

Paw Prints Newsletter Spring 2015 – The official newsletter of Guide Dogs SA.

Message from the Chief Executive Officer.

Thank you for the faith you have put in Guide Dogs once again.

The team here at Guide Dogs SA/NT begins each workday holding one key purpose close to their hearts - to use their expertise with dogs and in sensory service provision, to enhance the quality of life of people living with disability.

The most gratifying element of leading this wonderful organisation is that we truly deliver on this purpose in so many ways. Lives are transformed and enriched by our talented, dedicated team and our magnificent dogs. Every day, we witness tangible evidence of our achievements.

I know that delivering these amazing results would not be possible without your support so, thank you. Whether you support Guide Dogs through your donations or your time, or both, I am truly grateful, and I know the people who benefit from your support are, too.

The trust you have placed in Guide Dogs, voting us Australia's Most Trusted Charity for the third year in a row, is a great honour - recognition that we do not take lightly.

It makes us even more determined to succeed in our work to change lives.

In this issue of Paw Prints, I am pleased to update you on progress stories for just a few of our clients. You will all remember little Ryder from the recent appeal, and the

challenges he and his family faced, living with severe autism. I am delighted to share with you that Ryder has

now been matched with beautiful Autism Assistance Dog, Griffin. “No matter where we go, with Griffin by his side, Ryder is safe and I feel like a different person,” says Ryder’s mum, Rebecca.

The story of Joanne Chua on page 10 is a clear example of how one woman’s determination, combined with a highly-trained Guide Dog, can achieve amazing outcomes.

Joanne is a truly inspiring young woman who refuses to let her vision impairment stop her from leading a full and exciting life. When you read her story, I am sure you will be inspired, as I am, to empower many more young people like Joanne to fulfill their dreams.

On page three you will read all about the Lucas family who are helping puppy-in-training, Ike, in his journey to become a Guide Dog or Autism Assistance Dog as his Puppy Raiser. With the arrival of a new litter, we are again in urgent need of Puppy Raisers and hope that the inspirational story of the Lucas family, will lead you to consider becoming a Puppy Raiser as well.

Thank you so much for your faith and support. Without you, we couldn’t provide safety, independence and inclusion to people living with disability. I hope you enjoy reading these inspirational stories about the lives you are helping to change.

Kate Thiele
CEO, Guide Dogs SA/NT

Guide Dogs urgently seeking Puppy Raisers.

Guiding a puppy to a bright future.

The Lucas family of Mount Barker are helping little Guide Dog puppy, Ike, on his big journey ahead by taking on the very important role of Puppy Raiser.

Providing a home to Ike for the first 12 months of his life, teaching basic skills and socialising him, will help him to change lives by one day becoming a Guide Dog, Autism Assistance Dog or Pets As Therapy Dog.

With their boys now 12 and 14 years old, Natesha Lucas explained that the family was looking for a way to give back to the community and demonstrate to their children the benefits of doing something without expecting a return. "We love dogs and this seemed ideal," Natesha said. They already have a pet Labrador, Dash, and running their own business too, means Natesha has time to devote to socialising Ike.

Natesha says that Ike brings a big smile to everyone who sees them out walking. He is already well-known in the community, being a regular at the local fruit and veg store and supermarket. He even went along to a local restaurant recently, proving how the community has embraced the 'access all areas' rule for Guide Dogs.

Ike is the Lucas's first Guide Dog puppy-in-training and the family is enjoying the experience, knowing what an important difference Ike will one day make to a person living with disability.

“We went to the Pups in the Park event earlier this year and heard from Neil about the difference that Buddy had made in his life,” Natesha said. “It was clearly a loving relationship and from that moment on I knew we had made the right decision.”

Guide Dogs is urgently seeking more people to welcome puppies into their hearts and homes for approximately 12 months, with another litter soon to leave the Puppy Development Centre.

While the role of Puppy raiser is voluntary, all food and veterinary expenses are covered thanks to the generous support of the SA community.

Chief Executive, Kate Thiele, said “It’s vital that our puppies get the right guidance and supervision right from the very start. Our volunteer Puppy Raisers do a fantastic job in taking them out and about – it’s fun to do as well! We can’t do this without the generous help from people like you.

Please consider a donation today to help meet the necessary expenses that come with raising a puppy. Or, if you would like to take on this amazing role, please contact us on 8203 8375 or at puppies@guidedogs.org.au.

Become a Puppy Raiser today. Call 8203 7375 or email puppies@guidedogs.org.au

Winners are grinners!

Age is no barrier to luck!

