



## **RECALL FOR TRAINING PHASE DESCRIPTIONS**



**Where your dog goes next.....**

## Introduction – Training Phases

In an effort to provide raisers and leaders with more knowledge about what the dogs-in-training do after they return to one of our campuses we will provide weekly reports to each puppy raising club. These reports will tell the training phase of each dog. There are ten phases of training.

Attached are descriptions of activities included in each phase. By tracking the dog that you raised by his phase number and by then referring to the matching phase narrative, you can better understand our training process and your individual dog's role in it.

There is no clear defining line between each phase as there is in the case of a grade schooler who "graduates" from grade two to grade three. Guide Dog training is a seamless process in which a dog progresses at its own pace, slowly transitioning from one phase to the other. The work at each phase level builds upon the skills learned in previous ones.

Each phase is generally two to three weeks in lengths. Some dogs may advance through phases more quickly than others, but speed may not be any indicator of likelihood of eventual graduation. It is also true that a dog that seems to spend too much time in a phase may be only working on perfecting a single task before moving forward. Raisers, please do not feel disappointed if progress seems slow. Likewise, do not become too eager if progress seems quick.

Raisers should also be cautioned against plotting out on a calendar an anticipated graduation date. Dogs are usually in training for four to five months, but some dogs may stay in training for nine months or more. If a dog stays a long time in training, don't be disappointed. It may not mean that we do not like the dog; it may mean that we like him very much! In recent years, Guide Dogs has made changes in our training staffing, schedules, and protocols that allow us to spend more time developing each dog. We try our best to give each dog all the love, care, and training that it needs to become a Guide Dog prospect.

As you'll read in the description of Phase Six: The guide dog of today needs to be *Superdog* compared to the guide dog of the past. In the last few decades, since the founding of Guide Dogs for the Blind, the world has become an increasingly confusing environment for guide dogs. They carry the responsibility for the safety not just of themselves but for their blind or visually impaired partner as well. Cars are more dangerous (faster and quieter); noise has increased (construction equipment, concerts, movie theaters); intersections are varied with a thousand different designs of intersecting paths, slopes, and angles. Take a walk on a busy city street and study it from the perspective of a guide dog needing to travel it safely, calmly and confidently. Quite amazing, isn't it?

The instructors work hard to prepare each guide candidate for the challenges of this new world. Unfortunately, dogs that may have been ideal guides in the more slowly paced, less confusing world of not long ago might be career changed today. Guide Dogs believes that we are breeding better dogs than ever, that we are screening them better for health and temperament, and that raisers and staff are working harder...all in an attempt to keep up with a world that seems to getting more complex.

In the phase descriptions that follow, we have shared information with you that we never have before this project's inception. We talk about many of the training exercises and commands that are not taught in the raiser homes. The success of this new reporting method and of our dogs depends upon all raisers supporting our efforts by *not* teaching these guidework commands or exercises in their homes. Raisers who may attempt to give their dogs "a head start" by teaching the guidework discussed in this package are in fact very negatively impacting the dog's potential to become a guide. Improperly, inconsistently, or untimely taught guide commands or exercises will damage a dog's chance to become a guide. Please do *not* try to teach your puppy the techniques we discuss in this package, please only teach the ones discussed in your Guide Dog Puppy Manual.

At certain times a dogs' weekly training report may reflect a phase that differs from their previous weeks report. Passing a dog back does not necessarily reflect concerns but always reflects that we continue to see positive traits in the dog. One reason for this occurring is because each string of dogs are in various stages of training, the phase of a dog who is transferred from one string to another, which can occur for several reasons, will change. For example, a dog who is in phase ten, and considered "class ready", is not selected for class. This dog will subsequently be passed back and will be available for placement in the next class. Since the string that this dog has been passed to will be in a different phase, probably a lower phase, the dog will also be formally documented as being in the lower phase, even though they have technically completed phase ten and is considered "class ready".

On weekly Phase Reports you will also see a notation if your dog is on "breeding watch." If the dog is on "breeding watch," we are still considering it as a breeder. If a dog is no longer on "breeding watch," it will be neutered if that procedure has not already been done while in the raiser home.

Some dogs, unfortunately, do not go on to become either guides or breeders. These dogs are what we call career change dogs. Near the end of this package you will see several articles on career change dogs that will help you better understand your possible options on receiving the dog back. You'll also learn how Guide Dogs takes every effort to find loving, caring homes for those dogs we place.

Guide Dogs for the Blind has been very successful for many, many years. Our success is dependent upon all those many successes that you have at home - teaching your puppy to not relieve in the house, to only relieve on command, to respond to every obedience command, to be unafraid of distractions in your community, and to love and trust people.

Dogs can be career changed for many factors not in a raiser's control, including a dog's health, temperament, or guidework skills. A raiser's success should be measured by the amount of love, effort, and time spent with a puppy. If you worked your hardest and did your best, you should be proud of both yourself and your puppy. We are!

## Training Phase One:

Phase One of Guide Dog training could be called "A Dog's Introduction to Guide Dogs." It is also our introduction on campus to the dog that you raised. We're glad he's here, and we're thankful of all your hard work. Along with you, we also have high hopes for the dog's future.

Shortly after your dog's arrival on campus, he will receive a thorough physical examination. An instructor assistant (IA) who will first take your dog's temperature and measure the height and weight of your dog usually performs the physical. A complete "head-to-tail" examination will then be given. All the hard work you did on the "stand" exercise as well as the efforts you made in teaching your puppy to be well behaved and confident at the vet will greatly help during this process. The nose, teeth, eyes, ears, coat, skin and feet are checked. Many dogs that come in have minor ear infections. The "flop" ears on three of our breeds can be even more potent breeding grounds for fungus and infections. Ears need to be checked frequently. Raisers should check a puppy's ears often for redness, odor, flaky skin or other abnormalities. Please, always ask a vet to look inside the ears with an otoscope any time a puppy visits them.

We hope that all dogs will come in well groomed and in good condition. All Guide Dog candidates should look the part of an esteemed canine that has experience with being groomed frequently. The more practice a raiser and puppy have in caring for ears, coat, and nails, the more easily a dog will adapt to being groomed by a student or graduate. The IA will handle any minor problems your dog may have, such as long toenails, dirty ears, or matted coat. If your dog has any ailment or unusual condition that causes concern, the IA will bring it to the attention of an instructor or staff veterinarian. The accurate recording of maladies to your advisor through monthly reports, the project record, veterinary statements, and direct communication when needed greatly helps the veterinary clinic understand any health problem that has the potential to affect your dog's success as a guide. Accurate vaccination reporting on your project record is very important, for the staff will bring your dog up-to-date on his vaccines with booster shots for distemper, hepatitis, leptospirosis, parvovirus, parainfluenza, bordatella, and rabies.

Our veterinarians will also x-ray your dog's hips and elbows for orthopedic problems to improve the quality and longevity of the guides we graduate.

Once a month, a veterinary ophthalmologist comes to the campus, and all dogs that have returned for training since the last visit will have their eyes examined for defects that might affect their work as a guide or as a breeder.

A dog that will become a guide must be healthy, well mannered, confident, responsive, and wise. A dog that will become a breeder should exhibit these many traits, and his or her relatives must also be good candidates. If your dog has a condition that would prevent him from becoming a breeder (and your dog is still intact), then he will be altered. Unaltered dogs will continue on the Breeder Watch List until Phase Two or Phase Three. The Breeding and Training Departments will use this time to further evaluate your dog as possible breeding stock. Watch for your dog in

that section of the phase reports. If he is no longer on "breeder watch," you'll know that the Vet Department is altering the dog.

Once your dog has finished all of the physical examinations, he is assigned to a "string" of dogs. A string is a group of dogs brought in at approximately the same time (your dog's recall date). A string typically consists of 35 to 55 dogs in San Rafael, and 20 to 25 dogs in Oregon. The number of dogs in a string will vary according to the expected number of students for the class that starts four to five months in the future at each campus. Class size can vary for a variety of reasons, including the season, holidays, or the personal needs and schedules of the students. The training staff for each string comprises five instructors and three instructor's assistants in San Rafael and three instructors and two instructor's assistants in Oregon. San Rafael has a larger dormitory capacity, which results in the differences in string size and staff assignments.

Dogs may, if their training progresses in the usual pattern, be expected to graduate with the student class six months after their recall in San Rafael, and five months after their recall in Oregon. This time frame, though, can vary according to a dog's development and the availability of students who match well with each dog. A dog can change strings if it is determined that it may benefit from a change in training time or instructor. Formal guide dog training may last anywhere from four months to even a year, depending upon an individual dog's needs. Guide Dogs individually matches all students with the appropriate dog for their needs. Raisers should make all graduation travel plans as tentative as possible even up to the day of graduation in the event a match does not work out.

During the month before your dog arrived on campus, the instructors had been working with the most recent class to graduate by training the blind students to use their new Guide Dogs. After graduation, these instructors travel all across the country on follow-up visits with past graduates and their dogs. During Phase One, the instructor assistant will care for and work with your dog until the instructors return to the campus and continue to assist the instructor upon his or her return. The IA's will take your dog for walks on campus, begin integrating him into the community run, groom your dog on a daily basis, and provide any other care that your dog may need. This period is our chance to learn more about your dog individually, so that we can adapt ourselves to his needs as necessary.

