

# The Paw *sitivity*

# REPORT

Your Generosity at Work



## Megan and Buffy: Love Goes On

When Megan's beloved Autism Assistance Dog Guide, Freesia, crossed the rainbow bridge, it was hard for Megan to imagine life without her. Or that she could develop the same bond and trust with another dog.

But this past September, Megan and her new Dog Guide, Buffy, celebrated a wonderful first year together.

In Megan's words, ***"Buffy has brought so much support and joy into my life."***



***It's certainly been a journey! I'll be honest — it hasn't been without its challenges. Change is scary. But now something has just clicked and I'm more confident than ever in our ability to navigate the world as a team.***

***It's amazing to think that this time last year, me and Buffy were at Dog Guides training together, and now we are attending Sheridan College."***

September was also when Megan started her studies at Sheridan college — with Buffy at her side. Megan took the time to write to her professor beforehand, explaining that Buffy was her Autism Assistance Dog Guide and offering a few tips for how other students could help the transition go smoothly.

Megan feels incredibly privileged to have had both Freesia and Buffy.



Megan and Autism Assistance Dog Guide Buffy

***"Without them I don't think I'd be where I am today. Having a Dog Guide has allowed me to be more independent because I can face challenging environments, knowing I have someone with me for support."***

Thank you to all our dedicated supporters, who make partnerships like this one possible.

## A Family Affair

In our Dog Guide family, we have a few extra-special members. These are the Labs, Golden Retrievers, and Standard Poodles whose help we respectfully and carefully enlist to help give birth to the next generation of Dog Guides. Our Heroes!

Forty female dogs and 15-20 males live with loving foster families. The females have a small number of litters and are then adopted by their foster families, or find new homes through the Dog Guide Career Change program.

The Puppy Nursery is always a busy and happy place. Pups — named with a rotating letter of the alphabet — stay with their moms until 8 weeks of age. They are then placed with their approved volunteer foster family, and their journey to becoming a fully-fledged Dog Guide really begins!

Sam Hobbes, our Breeding Manager, shares, *“Moms and dads who are selected have the very*



*Dinah and her 6 Labrador Retriever pups*

*best health, as well as the temperament that a Dog Guide needs — confidence, willingness to work with their handler, low distraction, moderate energy, and a love of work as well as relaxation time.”*

The program is infused with love and respect ... both for the exciting new pups, and for their cherished moms and dads.

## Safety, Independence and Awareness

For Angela Bentivegna, working with our Hearing Dog Guides is her dream job. Angela loves having a job where she can work with animals and help people at the same time.

*“I love watching the dogs work, and how it gives the clients so much more awareness in their environment. Some dogs are really quick to figure out that they are their clients’ ears! They start alerting to other sounds that they haven’t even been trained for.”*

Angela completed her apprenticeship with Dog Guides in 2008 in the Service Dog program but moved into Hearing in 2012. Angela is also an assessor for Assistance Dogs International — one of the organizations that provide accreditation for assistance dog schools world-wide.

## Dog Trainer PROFILE

Interviewing volunteers, staff and clients, Angela can sum up the impact of a Dog Guide in three words: Safety, Independence and Awareness.

*“I am so passionate about our mission and want to see the best outcomes for all our clients and dogs. There is an art and finesse to matching dogs with clients — and it’s one of my favourite parts of this role.”*



*Angela Bentivegna*

# Meet Trusty



Nathanael and Facility Support Dog Trusty



Trusty brings comfort and support to children going through unimaginably difficult times.

As a Facility Support Dog Guide, Trusty accompanies handler Nathanael Hewitt at the Safe Kids & Youth (SKY) coordinated response in the Kootenay region of BC each day.

Together, this amazing team helps children and youth who are victims of abuse. They accompany them to visit professionals, testify in court, and attend interviews and counselling sessions.

With Trusty at their sides, these children and young people find it easier and less traumatic to give statements and speak to adults about the abuse they've experienced.

We are thrilled that Trusty is able to be such a good friend to these kids at a time when they need friends the most.

# The Joy of Living Our Values

## Legacy Donor PROFILE

After Chuck's wife passed away, a colleague suggested that he consider fostering a Dog Guide.

The timing spoke to him: his son had recently adopted a dog, and now it seemed like the perfect time to join LFCDG as one of our valued Fosters. And being a Christian, Chuck felt God was guiding him along this path.

Chuck's first foster dog was Zenith. When Zenith was paired with Jacob, Chuck really got to see the impact a Dog Guide has.

***"A Dog Guide allows resilient people — who are already doing amazing things — to accomplish so much more. It opens up their world."***

Chuck has now fostered three different Dog Guides and deeply appreciates the exceptional care LFCDG provides to each dog throughout their journey. And he sees the great things we accomplish with modest funding.

***"Knowing it costs \$35,000 to raise and train a dog, I'm amazed by what LFCDG accomplishes with no government funding."***

Now semi-retired, Chuck is enjoying another new role as a first-time grandfather!

He has also chosen to leave a legacy by including a gift to Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides in his Will.



Chuck and his dogs

***"I feel blessed to be where I am in my life, and fulfilled by knowing that my gift will have an impact on the future. Lions Foundation aligns with my own beliefs and values — stewardship and taking good care of what you're given."***

Bequests are a significant source of funding for LFCDG. For more information on leaving a gift in your Will please email Jane Leaver at [Jleaver@dogguides.com](mailto:Jleaver@dogguides.com).

# Diabetes Alert Dog Guides: Protecting Their People From an Invisible Danger

A few years ago, Jen Parsons endured a “bad low” — when her blood sugar got so low that she ended up unconscious and hospitalized. That experience left her understandably anxious.

Now Jen’s participating in our Diabetes Alert Dog Guide Transitional Home Program, and says that the dogs are “truly remarkable.”

The Transitional Home program uses volunteers like Jen who lives with type 1 diabetes. These special volunteers live with a newly trained Diabetes Alert Dog (DAD) for a few weeks at their home. This gives our DAD a chance to practice their alerting skills in a real-life environment before they go home with their client.

*“Even before my blood sugar is low enough for them to alert, the dogs have ensured they are close by with my attention, and ready to act. They are often able to catch my lows before I do. They help me feel safe and confident, without the constant worry.”*

Jen describes diabetes as “an invisible disability” and explains that — as well as the safety and security these dogs bring — they also help spread awareness about diabetes to other people.

*“It’s a privilege to be involved in a program that provides support to individuals living with type 1 diabetes. It fosters hope, independence and security.”*



## Once in a Lifetime Opportunity

After 40 years working in our current school, we have reached our capacity and need to expand to meet the increasing demand for people living with disabilities to be matched with our amazing Dog Guides.

The opportunity to build a new, state-of-the-art, fully accessible national training school is beyond exciting — the ability to help more people in a building that fully meets their needs is truly empowering!

That’s why we launched “The Difference

Campaign” to build a new, welcoming environment that improves the training experience for both people and future Dog Guides.

The goal for “The Difference Campaign” is to raise \$50M to build the new training school.

You can donate online at [www.dogguides.com](http://www.dogguides.com) or scan the QR code to make your gift →

