

# Guide Dog Tales

The latest news from Guide Dogs Victoria

Spring Issue 2016

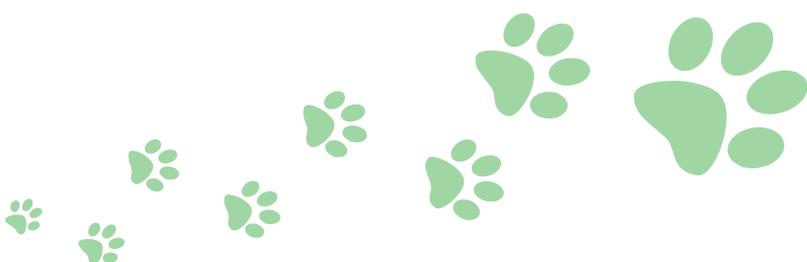
## IN THIS EDITION

**Australia's Most  
Trusted Charity**  
Fourth year in a row

**Nikki**  
And her brave  
battle

**Graduation Day**  
Celebrate our newly  
graduated handlers

Taking  
the lead  
this  
Spring



# A message from Karen & Willow

Spring has arrived and the weather has been warming up at Guide Dogs Victoria. I am thrilled to share what your support has helped us achieve over the last financial year.

Since our last issue, we celebrated our Guide Dog Graduation Day along with 57 strong newly graduated handlers and their canine companions. You can read more about this very special day on page 8.

For the fourth year running, I am proud to announce that Guide Dogs Australia has been named Australia's Most Trusted Charity, so a heartfelt thanks to all of you for your continued trust and loyal support.

I encourage you to read the story about 33-year-old Nikki on page 5. Nikki lost her sight in just over 10 days. In March 2015 she developed a growing headache due to spinal fluid on her brain. By April 2015, she had lost 95% of her vision. It is these stories which inspire us to do what we do every day, and it is with your help that we can make it all possible.

We do hope you enjoy this edition of Guide Dog Tales. It is a chance for us to send warm thanks for your generosity



and to show you just how much you are making a positive difference to the lives of Victorian's who have low vision.

Warmly,

*Karen Hayes* 

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



## Guide Dogs Australia 2016 Christmas Cards



**\$9.95**  
each

**FREE**  
Postage

**Call 1800 013 015**  
**to place your order**

Each pack contains 10 cards & 10 envelopes in five delightful designs, featuring cute photos of our Guide Dog Puppies. Message inside reads:

*"Best Wishes for Christmas and the New Year".*

# You have made a difference

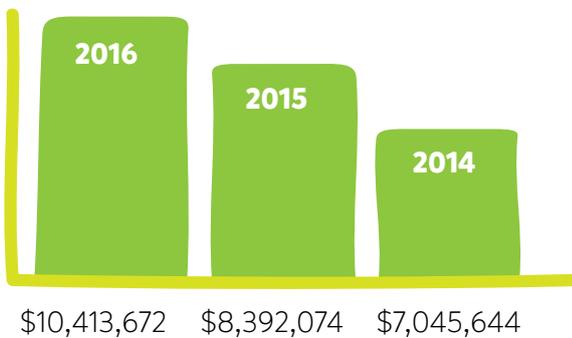
Thank you for your ongoing support and commitment to Guide Dogs Victoria. Your invaluable gifts help us change lives every day.

There are now approximately 570,000 people living with blindness or low vision in Australia, and this number is predicted to grow to 801,000 by 2020. So our work is ongoing and there is an ever increasing need for our services.

With your invaluable and ongoing support over the past financial year, Guide Dogs Victoria was able

to deliver a range of services to support more than 1,500 Victorian children and adults living with vision loss. In the same period, we provided 2,700 training and support programs and provided ongoing mobility support to 213 Guide Dogs users. Our services are available to everyone requiring them, regardless of their funding arrangements:

## 1. Fundraising over three years



## 2.



## 3.



## 4. INDIVIDUAL DONORS

- Individual donors - \$3,066,507
- Gifts in Wills - \$4,951,638
- Capital donations - \$1,339,000
- Major donors - \$815,213
- Special projects - \$45,500
- Corporate and community - \$191,368
- Public education programs - \$4,446

**Thank  
You!**

**These are impressive figures - every one of them is an individual, and every individual is another story making a difference. 🐾**



# Dog Tale – Guide Dog Khan & Simon

It's a brisk morning on Sunday and we are off to the Tan track to run a leisurely 10kms. So what's so unusual about that?

Well, my Guide Dog probably isn't that keen on running with me; it's a bit beyond his responsibility. The last time I tried to run without assistance, I met – at pace – a pole with an unwavering stance. Luckily there were no other collisions with people, cars or other inanimate objects.