Training Department staff carefully monitors newly arriving dogs to ensure a smooth transition into the kennel. Dogs can be introduced to an agility program, spend nights supervised by instructors in the dormitory, or spend consistent, supervised time in the Training Department office.

Our IA's describe their early time with your dogs this way: "It's a joy to see a dog that has been well-handled in the home..." and "Many of (us) have raised puppies and understand what raisers go through. We know what it's like to give up a pup. We care for each dog as an individual." Their focus is to ensure that your dog makes as easy and smooth a transition to kennel life as possible. As another IA says "We are their buddies and that is an important part of the process, particularly because we are helping relieve any kennel stress. I know that makes a really big

difference in their training...” Just as you had a wonderful bond with your dog, IA’s and instructors form tremendous bonds with them.

In addition to members of the Training and Veterinary staff, your dog may have another new friend - a kennel mate! Depending upon a dog's temperament, gender, health, and other factors, a dog may be paired up in a kennel run with another dog. Guide Dogs is very selective in this process, making sure that all dogs are properly matched and ensuring that a kennel mate will not adversely affect a dog's chances to develop into a guide.

Most dogs easily make the transition to kennel life. If your dog has difficulty making the adjustment, one or more of the following special care programs may be used: extended or continuous time in community run, frequent walks on campus, extended or continuous time in the Training Department office, special toys and other equipment in his run, and nights with instructors in the dormitory. We always try to adapt our regimens to meet the individual needs of dogs. We realize that the more flexible we can be in our approaches, the more successful we will be.

All of us at Guide Dogs know that Phase One is a time of excitement, challenge, and adaptation for our training staff and the newly arriving dogs as well. We also realize that this is a difficult time for raisers. We know that you're missing the dog that you cared for and loved for so long. Thank you for making this great gift and please be assured that we are giving the best, personalized care that we can during this and every phase.

If your dog passes all of his medical tests and some preliminary temperament evaluation, it will be on to Phase Two!

## Training Phase Two:

If Phase One is called “A Dog’s Introduction To Guide Dogs,” then Phase Two can be called “A Dog’s Introduction to Guide Dog Training.” Phase Two sets the foundation for any guide work training that may follow.

Your dog has now had time to settle into the kennel. The instructors are back from their follow-up visits and for the first time get to meet the dog that you gave so much time, hard work, and love to raise for Guide Dogs for the Blind. All of us here at Guide Dogs are very appreciative of your efforts and share in your dream that your dog will graduate as a guide or a breeder. It’s time to begin formal guidework training using “The Balanced Education System of Training Guide Dogs.”

Each instructor assigned to the string will be responsible for training between six and ten dogs. They will work and become familiar with all of the other dogs in the string as well. A training supervisor will provide support to all of the instructors working with the string. They will also help in evaluating your dog’s work, temperament and overall progress.

The instructors identify or “read” the characteristics of each dog. Since no two dogs are the same, it is important that the instructors learn what motivates each dog and what handling style works best. An example of this is learning the dog’s response to different styles of praise. Will calm and quiet praise best suit your dog’s personality and promote training progress, or will your dog be better motivated by spirited praise?

With the help of your leaders and advisor, you learned these types of characteristics about your puppy long ago. Now it’s the instructor’s turn to personally learn the individual characteristics of your dog. Part of what helps an instructor know your dog is a report that your puppy raising advisor sends to the Training Department about each dog. To compile a report, your advisor uses his or her personal observations of your puppy, your project record, and your monthly reports. The more consistently you turn in informative reports and the more you communicate any of your dog’s behavioral or health concerns with your leader, the better we know your dog and the easier we are able to help him adapt in training.

The first of the two most important parts of teaching a dog to become a guide is obedience. The obedience program consists of a variety of elements. Emphasis is placed on the response to the commands and the dog’s body positioning. During the first sessions of obedience training, the instructors will determine how well your dog responds to the leash and collar and to the commands you taught in your home. “Sit,” “down,” “stay,” and “come” are reinforced. New commands such as “heel” and the formal recall will be introduced. Distractions such as food, toys, different breeds of dogs, overly friendly people, or different scents are used to determine an initial reading of the overall controllability of your dog.

Martingale collars are used with all dogs starting training. Dogs who require firmer collar corrections when distracted also wear a slip training collar, to be used only when needed.

It's at this time when all your efforts teaching obedience to your puppy start to really pay off. The time and consistency you devoted to teaching obedience exercise in daily practices and at your meetings helps your dog advance through Phase Two. If instructors must spend time teaching your dog the basics, then they will have less time to reinforce the exercises with distractions. The more time that can be spent reinforcing exercises, the better it will be for a dog's blind partner. Reinforcement of obedience will continue throughout all nine phases.

The second part of teaching a dog to become a guide is, of course, the guidework. It begins with the introduction of the harness. Your dog will be taught to stand calmly while the harness is gently put into place. Your hard work at teaching your dog to stand on command becomes important beyond just teaching your dog to accept an examination as we discussed in the description of Phase One. Wearing the harness, your dog is then walked around in a calm and relaxed manner to get the "feel" of the harness.

When your dog is comfortable and familiar with the harness, it's time for the first "official" workout! This workout takes place on a treadmill. His instructor during treadmill training identifies each dog's individual gait and speed. These introduction techniques are so successful, that it is common to see a dog trying to get on the treadmill before it is their turn! Dogs receive three to four training sessions on the treadmill before beginning workouts in town with their instructors. Your dog will be taught how to pull into the harness chest piece and to maintain a straight line of travel – all while moving at a consistent pace. New commands related to guidework are introduced – "forward," "hopp-up," "steady," and "halt."

***These and other exercises and commands that are taught in training should never be taught in the home by raisers. A dog's blind partner will use these commands to ensure safe travel. If the exercises are incorrectly introduced and/or if there is confusion on the part of a dog as to what the commands mean, the success of the dog as a guide and the safety of the dog and blind handler team may be jeopardized. Puppy raisers also should never put their pups on treadmills for the same reasons. There is also a risk of injury if appropriate safeguards are not in place. We depend upon all our raisers in following the guidelines that are given with the ultimate goal of developing a safe and successful team. Please do not teach any exercises and commands that are not in your Puppy Manual.***

Since guide dogs and their partners will encounter many stationary obstacles (light poles, parking meters, parked cars, trees, etc.) and moving objects (pedestrians, etc.) in their work, obstacle courses are valuable tools. Obstacle exercises are a dog's first opportunity to learn how to give their handlers adequate clearance around them. Again, please do not do these exercises at home. Your dog will be introduced to his first obstacle course located on our campuses.

A primary goal in Phase Two is to establish a focused work ethic in your dog. If you have taught your puppy self-control and consistent command response in the home, instructors will have a much easier time continuing to develop a work ethic in the dog. As with your efforts, the result an instructor is seeking is accomplished by a generous amount of support and praise along with leash corrections when necessary.

Your dog will undergo extensive body handling exercises and responses to the handling will be identified. Since a visually impaired handler will hopefully one day care for your dog, it is essential that the dog remain patient and calm while being handled.

*The puppy lay-over and calming sit you performed when you first received your pup, as well as the continuing handling and grooming exercises you conducted daily, will make a big difference in how well your dog accepts and tolerates handling and grooming in this phase and later. If a raiser continues throughout the raising period to perform complete body handling and grooming exercises on a regular basis (especially brushing teeth, clipping nails, examining the ears and all four feet), the dog will seldom be resistant, anxious or concerned when these same efforts are done by others.*

The handling, guidework and obedience exercises of Phase Two, along with generous doses of love and affection, will work to build the trust and devotion between your dog and his instructor that are necessary for your dog to become a guide candidate. The quality of your dog's work and the strength of the bond the dog feels with its new handler will hopefully both grow through each successive phase.

## Training Phase Three

In the descriptions of Phases One and Two, you have seen how the fundamentals you established in obedience and handling have been utilized and built upon by the instructors on our campuses. Now, as your dog progresses through the phases of training, the instructors will continue to build on the guidework and other basics established in the earlier phases. It is important to remember that the phases of training are not distinct and separate from each other as are grade levels in school. Training a guide dog is a smooth and seamless process, with each small step and accomplishment built upon another. Phases do, however, help the Training Department and you chart a dog's gradual progress through training. Throughout his development here at Guide Dogs, we want your dog to become increasingly familiar and competent in the tasks and commands to which he's been introduced thus far.

During Phase Three, which begins approximately three to four weeks into training, the dogs really begin to form a "rapport" with their instructors. The time, work, and love that you so graciously gave to your dog while he was a puppy growing up in your home helped the two of you become partners. These same three ingredients help the instructors form a compatible team with your dog. An important part of becoming a team includes an increasing understanding on the part of the instructor, of what motivates each dog to work and perform.