When 93-year-old Joyce from Cheltenham received the call from Guide Dogs Lottery Centre, telling her of her good fortune as second prize winner, she couldn't believe her luck!

Winner of Charles Sturt Council's Citizen of the Year award in 2014, Joyce is no stranger to supporting charities and other organisations as a donor and volunteer. As secretary of a local club, Joyce is still very active in her community. "As well as volunteering my time, I still tend my own garden and clean my own home," Joyce explained. "It is important to keep active and to keep myself busy; I do a lot of crosswords to keep my mind active, too."

Joyce began supporting Guide Dogs many years ago because of her love of dogs. "Labradors are a lovely dog," said Joyce.

"I used to have a Golden Retriever, Sandy, who would sit behind the steering wheel in the car when no one was looking – what a laugh! Everyone in the neighbourhood knew us when we went out for our walks. He was just lovely."

Living in her home since the 1960s, Joyce welcomed Guide Dogs staff members, Hannah and Rebekah, in to be presented with her cheque of \$5,000. "I couldn't believe it when I received the call. I have been buying lottery tickets from Guide Dogs for many years and I was so pleased to be a winner this time! After more than 45 years, my carpet is still in good condition but a little threadbare in places so, for my safety, it needs to be replaced," explained Joyce.

“The pleasure I am going to get from having the new carpet has been made possible by this win and it’s just lovely.”

“After I received the call to tell me about the win, I said to my son, I can’t wait for you to come to tea, I’ve got great news!”

While Joyce is enjoying her new carpet, Territorian, George from Nightcliff NT, was receiving some news of his own.

A Puppy Sponsor since 2011 and a Lottery donor since last year, George was happy enough to know he was supporting Guide Dogs NT, but didn’t think much about actually winning. So-much-so that he jokingly told his two sons that he would ‘give them the winnings’ if he ever won.

Lucky for them, George received a phone call to announce he had won second prize in the most recent lottery this year. His sons are understandably excited to now be negotiating the terms with their generous Dad!

For your chance to win, buy your ticket now! Call (08) 8448 5664 or go to guidedogs.org.au/lottery

Events

Thank you for supPAWting our events!

We don't want to bark about it, but our flagship events, Pups in the Park, International Guide Dog Day Parade and Annual Quiz night have been overwhelming successes thanks to you.

Mother Nature turned it on for **Pups in the Park** just after Easter when more than 1,000 dog lovers from all over Adelaide took to Wigley Reserve in Glenelg with their pooches.

As well as strutting their stuff for the 'best dressed' and 'most like my owner', competitions there was a huge crowd for the Guide Dogs trainer tips which sent everyone home brimming with enthusiasm for re-training and correcting behaviours.

Even more well attended was the heartfelt story from long-time supporter and client, Neil Cundy, about how Guide Dog Buddy has changed his life (see more of Neil and Buddy online at www.guidedogs.org.au/client-stories-blog). Neil and Buddy were the icing on the cake for the Lucas Family, reaffirming their recent decision to become Puppy Raisers (see their story on page 3).

The best of the best', with 'best dog training tips' from our 'best trainers', the 'best merchandise' and the 'best doggy services stalls' and, best of all, people out and about enjoying the day with their furry friends, connecting with Guide Dogs.

We were also all loud and proud for the **International Guide Dog Day Paws Parade** through Adelaide on April 29 led by our Patron, The Governor of South Australia, The Hon Hieu Van Le, and Mrs Le.

As well as celebrating the wonderful work that Guide Dogs and Autism Assistance Dogs provide to the community, the day had an emphasis on encouraging people to ensure they 'take the lead'.

'Taking the lead' includes ensuring full access to shops, cafes, buses, or taxis, ensuring pet dogs are on the lead when near working Guide Dogs to guard against distraction or even harm, and ensuring you don't pat or call out to Guide Dogs when you see them out and about – even though they are so adorable!

At the **Annual Quiz Night** on Friday June 26, there were plenty of brainiacs putting their general knowledge to the test at yet another sell out event. More than 320 people got into the spirit of the night with one quiz-goer even dressing in an amazing puppy dress to look the part!

Each event was such a success that we will of course be doing it all again next year! Keep an eye out for the new 2016 Guide Dogs Calendar, available soon, so you can save the dates to support people living with disability.

We're excited about Guide Dogs' next event, Dining in the Dark!

Visit guidedogs.org.au/dininginthedark or call 8203 8355 to register today!

Your support has made the impossible, possible.

Now, every day brings a new adventure for Ryder and his family.

