

The Paw-sitivity

REPORT

Your Generosity at Work



“The best day of my life.”

“She makes me feel safer and more secure – day and night.”

That’s how Ross Knicely describes his Dog Guide, Ginger.

Ginger has received special training to serve as a Diabetes Alert Dog Guide – meaning that she can detect when Ross’s blood glucose is low, and alert him or people around him.

When the blood sugar of a person with Type 1 diabetes drops too low, they can experience hypoglycemia, a dangerous condition that can cause convulsions or even a coma.

Technology is very good for alerting but unlike a Continuous Glucose Monitor, Ginger can’t be turned off – a dog will continue to alert until there is a response from their handler. They are also trained to fetch a test kit or bark for help.

So, the role a Dog Guide like Ginger plays in detecting low blood sugar is truly life-saving.

Recently, Ross and Ginger were out at the pharmacy. He shares,

“I was paying for my insulin, when Ginger started pawing to alert me. I checked and my blood sugar was low – but I thought we would be OK. As we walked away from the checkout, I dropped to the floor and Ginger started barking for help. Everyone there thought Ginger was amazing.”

Ross remembers the day he received Ginger. *“The best day of my life,”* he calls it.



The two of them are really bonded. They go for walks every day, and are regulars at the mall. Ross says, *“When I put on her harness, she’s like a different dog. She’s all business. She keeps her nose near me all of the time.”*

Ross has a special thanks to the foster families who raise these special pups and to the Dog Guides donors – whose generosity means Dog Guides are provided at no cost.

“It’s truly wonderful how much people do so that Ginger can be my dog.”



Ross and Ginger

Day School Program success story

It's back to school for the pups in our Day School Program!

While some of our Dog Guides in training enjoy bunking with their friends, others do not enjoy the kennel environment. So, we opened up our Day School Program, and the results have been outstanding.

"Some dogs in training are unphased by the kennel environment, while others thrive when they are able to continue living in a home for the duration of their training," says Gina Lijoi, Director of Programs and Client Services.

Because these dogs can live on evenings and weekends with families, they don't experience the stress of being in a kennel environment. During their work day they can focus better on learning and be successful.

In the past, a dog who couldn't adjust to the kennel might need to be career changed and head into our adoption program. Now, the Day School Program allows them to go to school in the daytime and have their weekends and evenings in a home with a family to love them.

For Day School fosters Bill and Linda Festing-Smith, it's a joy to see the dogs they foster be matched with the perfect person.

Norman, now graduated in the Autism Assistance program, became a different dog in the Day School Program. Thanks to Linda and Bill, Norman became more laid back - he was calm, less distracted, and could focus on learning new skills.

Linda and Bill share, *"We get really attached, but we're just so proud of our dogs. To watch them go and settle in... It feels so good to take our love of dogs and see them helping people."*

Thank you to our dedicated family of supporters who make all these programs possible.



Day School graduate

Bill and Linda with Norman and his new handler Alyse.



PAW-fect, just the way they are

Program PROFILE

We're always watchful to make sure our student Dog Guides really are suited for service. We have a special Career Change Program for those who aren't.

In some cases, we work with organizations like Canada Border Services who will take dogs who may be too high energy to be Dog Guides – but they make great sniffer dogs!

And for dogs like Sophie we have our Adoption program where she found her “forever” home with Bruce and Barb Norman.

Sophie's high energy and active curiosity are wonderful traits – but it was clear to our trainers that her path lay outside the world of assistance

or guide dogs. Life with Bruce and Barb is wonderful...

“Sophie is our fourth poodle. Her foster parents and trainers had done a great job of raising a sweet, furry friend. The Foundation's adoption process took care to ensure the placement was a good fit for the dog and the family.”

“Our house, once again, is filled with joy, wonder and love. Dogs are miracle-workers.”



Sophie with Bruce and Barb

Jessie's dream job

Dog Trainer PROFILE

Even as a child Jessie's passion and desire was to work with dogs and people. When she was 10 years old, she started participating in dog sports like flyball and agility.

Jessie's love of helping people led her to a degree in Social Service Work, working with people with developmental delays and acquired brain injuries.

And then... Jessie found her “dream job” at Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides. *“These 2 passions – dogs and people – brought me to the mission at Dog Guides.”* Jessie is a trainer in the Diabetes Alert Dog Guide program and will celebrate 10 years with LFCDG in March this year.

Jessie shares, *“My favourite part of training is when the Dog Guide makes the correlation, for the first time with the scent and the alert. ‘I have smelt that before, and I got something yummy for it, so I choose to tell you now.’”*

All dogs have over 100 million scent receptors in their noses – compared to people who have only 6 million! Jessie's other favourite part of training is seeing one of her dogs alert their new person to a low blood sugar for the very first time.

“I like dogs in the program that show interest in using their nose. Dogs that are a bit spunkier and have a bit of energy. Dogs that are really in-tune with their person.”

Jessie with one of her super students



Legacy Donor PROFILE



Joanna hiking in Glacier National Park

A dog's love lasts a lifetime

Joanna knows that a dog's love lasts a lifetime. And beyond.

Growing up, her family had Labrador retrievers, so she knows how much love and meaning a dog can bring to a family.

But it wasn't until she saw the difference that a Dog Guide made in the life of her friend's son, Jason, that she really understood the impact these amazing dogs can have.

"When I saw what a blessing Dog Guide Romeo was to Jason, I decided that Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides would be the animal charity that I would leave a bequest to."

For more information on leaving a gift in your Will please email Jlinek@dogguides.com.

Monthly Donor PROFILE

Dog Guides Guardians, making a difference every month



The Dog Guides Guardians are a special group of donors who give a gift each month and provide a reliable, predictable and easy stream of revenue with minimal administrative costs.

Nancy Chiasson, a Dog Guides Guardian, says, *"I love that my donation happens each month and I don't have to think about it. It really is amazing how much a monthly donation can add up. I know that each donation I make is helping more Canadians to get the Dog Guide they are waiting for."*

As a volunteer, board member and Lion, Nancy is a passionate supporter of the work at Dog Guides.

Nancy shares, *"The independence and confidence that having a Dog Guide can provide is priceless, but it takes financial support to make that happen."*



Dog Guides Guardian Nancy

I became a Dog Guides Guardian as a way to help support the life-changing work that Dog Guides does."

For more information on our monthly giving program please email guardians@dogguides.com.

