, with my furry nurses - guide dog Uri and retired dog Arnie."

This time last year the **East Berkshire Fundraising Group** were busy planning the "Paws for Thought" Carol Service at Eton College Chapel. The programme was packed with well-known carols, performances, readings from volunteers and celebrities and was hosted by Aled Jones, who also performed a breath-taking rendition of "Walking in the Air". The event was an outstanding success, with 500 guests and celebrities, raising a fantastic **£22,710**.



Six-year-old **Verity Carruthers** from Wrexham wants to be a guide dog trainer when she grows up, and chose Guide Dogs as her school project during lockdown. Guide dog owners, fundraisers and trainers all came forward to share their stories. Verity's father John has a guide dog called Gryffin, and Verity is spending some of her pocket money on sponsoring guide dog puppy Rosie.



Cardiff fundraising group launched a Great Stair Challenge over the summer. Members walked or ran up their stairs at home a total of 3,781 times until they reached the height of Mount Everest - 29,029 feet. They set up an online fundraising page and challenged other fundraising groups to race them to the summit, raising a total of **£50**.

Meet Nell,

the star of our new advert



If you've been watching television or using social media over the last few months you may have noticed our heart-warming new advert, 'Nell's First Day'.

Our thought-provoking ad features a little girl with sight loss called Nell, moving down the corridor of an empty primary school ahead of her very first day. We see Nell learning to find her way to her classroom, where she's greeted by her Guide Dogs habilitation specialist, Branwen. Branwen has been helping get Nell ready for the start of the school year and, in uplifting final scenes, we see Nell on her first day, happy and confident amongst her friends.

The advert aims to raise awareness of the challenges vision-impaired children face in reaching key milestones in their lives. Released to coincide with back-to-

school time, which for any child and their parents is a huge moment, the advert showcases the invaluable support Guide Dogs offers children who are blind or partially sighted and a glimpse of the specialist advice and services we provide.

Emma Foulds, Guide Dogs' Director of Marketing and Strategy, said:

“

We hope this campaign will help us raise awareness of the life-changing work Guide Dogs does with blind and partially sighted children. Everyone knows us for our iconic dogs, but early intervention can help a child with sight loss reach their full potential, which is any parent's greatest hope.

”

Nell's First Day also builds on our well-received advert in which guide dog owner Alex stands beside a football pitch while his young daughter plays for her local team, narrating as she plays. Both commercials support our By My Side strategy to take us to 2023, helping people with sight loss know about the breadth of services we offer, and ensuring that the wider public know about us, understand and love our work and want to help us by volunteering or donating.

Go to [guidedogs.org.uk](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk) and search for 'Nell' to read the five-year-old's story, and for some bonus video material complementing the advert. Actor Sophie Thompson met Nell and her mum, Rachel, to discuss how Guide Dogs has helped them, especially going back to school in a Covid-19 environment.

Introducing our companion dog service



We all recognise what a difference dogs can make to our lives, even if they aren't a guide or another kind of assistance dog. Dogs become much-loved friends, family members and confidants.

Numerous studies have shown the positive impact dogs have on our physical and mental health, benefits we want to provide to a new group of people with sight loss. These are people for whom a guide dog may not be quite right, but who would gain from having a dog in other ways.

Our new companion dog service enables adults with a vision impairment (and their families) to enjoy the love and friendship of a well-behaved dog. We know that our companion dogs can build confidence and give people a reason to get up

in the morning, combating isolation and improving health and wellbeing.

While companion dogs will provide a range of social benefits, it's important to recognise that they won't be expected to perform any guiding tasks and they won't have any public access rights. Companion dog owners will also be expected to take on financial responsibility for their dog.



As with our buddy dog service (more on pages 16–17), we won't be using dogs that would have become guide dogs. Instead, we'll be assessing dogs that would have been rehomed to see if they're suitable to live with an adult with sight loss. We understand that not every dog will be right for this service. However, we want as many of our dogs as possible to go on to make a difference in the life of someone with a vision impairment and their family.

