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## Guide Dog Training



Once the grown puppies return to our campuses from their puppy raising homes, the dogs are ready to learn the tools of the trade. They discover how to become not just well-behaved, meticulously socialized dogs, but professionals! Now, they are about to embark on the career for which they've been preparing. The dogs are taught by our Guide Dog training staff how to safely guide someone through the complexities of pedestrian travel. This training takes approximately 4-5 months.

### What are the unique abilities that Guide Dogs have?

Our dogs are smart—very smart! In addition to learning how to lead a person safely around obstacles, Guide Dogs are also trained in "intelligence disobedience": if they are given an unsafe command, they are taught to not obey it (for example: refusing to step out into the street when there is oncoming traffic). Guide Dogs are also trained to have impeccable manners (for all those times they must visit places of public accommodation, such as restaurants, grocery stores and public transportation), and are capable of avoiding distractions (such as cats!). In addition, all Guide Dogs possess an eagerness to please and a willingness to work. They choose their profession!

Some of the skills Guide Dogs learn include:

- Leading a person in a straight line from point A to point B
- Stopping for all changes in elevation, including curbs and stairs
- Stopping for overhead obstacles, such as tree limbs
- Avoiding obstacles in their path

Two things Guide Dogs can't do:

- Determine the route to a new destination
- Read traffic signals

Guide Dogs take their cues and commands from their human partners; it's up to the person to determine the routes they take and if it is safe to cross a street. Through repetition, they may remember a routine course, but it is the blind person's job to know where they are at all times.

### What are our methods of training?

Our dogs are trained with high value rewards of both food and praise. An abundance of rewards, including physical and verbal affection, builds motivation, confidence and produces a happy working Guide Dog. When a dog makes an error, verbal and leash/collar cues are used to gain the correct response so the dog can experience reward and refocus the dog on its work. At the moment the undesired action stops, and the dog follows a command, the dog is given abundant reward and heartfelt praise.

Our BEST method of training also employs innovative training methods such as:

- Treadmill workouts
- Food rewards
- Clicker training

## Sidebar

### Contact Us

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### The Impact of a Guide Dog



[Hear Morgan Watkins relate how his Guide Dog has changed his life.](#)

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