Guidework progresses to the quiet residential neighborhoods of San Rafael, Calif., or Gresham, Ore. Your dog travels to and from town in "first class accommodations" - training vans equipped with individual wire crates. A separate configuration of crates, just like in the vans, is located in the kennel complex. All dogs are introduced to jumping in and out of this "mock" crate set before being put in an actual training van. Dogs then experience loading and unloading from crates in the van, riding comfortably and quietly, and waiting patiently for their turn at the training route. The vans also carry other essential items - fresh water, grooming equipment, harnesses, blindfolds, clean-up supplies, chew toys, first aid kits and other items. Dogs that are already familiar with riding in cars enclosed in crates (as well as loose) adjust more easily on their trips into town. These dogs will be less stressed by this form of transportation over dogs that have only ridden loose in a vehicle. Guide Dogs thanks all the raisers who have so willingly taken their dogs on countless trips, especially those first few carsick rides.

During Phase Three, your dog is continually worked using the guidework commands introduced in Phase Two. We also introduce several new guidework exercises and commands. The first of these are the formal turns and the commands "left" and "right." More precise positioning in obedience responses is strived for. "Come" (informal recall) response is continued and off leash work in enclosed areas is just beginning. More difficult distractions are introduced as well, to prepare your dog for "real-life" situations. Your dog will need to learn more than just what the verbal command means. There are hand signals or gestures, footwork or other "body language" associated with each command. The Instructor will use both verbal commands and body language to communicate to your dog just what needs to be done. Once your dog responds correctly to the command, we make sure that we give plenty of praise! Any type of dog handler - guide dog instructors, raisers, or private trainers are the most successful when they consistently

and willingly give lots of praise to the dog. At Guide Dogs, a dog that does obedience exercises properly is a necessity; a dog that does them happily is a delight.

Another new command your dog will learn in Phase Three is “over here.” This command prompts your dog to move into a position on the right side of the handler so the handler and dog can safely maneuver through heavy or awkward doors, revolving doors or turnstiles. ***Remember as we discussed in Phase Two; please do not teach any guidework commands or exercises at home.***

Additional concepts that are introduced in Phase Three are curb work and street crossings. These concepts are introduced utilizing a method called “pattern training.” During pattern training, the instructor causes the correct guiding behavior by cueing your dog before any mistakes are made. Pattern training introduces your dog to guide work responses in a way that keeps him feeling very confident about the new skills he is learning! Pattern training lasts for about four weeks, with a gradual transition to more “standard” training techniques which places more and more responsibility on your dog. During pattern training, dogs can be worked in a variety of environments, including challenging areas. Your dog has his instructor right there to make things go just right, so he learns exactly what to do.

Each dog is taught to stop at all “down curbs,” which will indicate to a visually impaired handler that there is a change in elevation and that they have arrived at an intersection. Your dog is also taught to stop at all “up curbs,” which will let the handler know that they have arrived at the opposite side of the street and that there is again a change in elevation. At this introductory level of curbs and street crossings, situations are kept simple while the dogs learn the basic concepts. Since street crossings are such an important part of safe travel for a blind handler, lots of time is spent teaching your dog to cross the street consistently and on an appropriate “line” (straight across the intersection to a particular point on the opposite side). The “hopp up”, “forward, and “halt” commands are continued, and the “steady” command, which tells the dog to ease off on the amount of pull into the harness, is introduced.

***It is crucial that raisers not try to teach their dogs to stop at curbs or other elevation changes, such as stairs. This should only be done by licensed instructors or by apprentices under their supervision. If taught incorrectly, it can take a great deal of time to undo the mistakes taught by someone with no guidework training experience, could lead to a dog being career changed, and could potentially put someone in a life-threatening situation.***

Phase Three is a fun time for the training staff, as the parts of training are starting to gel into a cohesive result. As one instructor assistant put it, “You really start to see them putting the pieces together; they really start looking like guide dogs!” Another said, “It is a great feeling to see them looking good out there – it’s team work.”

During Phase Three, IAs will also begin to take your dog to a local mall or shopping center so they can observe your dog’s reactions to people, noises, odors, other dogs, objects and more. Both positive and negative responses will be noted and relayed to the instructors.

***This is where your time spent socializing your puppy will really begin to make a difference. Every socialization outing that a puppy is taken on is a step towards becoming a guide. Guide Dogs depends upon every raiser's efforts on socializing our puppies. Thanks for all your hard work!***

During Phase Three, most dogs that have not yet been spayed or neutered will be evaluated for the breeding program. All aspects of your dog will be considered: health, physical soundness, soundness of temperament, willingness to work and please, breed characteristics, usability of bloodlines, and the ability to understand and become proficient at guidework. How well littermates and other closely related dogs have done in the program will also be considered. If your dog is “pulled” for breeding, he will leave the training string and become the responsibility of the Breeding Department.

To be pulled for breeding is really the highest honor we can bestow upon your dog, for it is only “the best of the best” that become breeders. A guide dog can assist one blind person; a breeder has the potential to assist many. If you live within 75 miles of the San Rafael campus (It’s 50 miles for non-raisers); and if you qualify with the standards required by the Breeding Department, you may be offered your dog back and you can become a “Breeder Keeper.” You will be invited to participate in a presentation ceremony of your breeder at a California class graduation regardless of the campus your puppy was recalled to for training.

Dogs that are not selected for the breeding program will be spayed or neutered. To avoid post-surgery complications, females will not be worked for five days and males for three days following their surgery.

If on your weekly “Phase Report,” your dog is indicated as being under “breeder watch,” you will know that we are still considering your dog as a breeder. Once your dog is no longer on “breeder watch,” you will know that he has been altered and is being considered as a guide candidate only.

Now it's time for your dog to meet more new friends! Your dog will begin to participate in social sessions with other dogs. Instructors or instructor assistants closely supervise these sessions. A group of dogs will be allowed to play with each other in an informal setting in an enclosed area. These sessions are similar to the old “community run” with which many long-time raisers are familiar, but the number of dogs and the area of play are both smaller. These sessions will take place throughout the day and provide the dogs with a good opportunity to relax, interact and enjoy the company of their instructors. Since your dog is still relatively new to the kennel and to the other dogs in the string, it does take time, experience and careful monitoring to establish a safe and productive atmosphere in these sessions.

If you visit the kennels, it is likely you will see any number of dogs playing, relaxing, or being groomed in the enclosures at any time during the day. You may also notice new toys or objects of interest to the dogs in the enclosures. These toys and objects are changed from time-to-time so your dog will find new and interesting items to stimulate them in the kennel environment. We are working hard at Guide Dogs to develop ways to keep our kennels both safe and stimulating for all the dogs while they stay with us.

***[Due to the high level of professional monitoring needed during community running of dogs, Guide Dogs does not want raisers community running their dogs in their clubs. Please insure your puppy's safety and Guide Dog potential by not participating in any such community running while your dog is in your care. Your advisor and leader can help you with appropriate guidelines for interactions between puppies, or you can refer to the Guide Dog Puppy Raising Manual.]***

Keep your fingers crossed! Can we make it to Phase Four? We're hoping right along with you.

## Training Phase Four

Now that guidework basics have been established, in addition to working in the quieter residential neighborhoods, your dog will begin to work in the somewhat more challenging areas of downtown Gresham or San Rafael. The routes will become longer and change in configuration. Curb approaches will become more difficult. Handicap access curbs that are flat or blended with the street will be included in the route. Street crossings will become wider and slightly more complex.

Your dog will begin to guide his handler through the obstacle course on campus as well as show clearance awareness when working in town. Your dog is taught to move around obstacles and to stop at more congested areas along the course. The course is becoming more difficult, with more angled clearances. Clearances requiring a full stop are also introduced.

At any time in training, if your dog exhibits a need to improve in any area, we work harder at developing that particular area. Some examples would include discomfort displayed when riding in a training van crate. The dog would then receive frequent rides in a variety of vehicles or more exposure to the on campus crate configuration. (See Phase Three). A dog that is uncomfortable on stairs will receive additional exposure to stairs. Dogs that are experiencing stress will be given extra play sessions and relaxing walks on campus and in town. We never "push" a dog through a phase. We take extra time so the dog can develop at its own speed.

***Likewise, when raisers work puppies in their communities, they should not rush their puppies' socialization development: They should not introduce their puppies to more than they can handle or force puppies into situations that are uncomfortable. If difficulties occur, they should hold off and let the puppies develop more slowly. You'll find that many of the tips in the Puppy Manual are the same ones that we use ourselves when we are training dogs to be guides.***

Pattern training continues, however, instructors are now allowing your dog more freedom to make mistakes so that he may learn from them. When errors occur, instructors will show the dog the correct answer before they get confused. Any advanced responses are still being patterned at this point.

During Phase Four, your dog's instructor will receive the actual copy of your puppy raising advisor's final puppy evaluation. Remember, as we discussed in Phase Two, your monthly reports, project record, and communications with your leader are all crucial in helping your advisor develop this final puppy raising report which assists the Training Department's understanding of your puppy. Up until this time, only the training supervisor had access to this information. The reason that we don't immediately share this information with instructors and IA's is that we do not want your dog's temperament or behaviors to be prejudged by the instructors. We want every dog to start with the same chance! If there is information about your dog that the instructors might need before this time, the supervisors will make the instructors aware of it. The instructors will review the advisor evaluation, and use it to help identify the strengths and needs of your dog. If there are areas of concern, a plan of action will be developed

to address them. Your input is very valuable, for there may be behaviors that were present in your home that have not been seen in the kennel, and vice versa. Please make sure that you complete every monthly report and the project record completely and accurately. We appreciate your doing so. As one instructor said, "We really get to know our dogs' idiosyncrasies. What we have learned about the dogs pretty much correlates with the final report from Puppy Raising."