We've designed our companion dog service with great care to make sure that we're doing the best we can for the people we support. Our Canine Assisted Partnership Specialists (CAPS) will be carefully selecting dogs they believe will be right for the service and matching them to fully assessed and trained service users.

Having a companion dog will have a number of benefits over having a pet dog. We'll assess both the potential owner and dog to make sure we have the right person matched with the right dog. By using the expertise we've built up in the guide dog matching process, we hope to give each companion dog partnership the best possible chance of success. Guide Dogs staff will also provide a well-rounded training package and long-term support for each new companion dog partnership.

We have designed every element of our new companion dog service with dog welfare at the forefront. Our dogs are our partners and we want each and every one of them to have a happy working life. Potential companion dog users will be assessed to make sure they, and their household, are able to meet all the dog's needs and give the right level of exercise and enrichment. We'll also provide training on dog care and give an overview of dog behaviour.

The focus of our training is that dogs need to be allowed to be dogs! Companion dogs will enjoy regular free runs, enrichment activities and positive training methods.

We hope to see our first companion dog partnerships towards the end of this year. We can't wait to get started! If you would like more information about any aspect of the companion dog service, please contact your local Community Team.



Congratulations to our new partnerships

New partnerships are listed by mobility team.
Each listing details owner, guide dog, town, breed,
puppy walker, brood bitch holder and boarder.
Warm congratulations to all our new qualifiers.



Coventry

Susan Chapman & Jana from Rushden GRxL Jackie Handley from Sowerby Bridge * Catherine Gray from Brackley. Mrs Anne Watson from Kenilworth. Mr & Mrs Claire & Ian Cobbold from Leamington Spa

Edinburgh

Anya Kettles & Walt from Perth LxGR Kathryn Schulze from Alva, James Paterson from Tillicoultry * Gillian Seager from Chipping Campden. Mrs Sharon Broer from Coventry. Mrs Nikki Henry from Carnoustie.

Nicola Milne & Odette from Carnoustie GRxL Sarah Meldrum from Dundee * Janet Klaar from Stourbridge. Miss Gayle Jackson from Forfar.

Exeter

Richard Bowman & Stratford from Okehampton GRxGSD Linda Appleton from Tewkesbury * Amanda Turner from Telford. Miss Jacqui Roe from Kenilworth.

Richard Burton & Dixy from Wells L Rebecca Bickford from Redruth, Ben and Jean Powlesland and Marshall from St. Austell * Patricia Dawson from Chipping Norton. Mrs Lana Taylor from Stratford-upon-Avon. Miss Lindsay Dudley from Cullompton.

Anthony Chivers & Amelia from Newton Abbot GR Angela Smith from Bristol, Anne Skinner from Wells * Paul Dodd from Ross-on-Wye.

Mark Regan & Merlin from Bristol GRxL Sylvia Waite from Exeter * Cindy McCreary from Kidlington. Mr & Mrs Mark & Samantha Edwards from Warwick. Richard & Marion Farmer from Exeter. Ms Camilla Barrow from Dawlish.

Rodney Wright & Theo from Bideford L Robert Taylor from Bath.

Glasgow

Colin Fisher & Woody from Dumfries GRxL Richard Brown from Girvan * Paul & Lyn Bushell from Daventry.

Aileen Johnston & Champ from Kirkintilloch GRxL Douglas Walker from Ardrossan * Sharon Bailey from Tamworth. Mrs Laura Kennedy from Brechin. Mr Ross Lyons from Glasgow.

Helen Sleith & Floss from Wishaw GRxL Ralph & Delia Dickson from Dunfermline * John Starkey from Malvern. Mr Paul Albrecht from Stratford-upon-Avon. Kirsty Sutherland from Laurencekirk. Mrs Joan Hill from Hamilton.

Colette Walker & Barley from Glasgow LxGR Sara Mitchell from North Berwick * Marie Court from Halesowen. Mrs Julie Trent from Leicester. Mr George Currie from Glasgow.

