



GUIDING EYES FOR THE BLIND MONTGOMERY REGION

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Raiser of the Month

September-October 2021

Yasha... eye contact was a bad idea!

Just don't make eye contact with her," my husband Chris suggested. "Great idea," the boys and I agreed. Yasha, a 5-month-old yellow lab had been dropped off at our house a few days earlier. She wanted attention, and she wasn't nice about it.



On April 17, 2020 Jeanyne pulled up in the GEB van in front of our house. I broke away from the very first Zoom session of my convention – a virtual one I started planning 4 weeks before. I told my presenters I'd be right back, masked up, grabbed hand sanitizer and I went to meet "Yasha Puppy." She was energetic and adorable until day two...that's when we decided eye contact was a bad idea.

We all wondered how a picture-perfect yellow lab could be so mean. She played aggressively by thrusting toys at you, barking, jumping and nipping at your elbows, knees, fingers, anything she could sink her teeth into. She became a famous part of that virtual convention as attendees met a demanding Yasha. I came in and out of the screen, played tug of war and staying on mute so they wouldn't hear her growl and bark.

After multiple panicked emails to Jeanyne and Jean about how to handle the situation, we started making serious progress. The idea was that after walks and playtime we needed to remind her it was time to settle or get a toy. Over, and over, and over again. Eventually, it sunk in and instead of biting, we'd see a light bulb go off above her head as she pranced away to find a toy and bring it back and, yes, sometimes she'd even go lay in her bed.

Over the past year and a half our COVID puppy has grown into a dependable companion. She spent extra time with her big brothers: Will came back from college for longer than expected and Collin did his senior year of high school from his bedroom. And she gets to sit at my feet as I work exclusively from home. We didn't travel out to stores and restaurants as much during the COVID world, but she went on hundreds of walks around Bethesda, countless hikes on the Billy Goat Trail and explored Sugarloaf Mountain and Rock Creek Park. Our Olympic puppy swimmer is obsessed with the water. She's like a small polar bear paddling in the Potomac, Shenandoah Rivers or the Atlantic Ocean. Going down the Shenandoah in a canoe we took constant breaks to let her swim.

We love her and her quirky issues – she won't pee in the backyard in the morning as if it's lava, she lays down in the middle of the street when she sees her favorite dog or human neighbors, tilts her head when she tries to understand what you want her to do, and blinks her eyes when she tries to look up at you when it's raining. She is so patient that she lays at the top of the basement stairs (with her butt and tail wagging) until Collin's friends or Callie the cat come to say hello. She stares at me every night until I finally sit on the floor and let her curl up on my legs. She is kind with her GEB puppy friends and elated when each family member comes down in the morning (unless breakfast is being served when she's conflicted.) We even love it when she stomps her foot to get a treat for doing something reward worthy.



Yasha... continued

It's ironic we avoided eye contact with her on those early COVID days because her dreamy brown eyes are something we'll miss the most. We wish great things for this awesome pup and know she will be amazing at anything she does, even if she decides to be a pet!

Heather, Chris, Will & Collin



Raiser of the Month

Mystic – oh how she loves to hike!

Mystic has been a fun dog to raise, both Java and I will miss her!



Of all the dogs I have raised, Mystic is the most athletic, loving to hike and swim. Mystic and Java became Wednesday regulars during the pandemic at the K-9 Aquatic Center in Potomac and loved to “snooze” together. I will miss this energetic girl and hope she does well with her IFT!

Good luck Mystic! Jean and Family– puppy raiser for Mystic

Welcome New and Repeat Raiser

Imagine a beautiful black male dog by the name of Dexter...he will be raised by Jean.



Repeat raisers Miriam and Sean enjoying their first puppy foundation class with Jethro.

Welcome Frank, a first-time raiser, who will be putting Aqua to her paces.



After taking a break from full-time raising, Margie and Lou are taking the plunge again to raise Krissy, their 6th full-time dog.



