



A publication for Lions  
across Canada

# Bark and Roar



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## Spring Forward Together

As we move into the spring season, we want to take a moment to thank Lions across Canada for your continued support of Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides. Your dedication to service and commitment to helping others continues to make a meaningful difference in the lives of Canadians living with disabilities.

Spring is always an exciting time across the Dog Guides community. With events like the Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides, the Memorial Forest Service, and countless club fundraisers and initiatives taking place across the country, Lions continue to show what is possible when communities come together in support of a shared mission.

Thank you for everything you do to support Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides and the people we serve.

**Richard Banyard**  
Campaign Officer



# In Memory of Judge Brian Stevenson

We are deeply saddened by the passing of Judge Brian Stevenson.

Judge Stevenson was a dedicated supporter and friend of Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, and his commitment to service and community made a lasting impact on our organization and on the lives of so many Canadians.

His compassion, leadership, and belief in helping others will be remembered and cherished by all who had the privilege of knowing him and working alongside him.

On behalf of the entire Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides family, we extend our heartfelt condolences to his family, friends, and colleagues during this difficult time.

His legacy of service will continue to inspire us.



## Trainer Spotlight: Courtney Starr

Courtney Starr has worked with Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides for 21 years, bringing hands-on experience across kennels, puppy raising, and several training teams. She began in the Breslau kennels, moved to the Oakville puppy program, completed her apprenticeship, and spent more than a decade as an instructor in the Canine Vision program. After several years as a senior instructor in the Autism Assistance program, she was appointed Program Manager. Today, as Program Lead for the Autism Assistance Dog and Facility Support programs, Courtney oversees two of Dog Guides' most complex and individualized areas. She has also helped expand Facility Support placements in schools, police services, funeral homes, and other community settings where dogs support individuals and families navigating trauma and crisis.

Her approach centers on matching dogs to people, prioritizing lifestyle fit, temperament, and specific needs over forcing an early bond. She emphasizes transparency about a dog's quirks before handover, patience during early transitions, and stability over speed in placements, reinforced by continuous feedback loops that adapt plans based on real-world experience.

Through this lens of patience, preparation, and partnership, Courtney outlined the full client journey and the work that truly goes into matching a client with a Dog Guide.



# Behind the Match: What It Takes to Pair a Client with a Dog Guide

From the outside, receiving a Dog Guide can look simple. In reality, it's a long, detailed process with many moving parts. Behind every successful team is a huge amount of quiet work: assessment, preparation, matching, and ongoing support that most people never see.

## Expressions of Interest and Early Screening

The process starts when applications open and we receive Expressions of Interest (EOIs).

Each EOI is reviewed on its own merits for:

- Eligibility and program fit
- Readiness and ability to commit

If interest exceeds available spaces, we use randomized selection to decide who moves forward and identify alternates. At this stage, applicants are not guaranteed a Dog Guide; they are still being screened.

## Phone Interviews and Deeper Assessment

Next, selected applicants complete structured phone interviews with Client Services. These conversations explore:

- Daily routines and mobility goals
- Family life and support systems
- Financial readiness and long-term commitment to a working dog

The key question is: Can a Dog Guide realistically and meaningfully support this person's life, now and in the future?

## **In-Home and Environmental Assessments**

Instructors then conduct virtual or in-person home assessments, often travelling or flying to visit applicants. They look at:

- Home safety and layout
- Typical walking routes and local environment
- Family dynamics, visiting children or grandchildren
- Other pets in the home

This helps us train Dog Guides for real-world conditions, not idealized scenarios, and flags any concerns early.

## **Admissions Committee and the Applicant Wait List**

All information is reviewed by the Admissions Committee. Applicants may be:

- Accepted
- Deferred
- Declined (with clear reasons and the option to appeal if circumstances change)

Qualified applicants are placed on a wait list, typically 18–24 months. This wait list is not a simple queue and does not guarantee a placement. It represents a pool of applicants who have passed a rigorous first phase and can be considered when an appropriate dog is available.