Robert Wallace & Connie from Cumnock GRxL Matthew Green from Bangor * Chris & Laura Higgins from Banbury. Mr & Mrs Pete & Louise Millard from Lutterworth. Mrs Ruth McKay from Forfar. Mr Andrew Ward from Hamilton.

Barbara Whiting & Zeldia from Hamilton LxGR Joyce Pirrie from Grangemouth * Lucy Cooper from Stratford-upon-Avon. Ms Wendy Medicott from Coventry. Mrs Lesley Wilson from Forfar.

Michelle Young & Hugo from Birmingham GSD * Linda Tindall from Coventry. Mr & Mrs S H Cox from Axminster. Miss Tracie Mallaghan from Hamilton.

Hull

Andrew Watts & Ugo from Drifffield LxGR Alison King from Morpeth * Jane Roberts from Wellesbourne. Miss Sarah Sheasby from Bromsgrove. 2. Mrs Kim Walker from Manchester.

Leeds

Douglas Lloyd & Albert from Pontefract LxGR Barbara Milhinch from Oldham * Elaine Aworth from Northampton. Mr & Mrs Paul and Kim Roberts from Leeds.

Terry Quinn & Spencer from Bradford GRxL John & Mags Smith from Rochdale * Howard Dorrell from Worcester. Mr Paul Crowe from Kenilworth. Mr Adam Broadbent from Leeds.

Simon Wheatcroft & Zuki from Doncaster GRxL John & Ruth Swanston from Tayport * Mrs Anne Watson from Kenilworth.

Liverpool

Pat Wade & Dixie from Altrincham GRxL Gill Bruce from Warrington * Amanda Bourne from Nuneaton. Miss Hollie Stott from Liverpool.

Manchester

Stephen Cooper & Paddy from Nelson GRxL Gillian Ruleman from Manchester * Christina Sibbald from Wantage. Mr Keith Binding from Banbury. Louise & Phil Gannon from Wigan.

Jade Nadine Puckering & Oliver from York GRxL Lynda Hamblet from Bolton, Lisa Davenport from Stockport * Howard Dorrell from Worcester. Mr Paul Crowe from Kenilworth. Mr & Mrs Elaine & Lee Eckersley from Westhoughton.

Kate Ramsden & Yorkie from Birmingham GRxL Pat Feinmann from Stockport * Jessica Macgregor from Warmington. Mr Michael Rudge from Solihull. Mr & Mrs John & Fiona Saunders from Manchester.

Shrewsbury

Donald Durnin & Holly from Wednesbury GRxL George & Margaret Dowse from Whitley Bay * Paul & Lyn Bushell from Daventry. Greg Eckersley from Leigh.

Claire Gaffey & Malcolm from Stoke-on-Trent GRxGR Susan Donnelly from Gateshead * Ingrid Moss from Warwick. Mr & Mrs Pete & Louise Millard from Lutterworth.

Mark Gaffey & Alfie from Stoke-on-Trent GRxL Rodney & Josie Wilson from Northallerton * Michael Drabble-Jones from Henley-in-Arden. Mr Paul Albrecht from Stratford-upon-Avon.

Denise Hopkins & Verity from Rowley Regis LxGR Margaret Tanner from Troon * Amber O'Brien from Warwick. Rev Craig Grocock from Leamington Spa.

Timothy Lee & Molly from Tamworth GRxL Susan Coxon from Nottingham * Michael Drabble-Jones from Henley-in-Arden. Mr Paul Albrecht from Stratford-upon-Avon. Mrs Jacky Ruston from Telford.

Ken Scott & Tigger from Stoke-on-Trent L Heather Lowe from Bolton * Griffith from Warwick. Mr & Mrs Lowe from Coventry. Miss Mary Caswell from Bolton.

Tina Squire & Pejay from Walsall LxGR Mike Greenwood & Dr Sarah Warburton from Burton on Trent * Helen Sergison from Dudley. Mr Geoff Whiteman from Coalville.

Ian Tonks & Danny from Rowley Regis L * Marion Vernal from Ledbury. Mrs Laura Cross from Shropshire. Mrs Jennifer Rutherford from Shrewsbury.

