



GUIDING EYES FOR THE BLIND MONTGOMERY REGION

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Featured Stories

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Raiser of the Month

March-April 2021

Endora...Our big boned girl!

When we first met Endora in the Ikea parking lot, the entire family immediately fell in love with her. Although she was mainly my mom's and my dog, with her kind and bubbly personality, she has made a positive impact on everyone in our lives.

Granted that her abundance of energy and excitement can get out of control occasionally, she always shows us that she is ready to work and train when we need her to.

During this process we have wondered if Endora would be cut out to be a service dog, but with the assistance of our region manager, Jeanyne, our region coordinator Jean, our main puppy sitter Martha, Margie for providing early training foundation skills, and the other people in the program with us. With the time we have spent with her, we have been able to train her and gain more and more confidence in her abilities.



Grace welcoming Endora her first day home

Endora knows when we are sad and need to be cheered up, so she brings us a toy. She celebrates with us when we are happy and she has helped us grow into more empathetic, responsible, and outgoing people. This has been a completely eye-opening experience and we can see the world from a whole new perspective now, understanding how much these dogs help the people who need them and how much we have to be thankful for.



Endora celebrating birthday and Christmas

It has been such a joy to watch her mature and grow into the amazing dog she is now. She makes us feel loved and secure and we will miss her and remember her for the rest of our lives, she holds a special place in our hearts. Even though our time with her is coming to an end and we are sad to lose her, we know that she is going to change somebody's life in an even better way than she has changed ours.

Puppy raiser Grace and family



Endora learning early socialization skills

We have loved taking Endora with us on hikes, to the beach, and just on everyday errands with us. Her love for the outdoors is unmatched and her enthusiasm for learning and exploring has been inspiring.



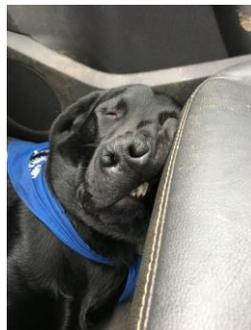
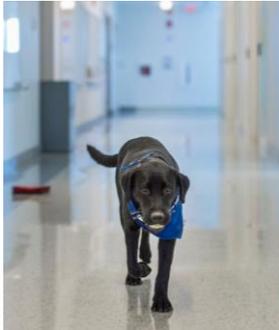
Raiser of the Month

Neville...he is definitely quirky!

Neville is **two years old!** Who knew I would be so lucky to get to spend an extra 7 months with this handsome man!

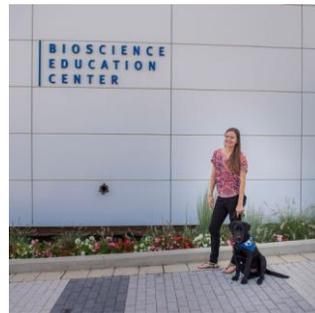
We literally picked up Neville on my way home from dropping off Schyler, my previous pup, at IFT. John and Renay Tyler in the Baltimore region had Neville for the early puppy stage and Neville was transferred to my care at 6 months of age.

From the moment I got him, he was instantly comfortable at school and absolutely *loved* everyone and everything. He's joined us for many road trips after which he would just zonk out.



Neville working the halls of Montgomery College and relaxing after a long day on the job.

He really enjoys hanging with his friends, like Whim (pup on left) and Doc. He loves showing people and dogs his collection of toys and will shove them in dog's faces and people's knees until they play with him.



Neville has the wiggliest of booties, especially when food is involved. His treats are just his kibble, but you would think it was the finest pepperoni in all the land for how excited he gets for it. The moment I start scooping his food he gets long strands of drool dripping on the floor. While he eats he incessantly wags his tail as if it's the only meal he will ever get. He is definitely quirky, but that's what makes him **Neville**.

Kiersten -- puppy raiser for Neville

Raiser of the Month

Blondie...what would we have done without you!

Blondie, our pandemic grand puppy, daughter of Lark and Finn, what would we have done without you?

You made this mad time magical and gave us a reason to look forward to every day. Never having raised a new puppy, we had a lot to learn and luckily a whole region of raisers to guide, encourage and share tips and tricks. A super smart puppy helps and you get an A+.



The first skill you needed to master was keeping your feet out from under mine. Why? Because I stepped on your tiny little paw and broke your toe! Who knew these little fur balls could scoot around so fast. As cute as your pink cast was, I would rather have not had photos of that. You survived, but I'm still recovering from the trauma all those months ago.

This crazy, life altering pandemic disrupted our usual outings, classes, exposures and experiences but like masked bandits we hit the trails and discovered new places to exercise and practice our skills. You love your canal walks and together we discovered new trails and opportunities to work on people and dog distraction skills while we accumulated "bark points" on your Fit Bark.

An occasional puppy play, swimming at K-9 Aquatics, journeys downtown to the mall and monuments, rides on the trolley through Arlington National Cemetery, walks with family,



friends and fellow raisers on the canal, and a visit to Bethany has filled the year and made time fly by way too fast. We realize how lucky we are to live in an area where there is so much outdoor "stuff" to do and places to go, even in lock-down.

