

MONTGOMERY REGION 2020 GRADUATES

A YEAR IN REVIEW



Sabrina and Jose – January 2020 Graduates

A resident of Louisville, Colorado, this is Sabrina's 2nd guide dog. Sabina has been a massage therapist for the past 25 years and truly enjoys her clients and finding the best approach to help each one. She previously lived in Hawaii for 25 years, but has been residing in Colorado for about the same length of time. She loves the outdoors, spending free time gardening, walking and hiking, or canoeing and camping with her husband. Her other interests are of a creative nature, including baking homemade bread with her own sourdough starter, not to mention doing ceramics.

How would you describe your guide dog? "Josie is extremely affectionate; freely giving it and showing when she wants it. I'm often amazed at how smart these dogs are. She's very tuned in and sensitive to how I'm feeling or I what I might want. If I want to sit quietly with her, she's willing to do that."

What made you decide to apply for a guide dog from Guiding Eyes? "My first dog, Bonita, was from Guiding Eyes and it was a good experience. She was a great dog and an incredible worker, who likely saved me more than once. Being with Guiding Eyes feels very familiar. I can count on their dogs being well trained; this school has been around a long time and has a lot of guide dog experience. I like that."

How has having a guide dog impacted your life? "A guide dog makes it possible to go hiking or take long walks with more freedom and safety. It's amazing what they will take you around or what they won't let you step into. They are just so attentive in their working skills, keeping you safely out of the way, like at street crossings."

Were there any training highlights? "From the start of our time together, I was able to see that she learns very quickly. We marked the huge cracks in the curb along the route, and from then on, she would always stop at them. I thank Guiding Eyes for their generosity in providing these dogs and this program. Thank you to the trainers for being really on top of things; making sure the students have the tools that we need and teaching us everything, so that when we go home, we can utilize those tools."

Montgomery Region Raiser: [Carla Coelho](#) and [Patricia Noel](#)



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Danielle and Ellie – February 2020 Graduates

A resident of Lafayette, Louisiana, this is Danielle's 1st Guiding Eyes dog. Danielle is a retired Special Education teacher for students in the 2nd through 5th grades. She is considering a return to teaching, to provide Braille instruction for elementary and middle school aged children. The mother of three children, now aged 20, 18 and 16, Danielle has spent a considerable amount of time volunteering at school events and also for the non-profit organization, La Leche League. Danielle enjoys yoga and is interested to see Ellie's reaction to her yoga lessons. She can't wait to head home with Ellie and traverse her home area with her new partner.

How would you describe your guide dog? "Ellie is confident and playful, but cautious when it's needed. She's really affectionate and will run right into my arms. She has no issues with manners at all and has been doing great in class. The dogs here at Guiding Eyes are very responsive."

What made you decide to apply for a guide dog from Guiding Eyes? "I know a graduate from Guiding Eyes and his dog was so disciplined and well kept. I was impressed, because the dog was so young, but I've never seen a dog that focused."

How has having a guide dog impacted your life? "I think the biggest impact for me has been having a companion in travel. This is a 'living being' that you can talk to when you get a little flustered or lost. You just take a few breaths and figure it out together."

Were there any training highlights? "I liked seeing the change between our first day and our second day, with the dogs. Everyone's gotten more and more comfortable and confident, and the dogs are so relaxed. It's really good to see the great control and the teams becoming more solid."

Montgomery Region Raiser: Katie Long and Cindy Beauregard & Family