When we last shared the story of three-and-a-half year old Ryder, his mum Rebecca was in despair. Diagnosed with autism at the age of two, Ryder's day-to-day behaviour was unpredictable and Rebecca constantly feared for his safety. A quick trip to the supermarket or a walk to the park was simply impossible. Ryder's younger brother, Levi, had to miss out on many outings and experiences, too. "My heart aches for him," Rebecca said.

Then Rebecca found Guide Dogs. Through our Autism Assistance Dog program, Rebecca saw a glimmer of hope in the arrival of beautiful Griffin. She hoped and prayed that the match would be possible.

We are delighted to reveal that with a lot of hard work and determination from Guide Dog Instructor, Natalie, and Rebecca, Ryder was successfully matched with Autism Assistance Dog, Griffin – changing the lives of this young family forever.

"I simply can't thank Guide Dogs' supporters enough. The change in our lives is incredible. No matter where we go, with Griffin by his side, Ryder is safe and I feel like a different person," said Rebecca.

"Trying to load Ryder and Levi safely into the car at childcare pick up was a nightmare.

I felt exhausted every time. Now Ryder stands calmly and safely on the footpath with Griffin while I load Levi into the car, then Ryder. The difference is extraordinary.

“Every day brings big achievements and new adventures. I get excited about leaving the house! Recently on a shopping trip I saw another huge development from Ryder, who was hugging and patting Griffin happily as we walked around the shops. He even waited happily in line at the checkout for the first time!

“A lady stopped and remarked on how happy Ryder and Griffin were. I explained that the match was only two months ago and what a difference it had made in our lives. She returned five minutes later and gave me a bunch of flowers and told me I was doing a great job. I was so touched. I think it was the most meaningful bunch of flowers I have ever received.

“I really do feel like a different person. I’m not stressed about leaving the house or what might happen to Ryder if I take my eyes off him for a second. I’m so keen to try new things with him every time we go out. I used to love going to the library but had to give up, as Ryder could not cope with the space. We recently took a quick walk in and around with no problems, so next week I will try again!”

Thanks to you, Ryder is now on a new path to safety and happiness - and his family is looking forward to a positive future.

Do you want to make this a reality for another family who has a child living with autism? Call 8115 6060, or to donate online, at guidedogs.org.au/donate and help change lives today.

To see first-hand, the difference Griffin has made to Ryder and his family, go to guidedogs.org.au/client-stories-blog to watch a video of Rebecca and Ryder picking Levi up from daycare.

Changing lives

Think back to when you left school. Perhaps you moved on to University, or straight into the workforce. When you left home, did you cook for yourself, clean your own home and do your own shopping?

Imagine, if you can, how challenging this transition would have been if you were blind or vision impaired.

Enter the Guide Dogs Transition Group. The group was developed in 2012 to provide support during this time of transition, to 15-25 year olds who are living with vision impairment. It aims to provide a social, fun and supportive environment while also being educational and informative.

Guide Dogs were thrilled to recently be awarded a Messenger Community Grant for \$1,000 to purchase cooking equipment and adaptive technology to assist in teaching this young group all about the kitchen, in a recent cooking class. Supported by Occupational Therapists (OT) during the class, the group learned techniques led by touch and sound, such as how to cut vegetables safely and how to measure.

They prepared and cooked several recipes using a mixture of equipment including talking scales, tactile marked measuring jugs and barcode readers. Food handling safety and table setting techniques were also on the menu, teaching techniques specific to individual's vision requirements.

18-year-old Lauren, who was featured in the last issue of Paw Prints, was excited about learning how to cook for herself and for guests when she moves out of home. You can see more of Lauren and the rest of the class when they were captured by Channel Ten's cameras, at

tenplay.com.au/news/adelaide/2015/7/10/cooking-class-for-vision-impaired

For more information about the Transition Group, please call Your Support Line on 1800 757 738.

Are you having trouble hearing?

We need you!

Is your hearing aid sitting in the bottom drawer? Do you have difficulty hearing in a noisy environment? Are you always asking 'I beg your pardon?' Then we need you!

One in six Australians has a hearing impairment and, with the ageing population, by 2050, this is expected to increase to an alarming one in four!

Hearing Services at Guide Dogs are collaborating on a joint research project with the Flinders University Audiology Department. The project aims to evaluate whether a hearing assessment and attendance at an information session, positively influences participants' actions, enabling them to make a more informed choice about their hearing, therefore resulting in improved outcomes.

Participation in the project is free and open to all adults who suspect they have some degree of hearing loss, regardless of whether they already use hearing aids or have had a recent hearing assessment.

For more information, or to register your interest, please contact the Hearing Services team on 1800 757 738 or hearing@guidedogs.org.au today.

What's on at Guide Dogs?

