

autumn 2011 issue

Guide Dogs Victoria 

Guide Dog Tales

Take part in Victoria's
Biggest Dog Wash



INSIDE Our Collection Dogs are turning 50! • Victoria's Biggest Dog Wash • A Special Tribute

A Message from the CEO

Dear Friends,

We, at Guide Dogs Victoria, extend our very best wishes to you and your family for a happy and healthy 2011 and would like to thank you again for your support over the past 12 months.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome our new supporters.

It was wonderful to see so many people out in force and braving the weather at the recent Open Day event. It provides such a great opportunity for us to give you a behind the scenes look at what we do and show you firsthand the difference your support makes.

2010 was not an easy year for fundraising, but we are proud to say that no services were cut or even reduced - keeping our clients' needs as first priority. For the fifth year in a row we have continued to break records in the number of programs offered and clients assisted.

Looking forward, 2011 is shaping up to be a big year for Guide Dogs Victoria and there's so much we want to share with you.

2011 marks the 50th anniversary of our iconic Collection Dogs program. For 50 years, the public have generously 'fed' these dogs and contributed vital funding toward our Guide Dog training program.

We can never thank everyone personally for this anonymous act of kindness, but know that every cent is making a difference.

This year we are also unveiling a brand new event on the calendar, hosting Victoria's Biggest Dog Wash on April 10 at Flemington Racecourse. The off-site venue means that for the first time, we can invite all of our friends – both two and four legged! Details can be found on our web site and in this newsletter.

Fundraising events, Puppy Sponsorships, Pledge donations and programs like the Collection Dogs are absolutely vital to our success. With no Government funding received towards Guide Dog training programs, we simply can't survive on our own.

So we again say thank you for joining us on our journey in 2011. I hope that you will take a moment to read about the people whose lives you have brightened with your support. We couldn't do it without you. ● ●

Yours Sincerely,



Graeme White
CEO Guide Dogs Victoria
and Guide Dogs NSW/
ACT



A Special Tribute

For Ambassador Dog Astro, welcoming Government officials, VIPs and foreign dignitaries (including Prince William!) is all in a day's work. So how did a cheeky Labrador find himself with such a prestigious day job? By living with Professor David de Kretser AC, Governor of Victoria.

A Patron of Guide Dogs Victoria for five years, Professor de Kretser and his wife Jan joined our volunteer Puppy Raising program and welcomed Astro into their home as a young pup. When Astro was selected to be an Ambassador Dog, he returned to Government House and became a representative of both our organisation and this great State!

Professor de Kretser's term of office will conclude in April, so to honour his term in office, his five years as a Patron of our organisation and acknowledge the Governor and Mrs de Kretser's contribution to the Victorian blind and vision impaired community, we paid them special tribute at a Gala Fundraising Dinner.

The Gala was a great success. Not only did it prove to be a wonderful tribute to our dear friends and Astro, but the evening also fundraised in excess of \$20,000 towards the Guide Dog training program.

Guide Dogs Victoria would like to thank the following people for generously donating their time and talent for this special occasion:

- Actress Noni Hazlehurst
- Musicians Jo Beaumont (violin) and Massimo Scattolin (classical guitarist)
- Vocalists Emma O'Brian (soloist) and Emily McClean & Paul Gelsumin
- Kids on Collins

Astro has now been retired from the Ambassador Dog program and will stay with the de Kretser's as a much-loved member of their family. On behalf of everyone at Guide Dogs Victoria we would again like to thank Professor de Kretser and Mrs de Kretser for their commitment to our cause and wish them all the best in the future. ● ●



L to R: Graeme White, Russel Walker, Mrs De Kretser, the Governor, Betty Amsden OAM & Astro

Losing Vision, Gaining Insight

Melbourne local Andrew Follows is a talented photographer and well established within the Victorian arts community. He is also vision impaired.

Born with the eye condition Retinitus Pigmentosa, Andrew is completely blind in one eye and has diminishing tunnel vision in the other. Not your typical profile for a photographer! As his sight faded, rather than giving up on his passion Andrew discovered that with digital technology the camera could become his eyes. Picking up detail that his vision can't, photography allows Andrew to see the world in a whole new way.

"Digital photography allows me to enlarge images and explore colours and textures that I can't otherwise see" Andrew explains.



Andrew has a long list of incredible achievements. In addition to several upcoming exhibitions and workshops, two of his works are currently on display in the foyer at Arts Victoria and in 2012 he will be taking his exhibition to London.

