

# Guide Dog Tales

The latest news from Guide Dogs Victoria

Spring Issue 2017

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### Meet our volunteers

The life blood of GDV

### Tegan

Surviving a brain tumour at 13

### Graduation Day

Celebrate our newly graduated handlers

### Jed

The biggest dog, with an even bigger heart

Taking the lead since 1957!



# A MESSAGE FROM KAREN & WILLOW

## Spring has arrived and it's warming up at Guide Dogs Victoria.

At GDV we are so lucky to have over 400 amazing volunteers working with us across all areas of our operations. Through their tireless efforts we are supported in areas like puppy raising, our fundraising and admin teams, our kennels, and so much more. It is because of this generous ongoing support that we can continue to achieve as much as we do and continue to deliver services to our amazing clients. You can read more about our volunteers on page 3.

On page 5 you will be introduced to Teagan. I encourage you to read her story, as this young woman is truly inspirational. It's stories like these which inspire us to do what we do every day.

We celebrated the Class of 2017 Graduation Day on 2 September, with 93 graduating dogs. You can read more about this very special day on page 7. Guide Dog, Jed graduated at the event, and we also say goodbye to our large, spirited friend on page 6.

I am proud to share with you that a group of supporters, staff and clients have joined together to take part in the Melbourne Marathon this year. If you are participating, we would love you to join or support our team! Find out how on page 4.



I do hope you enjoy this edition of Guide Dog Tales. It gives us a chance to send you our heartfelt thanks for your generosity, and it shows you just what a positive difference you are making to the lives of Victorians with low vision and blindness.

*Karen Hayes* 

**Karen Hayes**  
Chief Executive Officer & Ambassador Dog Willow



## Become a Puppy Pal today



### FROM JUST \$30 A MONTH - ONLY \$1 A DAY!

**It costs more than \$50,000 to breed, raise and train each Guide Dog.**

Puppy Pals help fund the training that prepares our adorable Guide Dog puppies to support someone with low vision or blindness. You will help name litters, follow the litters amazing journey with regular Pupdates, and be invited to attend our Meet the Pups events.

**So what are you waiting for?**

**Your supPAWt will change lives forever.**

Call **1800 988 626** or visit **[guidedogsvictoria.com.au](http://guidedogsvictoria.com.au)**



John Raymant has been driving for GDV for 15 years!



## Volunteer Profile

**Michelle:** Puppy Raiser, Puppy Delivery and Puppy Raiser Peer Support. Michelle has been volunteering since June 2011.

"Puppy delivery is such an amazing part of what I get to do, taking the little 7/8 week old puppy to their new raiser. They excitedly wait to start their new role and become part of the puppy raising family. I always look forward to the call from Di asking if I'm available to deliver a puppy to their new home."

# OUR VOLUNTEERS MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE

For the last 60 years our volunteers have been a constant support for our business and the community.

We proudly report there are now approximately 480 volunteers in our ranks. They raise our puppies, work in our kennels, help with administration, run tours, speak to community groups, walk dogs, and assist in regional areas with the collection dog program and fostering dogs in training. All in all, we have over 20 programs that our committed volunteers assist with daily.

GDV can't do what we do without the support of our volunteers, in fact we have roughly four volunteers for every one staff member. This treasured group of people give their time selflessly. Some have even been with our organisation for 50 years, and others have just recently come on board to support us in a variety of areas.

Through our combined volunteer efforts, a massive 1,274,308 hours have been contributed to Guide Dogs Victoria over the 2016–17 financial year!

### OUR PUPPY RAISERS

Our puppy raisers have pups in their homes from eight weeks of age to 12 months. They care for them and

make sure, with the guidance of their allocated advisor, the pup experiences a variety of activities at the right developmental stages. Pups are progressively exposed to different environments such as trains, buses, cafes and shopping centres, which prepares them for everyday life in the community.