Blondie, we've spent almost every waking hour for over a year together and we can't believe it's already time to say goodbye. We're so excited that you and your whole litter are on breed evaluation and can't wait to hear if a Blondie puppy is in our future. You're ready to go make a difference, sweet Blondie, and we wish you great joy and love on your journey. Thanks for all the lessons learned, warm wet kisses, the snuggles, laughter and joy of raising you. We know you have what it takes to be great at whatever you choose to do, so go do it girl!



Raiser Jane and Family

Raiser of the Month

Zelda...she is cheerful and optimistic!

My GEB family history started in 2010. Some of you know I had a very hard time raising my first puppy, Domino, because she was the first dog to have in my life and I was still learning the English language.

Jean, Sue-Anne, Brian, Bobbie, Jody, Terri and Liz helped me tirelessly through these early years. Domino and Thansa became trusted guide dogs. Lacy became my forever pet.

I was raising my fourth puppy, Estelle, when the entire family had to return to Japan in 2015 because of my husband's work. Bobbie kindly took over Estelle to finish her training and Estelle became a trusted guide dog, too.



Estelle and Lacy (r) enjoying the spring cherry blossoms – their last time together



Ayumu and Azusa saying farewell in 2015

On the day before I was scheduled to depart from Dulles Airport in July 2015, Lacy and I had a hidden crisis. Everyone who came to my farewell gathering discovered that I had the wrong crate to take Lacy into the aircraft. After I left the gathering, people worked so hard to find me the right crate without letting me know because I would have panicked. They made calls to many stores to find the correct crate, but none were open. Finally, they located our very own Montgomery Region volunteer, John, who had a perfect crate for Lacy's travel. Bobbie and Gigi delivered the crate to my hotel and Lacey was able to travel to Japan in style.

Words can never fully express my gratitude for the gift and kindness shown towards me and is forever imprinted on my heart.

GEB often tells people that it takes the whole village to raise a guide dog. The whole village not only helped me to raise guide dogs but helped me become a better person. Village spirits gave me the courage to train Lacy as a Disaster Search dog in Japan for the greater good. She became a trusted search dog and worked every time she was called on until our family had the opportunity to once again return to the U.S.

As soon as I returned to Maryland in September 2019, I called our region coordinator, Jean, who immediately put in a puppy reservation for me.



Zelda came to me in January 2020

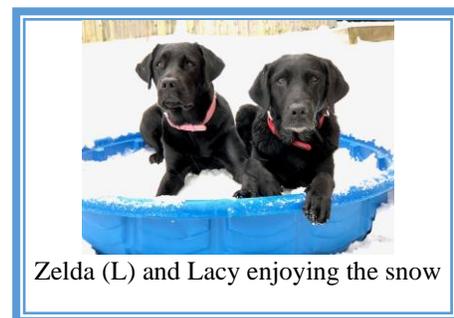
Zelda came to me in January of 2020. While other puppies that I trained had so many places to experience, I had to limit my outings with her. It was really hard, and I could see how she was inexperienced with the situation. I know how important it is for her trusted guide life to experience every smell, sound, touch and ride. I felt I was not able to give her all the confidence I gave to my other puppies. However, she is such a cheerful and optimistic puppy and I believe she will do great and be loved anywhere she is placed.

Zelda, Lacy and Azusa enjoying the West Virginia countryside



Most likely I have one more year in the U.S. and won't be able to finish another puppy, but I will do as much puppy sit as possible.

Lacy and I will miss you, Zelda! We love you so much!



Zelda (L) and Lacy enjoying the snow

I am so lucky to be a citizen of the Montgomery Region village during this challenging year.

A Memorial to Napa

Have you ever found yourself going through life associating an event or experience by a number such as “easy as *one, two, three,*” it takes *two* to tango,” or “cast to the *four* winds”?

Five was a magical event for us when in late 2006 we were able to proudly say “Napa is the *fifth* dog we are going to raise for GEB.” While she gave her best to the training that would advance her to being a guide dog, it was not to be her destiny...as any GEB puppy raiser can relate to...and we were fortunate to adopt her.

However, she was not just going to be a family pet. She became a wonderful ambassador attending numerous “call for volunteer” community activities in which the Montgomery Region participated, as well as sharing her home with many other GEB pups-in-training as they passed through. She was the well-recognized mascot at the Rockville Senior Center garden and the neighborhood dog who shared her Charley Bears with any four-legged friend who passed by.



During the past 16 months, Napa overcame several health issues that included knee/ligament surgery, and sepsis poisoning from teeth extractions that landed her in the Veterinary Referral E.R. for 9 days.

With great medical care and loving attention at home, she overcame these health setbacks and came to be known as “*wonder woman.*” However, she was not able to ward off the cancer that overtook her body, and sadly her time to say “good-bye” was on the first day of spring, March 20...a beautiful day for Napa as she so loved to lay on the lawn and bask in the sun, but a sad day for us.

As we began taking pictures with Napa, we knew it would be her last Christmas with us, her last time to experience the coolness of the fresh fallen snow, her last time to relish in the warmth of the sun, and our last time to see her wagging tail and big brown eyes as she greeted us each morning. So many other last times that will now only be memories.