***Note: If you are currently raising a puppy and have questions about your monthly report, please check with your leader to make sure that you are completing it in the most useful fashion. All raisers should submit their monthly reports to their leaders every month. The leaders should read them, add their comments, and forward them to the advisor every month, not just when the dog is about to be returned for training. By reviewing them, an advisor can determine if a raiser may need some extra help.***

***Here are some tips on completing the project record. A good idea is to read the project record periodically while you are raising to continually familiarize yourself with the type of information we are seeking. When your puppy turns 12 months of age, complete your project record and send it to your advisor. This will give your advisor time to record all behaviors, habits and problems in the final report to the Training Department.***

During Phase Four, we formally evaluate your dog's individual progress. The first evaluation is preliminary obedience testing, which may take place on our busy campus. Your dog's responses to formal and informal commands are assessed. These commands include "sit," "down", stay, and "heel;" the formal recall and the informal come. Throughout the testing, a variety of distractions will be presented, including food, dogs and toys. Your dog will also be asked to demonstrate his ability to behave while being extensively handled during a physical body examination. Phase Four is also the time when your dog will be evaluated for their response to a head collar.

Once again, the more time you spent teaching your dog consistent obedience and physically handling your dog, the better the dog should do during this preliminary test. Your hard work does count...thank you very much!

## Training Phase Five

In Phase Five, your dog will spend a lot of time in downtown Gresham or San Rafael. The instructors will be concentrating on improving your dog's guidework on the basis of the information gathered during the previous phases.

Your dog's instructor continues to fine tune all the new skills your dog is learning. Both formal and informal exercises are executed in a variety of environments to ensure a good response. The level of distractions is also increased so that each dog's individual distractions can be identified and addressed. (i.e. birds for some, squirrels for others.)

During guidework, your dog continues to have the freedom to make mistakes and decisions while working. Instructors will continue to show the dog the correct answer before he becomes confused. Any challenging or advanced guiding decisions will continue to be patterned by the instructor.

Instructors are now practicing short blindfold sessions with your dog while a teammate spots them for safety. This allows the instructor to see where your dog's strengths lie, and what areas need more work. It is at this time that preliminary blindfold testing occurs. The route for testing is usually an urban or suburban area of about a 14-block distance. During this test, the instructor wears a blindfold and is "spotted" by his supervisor. Passing requirements are for a dog to display an understanding of safe guidework skills and keeping focused. These skills include good responses to commands, adherence to line of travel, consistent pace of travel and clearance awareness. Obedience exercises are also done on the route, with a distraction present. In the event a dog does not pass preliminary guidework testing, he will receive the extra training he needs, and have an opportunity to work the route again when he is ready. Each dog progresses at a different pace, and not passing this test does not mean he will not become a guide, he simply needs more work in one or more areas. We also use this opportunity to evaluate dogs and improve our training techniques.

Here is what an instructor said about the preliminary guidework test: "After working with the dogs while under blindfold, we realize just how much we have been inadvertently cueing them. So we work on those areas of the dog's training that are weak. This test helps us fine tune the dog's skills."

During these tests, both for guidework and obedience (see Phase 4), your dog will not be expected to perform perfectly. The dogs are expected to show they are beginning to understand guidework concepts. His skills are still just developing, and this is only the preliminary test. If your dog does not yet meet the necessary skill standards during preliminary testing, he can be passed back one or two strings. If this happens, it does not mean your dog will not become a guide. It simply means he needs more time to learn the challenging concepts of guidework. Dogs that are passed back regularly go on to graduate.

Ever since your dog first arrived on campus for training, the instructors, instructor assistants and staff veterinarians have been closely monitoring your dog's health. During Phase Five, the instructors and veterinarians will review your dog's medical history. Since it is very important

for a working guide to remain healthy, any ailments that occur during your dog's stay on campus are carefully recorded in your puppy's medical history

***Any health information that you have given Guide Dogs through your leader or through your monthly reports or project record may help us evaluate a veterinary concern that becomes evident while the dog is in training. Also, all raisers should remember to turn in accurately completed veterinary billing and diagnostic forms that are provided in the puppy packets. We record and track all the information on each of those forms to keep an accurate in-house record of your dog's health history. The accurate reporting of your puppy's ailments while in your home is essential.***

While at Guide Dogs, dogs may acquire minor medical problems; such as ear infections, loose stools, conjunctivitis (oozing, irritated eyes), or lick sores. To reduce any ailments that can be induced by stress or boredom, the extra play sessions, relaxing walks or other activities developed for individual dogs help keep the dogs happy and well adjusted. In both the puppy and the training kennels, we are continually evaluating new ways to keep the dogs stimulated. Puppies in the home benefit from the extra time you have taken to give your love and care.

Whenever possible, a treatment schedule and appropriate timeline for improvement in an existing medical problem will be developed so that the dog remains in training. We want to give every dog a chance to become a successful guide. Unfortunately, chronic ailments or their potential reoccurrence later in a graduate's home may lead to your dog being career changed from the program.

***Please always remember that a dog graduating as a guide or breeder does not gauge a raiser's success, nor does where a dog advances in training. Dogs can be career changed for many reasons not within the raiser's control, such as health issues, inherent temperament, or guidework. A raiser's success is measured only by the amount of love, effort and time that is spent with a puppy. No matter what happens in training, if you did your best, be proud! Always remember that we are proud of each and every one of you and can never say Thank You! enough.***

## Training Phase Six

Phase Six begins in approximately the seventh and eighth weeks of training. Some dogs may move more quickly through the phases than others. Their speed is not necessarily a reflection on their chances to graduate, only of their rate of learning. In fact, a dog that seems to be stuck in a particular phase may only be slowed down by a single exercise that it finds challenging; everything else may be going great. What you perceive as slow progress may be quite normal. We spend a lot of time with our dogs, helping them through these challenges.

By this point, your dog has shown, through its individual character and temperament, what kind of guide dog he may become. Some of the telling signs are your dog's energy level, sensitivity, initiative and level of distractibility.

Obedience continues to be a very important part of your dog's training. Unlike guidework, where a dog is taught to think and make decisions, obedience responses should be prompt and precise. Dogs performing obedience exercises should exhibit complete attention to their handler, (raiser, instructor, blind partner). Your dog is continuing obedience training with instructors other than his primary instructor to make it clear to your dog that consistent responses are expected.

***You can help develop positive characteristics in a puppy that you raise. Handling techniques that help teach positive behaviors include:***

- being a positive role model by maintaining a calm energy level
- being consistent in your expectations of calm behavior
- learning to read and anticipate the actions of your puppy
- being consistent in your expectations of compliance to every command even in the presence of distractions
- by consistent practice, mold the actions that you desire
- learning how to most effectively use the collar type that has been assigned to you by Guide Dogs
- willingly and effectively praising every success

***These are the exact same fundamentals that Guide Dog instructors use when they train a dog to be a guide. If you're raising a puppy for Guide Dogs and you want to learn more about handling techniques, read the section about training principles in the Puppy Manual, talk to your leader or ask your advisor.***

Guidework training continues in downtown Gresham and San Rafael, where the routes become longer and more complex - up to 45 minutes long. New concepts in guidework are added. Your dog will be taught how to inform the handler when a barricade completely blocks the path and how to safely work around it. Many graduates live in rural areas with no sidewalks. Your dog will be taught to work in sidewalkless areas. Many residential areas have curbs that are widely rounded. The different curb and corner situations your dog will encounter make street crossings much more challenging.

Work continues in malls and buildings as well. Stairs, crowded aisles, supermarkets, different scents and a variety of surfaces will be encountered. It sounds much the same as when you were socializing your puppy many months ago, but it is just as important now as it was then. Your dog must continue to see all sorts of situations, both new and familiar, especially now that your dog has the responsibility of guiding a handler through them.

The help that you give us by frequently socializing your puppy in both new and familiar situations while he is with you is crucial to this work in training. Believe us... the instructors personally thank you for every trip to the store, mall, or park that your puppy took with you.

Your dog will be taught to make “moving turns,” rather than stopping to make the “formal turn.” Crowded buildings, stores and malls provide a challenge for the team of guide and handler to negotiate. While working through buildings, your dog will be taught to slow down.

Dogs receive their first exposure to traffic in Phase Six. “Pre-traffic conditioning” teaches your dog to stop, hold a line, or back up on line when a vehicle is too close. This is a notable accomplishment for your dog! Traffic is serious business and the safety problems that your dog is being exposed to at this phase will carry over to the high level of responsibility required to become a guide.