Won't be long before raiser CJ will NOT be able to hoist up her newest pup in training...Webster.

A Farewell to Montgomery Region Pups

With sadness we learned of the recent passing of a former Montgomery Region pup – Pacer. Pacer arrived in the region in 2007 and raised by the Mulla family.

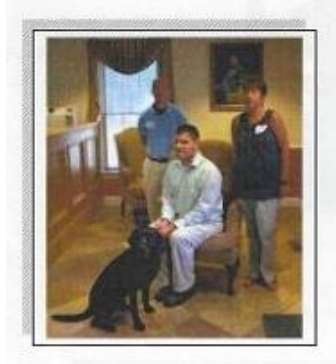
They often shared with us that if not for the ad that would run in the local Gazette paper, they may have never been a puppy raiser. The family saved the ad on the refrigerator as a reminder and when the time was right they join the team.

While Pacer gave it all, his choice was to become a member of the family. He was one lucky dog!



Will you help me grow into this harness!

Another recent passing was that of Patriot, our very own Region Coordinator's first GEB puppy to be raised by Jean and family. After guiding, he came back home with the family and served diligently as a region ambassador attending many volunteer activities, not to mention being the four-legged member of the household who welcomed so many other GEB dogs in training.



Congratulations to Montgomery Region Graduates

Namath, a male black Lab, is Terry's first guide dog and they will be living and working together in Saint Charles, IL. Terry worked for many years in the hotel industry with responsibilities that included front desk customer service and assistant management. Terry has 3 children, two daughters and a son, ranging in age from 14 to 6 years old, and he embraces the role of Dad!

Namath is a 2 ½ year old black Lab and he is amazing! He easily transitions from companion and playmate to putting on the harness and working. He is a quick study and has great instincts. Shortly after arriving home from training, Namath quickly learned to navigate construction impacting the sidewalks near my home. He recognized the hazards and adjusted his pace accordingly. We recently spent a night in a hotel and after being in the elevator only once, he had learned the route from the room to the exit.

Not a day goes by that I am not thankful for Namath. We get along great! Namath likes to be with me wherever I am in the house. He is very attentive, but never gets underfoot."

Namath immediately become part of my life and he fulfills two roles; he is an awesome guide dog and wonderful companion! With him, I can travel more quickly and confidently than with a cane. I recently went on a walk to get ice cream with my children. The kids followed Namath and me. At first, they were quick to alert me to hazards ahead, but soon witnessed first-hand how capable Namath is at guiding me. He amazes me and I trust him.

I attended training at the Guiding Eyes campus and soon after arriving in my room, I found a letter the previous student had left for me. They shared some of the effort involved in training but reassured me it is so worthwhile. They were right! I decided to leave the letter so the next student could benefit from their encouragement, as well. Namath is my first guide dog, and my instructor Katharine was extremely patient in teaching me all I needed to know. I can't say enough about Guiding Eyes and Namath!



Terrence and Namath

Namath has a great love for life! He approached every day like it was going to be the best day ever. I loved how enthusiastic Namath was about everything. He made everyone smile and those who met him were sure he liked them best. He made amazing eye contact with people. Everyone commented on that. Namath came to work with me every single day. He has perfect "museum manners"! Even during the pandemic, while I was the only person in the building, he came with me and was great company. I'm so lucky to have raised him during that challenging time. And did I mention he was the most handsome guy ever?

Allison – Nathan's Puppy Raiser



Congratulations to Montgomery Region Graduates

Vesey, a female black Lab, is an experienced guide dog user and has come back for her 6th Guiding Eyes dog.

She lives in Ohio with her husband Todd and is enjoying retirement after working for many years as a Food Service Manager. Cathy loves to garden, crediting her participation in her local Garden Club with having taught her so much. An avid crafter, she is also the website admin for a crafting group. Her favorite pastimes include knitting, crocheting, macrame, beading and Kumihimo, a traditional Japanese braiding technique. Her many creative interests were sparked by her involvement in the NFB Krafters Division, which was instrumental in teaching her a variety of crafts over the past 10 years.