## **Returning Clients and Successor Dogs**

Graduates who need a successor Dog Guide also go through this process. They must still meet current criteria, but if they are in good standing and have previously worked successfully with a Dog Guide, they are often prioritized.

Their applications are reviewed alongside new qualified applicants. Matching decisions still depend on compatibility, environment, and need, not just history.

## **Matching Is Not First-Come, First-Served**

Matching is one of the most complex steps. It is never based simply on who applied first. Instructors consider:

- Dog temperament, confidence, energy, training history, health
- Client environment, walking pace, family situation, stress tolerance

Dogs are often matched to potential clients weeks in advance, then trained specifically for that person's lifestyle—busy cities, schools, workplaces, or quieter rural settings.

## **Class and Transition**

When clients arrive for class, they learn an important truth: Bonding takes time.

Dogs are also going through a major transition, moving from their instructor to a brand-new partner. Education about dog psychology, realistic expectations, and gradual trust-building is a core part of training.

Even with the best planning, some matches don't work as hoped. When that happens, it's not a failure. Dogs and clients can re-enter the matching process so that both end up with the right partner.

## **Life After Graduation**

- Support continues well after graduation. The team helps clients navigate:
- Workplaces and schools
- Family changes, including children and major life events
- Health considerations and changing needs
- Dog retirement and future successor dogs

The relationship is ongoing and adaptive, focused on helping both the client and the dog thrive over the long term.

## **The Key Takeaway**

Every Dog Guide placement represents years of work, careful judgment, and ongoing reassessment. The goal is not simply to place a dog, but to build a partnership that can succeed for many years.

# Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides

Registration is now open for the 2026 Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides, a national movement helping restore independence and transform lives, one Dog Guide at a time. Join us on National Walk Day, Sunday, May 31, 2026, as communities across Canada come together to support Canadians living with disabilities.

Each Dog Guide costs \$35,000 to raise, train, and match, and together our goal is to raise \$1.6 million to provide life-changing Dog Guides at no cost to recipients. As the only school in Canada offering seven distinct Dog Guide programs, Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides relies on the generosity of supporters to make this work possible.

#IndependenceRestored #LivesTransformed

Register today and be part of this powerful movement. Visit [www.walkfordogguides.com](http://www.walkfordogguides.com) to sign up or find a local Walk near you.



**INDEPENDENCE RESTORED. LIVES TRANSFORMED**

**pet valu WALK FOR DOG GUIDES**

**JOIN A POWERFUL MOVEMENT TO PROVIDE LIFE-CHANGING DOG GUIDES.**

**WALKFORDOGGUIDES.COM**

# Paws & Practice: Lions Learning Hub

## Fellowship & Life Membership – Historical Recipients List

When ordering a Fellowship or Life Membership, clubs can review a Historical List of recipients to date using the button at the bottom of the awards ordering page. The list is updated every 3 months and serves as a helpful reference when planning new awards.

If your club would like confirmation of past awards or a current list for your club before placing an order, we're happy to help. Award corrections can be costly, and we're glad to help ensure everything is accurate before your order is submitted.



## Memorial Forest – Order Deadline Reminder

Honour the memory of a loved one or fellow Lion through the Memorial Forest Program. Each tree includes a plaque at its base and an "In Memoriam" certificate for the family.

- Trees purchased by April 25, 2026 will be recognized at the Memorial Forest Service on Saturday, June 13, 2026 in Breslau. Orders received after this date will be included in the 2027 ceremony.
- Order online: [dogguides.com/memorial-forest-order-form](https://dogguides.com/memorial-forest-order-form)

**Questions?** Contact Richard Banyard, Campaign Officer – [rbanyard@dogguides.com](mailto:rbanyard@dogguides.com) | 1-800-768-3030 Ext. 202



# Lions Spotlight

## Merritton Lions Club 13th Annual Dog Bowl Supporting Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides

The Lions Club of Merritton has been a dedicated supporter of Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, with their annual Dog Bowl continuing to be a meaningful way to raise both funds and awareness. In November 2025, the Club hosted its 13th Bowl-A-Thon at the Merritton Community Centre, raising more than \$8,000. Since the event began in 2009, the Dog Bowl has contributed over \$105,000 in support of Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides programs.