Your dog is also learning another entirely new concept: “intelligent disobedience.” This requires your dog to actually disobey his instructor when a situation is unsafe. For example, if the handler gives the command for the dog to go forward across a busy intersection but there is a car moving towards the intersection, the dog will disobey. This concept is first taught on the obstacle course with a variety of tight clearances, but carries over directly to traffic conditioning and training

The guide dog of today needs to be *Superdog* compared to the guide dog of the past. In the last few decades, since the founding of Guide Dogs for the Blind, the world has become an increasingly confusing environment for guide dogs. They carry the responsibility for the safety not just of themselves but for their blind or visually impaired partner as well. Cars are more dangerous (faster and quieter); noise has increased (construction equipment, concerts, movie theaters); intersections are varied with a thousand different designs of intersecting paths, slopes, and angles. Take a walk on a busy city street and study it from the perspective of a guide dog needing to travel it safely, calmly and confidently. Quite amazing, isn't it?

The instructors work hard to prepare each guide candidate for the challenges of this new world. Unfortunately, dogs that may have been ideal guides in the more slowly paced, less confusing America of not long ago might be career changed today. Guide Dogs believes that we are breeding better dogs than ever, that we are screening them better for health and temperament, and that raisers and staff are working harder...all in an attempt to keep up with a world that is getting more complex. Guide Dogs thanks every raiser and leader who have so dedicatedly joined us in our goal of providing safe, dependable guides and partners for the blind and visually impaired.

## Training Phase Seven

Guidework training moves from the “merely” challenging areas of San Rafael or Gresham to the big cities of San Francisco or Portland. These urban environments present a wide variety of demands such as wide, complex intersections and street crossings (some with pedestrian islands), more pedestrian and vehicular traffic, louder noises, and the generally more chaotic life common in the city. Dogs that had good socialization experiences in a big city situation during their raising tend to have an easier time - they’ve seen it all before. Your dog will also ride the city bus system and light rail or the subway as well as learn to work safely along a station platform edge.

Those special outings you attended with your puppy club in congested urban centers and on light rail, the bus, the train, or the ferry will help your dog adjust and cope effectively when it is in training.

Now that guidework basics are becoming well ingrained and your dog is working in a more consistent manner, the concept of low overhead clearances is taught. This is one of the most difficult aspects of guidework for a dog to master, because low overhead clearances (such as a tree branch) normally would not affect a dog. Overhead obstacles are usually outside a dog’s normal range of vision. Dogs do not naturally look up; therefore they’re not often aware of such obstacles. As a result, it is very difficult for a guide to indicate a low overhead clearance by stopping. However, with consistent practice and patience, a guide can become proficient in overhead clearance work if it is trained on a specific route that has low overhead clearances.

Your dog is now at another very important part of the progression toward becoming a guide; “formal traffic training” begins! At this stage of training, more responsibility is placed on your dog and emergency decisions must be made. Dogs become more secure about the responses in formal traffic training when deciding when to stop, hold their line, back up, or even move forward.

Training in the proper response to a total barricade is started in Phase Seven as well. Your dog is taught how to inform the handler of objects totally blocking the travel path, and how to work safely around them.

Obedience training now progresses to off-leash work to evaluate attitude and consistency. Only when your dog responds consistently in a reliable manner on leash under very distracting and difficult situations will your dog begin “off-leash training.” Note that off-leash work occurs very late in the training program and only after the instructors have a great deal of confidence in your dog.

*Just a reminder: raisers should not do off-leash work with their puppies other than the off-leash recall (“come”) and that exercise only while within a securely confined area. Please refer to the Puppy Raising Manual for the proper training procedure for the recall. The best way that you can help prepare a dog for the challenges of off-leash work they will encounter in Phase Seven is to teach your puppy consistent responses to all commands while on leash.*

Since many graduates will need to leash-relieve their dogs while at home, at work or while traveling, instructors will leash relieve the dogs in training on a regular basis.

Teaching consistent and proper leash relieving at home is very important. When a dog has learned to relieve at will, it is hard to then teach them to relieve only on command. Unfortunately, a good number of dogs are career changed both in training and later in graduate homes because of poor relieving habits. This is a potential career change characteristic that raisers can help prevent. Read your Puppy Raising Manual for the proper techniques. Ask your leader or your advisor if your puppy is having difficulty learning to relieve only on command. The longer improper relieving continues, the harder it is to correct. Good relieving techniques are essential. We're counting on you!

## **Training Phase Eight**

At this time, your dog may have been in training for roughly 10 to 14 weeks. Always remember that all dogs are different and that speed through the phases may be no indicator of future success. Advanced guidework and obedience training will take place in Phase Eight.

Developments of precise on leash obedience responses are being worked on daily. New handlers are still being introduced to your dog at this time, and off-leash formal obedience training continues as well.

Guidework has reached an advanced level, and your dog is regularly working in a variety of environments, such as country areas, suburbs, and sidewalkless areas. Your dog is also now working in the big city! San Francisco and Portland become the training grounds for working on more challenging concepts with a host of new types of distractions, scents surfaces, street crossing and curbs. The traffic here is very heavy and very close, and the sidewalks are densely crowded. This is the environment where your dog can really show all he knows, and it is a great accomplishment.

Your dog is also learning to avoid platforms and drop-offs, such as the type at subways and rail platforms. While learning to avoid these dangerous areas, your dog is also being exposed to riding on these subway and light rail trains. The dogs ride in a similar fashion as they did while riding in a car with you; sitting quietly between the knees of the handler and patiently waiting until it is time to get off the train. All of the traveling you did with your puppy really pays off here, as these trains can be crowded, so waiting calmly is very important.

When working in more populated areas, it is common to need escalators to get around in buildings. Your dog is learning how to board, ride, and get off escalators in Phase Eight. The dogs must learn to remain still on the ride both up and down, as well as getting of and on safely. Intensive indoor mall training with a wide variety of training opportunities including slick floors, food courts and crowds is also being worked on.

Please, under no circumstances should you ever take your dog on an escalator, leave this to the professionals. Don't risk injury or the creation of fear response to escalators. We depend on your help by following the guidelines that we give you. A raiser, who in an attempt to enhance a puppy's chances by teaching training other than that described in the Puppy Manual or by staff or leaders, can actually develop behavior in the puppy that could lead to a career change.

Your dog is advancing in all kinds of ways at this point in training. All elements of his previous training have reached an advanced level. This includes the sidewalkless areas as well. He is expected to maintain a travel line on the extreme left side of the roadway with no sidewalk or reasonable shoulder to walk on. He also has to work around or up to various obstacles in his path, such as parked cars and trash cans, and resume travel on the far-left side of the road.

Your dog is very close to reaching the end of training, and Phase Nine is the "Beginning of the End....."

## Training Phase Nine

We're so close to the goal. Your dog has now been in training for roughly 13 to 14 weeks or more. This is the almost the final stage in the process of preparing a dog for placement with a student in class.

"Final obedience testing" is done during this phase. With the instructor blindfolded, your dog undergoes an extensive obedience test. All dogs must pass final obedience in order to qualify to take the final blindfold guidework test. The dog has to rely on the months of training he has received, and has no cues other than the verbal command and the appropriate hand gesture from his instructor to execute the desired response. The testing is done on campus, with a variety of distractions, possibly food, or a staff dog not affiliated with the program. The string supervisor will assess your dog's responses and positioning on leash to sit, down, stay, and the formal recall. The supervisor will also evaluate your dog's acceptance of a complete body examination and response to the informal recall command. The final exercise is the off-leash evaluation. During this part of testing, the instructor removes the blindfold and leash. The same exercises are performed as on leash, with the addition of a long down stay with the instructor out of the dog's sight. There are several distractions to contend with during this long down, such as people, dogs and toys. If your dog does not quite make the grade, he could be passed back to another string for more training and development.

***During your dog's final obedience testing, lessons learned in your home make it more likely that your dog will pass. Puppies who learn to respond appropriately and consistently to on-leash commands at home, at meetings, and in public, as well as puppies who are familiar with being physically handles because they have had their nails clipped regularly and have had their ears checked, will all have a greater chance of passing their final testing.***

Phase Nine is made up of quite a few evaluations and tests. "Final building testing" is also done at this time at a mall in San Rafael or Gresham. During this test, the instructor is blindfolded once again and a head collar is placed on your dog. Your dog is then tested on escalators, elevators, stairs, stores, and through the food court while wearing the head collar. What is expected of your dog is a demonstration of caution inside the mall and stores, walking up and down stairs without difficulty, riding comfortably in elevators and confidently boarding, riding, and exiting escalators. ***(Please do not ever socialize your puppy on an escalator-see Phase Six)*** As with the final obedience, your dog must pass final building testing before being considered ready for class.

Training continues, even during a phase like this one with final testing. The work routes continue to be advanced and lengthy to prepare your dog for "the real world." Your dog is challenged and his problem solving skills are put to the test. Street crossings are off set, curbs are not directly across the street, and loose dogs and cats can be in any neighborhood! To further challenge your dog and assess his abilities, an unfamiliar or novice handler will work him. (i.e. a new apprentice, or a new student in class.)

The third test of Phase Nine is “final traffic testing.” The instructor is again under blindfold while the supervisor drives a training van in an effort to simulate “real life” traffic situations and your dog’s responses are evaluated. Once again, your dog must pass this test to be considered ready for class. Not doing so can result in your dog being passed back. Retesting occurs after more conditioning, training, and responses have improved.

Are you getting excited? The instructors and their supervisor are too! They share your hopes and anxieties about your dog’s future. Remember to breathe though, there is still a lot more work to do, one more VERY important test and class!!