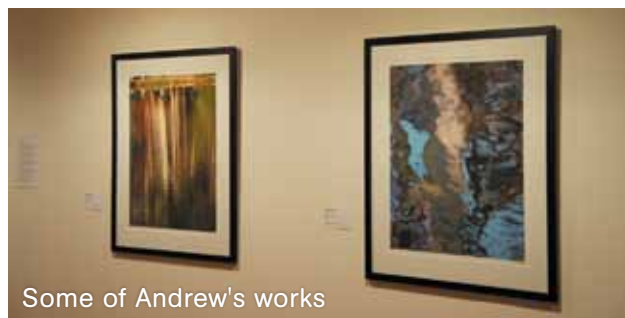
However, he didn't always have the confidence to tackle life with such confidence. Four years ago he never expected to be where he is today. In fact, he thinks he would still be "living like a hermit" had it not been for being matched with his best friend, Guide Dog Eamon.

"Getting Eamon has completely changed my life. Instead of slowing down, I'm living like a teenager again! I no longer have to worry about my safety or hurrying home before dark, there are no restrictions on my life" says Andrew.

"As soon as I get off the bus he knows exactly where to go. I'm continually amazed at what he is able to do. If we go to a place once, he knows exactly where we're going the next time - it's just incredible."

In addition to art exhibitions, Andrew also runs community workshops for sighted youth in Regional Victoria, teaching them about photography while also giving them an understanding of blindness and appreciating the use of all senses in art and education. Eamon loves 'helping' too! He adores the kids and always turns on the charm with his sweet-natured head tilts and tail wags.

You can see more of Andrew's inspiring work on his web site at www.blinkiephotography.com.au ●●



Our Latest Graduates

Adam (CD), Haley (GD), Helga (GD), Hetty (GD), Imrod (GD), Inca (GD), Innis (GD), Magnus (GD), Major (GD), Pippa (GD), Ronan (PAT), Virgil (GD), Willa (GD)

Guide Dogs (GD), Companion Dog (CD) Pets as Therapy (PAT)

Magnus



Inca



Adam



Helga



Imrod



Willa



International Guide Dog

Every year, Guide Dogs Victoria celebrates International Guide Dog Day at the end of April, recognising the incredible work that Guide Dogs do in providing freedom and independence to their vision impaired handlers. This year, we have so much to celebrate that we're hosting activities and events all month!

Golden Anniversary of Collection Dogs Program

Our iconic Collection Dog program is turning 50!

Collection Dogs not only provide a vital source of funding for Guide Dog training, but have also become a beloved fixture in Victorian retail outlets for 50 years! To celebrate the Golden Anniversary of this iconic program and to kick off a month of celebrations for International Guide Dog Month, Guide Dogs Victoria is bringing a special guest to Federation Square.

Standing at 4.3 metres high, 'Goldie' is a giant model-dog and, accompanied by some real life counterparts, will be helping us raise funding and awareness to train more Guide Dogs. So on Tuesday March 29, go 'Gold for Goldie' by donating at your local Coles or Woolworths store or come and down to Federation Square and see Goldie and our adorable Guide Dog pups.

Keep an eye out for our team of volunteers who will also be collecting at train stations and intersections throughout the Melbourne CBD from 7am – 7pm.

For further details and collection locations, or to make your donation online, please see our web site at www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au ●●



Top Dog Day

It's that time of year again! Top Dog Day is Friday July 29.

This year, Top Dog Day merchandise includes adorable plush Guide Dog key chains, Guide Dogs Victoria trolley coins, Top Dog Day pens and Top Dog Day lapel pins and will be available for purchase throughout July at your local IGA, Ritchies and Video Ezy stores.

If you would like more information or would be interested in holding a fundraising activity for Top Dog Day please contact events on 9854 4522.

We would like to thank to Network Ten and Mike Larkin for their support of Top Dog Day. ●●



Dog Month - April 2011



APRIL 2011						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16

Victoria's Biggest Dog Wash – Sunday, April 10

Join us as we team up with Jim's Dog Wash and JaniKing at Flemington Racecourse on Sunday 10th April for Victoria's Biggest Dog Wash!

This exciting new event is the first Guide Dogs Victoria event that allows our supporters to bring along their four legged friends to join in on the fun. Our professional groomers will be on hand to make your canine companion squeaky-clean. Once they have been primped and pampered, enter your pooch in our Cutest Canine Competition – judged by our surprise celebrity guest!