Michael Webster & Prince from Holywell GRxGSD Jean Ruff from Redcar * Mrs Catherine Egan from Worcester.

Southampton

Catherine Todd & Mark from Portsmouth LxGR Linda Vafidis from Bridgend * Margaret Elaine Roberts from Stratford-upon-Avon. Mrs Kelly Robinson from Southampton.



New partnerships

Breeding Stock Qualifiers

Allie * 27.08.20 * L * Bitch
* Mrs L A Chandler from
Gloucester. Mr B Hardy
from Canvey Island.

Arden * 03.07.20 * GR * Bitch
* Mrs S Northover from
Derby. Mr E Sadek from
Warwick. Mr & Mrs Greg &
Lee Butler from Banbury.

Baxter * 03.07.20 * GR *
Stud * Mrs D Parsons from
Wallingford. Mrs J Yarker
from Edinburgh. Mr Paul
Black from Lapworth.

Bernie * 06.04.20 * L *
Bitch * Mrs A Buxton from
Leicester. Miss M Pritchard
from Southampton.
Mrs Kim Roberts from
Stratford-upon-Avon.

Carlo * 04.08.20 * L *
Stud * Mrs L A Chandler
from Gloucester. Mrs K
Yarlett from Whitstable.

Chelsea * 27.08.20 * L *
Bitch * Mr & Mrs J Nixon
from Warwick. Mr R
Weston from Lifton.

Jean * 27.08.20 * GSD *
Bitch * Ms J Webb from
Wolverhampton. Mrs L Moore
from Plymouth. Mrs Carol
Evans from Kingswinford.

Kurtis * 27.08.20 * L * Stud
* Mr & Mrs M Downs from
Solihull. Mrs C&W Farge
from Billericay. Mrs Sally
Thomas from Worcester.

Lena * 13.08.20 * L *
Bitch * Mrs L Yates from
Northampton. Mrs L Hunt
from Stratford-upon-Avon.

Liesel * 04.08.20 * GR
* Bitch * Mrs L De Melo
from Loughborough. Ms H
Howe from Edinburgh. Mr
& Mrs Mark & Samantha
Edwards from Warwick.

Luka * 18.08.20 * L * Stud * Mrs
L Yates from Northampton.
Mrs K Tully from Plymouth.

Ollie * 03.07.20 * GR *
Stud * Mrs D Parsons from
Wallingford. Mrs J Dillon
from Kinross. Mr Paul
Black from Lapworth.

Patchy * 21.07.20 * L *
Bitch * Mr & Mrs C Higgins
from Banbury. Mrs A
Perepechay from Edinburgh.
Mr & Mrs Tom & Jane
Hargrave from Daventry.

Peggy * 21.07.20 * L * Bitch *
Ms E Emms from Stratford-
upon-Avon. Mr & Mrs J
Banks from Carnoustie.
Mr & Mrs Tom & Jane
Hargrave from Daventry.

Penny * 04.08.20 * GR
* Bitch * Mrs D Parsons
from Wallingford. Mrs E
Churchill from Leeds. Mr
Paul Black from Lapworth.

Riley * 03.07.20 * GRxGR
* Bitch * Mrs S Cox
from Marlow. Mrs S
Cox from Marlow.

Rose * 13.08.20 * L * Bitch
* Mrs L A Chandler from
Gloucester. Mrs K Oswald
from Hertford. Mrs S Butler
from Milton Keynes.

Sarah * 04.08.20 * GR *
Bitch * Mrs L De Melo from
Loughborough. Mrs D
Pattison from Prestonpans.
Mr & Mrs Mark & Samantha
Edwards from Warwick.

Sparky * 13.08.20 * L * Bitch *
Ms C Morgan from Stafford.

Voss * 21.07.20 * GSD * Stud *
Mrs C Pinks from Rugby. Mrs
J Black from Dunfermline.