## Training Phase 10

Your dog has now been in training approximately 15 to 16 weeks. This is the final phase of training and your dog is being prepared for class. The months of love, support and basic training that you gave your puppy, plus the months of love, support and formal training that the IA's and Instructors have put into your dog now equal a class ready dog.

Your dog's obedience responses are now finely tuned and more precise than ever. He continues to become more and more reliable both on and off leash. The guidework routes are more advanced, and he is receiving little or no "help" with problem solving; he has become a responsible partner to his handler. The Instructors are now working on "finishing routes", which include relaxing residential routes, and sidewalkless areas in an effort to build your dogs confidence prior to class.

"Final blindfold testing" is done during Phase 10. This is a gigantic achievement! Your dog works a lengthy, difficult route with the instructor under blindfold. Your dog is expected to demonstrate a clear understanding of all guidework responsibilities, which includes holding a line, consistent lead, curb work, street crossings, and traffic awareness. The class supervisor also evaluates your dogs overall attitude towards his work; is he focused? Is he attentive to the handler? How is his response to the guidework commands? The supervisor also stops the team along the route for an obedience session. This is so your dog's obedience responses can be evaluated with natural distractions present while guiding a blind partner. When natural distractions are present, your dog's response to verbal and leash corrections, if necessary, will be assessed.

Your dog also receives a final physical examination during Phase 10. His puppy raising, training and medical histories are reviewed. When all of these elements are checked and approved, your dog is officially "Class Ready"!

Class
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By the time the dogs are finishing their final exams in Phase Ten, the students that are scheduled to arrive for the next class have been confirmed and the preliminary and important process of matching dogs with students begins. Once the students have arrived at the campus and class training has begun, the final decision regarding each student and dog match is made. There will be more dogs available than there are students allowing the best match of student and dog. If your dog is not chosen for this class, it only means that the right student was not available for your dog. If your dog was not chosen, he will continue training with the next string and be available for placement with a student in a future class.

There are 3 different class-training programs available. The four-week class is for new students and some students (retrain) with previous experience using a dog guide. We also have two and three-week retrain classes available. The best training option (two, three or four week retrain class) is recommended during the home interview based on the student's previous experience current physical condition and handling abilities. All the students begin class so that their graduation is on the same day.

The home interview may recommend in a few situations a student receive in-home training if they cannot attend a class at one of the campuses. If in-home training is approved, the student and dog may not attend the formal graduation on campus. (See "Graduation" portion of this packet for special arrangements afforded to Raisers whose dogs are trained in-home).

Some of the lectures students receive during their training are:

**ORIENTATION**

Instructors give an orientation to the dormitory facilities.

**INTRODUCTION TO THE GUIDE DOG**

Instruction on how to meet and properly handle a Guide Dog.

**COMMUNICATIONS WITH A GUIDE DOG**

Instruction on appropriate commands for a Guide Dog.

**HARNES COMMANDS**

Instruction and review of the obedience and guidework commands for a Guide Dog.

**DESCRIPTIONS OF GUIDE DOG BREEDS**

Description of the characteristic of each Guide Dog breed: Labrador Retriever, Golden Retriever, German Shepherd Dog, and Labrador/Golden Retriever cross

**CONTROL OF A GUIDE DOG**

Instruction on effective control of a Guide Dog.

**EQUIPMENT FOR A GUIDE DOG**

Discussion about the different types and appropriate use of Guide Dog equipment.

**GROOMING**

Discussion and instruction on grooming, skin care and dental care for maintaining good health of a Guide Dog.

## **RECEIVING YOUR GUIDE DOG**

Hands-on instruction and discussion prior to meeting your Guide Dog.

## **MAINTAINING A WELL BEHAVED GUIDE DOG**

Review of daily schedule and use of obedience commands.

## **PROCEDURES FOR FEEDING YOUR GUIDE DOG**

Instruction on feeding your Guide Dog (when, what, and how much).

## **STUDENT VISITING HOURS**

Review of visiting hours for students during training at Guide Dogs.

## **FOLLOW YOUR DOG**

Instruction of proper following position while walking with a Guide Dog.

## **STREET CROSSINGS**

Discussion of crossing streets with a Guide Dog (listening for traffic, appropriate stops, etc.).

## **MAINTAINING A HOUSE CLEAN DOG**

Relieving instruction and information on how to maintain consistent house behavior.

## **FLEA CONTROL**

Discussion of available products and instruction in their use.

## **ORIENTATION & LEARNING ROUTES**

Review and discussion of the downtown street system and street names.

## **DISTRACTIONS**

Instruction on control of a Guide Dog when distracted by other animals, people, or environment.

## **REWORKING ERRORS**

Instruction on how to improve Guide Dog work.

## **WORKING IN BUILDINGS**

Instruction on locating and working different types of buildings with your Guide Dog (such as stores, malls, supermarkets, etc.).

## **TOYS**

Instructors discuss and issue recommended toys for Guide Dogs.

## **WHEN YOUR DOG IS HOME ALONE**

Instruction and practice on having a quiet and well-behaved dog when left alone.

Discussion on appropriate times, and length of time, for dog to be left alone.

## **TRAFFIC TRAINING & TOTAL BARRICADES**

Instruction on working around obstacles totally blocking the sidewalk.

## **CARE OF YOUR GUIDE DOG**

Instruction and review of water, feeding and relieving schedule for a Guide Dog.

## **NUTRITIONAL NEEDS OF YOUR DOG**

Discussion of nutritional needs, type of dog foods, and recommended amount for feeding each individual dog.

## **THE PUBLIC & YOUR GUIDE DOG**

Discussion on laws, legislation and the public.

## **TRAVELING WITH YOUR GUIDE DOG**

Discussion about the different methods of travel with a Guide Dog (city bus, light rail, airplane, etc.).

## **A GUIDE DOG IS REALLY A “DOG”**

Discussion on how Guide Dogs are raised and trained; how to best adapt you're Guide Dog to your home.

## **WORKING YOUR GUIDE DOG IN YOUR HOME ENVIRONMENT**

Instruction on how to transition to your home area with your Guide Dog.

## **GRADUATION**

Information about meeting your puppy raiser, the graduation ceremony, and departure for home after graduation.

Students begin training with their dogs in residential areas San Rafael or Gresham and in the last part of training to San Francisco or Portland. There are many different situations presented to the teams including public transportation (cars, city buses, subway systems, and ferries), heavy traffic, construction, escalators, areas with no sidewalks, etc.

Our students come from many different walks of life and areas. Towards the end of class, students are given more exposure to areas similar to where they will be working most of the time at home. Students are given tips on how to keep their dogs comfortable in all types of climate changes.

This is a busy and exciting time for the Training staff. They have spent many months nurturing and preparing the dogs for class. The staff puts it this way:

*“When we finally get to class I’m ready. You are so proud of the dogs – it’s a process where you really want to see them fly. There is a part of me saying “show those students what you can do!”*

*“Going into class and making that match (of dog and student) is what it’s all about...seeing people become more and more independent...walking with smiles on their faces.”*

The end of the training string signals the culmination of months of hard work by many people at Guide Dogs, both staff and volunteers. From the volunteers that socialize the young puppies and work in other areas on campus, to the immense efforts of you in the puppy raising community, to the dedicated staff, and to our donors... we couldn't do it without all of you! It is the efforts of all these people that make the ten phases of training possible, and provide us with the foundation to shape a wonderful dog into a highly trained guide dog and companion, and then pair that dog with a partner to become an effective team. This is the mission of Guide Dogs for the Blind.

## Graduation

Graduation is the culmination of many years of hard work from many people. Raisers are invited to attend graduation and present the dogs they have raised to their new partners. If you are planning to fly to attend a Guide Dog graduation ceremony, we recommended purchasing refundable airfare in case something happens to cause your dog to be career changed, passed back or taken out of class at the last moment.

On graduation day you will have an opportunity to meet the graduate and have your pictures taken together. The pictures will be sent to you after graduation. The graduates will then be seated on the stage. When your name is called, you will go on stage to present the dog to the graduate at the microphone. You will then be given an opportunity to share a few words about your experiences. After the ceremony you will escort the new team to a reception in the dormitory. You will be sent a video of the graduation as a keepsake.

Your dog could also be selected as a sponsored team. Donors who have contributed a significant amount towards the cost of training a person and their dog are invited to come to graduation and meet the team they have sponsored. Many times donor teams are chosen based on the area in which the graduate lives or their background, such as being a veteran or in a certain career field. When photos are taken, the donor (if present) will also have their photo taken with the graduate and dog. If your dog and his new partner are a sponsored team, and the donor is present you may be asked to meet the donor at a reception. The Puppy Raising Department will notify you a few days in advance if the graduating team has been sponsored.

Those Raisers whose dogs have been matched with students receiving in-home training are welcome to attend graduation, and their name, their dog's name and the student's name will be mentioned during the program even though their dogs will not be presented in person.