More than a fundraiser, the Dog Bowl invites participants to bowl while experiencing simulated vision loss, helping build understanding of the daily challenges faced by individuals with visual impairments. The focus is on inclusion, empathy, and fellowship, with 20 teams taking part this year.

Beyond the Dog Bowl, the Merritton Lions support Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides through dog sponsorships, Lions Fellowships and Memberships, Memorial Forest gifts, and a pledge to the Difference Campaign supporting the new national training school. Their continued generosity helps ensure Dog Guides can change lives across Canada.



## **Mosborough Busy Busy Lions Club: Washing Machine Donation to Breslau Breeding Facility**

The Mosborough Busy Busy Lions Club generously donated a new washing machine to our Breslau Breeding Facility, providing essential support to the daily care and well-being of our dogs. This practical gift plays an important role in keeping bedding, enrichment items, and supplies clean, helping our breeding team maintain a healthy, comfortable environment for both dogs and staff.

By responding to a real operational need, this donation strengthens the behind-the-scenes work that supports every stage of a Dog Guide's journey. We are sincerely grateful to the Mosborough Busy Busy Lions Club for their continued thoughtfulness and commitment to making a meaningful impact.



## Floradale Friends of Dog Guides Lions Club: Supporting Our Breeding Puppies

The Floradale Friends of Dog Guides Lions Club has been supporting the Foundation since 2020 and has been a strong, ongoing supporter of the Breslau Breeding Facility. Their commitment continues through thoughtful gifts that directly enhance the daily care and development of our puppies.

Most recently, the club donated a variety of much-needed items from our Wish List, including Benebones, balls, chew items, plush toys, and bones. These enrichment items support healthy chewing habits, encourage play, and provide important mental stimulation during early development for puppies on site.

By responding to specific needs and focusing on practical impact, the Floradale Friends of Dog Guides Lions Club helps create a nurturing and enriching environment for our future Dog Guides. We are sincerely grateful for their continued generosity and dedication to our breeding program.

If you were inspired by these gifts, check out our [Wish List](#) which offers practical ways for Lions to support LFCDG.



# Thank You for Your Generosity

(Donations: January – February 2026)

## Ongoing Support

Arrowwood Lions Club	East Peterborough Lions Club	MacNutt & District Lions Club	Ripley & District Lions Club Inc.
Auburn & District Lions Club	Elgin Lions Club Inc	Martensville & District Lions Club	Sharbot Lake & District Lions Club Inc.
Berwick & District Lions Club	Elmira Lions Club	Mosborough Busy Busy Lions Club	St. Brendans Lions Club Inc
Bloomfield-Musgravetown Lions Club - DISBANDED	Floradale Friends of Dog Guides Lions Club	Nanoose Bay Lions Club	St. Eleanors Lions Club
Bryson Lionettes Club	Geary Lions Club	Pembroke-Petawawa Lions Club Inc.	Stittsville District Lions Club Inc.
Chatham (ON) Lions Club	Goodwood Lions Club	Penetanguishene Lions Club	Stonewall & District Lions Club Inc.
Chestermere Lions Club	Grande Prairie Lions Club	Pilot Butte & District Lions Club	Temiscaming & District Lions Club
Chilliwack Dogwood Monarch Lions Club	Hampton Lions Club	Pittsburgh Township Lions Club	Vancouver Yaletown Lions Club
Cymbria Lions Club Inc.	Kenora Lake of the Woods Lions Club	Plattsville and District Lions Club	Winnipeg West Lions Club
District N-4	Kootenay Lake Lions Club	Prince Albert Lions Club	York Lions Club
Doddsland District Lions Club	Labrador City Lions Club	Quesnel Lions Club	
	Le Club Lions Quebec la Cite	Redwater Lions Club	
	Lindsay Lions Club		
	Lions Bingo Lottery		

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## In Memory/ In Honour

Elora Lions Club	Marmora Crowe Valley Lions Club	St. Agapit Lions Club Inc.
Kendal Lions Club	Nashwaaksis Lions Club Inc	

## Capital Campaign

Bic Lions Club

Broughton Lions Club

Burlington Lions Club

Chippawa Lions Club

Club Lions de Mont-Joli

Club Lions Richmond-Melbourne Inc

Club Lions St-Romain Inc.