Well, is it time to hang my running shoes up and retire? But wait – what's that in the distance coming out of the sunrise? An entourage of volunteer Guide Dog minders, runners and walkers keen to run or walk for fitness with people with low vision and blindness.

Achilles Running Club Melbourne follows the international group that has chapters in Melbourne, Sydney and Canberra. So how does it work? Where possible, volunteers are matched with similar paced runners or walkers. There is a strap that is held by both runner and guide. The guide verbally indicates a series of signals to avoid any obstacles that are coming.

Surprisingly and happily, I can tell you it works. I have the opportunity to get fit while someone watches over

my hero Guide Dog, Khan. He can be a mischievous handful when he is out of his harness, but fortunately the sight of a ball makes him instantly yours!

My run takes around 50 minutes to an hour and it makes the day perfect. The volunteers are essential and amazing people who assist with achieving my fitness goals. Where possible, they sometimes pick us up and take us to the venue. Some volunteers are starting to meet up with runners in their area for mid-week runs in addition to regular Sunday training. This makes it possible for me to work towards my goal, which is to do 21kms at Run Melbourne in July, then take on the 42.5km run at the Melbourne Marathon in October. Sounds difficult, but one thing is for sure: I am travelling with the best people who can make it happen.

Achilles Running Club Melbourne meets every Sunday morning at 8:30am at the Tan running track in Melbourne CBD.

Contact Amanda Kwong at [achillesmelbourne@gmail.com](mailto:achillesmelbourne@gmail.com) 



Simon and Guide Dog Khan

## Become a Puppy Pal today From just \$25 a month!

Every Guide Dog we breed, raise and train costs over \$35,000.

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

**So what are you waiting for?**

**Your support will change lives forever.**

Call 9854 4444 or visit

[guidedogsvictoria.com.au](http://guidedogsvictoria.com.au)



The L Litter – 2014 Puppy Pals Litter

# A world turned dark

Could you imagine losing your sight in just over 10 days? How would you cope? How would you go about re-building your life to adapt to blindness?

33 year-old Nikki lost her sight in just over 10 days. On 20th March 2015 she developed a growing headache due to spinal fluid putting pressure on her brain. By 1st April 2015, she had lost 95% of her vision.

Over a year later, Nikki is still fighting to build a new life and regain her confidence and lost independence.

**I would have given up without Guide Dogs Victoria. I'd be sitting in a corner feeling sorry for myself, afraid to go out, with no job or money, living a life in total darkness.**

Nikki's daily struggle to cope with her vision loss has left her angry and frustrated.

"Nothing is easy anymore. I have to pay attention to every little detail all day long. Making coffee, taking a shower, or cooking a meal is really tiring because I have to concentrate hard on things I didn't give a second thought to a year ago."

The light in Nikki's life is the love of her mum and the caring support from the team at Guide Dogs Victoria.

"Guide Dogs Victoria made me realise life wasn't over. Vicky, my Orientation and Mobility Instructor, taught me how to use a white cane and public transport. She got me back to work within eight months of losing my sight."

There's still a long way to go to achieve a more independent life, but Nikki knows that she can rely on Guide Dogs Victoria and caring friends like you, who continue to support our work with your generous donations. 🐾

Nikki has learned invaluable cane skills



# A day in the life of Guide Dog Zoran

As quite a famous Guide Dog, I get asked a lot of questions when I'm travelling out and about.

One of the most frequently asked questions people ask me is, 'Why do Guide Dogs Victoria only use Labradors for Guide Dogs?' Guide Dogs Victoria uses Labradors and Golden Retrievers for Guide Dog work. My dad was a Labrador and my mum was a Golden Retriever. Paula says that is one of the reasons I am so handsome. In the early days of Guide Dog training, well over 50 years ago, dogs were sourced from a range of different places including dog shelters. This meant that trainers had to use the most

temperamentally sound dogs for the Guide Dog work regardless of their breed.

Some of the more unusual breeds that qualified as Guide Dogs were German Shepherds, Border Collies, Boxers, Curly Coat Retrievers, and there was even a Greyhound who trained successfully as a Guide Dog!