Individuals who receive their guide dogs through in-home training are often not able to attend the formal graduation with their new guides. The whole purpose of this type of special training is to help a person with a visual impairment who cannot, for health or other personal reasons, attend one of the campus-based training classes. Because of this, Guide Dogs can sometimes arrange for the Raiser to visit their dog on campus before it leaves for training. The Instructor will take photos of the working team for the Raiser's keepsake. You may attend graduation and can make a statement at the microphone when introduced. With the graduate's consent, a statement composed by the graduate may be read by Guide Dogs' staff. Also with the graduate's consent, a phone call can be arranged between the Raiser and the graduate.

If your dog is chosen for breeding stock, it will also be involved in a graduation at one of our San Rafael graduation ceremonies. Just like presenting a guide, you will have the opportunity to present the breeder and make a statement at the microphone when introduced.

Tips to help make graduation more relaxed and enjoyable to all:

- Realize that the student is probably nervous and wants to make a good impression on you.

- It's natural for some Raisers to be nervous too; we want you to relax and enjoy yourself.
- Please let your first words be a greeting to the student (not the dog). Initiating a handshake is great! (Gently touch the back of the student's right hand as a greeting if they do not have their arm extended.)
- The student may offer you the leash so that you can visit with their dog for a few minutes. Keep in mind that this is a courtesy to you. Please be respectful of the student's important relationship with their dog and hand the leash back to them in a few minutes.
- Take a few minutes to greet the dog you've raised; it's best to stay gentle and calm. Despite your own excitement, try to not increase the dog's excitement.
- Please remember that the dog is working on this day. Expect and encourage him to behave as he would in a working situation involving a crowd.
- Indicate an open seat to the student. Ask the student about their class experience.
- Feel free to share positive and/or humorous stories about the dog's puppyhood. Keep in mind that the student has only begun to develop their trust and confidence in their new guide. While sharing normal puppy "challenges" with the student is fine, try not to focus on any negative subjects about raising their dog.
- Inquire about the student's lifestyle, plans or hobbies/career. Keep in mind, the student may or may not want to share this.
- Please do not offer the student any training advice even if asked.
- The student will put the harness on the dog when it is time to take photos. The student may also attach alternative control equipment onto their dog, such as a specialized collar or headcollar.
- The students' complete address is sent to you in the letter informing you of the graduation. Many times phone numbers are exchanged but remember that the graduate and you are under no obligation to give each other personal information or communicate in the future. Please respect any privacy wishes that the other may express.

This is truly a day to celebrate. All of the hard work that you have put into your dog has paid off. This new team still has a lot of work to do. When they return home, they will truly begin developing a working relationship based on trust and love. The graduate will receive a yearly veterinary stipend and follow-up visits by licensed Instructors to ensure that the transition goes smoothly. The graduate will look back on this day as the beginning of a new and exciting chapter in their life. And you are a very large part of what has made Guide Dogs' mission a reality for another visually impaired person.

## Career Change Dogs

“Career change” dogs are those who are released from Guide Dogs for the Blind programs, usually to become pets/companions. Some career change dogs go on to other careers such as obedience work, search and rescue, agility, hearing dog or service dog training, tracking, and pet therapy. The dogs that do not graduate as guides or breeders are released from the Guide Dog program for a variety of reasons; usually medical, temperamental, or behavioral.

*Guide Dogs is very fortunate to have a large community of raisers and leaders who work very hard to deliver back to us the best possible guide candidates. All raisers should be proud of their efforts and accomplishments regardless if the dog graduates, becomes a breeder, or is career changed. We are immensely proud of the love and dedication that all our volunteers - puppy socializers and testers in our kennels, raisers, leaders, and others - contribute so generously and effectively to help us develop the best puppies possible.*

The level of skill, soundness, and health that is necessary for a dog to be considered for guidework is extremely high. A dog must be orthopedically sound, capable of walking for long distances, free from nagging allergies, and in good physical health. An effective guide must exhibit a paradox of behaviors that can be extremely difficult to balance. The dog must be sensitive yet brave, obedient yet independent, loving of the handler yet aloof from strangers when necessary. One small concern may prevent a dog from being issued, resulting in career change.

Our canine population must be large enough to allow us to carefully screen and select the very best guide and breeder candidates. This is essential in order for us to provide the quality of guide that is needed in today's busy world.

All of our dogs, including our career change dogs go on to enrich the lives of people with whom they come into contact. They are wonderful ambassadors for our program, making friends throughout the world for themselves and for Guide Dogs for the Blind. All become wonderful, loving pets either with the family that raised them, a close friend or relative of the raiser, or with an adoptive family who has been screened and carefully selected by the Puppy Raising and Dog Placement Department at Guide Dogs. The hard work and love that raisers give to our puppies is the largest contributing factor in making career change dogs such great pets, and for this our raisers deserve our heartfelt thanks.

### **Who can receive a career change dog?**

#### **If a dog is career changed from the puppy home or training program**

- The last raiser to raise the dog has the first option to receive the dog as a pet.
- If the last raiser does not wish to keep the dog personally, the previous raiser has the next choice to receive the dog personally.
- If the dog has had more than two raisers and neither of the previous two wish to keep the dog personally, other previous raisers are offered the dog in the reverse order that they raised. An example of a dog that's had four raisers: 4<sup>th</sup> raiser = 1<sup>st</sup> choice, 3<sup>rd</sup> raiser = 2<sup>nd</sup> choice, 2<sup>nd</sup> raiser = 3<sup>rd</sup> choice, 1<sup>st</sup> raiser = 4<sup>th</sup> choice.

- If no raisers of a dog wish to keep the dog personally, raisers have the option of placing a career change dog only with a close family member or a close friend and in the order described above.
- The above guidelines for placement options have exceptions at the discretion of Guide Dogs. Exceptions may be based on consideration of:
  - a. the dog's temperament
  - b. the dog's health
  - c. the dog's compatibility with people and pets in the Raiser or adopter home
  - d. the dog's possible effect on a Guide Dog puppy in the home
  - e. instances of abuse or neglect in the home
  - f. incidents of dogs running loose at the home
  - g. questions regarding the raiser's ability to effectively care and control the dog
  - h. inadequate fencing or other housing needs
  - i. previous agreements between transfer homes, leaders, and advisors
  - j. other determinations by Guide Dogs in consideration for the well-being of the dog and/or the household

**If a dog is retired from the graduate's home in less than a year**

- The last person to raise the dog has the first option to receive the dog as a pet.
- If the last raiser declines to accept the dog personally, the graduate has the option to keep the dog or place the dog only with a close family member or a close friend.
- If both the graduate and the last Raiser decline these options, the dog will be placed by Guide Dogs using the same guidelines as when a dog is career changed in the puppy home or training program.

**If a dog is retired from the graduate's home after a year or more**

- The graduate has the option to keep the dog or place the dog as he or she chooses.
- If the graduate declines this option, the dog will be placed by Guide Dogs using the same guidelines as when a dog is career changed in the puppy home or training program.

**If a suitable home (one that meets the order of placement described above) cannot be found, Guide Dogs Puppy Raising and Dog Placement Department will individually screen and select a home for the dog**

- Guide Dogs receives hundreds of inquiries each year from people interested in receiving a career change dog.
- Potential homes are screened to determine their suitability to adopt a career change dog, including a home visit/fence check.
- Potential adopters must come to Guide Dogs to meet the available dogs.
- Individual dogs are matched to individual homes.
- Puppy Raising and Dog Placement staff personally interview and introduce dogs to their potential adopters.
- GDB charges an adoption fee of \$300.
- GDB provides follow-up information: books, videos, audio tapes, booklets, training references.
- GDB welcomes back any dog that is not compatible with the new home.

## **How Guide Dogs places the puppies you raise**

It is difficult when you can't provide a home for a career changed dog when you have invested so much time, effort, and love raising it. We want you to know about our Dog Placement process and the time, effort, and love that go into each placement.

The process starts when someone notifies us of their desire to receive a dog from our program by submitting a Career Change Application. After careful review, only those who qualify are kept on file. Acceptable applications are entered into our computer database.

When a dog is career changed and the raiser is unable to take the dog back or has no close family member or close friend that can offer a quality home, the dog's placement becomes the responsibility of the Puppy Raising and Dog Placement Department. We learn everything we can about the dog: the reason the dog was released from the program, the dog's history in the puppy raising home (another reason completed project records are so helpful!), the training and socialization history and health history. We review the evaluations done in the field by the puppy raising advisors and, if the dog made it all the way back to the training program, we talk with the instructors and instructor assistants who may have trained and cared for the dog. From all the information we have gathered, we put together a basic profile of the kind of home we are looking for - a family with kids, a retired couple, a home without other dogs or cats, a family who has owned this type of dog before, etc.

By searching the available applications in the database, we develop a list of potential matches. Then, considering the dog's strengths and weaknesses, we spend hours reviewing the applications and talking on the phone with several potential adopters to find a home that seems best suited for the particular dog we are trying to place. Only when we feel we have a possible match do we indicate that we have a dog available. We then describe the dog in detail, always giving both the positives and negatives. It is very important to us to be straightforward about the dog. Our success in locating a permanent home is more likely if there are not a great deal of "surprises" when adopters take their new dog home.

A fence check must be completed before the dog goes to its new home. This check provides an opportunity for us to observe the home environment. Fence checks may be done by GDB staff, leaders or volunteers.