Cowansville Lions Club Inc.

Degelis Lions Club

Fort Qu'Appelle District Lions Club

Gananoque Lions Club

Goulds Lions Club

Green Capes Trust Foundation

Long Point Lioness Club

MacDowall & District Lions Club

Marmora Crowe Valley Lions Club

Matane D'amours Lions Club

Niagara Falls Lions Club Inc.

Plessisville Lions Club Inc

Port Williams & District Lions Club Inc.

Riviere-ouelle St Pacome Lions Club

St. Louis Lions Club

Ste Blandine Lions Club Inc.

Udora & Leaskdale Lions Club

Valley East Lions Club

Vancouver East Lions Club

Woodville & District Lions Club Oliver Lions Club

Omeme & District Lioness Club

Oro District Lions Club

Oshawa Airport Lions Club

Palmer Rapids & Area Lions Club

Parksville Lions Club

Prince Edward County Lions Club

Rapid City & Area Lions Club

Region G Zone 10 Lions

River John & District Lions Club

Rockton Lions Club

Rosebud Lions Club

Rosthern Lions Club

Russell & District Lions Club

Sackville (NS) Lions Club

Sheet Harbour Lions Club

South Brant Lions Club

Springdale Lions Club

St. Eleanors Lions Club

St. George Lions Club

St. Margaret's Bay Lions Club

Stephenville Crossing Lions Club

Stony Plain Lions Club

Storrington Lions Club

Stratford & Area (PE) Lions Club

Sylvan Lake & District Lions Club

Terrenceville Lions Club

Thornton District Lions Club

Tracadie Lions Club Inc.

Uxbridge & District Lions Club

Vancouver East Lions Club

Vankleek Hill & District Lions Club

Ville St Georges Lions Club

Warwick Lions Club

Welland Lions Club

Weston Lions Club Inc.

Winsloe Lions Club

Woodstock (ON) Lions Club

### Scholarships

Chase Lions Club

Clarenville Lions Club  
Inc.

District N-4

Eston Lions Club

Fenwick Lions Club

Kelowna Okanagan  
Mission Lions Club

Kinmount & District

Lions Club

Merritton Lions Club

North Newmarket  
Lions Club

Oak Ridges Lions Club

Paradise Centennial  
Lions Club

Sunderland Lions Club

York Lions Club

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### Fellowships and Memberships

Baie Comeau Lions  
Club

Bonavista Lions Club

Calgary Lions Club

Carleton-sur-Mer Lions  
Club

Chilliwack Dogwood  
Monarch Lions Club

Club Lions D Amqui Inc  
District 19L

Hampton Lions Club

Hyde Park & District  
Lions Club

Lions Club of Oakville  
Inc.

Londesboro Lions Club

Lumsden District Lions  
Club

Merritton Lions Club

Mont Louis Lions Club

Mont-Carmel Kam  
Lions Club

Murdochville Lions  
Club

Nanaimo Lions Club

Ripley & District Lions  
Club Inc.

Riviere-ouelle St  
Pacome Lions Club

Sept Iles Lions Club  
Inc.

Smoky Lake Lions Club

Spiritwood Lions Club

St. Anaclet De Lessard

Lions Club

Vancouver Pioneer  
Lions Club

Vancouver Point Grey  
Lions Club

Vancouver  
Shaughnessy Lions  
Club

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### Memorial Forest

Amherst Lions Club

Newcastle (NB) Lions  
Club

Petrolia Lions Club

# Contact Us

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For further questions and additional support, please contact your Lions Liaison:

**Richard Banyard**

Campaign Officer

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Phone: 905-842-2891 Ext. 202

**This newsletter is meant for all Lions, so please share freely within your network.**

**If you know of a club that is not receiving updates from LFCDG, please let us know.**