

MONTGOMERY REGION PUPPY RAISERS

2021 GRADUATES

A YEAR IN REVIEW

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. He immediately became 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. He amazes me and I trust him.



Terry and Namath

Montgomery Region Raiser: Allison

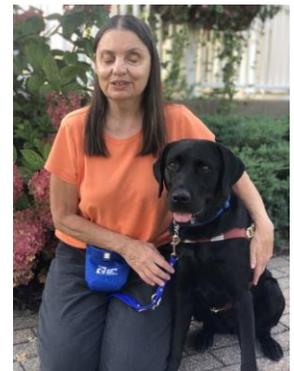


Vesey, a female black Lab, is an experienced guide dog user and has come back for her 6th Guiding Eyes dog. She lives in Ohio with her husband Todd and is enjoying retirement after working for many years as a Food Service Manager.

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. 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.



Catherine and Vesey

Montgomery Region Raisers: Bobbie and Jim



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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 home training with Dave was really good and 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.



Joe and Maui

Montgomery Region Puppy Start: John



Dart, without knowing it, is driving Kevin to do even more. Kevin grew up in Connecticut and enjoyed both running and skiing in high school. After graduation, Kevin joined the Navy and spent the next four years traveling the world. Some of his favorite places were Venice, Athens and Diego Garcia, and he has traveled as far east as Singapore. After his time in the military, Kevin spent over thirty years in the business of Restaurant Management. Kevin now lives in Bristol, CT with his girlfriend and two sons, and has a daughter who lives in Massachusetts. Dart has been a fantastic addition to his life and Kevin has really enjoyed working through challenges with him. He looks forward to overcoming new challenges as they work and grow together.

There's something about that connection that has a real impact. In a roundabout way it's almost like having a child in certain ways. You want to take care of them, do the best for them, and it makes you want to do more. One of the instructors said if we wanted, we could try closing our eyes and really allow our dogs to lead us. It was a challenge putting all of my trust into this dog, but I did it and it was so freeing. I felt like my mind and body went straight to my left arm. It really helped to gain a sense of trust between Dart and I.



Kevin and Dart

Montgomery Region Raiser: Carson



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Eros will be residing in Graham, Washington where he will be working with Julie, an experienced handler. In high school, Julie enjoyed a variety of sports- tennis, volleyball, basketball, track and cheerleading, but just before she turned 18, she received a diagnosis for the vision problems she had been experiencing since childhood.

In 2007, Julie obtained her bachelor's degree, and soon after received another degree in paralegal studies. In 2015, Julie was diagnosed with breast cancer and spent over a year receiving chemotherapy treatments, but during that time she studied alternative healing methods. She was inspired to pursue a master's degree in Health and Wellness Coaching, with a minor in Herbalism. Julie is also certified in Jin Shin Jyutsu, a type of Acupressure and with her business partner, Laura, plan to open her own business called InnerVisions.

Julie has always believed that vision isn't required to know your outlook on life; it is an inward journey. She truly feels that Eros is the perfect addition to their team and to her family. She has many goals for the future, including pursuing a PhD, and she is thrilled to have Eros with her on her journey.

I have always loved taking walks through my neighborhood, but these things have held me back. Now with Eros, I can just go without having to worry. He's so wonderful. The freedom is huge. I gained a lot of freedom from him.



Julie and Eros

Montgomery Region Raisers: Dixcy Bosley-Smith and Family



Doc, after returning to Guiding Eyes for the Blind in New York for formal guide dog training, he decided that guiding was not his line of work. Doc found his path as a team member working with Michael Stapleton Association (MSA).

MSA is a security agency that gives GEB release dogs the opportunity for a different career path. These re-trained dogs provide security and can be found working at national parks, on the Staten Island Ferry, airports to support TSA, as well as big sporting events such as the Super Bowl. GEB-Montgomery has had several dogs placed with MSA.

Doc will enjoy this career path while living with the working family and upon retirement will be adopted.

Montgomery Region Raisers: Rachel and Libby



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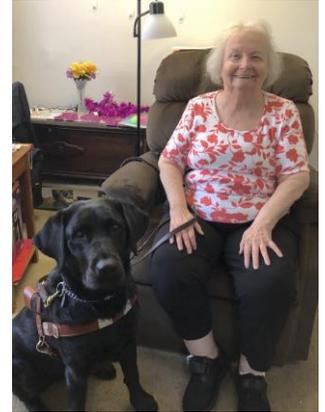
Roma, a female black Lab, is Dottie's second Guiding Eyes dog, only after many special years with her beloved first guide dog, Gandolf, whom she loved with all her heart. She is forever grateful that he was brought into her life during a difficult time, 2 years after the loss of her husband and as her eyesight worsened.

Dottie enjoys walking, shopping, tag sales and talking to people. As a people-person that loves a good conversation, Dottie admits that her walks often take longer than expected. She is an unofficial, yet natural, ambassador for Guiding Eyes for the Blind, often explaining her journey through vision loss, praising the organization and guide dogs she depends on, or offering friendly advice to those contemplating a guide dog in their future.

Roma is wonderful! She is very smart and picks up on things you teach her really quickly. I say, 'target pole' and she finds the traffic light pole right away for me. Roma's just gorgeous – I call her my little girl, and she gives me lots of kisses. I never have to tell her to lie down. If it's bedtime and she's had enough, she goes right to her crate. She loves visiting my sisters, where she can run in the yard or play with my 4-year-old great nephew...the harness comes off and they are inseparable.

I live in the city of New Haven, CT and used to be so nervous and scared when I went out because I could no longer read the street or bus signs. If a building changed or was taken down, I wouldn't recognize the area. I remember going to the hospital to visit my husband and I got so mixed up and scared until a cop asked if he could help me. When I got a guide dog, I had more confidence, and it was a lot better for me. I'd go to the Farmer's Market with a backpack on, a cane in one hand and Gandolf in the other. We had a lot of fun.

It all came right back to me when Roma arrived. I now have to take it a little slower, but Roma was patient with me. She's very bright, stopping at all the cracks when the pavement changes, or to let me know of a driveway or the curb. My trainer was Kathy Rooney. I had met her before and love her dearly. She could teach me anything and I'm always eager to learn.



Montgomery Region Raisers: Catherine and Fred