Over the last year we were lucky enough to have 144 puppy raisers volunteer with us. When we calculate 144 raisers caring for a pup 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. This equates to more than 1.2 million hours of time! You can't put a price on this unwavering commitment, it's truly invaluable to our organisation.

Our volunteers are at least 18 years old and come from many walks of life. Some come to us for their love of dogs and some come because a friend or family member receives services from GDV. No matter why they join the team, strong friendships are quickly formed and they enjoy a true sense of belonging to an esteemed community organisation.

# MEET BOWIE

**I'm told that I am the fifth Guide Dog pup that my mum has raised.**

I live with two, four-legged housemates, aged 6 and 3, and two humans and I also have a 14-year-old foster brother who was a Lab rescue. He doesn't live with us, but we visit him.

I also have an 'Aunty' living close by who has two Cocker Spaniels so there is a lot of company here.

My bed is spacious and warm and I sleep beside my bestie, Henry.

My food is great. Just mention brekkie, lunch or dinner and I head straight to the laundry (my private dining room). I know NOT to touch Oliver or Henry's food bowls if they haven't finished before me.

**“ The commands I have learnt are sit, down, stand, come (I have great recall), wait (at dinner time), leave it, and stay (working on this one - sometimes I forget not to move).**

I'm not frightened by loud noises like the vacuum cleaner or washing machine. Henry isn't frightened, so why should I be?

I have been going on short walks around the neighbourhood, and cars and buses are not scary either. Just big! Soon I will get my yellow coat that identifies me as special and allows me to go everywhere.

One place I'm going to is the school that Mum's grandson attends. I will meet and greet the kids and if I am well

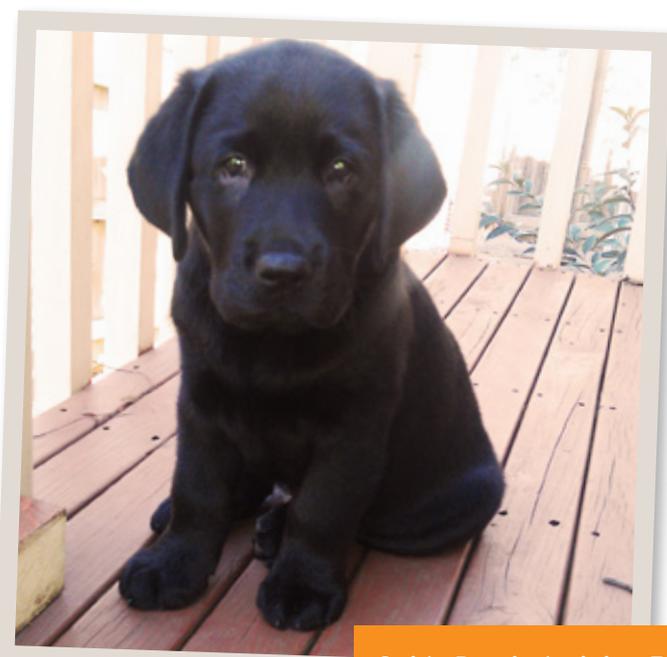
behaved I can sit in a class and learn from the teacher also.

I almost forgot to mention, Mum left the three of us alone outside the other day for the first time and boy, when she came home she was sooo excited because there weren't any holes, exploding beds or mess of any kind. We got a carrot each as a very special treat.

Well I think I hear the word 'lunch' so I will be off.

If you see me out and about, please say hello. But don't pat me as my concentration span isn't very big yet.

Now what was that word I just heard? 🐾



Guide Dog in training Bowie

## ARE YOU RUNNING THE MELBOURNE MARATHON?

**Guide Dogs Victoria is taking part in the 2017 Melbourne Marathon Festival! On 15 October, a fantastic group of supporters, staff and clients who are blind or who have low vision will be pounding the pavements to raise crucial funds for our breeding program.**

It takes two years and \$50,000 to breed, raise and train one Guide Dog, and at Guide Dogs Victoria we receive less than 10% government funding to deliver our critical and life changing services. Please dig deep and help support our wonderful organisation and help change the life of someone living with vision loss.