Guide Dogs Victoria's Biggest Dog Wash has a host of fun activities for the whole family:

- Meet Guide Dogs in training and our adorable Labrador puppies
- Get dog behaviour and grooming advice from our Guide Dog training experts
- Spoil your pooch with loads of doggie products and exhibitors
- Enter the Cutest Canine Competition*

- Have fun on the Jumping Castle
- Ride the Thomas the Tank Engine train
- Get your face painted
- Stay for lunch at one of the many food and drink stalls

...and much more!

When: Sunday April 10, 2011

Time: 9am – 4pm

Where: Flemington Racecourse (Ascot Carpark)

Cost: Dog Wash + Showbag (valued at \$30): \$35

Entry only (individual): \$5

Entry only (family): \$10

Pre-register online to book your dog wash timeslot at www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au

*Cutest Canine Competition will be judged at 12noon, be sure to arrive before 11am to register (entry is free).



Guide Dog Care

We often get questions from the public regarding the care of our dogs once they become working Guides. In this edition of Guide Dog Tales, we take a look at a few common questions regarding Guide Dog care.



“Do Guide Dogs enjoy working?”

Absolutely! Some Guide Dogs might look sad, but it is generally those big Labrador eyes or simply a look of concentration. Many breeds of dog enjoy the mental and physical stimulation of working and Labradors are no exception. It is not uncommon to see a happy face and big wag of the tail whenever a Guide Dog has successfully completed a command. Positive reinforcement is used in their training and by the Guide Dog handlers.

All of the dogs that are accepted into the program enjoy the rewards of working and the constant companionship. Any dog that shows signs of anxiety or stress would not be passed through the vigorous training program.

“Do Guide Dogs ever get time off?”

Yes – Guide Dogs are only ever working when they are in harness. When the harness comes off, they are free to run and play like any other dog.

Guide Dog handler and ‘Dad’ to Eamon explains “Eamon is my key to independence and a great friend... but at the end of the day he is a dog. He gets breaks and playtime like any other dog. He’s not treated like a working tool and has his own little personality quirks, lots of down time and time to free run. He loves a good run with the other dogs when we visit the park – he’s fast too, he can run his Rottweiler friend dry!”

“Some Guide Dog handlers have said they never had pets before owning a Guide Dog, do the handlers know how to care for the dogs?”

Whenever a person is accepted into the Guide Dog program, much care and consideration is taken into matching their needs – both the client and the dog. For example, active and fast paced dogs are matched with clients who lead similar lifestyles.

Once matched, Guide Dog handlers complete a month of training with their new companion. This not only focuses on mobility training and how to work together as a team, but also how to care for the dog. Thorough

health checks are completed on all of our dogs by qualified staff and the Guide Dog handlers have their own vets for regular check ups.

“What happens to a Guide Dog when they are too old/sick to work?”

Like humans, when a Guide Dog is no longer fit for work they will go into retirement. This is a joint decision made by the Guide Dog Mobility Instructor and handler and is typically discussed if the Guide Dog handler notices a change in their dog or feels they are slowing down.

In most cases, the dog will stay with their owner and become a family pet. In any case where a person is unable to care for a new Guide Dog in addition to the retired dog, the dog will be placed with either another family member, offered back to the Puppy Raiser or a new family home will be found for them. We have had cases where retired Guide Dogs have gone to nursing homes to bring joy to residents. No dog is ever put down for being unable to perform Guide Dog duties.

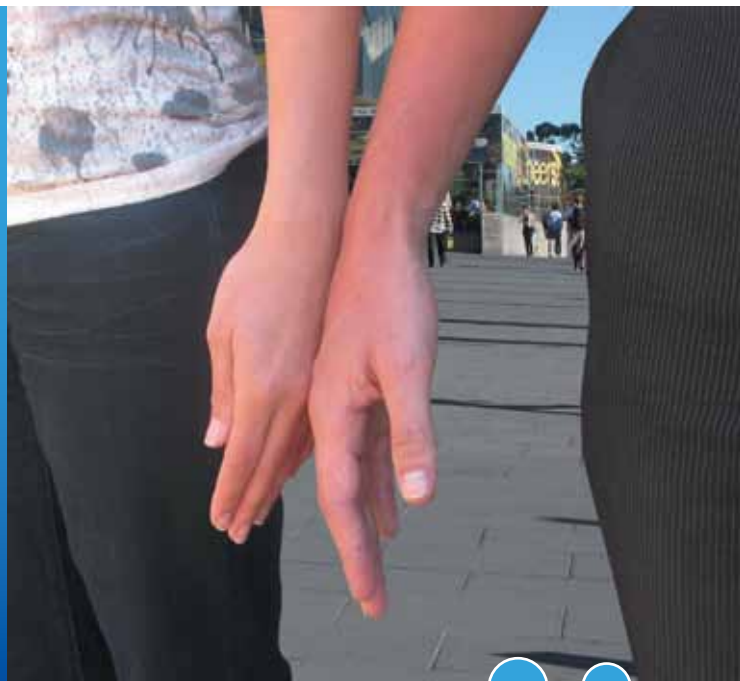
“I read that Guide Dogs Victoria breeds 130 puppies a year – is that like puppy farming?”