Fonefund

Did you know that your workplace and personal mobile phones can help Guide Dogs SA/NT? Each time you upgrade to a new mobile phone contact FoneFund and they will collect and recycle your old handsets.

Money raised will directly support Guide Dogs' programs and services. To find out more please contact Jena on (08) 8203 8312.

A Christmas gift with a difference

With Christmas just around the corner (yes, really!), you may already be thinking about the pawfect gift.

Give a gift from the heart and support Guide Dogs by making your purchase from a brand new range of Christmas Products.

The new the calendar, entitled 'Harnessing Freedom', features 12 months of adorable pups and dogs that will melt your heart! There is something for everyone with a brand new range of gifts, and Christmas cards and Christmas wrap are the pawfect accompaniment to your gift!

It's too early to let the dog-out-of-the-bag about the delightful stocking-stuffers we have in store for you but keep your eyes open for the announcement of our better-than-ever online shop and get ready to hear squeals of delight on Christmas day!

Purchase online from October at guidedogs.org.au/shop or by calling 8115 6060.

Jog 4 a dog

At the City to Bay on 20 September.

Call Nicola on 8203 8343 to enter your team today.

Are you ready for dinner with a real difference?

Get your friends together and take part in a FUNdraising event with real bite.

You and your friends can enjoy a night together full of fun and food whilst raising money to assist South Aussies with a vision impairment.

It's a recipe for a great event. Now we've whet your appetite, jump onto guidedogs.org.au/dininginthedark to register being part of this unique experience and we will send you more info to get your teeth into. Now, that's food for thought!

Meet an extraordinary young lady – Joanne Chua

“Nothing is going to hold me back.”

Joanne Chua has corneal failure and congenital blindness, made worse by complete retinal detachment following a sporting injury two years ago. Her limited vision enables her to see only daylight, shadows and some colours.

Despite this, Joanne is one in a million. The Guide Dogs team is continually blown away by her incredible energy, ambition and generosity – and we are so honoured to be able to work with her to help achieve her dreams.

Joanne moved to Australia from Malaysia in 2006, on her own, to pursue her education. She completed a double psychology and business degree, while continuing to pursue her many other passions in life.

Photography, university study, travel, sport, volunteering and an unwavering passion for high-risk adventure experiences – you name it, Joanne has either done it or has it on her bucket list! Her list of achievements is even more impressive when you consider that she does all of this with practically no vision.

By her side since 2005 has been a Guide Dog; first Yasmine and now the beautiful Genie. Despite her courage and ambition, Joanne agrees that having her Guide Dog by her side makes life even more enjoyable. “A Guide Dog is like an extension of me and my busy life,” she said.

“Yasmine - and now Genie – mean so much to me. I can go anywhere, anytime with their help,” – just another example of the way Joanne approaches life. She believes that nothing should stop her experiencing life to the fullest.

“The greater the risk, the more exciting I find an experience,” said Joanne. “I have to be careful so as not to create any further damage to my eyes but, I want to learn to ski, go skydiving and shark cage diving. I am already heavily involved in the visual arts community in Adelaide and aim to hold a photographic exhibition. Challenging perceptions of what a person with vision impairment can achieve is one of the main drivers in my life.”

“I know that regular supporters of Guide Dogs have helped me to get where I am today. I really want these people to know that their donations mean something special. I love that I am able to get out and really embrace life and not hide away, afraid and alone.”

We are delighted to report that Joanne’s latest adventure has taken her all the way to India as a volunteer on a social change project, Kanthari, arranged by Braille without Borders. After a comprehensive application process Joanne was chosen as one of 20 from 600 applicants. The project, called Blind Leading the Blind, centres on how blind people can influence other blind people so they are not seen as “a charity case”.

Our work with Joanne over the years has helped her achieve many of her dreams, as well as make plans for more. This is the work that embodies our purpose - to use our expertise with dogs and in sensory service provision, to enhance the quality of life of people living with disability.

But there are still so many more people who need help; people who, without your generosity, may never have the opportunity to pursue their dreams of adventure like Joanne has been fortunate enough to do.

Your support means Guide Dogs can empower and enrich the lives of people just like Joanne – people who with support can tackle their hopes and dreams one at a time. Whether it is feeling safe and independent when travelling on public transport, taking a plane flight for a holiday or embarking on a course of study, each and every one of our clients has a dream. With your help, Guide Dogs has the experience and expertise to make these dreams reality.

Please consider a donation to the Guide Dog Program today. Your contribution will help a young person turn their dreams into reality.

Call 8115 6060 today to donate or visit guidedogs.org.au/donate

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