Thank you for your support and for helping to make a difference. You can join or support the Guide Dogs Victoria team here:

[melbournemarathon2017.gofundraise.com.au/page/gdv](http://melbournemarathon2017.gofundraise.com.au/page/gdv)



# TEGAN & NIMBEE

**“There is no manual that prepares you for your child surviving a brain tumour at 13 and then going blind. But, as a family, we coped.”**

We made a lot of mistakes. There’s no right or wrong way; you learn things as you go. We went to disability days and realised that every child who has a disability is different,” say Julie and Garry, Tegan’s parents.

When Tegan was declared legally blind, she was just a teenager. In spite of being so young, she found the strength and maturity to get on with her life.

Tegan and her parents would never have imagined that when she was diagnosed with Streff Syndrome in her early teens, life would change forever.

Streff Syndrome is a vision condition primarily exhibited by children, who experience reduced or blurred vision. Tegan thought she would have to wear glasses for a little while and that eventually her eyesight would recover.

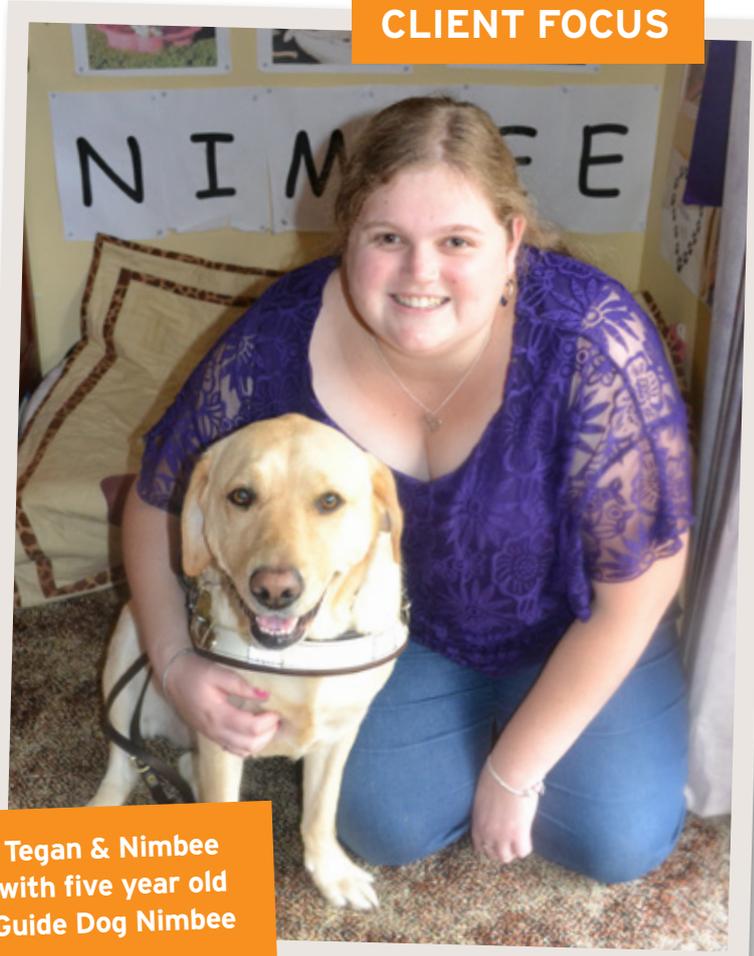
“But my sight just kept getting worse so my eye doctor sent me for an emergency CT scan. We were shocked: the scan showed a tumour right in the centre of my head. I just accepted it and fought it. I went through 30 doses of radiotherapy to get rid of the tumour.”

Tragically, the brain tumour had damaged Tegan’s optic nerves and reduced her eyesight to just 6%. She cannot see details or pale colours anymore. By the time she went blind, Tegan had a clear memory of her home so no major adjustments needed to be made.