A proud moment for Terry and Spencer

I wanted to share a moment when I was super proud of my new guide dog, Spencer, and myself. Spencer's my first guide dog, we qualified in September and we live with my partner, Dean, in West Yorkshire.

I was out in my local village and, not wanting to return to an empty house, I challenged myself to do something I haven't done on my own in almost two-and-a-half years since losing my sight. I decided to go to a nearby pub called the Malt Shovel to enjoy a nice cold beer! To me, it was a gargantuan feat.

I was so nervous, I called ahead to ask if they could meet me at the entrance. From

the member of staff I met at the door, to the customer who walked me out to make sure I was OK, everyone couldn't have been more helpful and accommodating. Their kindness was truly epic. I was so proud of Spencer, too, who just chilled under the table despite a dog at another table barking at him. He's my knight in shining armour.

It's easy to feel the world is full of hate and selfishness but, in reality, the majority of people are wonderful, kind-hearted and willing to help in any way they can.

Yours sincerely,

Terry Quinn and Spencer

Caption competition



Guide dog Olive's bitten off more than she can chew with this oversized rabbit toy in her mouth! Olive was with puppy walker and boarder, **Jean Endersby**, from Guiseley, West Yorkshire.



The last competition winner is **Ella Money**, from Mortimer near Reading, with the caption "You like sticks, I like sticks, I am sure we could be friends..."
Congratulations, Ella!

What would you caption this photo?

Send your suggestions to: Forward, Guide Dogs, Hillfields, Burghfield Common, Reading, RG7 3YG or email forward@guidedogs.org.uk with your name, address and a daytime phone number. The winner gets a £10 Marks and Spencer voucher.

Competition rules This competition is open to anyone resident in the UK, except employees of the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, their families and anyone connected with the competition. No purchase necessary. Proof of posting cannot be accepted as proof of delivery. No responsibility can be accepted for entries delayed, damaged or mislaid or wrongly delivered. Illegible entries will be disqualified. Only one original entry is allowed per envelope. The winners will be notified by either post or telephone and the results will be published in the next issue of the magazine. The winners must agree to the publication of their names, photographs and any publicity, if requested. In all matters concerning the competition the Editor's decision is final. No correspondence can be entered into. Entry implies acceptance of the rules. **The closing date for the competition is 31 January 2021.**

Extraordinary corporate partnerships

Corporate partnerships are incredibly important to Guide Dogs. Each one is unique and gives mutual value and impact. A shared focus for many of our partners is helping Guide Dogs transform lives through our guide dog service. Here's how some of our partners are helping us make a difference...

Citi

We're Citi's London Charity Partner and throughout lockdown, Citi employees took part in virtual fundraising. Our 2020/21 ambition is to raise **£350k** to match **178** people with sight loss to guide dogs and volunteer sighted guides in London. Citi employees also named a guide dog puppy, Theia, who's being cared for by one of two Citi employees who are also puppy walkers.

People's Postcode Lottery

The wonderful players of People's Postcode Lottery are funding the lifetime of an entire litter of nine guide dog puppies. Now nearly two-years-old, the puppies are all well underway in their formal guide dog training, learning to be life-changing guides for nine people living with sight loss.

Royal Canin

Royal Canin is a vital partner and supplier of dog food, providing tailored nutrition for all our guide dogs' life stages. Our guide dog owners benefit from a specialised service for ordering food supplies easily and conveniently.

Royal Canin's also funding the lifetime of guide dog puppy Robin. Nearly a year old, Robin is being cared for by a puppy walker, learning basic skills to set him on the road to becoming a life-changing guide.

Pets at Home

We're a Pets at Home VIP Loyalty Scheme charity partner. Whenever you shop using your VIP card and choose Guide Dogs as your charity, you're helping to raise 'lifelines'. With 'lifelines', we can buy vital training equipment and toys for our guide dogs in training and helpful 'starter packs' for families who benefit from a buddy dog.

A heartfelt thanks to all our corporate partners. If you'd like to find out more or get your company involved, visit [guidedogs.org.uk](https://www.guidedogs.org.uk).





smile.amazon.co.uk

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