Once the fence check is completed, the family is required to meet the dog on campus. We encourage the whole family to come, especially if there are young children in the household. During this meeting we spend a lot of time discussing dog behavior, teaching the family various training techniques (e.g. how to use a proper collar and leash correction along with praise and the basic obedience commands). It typically takes between one and two hours to educate the family and "show" the dog.

Not every meeting results in the dog going to that home. Occasionally, in spite of the hours that were spent interviewing the family by phone, the match is inappropriate. Sometimes we deny the

placement, and sometimes the family decides that the dog is not right for them. If the campus meeting is not successful, the process begins again to search for a new, more appropriate home.

It takes time to find the right match. It is never a case of just assigning a dog to the next applicant on the list. As dogs wait for new homes, most adjust well to kennel-life, continuing to mature and learning from the instructor assistants who constantly work with them grooming, exercising, and training.

Our primary goal is placing the dog with a family that will provide it with a lifetime of love, care, and companionship. Since our breeds are known to enjoy active involvement with their owners, we also encourage applications from those who are looking for dogs to enter into agility, obedience, tracking, search and rescue, pet facilitated therapy, and other disciplines and hobbies.

Thank you for the time, love, and care that you have put into raising a puppy for Guide Dogs for the Blind. Even though all dogs cannot become guides or breeders, we recognize that each dog is truly a unique and valued individual. We will continue to work hard to find loving and responsible homes for each. We know that you would want nothing less for your puppy!

## **Taking back your career change dog**

Let's suppose that you have just found out that the puppy you so carefully raised has been career changed. Now what?

Raisers have a great deal of attachment to the puppies that they loved, cared for, and trained, often watching them grow from cute, cuddly puppies into mature dogs. As a result of these heartfelt emotions, a raiser may feel obligated to take a career change dog back. We at Guide Dogs understand a raiser's feelings of love and responsibility to the puppy that they raised because we feel the same spirit of protectiveness. However, we place no responsibility on raisers to keep a dog that they have raised. Unless a raiser is sure that they can provide a lifetime quality home for a dog, we would prefer to place the dog through our Puppy Raising and Dog Placement Department.

### **Before deciding to take a career change dog back, please ask yourself the following questions**

- Are you considering taking the dog back only because you feel an obligation to the dog or GDB?
- Have you considered that the dog may be a different dog in size and behaviors than the one that you returned for training several months ago?
- Can you give the dog the best possible home for the rest of the dog's life?
- Do you have time to spend exercising and playing with the dog?
- Does everyone in the home want the dog?
- If you are a youth raiser, do your parents want the dog as much as you do?
- If you are a youth raiser, will you be going to college or moving into your own home while the dog may be still living? What are your plans for the dog then?
- Will the dog get along well with all family members: adults, small children and pets?

- Do you have other dogs - a GDB puppy, other career change dogs, or pets – and will you be able to provide each with sufficient individual love and care?
- Can you afford the food and veterinary care of a large-breed dog?
- Do you currently have a secure, fenced area (yard or dog run) at least 5 feet in height?
- If your home has a pool, is it safely fenced?
- Will the dog have adequate shelter from both the rain and sun?
- Will the dog be inside the house (at least at night)?
- How much time will the dog be alone?
- If renting, do you have the landlord's permission to have a dog?

If any of the preceding questions cause doubts, perhaps you would be better off letting a previous raiser accept the dog or letting GDB place the dog.

### **If you decide to accept the career change dog back as a pet**

- Guide Dogs will legally transfer the dog to you.
- You must complete an "Agreement Confirming Gift of Dog" contract which transfers the dog from GDB to you.
- Any transportation costs to return the dog to you are at your expense.
- With the exception of a small number of pre-approved cases, veterinary and all other expenses are your responsibility.
- If the dog doesn't work out, please do not hesitate to notify and then return the dog to GDB.
- If at any time in the dog's life you transfer the dog to a new home, please complete and return to Guide Dogs a "Supplemental Dog Transfer Form."
- Raisers are not allowed to sell career change dogs.
- If concerns about a dog's behavior or health arise, please contact the GDB Puppy Raising and Dog Placement Department's dog evaluation specialist.

### **Placing your career change dog**

If you decide that you cannot personally keep the dog, you also have the option to place the dog (using the same order of preference as described in "Who Can Receive a Career Change Dog?") If you choose to place the dog yourself, you may only place the dog with a close friend or close family member. Guide Dogs has found that the placements of dogs by raisers with people whom they do not know extremely well are often not successful. If a raiser cannot keep a career change dog as their own or place the dog with a very trusted person, Guide Dogs will happily place the dog.

Guide Dogs takes great care, reinforced by years of experience, in the placing of career change dogs. Guide Dogs has two Dog Placement offices, one in California and one in Oregon, that are staffed by professionally trained people whose sole jobs are to screen, select, and educate prospective homes. We offer not only these preliminary services but also follow-up services to ensure that the dog is happy in the new home.

**If you decide to place a career change dog with a close friend or family member, first, carefully ask yourself some questions about the dog**

- Does the dog have temperament, control, or behavior concerns that make him a challenging candidate for placement?
- In offering this dog to a new home, can you be honest with the prospective adopters about all his behaviors, good and bad?
- If the dog has problems in the adopters' home, can you offer the resources to help work through the problem?
- If this dog does not work out in his new home, are you willing to take him back or return him to Guide Dogs?
- Would this dog be better placed by Guide Dogs' experienced Dog Placement staff?

**In deciding whether your close relative or close friend is a good candidate for a dog, ask yourself some general questions about the prospective home**

- Have you honestly and completely explained in detail all the dog's potential negative behaviors and/or health problems to the prospective adopter?
- Does everyone in the home want the dog?
- Is the potential adopter making a decision on impulse or as a surprise gift for someone else? This is not a good way to make such an important decision.
- Will the dog get along well with all family members: adults, small children, and pets/livestock?
- Is any one in the home allergic to dogs?
- What is the prospective adopter's motivation in wanting this dog as a pet?
- Are they interested in this dog because they really know and like him?
- Have they spent any substantial amount of time with the dog?
- Do they only want the dog because he is a "good deal?"
- Do they only want the dog as a favor to you?
- Do they only want the dog because he has come from Guide Dogs for the Blind?
- Do they understand that all dogs have dog behaviors, good and bad, even ones from Guide Dogs?
- Do they understand all the responsibility involved in providing a lifetime, loving home for a dog?
- Are all their current pets well cared for, including grooming, housing, and vaccinations?
- Have they had dogs in the past? What became of these dogs?

These general dynamics can often best predict a dog's happiness in a new home. Refer to the article "Common Career Change Misconceptions" for additional information. If you have any concerns about the success of the proposed placement, please let Guide Dogs select a home instead.

**If you are confident from the answers to the above questions that a prospective family may be a good candidate to receive the dog that you raised, ask the following**

- Can the prospective family afford the food and veterinary care of a large-breed dog?
- Do they have time to spend exercising and playing with the dog?
- Do they have a secure, fenced area (yard or dog run) at least 5 feet in height?
- If the potential home has a pool, is it safely fenced?
- Will the dog be inside (at least at night)?
- Is adequate shelter provided from both rain and sun?
- How much time will the dog be alone?
- If renting, do they have the landlord's permission to have a dog?
- Are they able and willing to obtain and use a crate?
- Will they take a dog through obedience classes or private training to better understand and control the dog?
- Are they familiar with the grooming needs of this breed?
- Are they willing to provide flea control?
- Are they planning to move in the near future?

**If you are satisfied that the dog you are placing fits well with the applicant**

- Introduce the dog to the adopters at their home.
- Make sure that no family members are intimidated by the dog,
- Make sure that all family members are gentle and kind, yet consistent.
- Make sure that there are no possible conflicts with other pets, inside and outside the home.
- Double check the yard for safety and security.

**If you decide to place the dog in this new home**

- Any transportation costs to transport the dog to the new home are yours or the adopters.
- Raisers are not allowed to sell career change dogs.
- With the exception of a small number of pre-approved cases, veterinary and all other expenses are the responsibility of the adopters.
- If questions arise in the new home that you cannot answer, please ask the adopters to contact the GDB Puppy Raising and Dog Placement Department's dog evaluation specialist who will consult with them.
- Ask the adopters that if it doesn't work out to please contact you or GDB directly to return the dog to us.

**If you don't feel right about a potential new owner, tell them "no."**

**If you have any uncertainties, please let us place the dog. The Puppy Raising and Dog Placement Department is available to place the dog from either campus in the event that you don't feel comfortable with your options. Since the quality of the dog's life depends on this placement, take your time and don't take chances!**

**Thank you for all the love and effort that you spent raising a puppy for Guide Dogs for the Blind. Thank you also for helping us find a permanent, happy home for each dog from our program.**

**Please help us fulfill our responsibilities by letting Guide Dogs for the Blind Puppy Raising and Dog Placement staff find homes for any dog in need of a home.**

**Guide Dogs for the Blind will gladly accept back any dog that is returned to us at any stage of the dog's life.**

**We feel a great debt to all our dogs - guides, breeders, and career change - that have contributed to our mission. We have a lifelong responsibility to them all.**

**Please help us fulfill our responsibility by returning to us any dog that is from our program and that is in need of a home.**