She's totally an angel. She likes to lay on my feet when I'm sitting in my chair. Her work is just so excellent. I think the extra time in training actually helped her. She is more mature than previous dogs I've had. She was in the Home Foster Program that was started during Covid and the foster family did an excellent job working on her home behavior.



My initial story starts when I was at college and using a cane. I met a girl who had a guide dog from Guiding Eyes, and I could see how much easier it was for her to get around. She could walk so much faster, she didn't bump into things, and she seemed to be able to find the handles of doors. I thought to myself, *I want that!* At 21 years of age, I went out and got my first guide dog and it was one of the best decisions I ever made.

It has given me a lot of self-confidence. It's given me the ability to have more social interactions with people, because they ask about the dog and initiate conversations. I have the confidence to go anywhere now. I'm not afraid to go somewhere new.

This was my first Home Training and an excellent experience. I was stressed thinking about going to the school and wondered if, now that I'm older, would I have the stamina to handle the travel and long days; then they offered me Home Training. Lisa set up a flexible schedule, training in the cooler mornings and evenings because of extreme heat. It was relaxed and I didn't feel stressed. Training in the home environment can be a good option. There is a 4-way intersection near me with multiple lanes, traffic lights and arrows that I used to find terrifying. Now, with Vesey at my side, crossing this intersection is something I can do with confidence.

Vesey is a smart and delightful dog with a sweet personality. She learned commands quickly and always wanted to please her people. Vesey developed good impulse control, and was especially focused when "working" on outings. She enjoyed going to restaurants and rarely used the bones or toys we took along, as she is more than happy to sit quietly under a table and watch the action. Vesey was quite entertaining when she wanted to play ball and no one was available. She would toss the ball herself and then chase it. While she would quietly play with toys, lots of toys, it's the ball tossing that was the most whimsical.

Bobbie and Jim, Vesey's Puppy Raisers



Congratulations to Montgomery Region Graduates



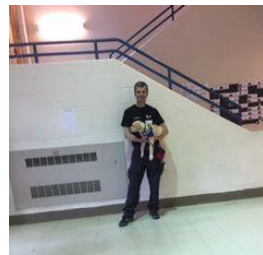
Maui, a female yellow Lab, is Joe’s 7th Guiding Eyes dog. Joe is a retired law professor who received his first guide dog in 1969. He and his wife divide their retirement time between Florida and Wisconsin, keeping fit for the downhill skiing they enjoy every year, in addition to playing the guitar and taking long walks to stay fit.

In Joe’s own words, “Maui has a wonderful personality. When she plays outside, she likes to retrieve a ball, drop it, and let it roll downhill. Then she’ll pick it up again but drop it several feet away from me. Next, she jumps right off the ground landing with all four feet simultaneously! She loves people and works well. Her recall is excellent; the best yet in any guide I’ve had.

In the early days, I didn’t like using a cane, but knew that I was going to be commuting into New York City. I felt I could move faster and more safely with a guide dog. People are friendlier when you have a dog compared to a cane and I like the increased interaction with the public. I love having dogs around.

My training with Dave was really good and Home Training worked out well for me this time around. I had to retire my last guide dog and was without a dog for 18 months due to scheduling problems caused by the pandemic. I was surprised at how quickly working with Maui, and having her in our home, became so natural.”

John gave Maui her early puppy start training before being transferred to Colorado for final training with another family. Congratulations to both families for a job well done.



Fun Places to Go

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



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



Margie -newsletter writer
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Krissy getting settled into her new home

It may not look like we aren’t having fun, but believe us...WE ARE!

Krissy doing a meet and greet with local GEB resident Lucy. They can’t wait to do more training outings together.





*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.