There are lots of reasons why Labradors and Golden Retrievers have been chosen by Guide Dogs Victoria to work as guides and these include the following:

- 1. Our coats are easy to maintain – we have a short coat.**
- 2. We are easy to train – we work for pats, love and food.**
- 3. We don't look scary – people are happy to have us come into their homes and shops.**

Our extended family tree of Labradors and Golden Retrievers have been producing Guide Dogs for generations. My brothers, sisters, uncles, aunties and extended family have been specifically bred over many years to be the best Guide Dogs possible. We love to work and it is known all around the world that Labradors and Golden Retrievers love to work as Guide Dogs. I especially love my job as I help children learn how to be Guide Dog handlers. 🐾



So much depends on a Guide Dog's ability to be fit, healthy and happy to perform their duties. To ensure their health from puppy to adulthood, ADVANCE is used exclusively to feed and nourish Guide Dogs around Australia. ADVANCE is proud to support this life-changing service and has done so for many years. 🐾

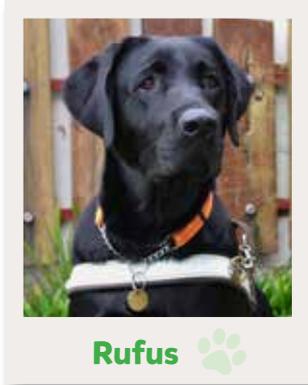


# Congratulations to our latest Graduates!



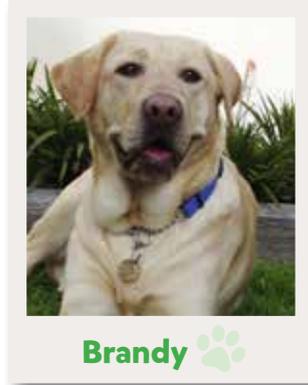
**Misty** 

Qualified Guide Dog



**Rufus** 

Qualified Guide Dog



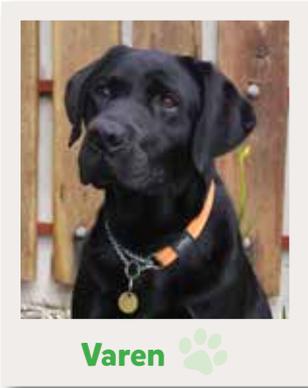
**Brandy** 

Ambassador Dog



**Zoraya** 

Pets as Therapy Dog



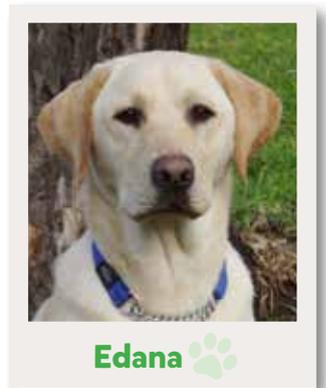
**Varen** 

Pets as Therapy Dog



**Garrett** 

Pets as Therapy Dog



**Edana** 

Companion Dog



## A Gift in a Will Changes Lives



With minimal Government funding for the breeding, raising and training of our Guide Dogs, gifts in Wills help to make our work possible.

Over 30% of our Guide Dogs have been bred, raised and trained due to the generosity of donors who have left a lasting legacy. Leaving a gift in your Will helps restore dignity, confidence, independence and mobility to blind and vision impaired Australians.

For more information on the bequest program or to leave a bequest, please call Angie on 9854 4508

# The class of 2016

The class of 2016 has graduated. It was a wonderful day at the Hawthorn Arts Centre which saw clients, puppy raisers, sponsors, volunteers and staff all come together to celebrate our 57 graduating handlers and their new Guide Dogs.

Thank you to everyone who was involved, but special thanks must go to our official ambassador Craig Ondarchie MP and Ambassador Dog Nala for being such a great MC for the day and for his continued support to Guide Dogs Victoria. 🐾

The whole day had a brilliant atmosphere and as always, it is so moving to see firsthand the positive impact a Guide Dog has not just on their handler's life but also for the family and friends that surround them.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE CLASS OF 2016, WE ARE EXTREMELY PROUD OF YOU ALL.**

## Australia's Most Trusted Charity

For the fourth year running, Guide Dogs has been voted Australia's Most Trusted Charity in the annual Australian Reader's Digest Most Trusted Brand Poll.

The award is based on the results of an independent survey commissioned by Reader's Digest. Guide Dogs Australia was recognised for its services, including providing Guide Dogs to Australians who have low vision for 60 years.

CEO Karen Hayes is thrilled to have the organisation acknowledged for the fourth year in a row. "Over the years the public has been so supportive of the work we do, so as part of the Guide Dogs family, I'd like to express my sincere appreciation for this recognition," she said.

In Victoria alone, there are 220,000 people living with permanent vision loss with this figure expected to grow to 350,000 by 2020.

"Demand for our services in the state is rapidly on the rise. We are always looking for ways to prepare for this growth – our priority is to find Victorian homes for 20 of our Guide Dog puppies as well as recruit 50 puppy raisers over the coming months," says Karen. 🐾



Thank you for putting your trust in us.



It's helping us to change more lives than ever.

## Acknowledgements

### Guide Dogs Australia Partners



### Guide Dogs Victoria Sponsors



### Guide Dogs Victoria Supporters Strathmore Community Bank

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### Social Media