First, in our hearts, so dearly loved and deeply missed...this is where Napa will remain in our memory forever...*first!*

Margie, Lou and family



Napa celebrating her 14th birthday August 10, 2020

Last Year? Teenagers and Learning During the Pandemic

The following article is an excerpt published in The **Hill Rag**, a community newspaper based in Washington, D.C. providing coverage to Capitol Hill, Southwest Waterfront, H Street Northeast, and Navy Yard neighborhoods.

What is most impressive about the article is two-fold (1) it is about our very own puppy raiser Zoe, who is raising Montana, and (2) Zoe’s sister Sarah, wrote the article for the February issue. Read along and you will agree that we have such amazing teens living in our communities.

Zoe has been waking up at 6 a.m. since March of last year. Every morning, the 13-year-old takes Montana, a one-year-old yellow lab, out of his crate to give him breakfast and begin his morning training session.

Montana arrived at six weeks old from the evacuated New York kennels of Guiding Eyes for the Blind. Zoe is responsible for his training until he is around 18-24 months old. At that point, he will go back to New York for specialized guide training. If he passes, he will be placed as a guide dog for a person who is visually impaired.

I have had the chance to watch this unique pandemic project unfold up close —Zoe is my younger sister.



Zoe has impressively balanced distance learning and the training of a young and feisty puppy, simultaneously attending to her Zoom class while convincing Montana to settle (and stop nibbling her toes). It is inspiring to see how, at age 13, she is learning to do something that will have a profound impact on someone else.

And she’s not the only one. I spoke with more than a dozen teenagers across DC, curious about whether they had experiences like Zoe’s.

There is absolutely no question that this past year has been a challenging time for teenagers. It’s a period of life that is supposed to nurture independence, growth and opportunity. But when the pandemic hit almost a year ago, it curtailed all of that: a school year cut short, separation from friends, summer events canceled, frustrating semesters of distance learning—not to mention the constant anxiety about getting sick and infecting loved ones.

But the decision of DC Public Schools (DCPS) to make every Wednesday a day of “asynchronous instruction” (a day with no live classes), empowered students to decide for themselves how they would spend that day. As many doors closed on extracurriculars and friendships, teens got creative. I discovered a huge range of fascinating endeavors that are happening behind the closed doors of many homes. Rather than learning loss, the teenagers tell stories of finding new passion for study.

When Montana isn’t asking me to play with his purple squeaky toy, my friend Nathaniel Liu and I have pursued a pandemic project of our own. Confronted by the fear and uncertainty about the future, Nathaniel and I wanted to understand how other people have made their choices about their career paths.

We started a podcast called My Life’s Work. For each episode, we interview a Capitol Hill neighbor, exploring how each one discovered their life’s work.

Like my peers, this pandemic project has allowed me to feel like I am continuing to move forward with my life. We are currently working on our fourth episode—you can find all of our episodes at mylifeworkpodcast.org or wherever you listen to your podcasts.

It’s been a terrifying and disappointing year for all of us. But this group of teens revealed their innate resiliency.

Together, they demonstrate that while COVID-19 might be impacting schools, that doesn’t mean that teenagers are slowing their learning down. Instead, they’re finding ways to pursue their passions, to learn about things that don’t always fall under the school curriculum. They’re taking this time to learn more about life—and themselves.

Follow along: This story is the first in a three-part series entitled: Lost Year? Teenagers and Learning During the Pandemic

<https://www.hillrag.com/2021/02/01/learning-gains-for-dc-teens-during-the-pandemic/>

Fun Places to Go

Let us know where you like to take your pup for outings



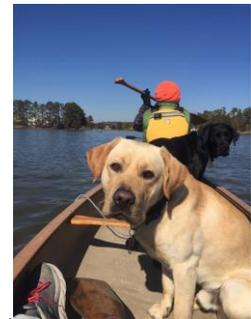
Deadline for submission of articles and pictures is the 1st of each month



Your articles will be included in future issues
Margie -newsletter writer
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It’s not all work and no play at the training center Jericho celebrating his 2nd birthday



Westley enjoying a canoe ride and checking out some some “critters” with big brother Quinn

No fair! Larson getting to enjoy a spring break in Florida





***Fundraising in our communities
Will help me grow into this
harness!***



The Montgomery Region is highly dependent upon donations and the monies received support class space, crates, medications and other items for our pups in training. In order to maintain this support for our volunteers and pups in training, monetary contributions are always needed.

So, how can you help? Take the time to look around your community or inquire at your place of work or worship. You may be able to identify a business, organization or individual looking to either sponsor or contribute to a worthwhile non-profit organization.

- Restaurants – Many local restaurants will partner and host a non-profit lunch/dinner
- Retail stores – Many stores will host a shopping event
- Place of work – Is your place of work looking to make a tax deductible contribution, or already has a matching charitable contribution program
- Financial organizations, grocery stores, sororities and fraternities...can they donate
- Yard sale –Is there a yard sale in your community in which we can participate
- GEB is on the national list of non-profit participating agencies for the Combined Federal Campaign #10248

Reach out to the Region’s management team. Jeanvne and Jean. with your ideas.