While it is true that we breed a large amount of puppies for our Guide Dog training programs, we in no way operate like a puppy farm. Our breeding dogs (known as ‘broodies’ or ‘studs’) live in family homes as a loved pet, returning to Guide Dogs Victoria only when it is time to be mated or give birth. Dogs are not over-bred and we have a number of dogs to select from to avoid heavy inbreeding. We also source genetic material and dogs from approved schools in the International Guide Dog Federation to further expand our gene pool.

Our Breeding Centre is staffed with qualified nurses, who provide constant care to our expecting mums and their pups. We even have a webcam installed so that our Breeding Manager can check on the dogs at any time of day or night. ● ●

Sighted Guide

Ask the person with impairment if they need assistance. If they do not require assistance, do not feel offended. If they do, make contact by touching the back of your hand against the back of theirs. This is the signal for them to take your arm.



Bequest Story - Shirley Clark & Guide Dog Kia

The year 2000 was a joyous year for Shirley Clark, welcoming her first grandchild into the world. Unfortunately it wasn't all good news, as she also discovered black spots in her vision.

An eye exam revealed that Shirley would lose her vision in over the next five years. She was diagnosed with macular degeneration with retinal thinning. By 2007, her vision loss was becoming a real problem and she no longer felt safe getting around independently. Not wanting her growing family to worry about her, she sought help from Guide Dogs Victoria.



Kia

Shirley was matched with Guide Dog Kia, who gave her back her independence and peace of mind. "With Kia, my family doesn't need to worry about me. It's been a long road to get here but now I feel safe again and I just don't know what I would do without her now. She is everything to me," she explains.

A year after receiving Kia, Shirley made the decision to include Guide Dogs Victoria in her Will. When asked what motivated her she says, "Purely and simply, because of the amazing work that Guide Dogs Victoria does for people".

Over the last three years I have personally come to understand the difference Guide Dogs Victoria makes – and it's so much more than just the dogs. It's the children's camps, the work they do with people who've had strokes, all the cane training and mobility work. The more I see of the work here, the more I want this work to continue. The best way I can help is by leaving a bequest in my Will, especially with so little money being received from Government funding."

By leaving a gift or legacy to Guide Dogs Victoria in your Will, you can really make a difference to the lives of Victorians with vision impairment. For more information, please contact our Bequest office on (03) 9854 4444 for a free information kit and personal Will profile. If you have already considered Guide Dogs Victoria in your Will, please let us know so that we can say thank you. Your confidentiality will be respected. ●●



Shirley with Kia

Our Wish List

At Guide Dogs Victoria we provide our clients with the best of care, but we often wish we had the funds to purchase the latest specialised equipment. If you are able to donate funds to cover or contribute to the cost of any of the items on our current Wish List, please call Danni on **(03) 9854 4444**. The full wish list is available on our web site at www.guidedogsvictoria.com.au



ABI Department

Resources for enhancing client programs..... **\$1,000**
 Spatial Assessment Kits..... **\$1,000**
 Mini-guides for use by ABI clients to develop awareness (10 x \$450)..... **\$4,500**

ACH

New crockery, glass ware, tablecloths etc..... **\$1,300**
 Manchester sets and mattress underlays (6 x \$100)..... **\$600**
 Equipment for client kitchen..... **\$1,000**

Adult O&M

UV Shields..... **\$1,500**

Guide Dog Services

Equipment and obstacles used for training Guide Dogs..... **\$2,000**

Occupational Therapy

Nordic walking poles for fitness (10 x \$195)..... **\$1,950**

Maintenance

Garden Mulch..... **gift in kind**

Acknowledgements



Aero Manufacturing Australia Pty Ltd

A.I.S Insurance Brokers/ Guardian

ANZ Value Resolution

ASIC

Campbell's Soups Australia

Channel Ten

Clemenger BBDO

Coles Supermarkets

Golden Square Carpark

IGA Supermarket

Insignia Management

Kids on Collins

Lateral Building Design & Harding-Smith Family

Punthill Apartment Hotels

St Albans Textiles

UME Australia Pty Ltd

Wilbow Group Pty Ltd

Woolworths Supermarkets

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