But life was quite different at school.

**“Losing my sight at 13 really affected me socially. I had a big group of friends, but by the end of the year, I had only one left. Most of my friends could not cope with me going blind.”**

Guide Dogs Victoria came into Tegan’s life through a pink cane. Angela, one of our Orientation and Mobility Instructors, came to visit Tegan at her house to help her learn how to get



**Tegan & Nimbee with five year old Guide Dog Nimbee**

around town with a cane. Tegan chose a pink cane.

Getting around Tegan’s home town of Wangaratta can be very tricky. There are a lot of roundabouts to navigate. Tegan found that she couldn’t manage them and so didn’t venture much further than the main street.

So as soon as she could, Tegan applied for a Guide Dog. At the age of 18, she was matched to Nimbee, her very first Guide Dog.

“I couldn’t do what I’m doing today without Nimbee. She keeps me safe wherever I go. Nimbee gives me independence, safety and companionship. Nimbee has that warm touch and big brown eyes that would melt anyone’s heart.

Life would be so much more difficult without my Guide Dog. Without Nimbee I wouldn’t have been able to get a job at the Rural City of Wangaratta for eight months. I was working with disabled youth. It was a wonderful job and I gained so much experience.”

Tegan and five-year-old Nimbee, will work together for around 10 years. When Nimbee retires, Tegan will need a new Guide Dog. It costs as much as \$50,000 to breed, care for and train a single Guide Dog, and we receive less than 10% Government funding to support the delivery of all of our services.

Without your continued support through donations, we would not be able to train more Guide Dogs for young adults like Tegan.

# JED, A SPIRIT WORTH BOTTLING.

## Guide Dog Profile

**GUIDE DOG:** JED  
**SIRE:** DUKE  
**DAM:** TAMMY  
**DOB:** 10.10.2015  
**PUPPY RAISER:** SOPHIE WILD  
**7 PUPPIES IN LITTER**

### Jed is larger than the typical Guide Dog and he's also larger than life!

He spent a lot of time in our office at Guide Dogs Victoria as his puppy raiser, Sophie, works in the Marketing Department.

Sophie and the staff were very sad to say goodbye to Jed but equally proud of him becoming a Guide Dog.

Sophie loved teaching Jed and he has blossomed into a working Guide dog with exceptional manners.

**“ Jed is such a fabulous dog and I know I'm very lucky. It is a credit to Sophie. He's currently lying beside me looking after me - God bless him, his spirit is worth bottling.”**

said Kim, Jed's new handler.

“Jed is settling in and working really well with me. After two nights, I got some doggy toys out of a basket behind the lounge chair and played with him. Every morning now, he goes to the basket, gets the toy he wants to play with and we have a quick play together. He's a smart boy with heaps of personality.

We are both tired after our first week of training and I know there's plenty more to get through. I'm certainly looking forward to a quiet weekend just spending quality time with Jed.”

Kim is a Country & Variety singer, and a regular performer at many country music festivals throughout Central and North Western Victoria, Southern New South Wales and South Australia, and Jed will be the perfect roadie!

We wish Kim and Jed all the best in their new partnership!

Guide Dog Jed



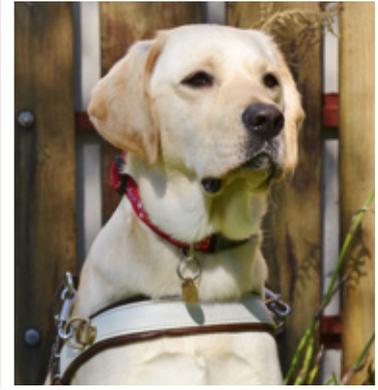
Puppy raiser Sophie and family celebrating Jed's Graduation with his new handler Kim.



## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR LATEST GRADUATES

The class of 2017 has graduated! It was a wonderful day at the Hawthorn Arts Centre where clients, puppy raisers, sponsors, volunteers and staff all came together to celebrate our 93 graduating dogs! Our dogs were recognised for their many important roles, including Guide Dogs, Pets as Therapy dogs, breeding dogs and companion dogs. Congratulations to all graduates, we look forward to hearing your amazing stories in the future!

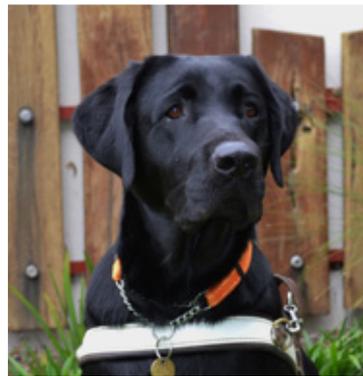
**Congratulations to the class of 2017, you are all extremely PAWSOME!**



MARDI



PENNY



RUFUS



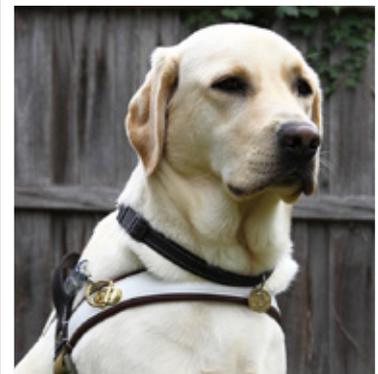
SAHANA



BENITA



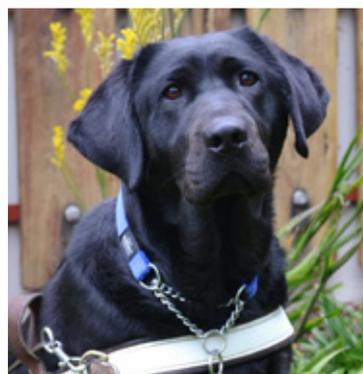
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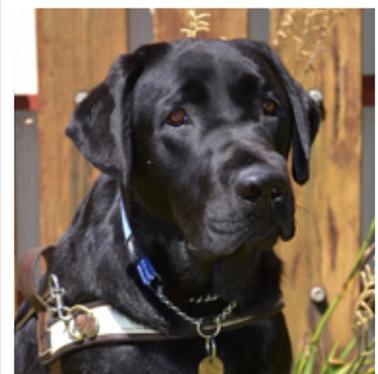
GIANNI



HESTER



KATHLEEN



JED

# DARKNESS. I WAS BORN INTO IT.

Eight-year-old Sabre was diagnosed with Horizontal Jerk Nystagmus which causes him to blink quickly all the time.

He also has Stationary Night Blindness (he is almost completely blind in the dark and low light) as well as retinal dystrophy and suspected Retinitis Pigmentosa (tunnel vision that is gradually getting worse and contributing to his loss of vision).

Last month, Sabre, his older brother and mum experienced Dialogue in the Dark.

No surprises, Sabre with his cane was the fastest ever through Dialogue in the Dark.

His brother and mum, Cookie, now have a better appreciation of Sabre's lens on the world and challenges.

Read more about Sabre in our forthcoming Christmas appeal.

*“What an experience. My husband and I wanted to do it to understand our son who is four and blind. It gave us a better understanding of how he navigates spaces and objects. Definitely recommending all of our family and friends go and experience how our son sees the world. Great exhibition. I encourage everyone to go.”*



Sabre meets a Guide Dog at the Dialogue in the Dark exhibition.

## Acknowledgements

### Guide Dogs Australia Partners



### Guide Dogs Victoria Sponsors



### Guide Dogs Victoria Supporters Strathmore Community Bank

ABN 68 004 621 461  
2-6 Chandler Highway  
Kew Victoria 3101

Telephone 03 9854 4444  
Facsimile 03 9854 4500  
info@guidedogsvictoria.com.au

### Social Media

