

Pupdates - it's a dog's life

Pupdates continued

Thank you for making a difference!




Maggie, Derek & Chris

A life-changing experience

"It's very worthwhile... it's given us so much as well. It really is a lovely experience."

They may only live with them for a comparatively short time, but the pups in our programs leave pawprints that last a lifetime on the hearts of the volunteers who raise them.

Maggie Brzozowski and Chris White say the loss felt when handing back a dog they have socialised, cared for and loved, is outweighed by the pride and joy of seeing the difference that dog can make for a vision-impaired Tasmanian.

Maggie and Chris were puppy raisers for Derek, who was placed with Faye Pattinson in February.

He was about 12 weeks old when they began caring for Derek. He stayed with them for around 18 months, learning to become well-socialised, unfazed by noise, able to navigate busy shopping centres, sit quietly on public transport or in cafes, and develop toileting routines.

"Being our first (Guide Dog pup) we were both a bit emotional when the day came to hand him over for training," says Maggie.

"But Labradors in particular love being with people, and [the Guide Dog's] going on to be with someone all the time, and helping that person, and we can then look forward to hearing about their progress and how they're going with their life.

"There were lots of little quirky moments that you can think back on and of course we're always taking heaps of photos, so we've got a record of our life with Derek, which is lovely."

They were then delighted to meet Faye and see Derek so happy with her, through an online meeting during the COVID isolation period.

"The thing we picked up on was that her life has just got so much better since she's been having guide dogs, and how much she enjoys Derek's personality," says Maggie.

She and Chris have since helped to raise Harmony, who at the time of writing, was just days away from leaving them to begin her training. But, asked whether she would recommend becoming a puppy raiser despite the necessary goodbyes, Maggie didn't hesitate.

"Oh yes, I think it's a really lovely thing to do and very worthwhile, and there is a lot of support and care. A big thank you to Guide Dogs Tasmania, because it's given us so much as well. It really is a lovely experience."



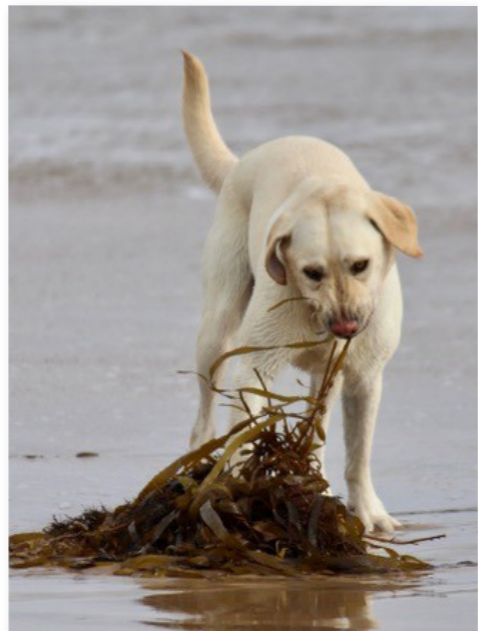
Alfie checking out the handsome guy in the mirror



Oh, Alvin - that face...!



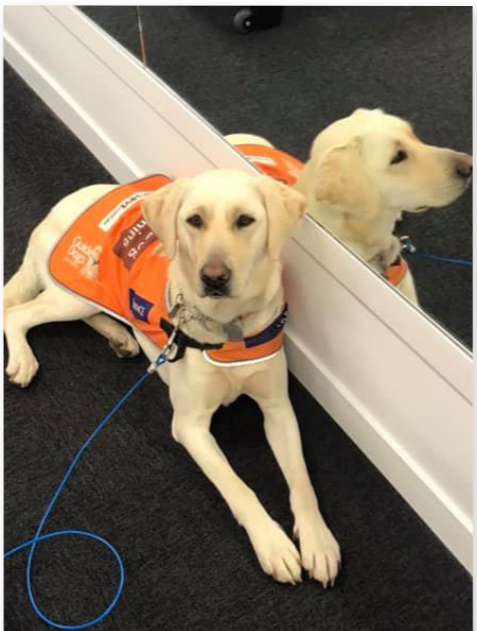
Austin's still getting plenty of very important playtime



Why was Harry wet? Because the seaweed



Siblings Jasmine and Jonty caught up at the park to celebrate their first birthday



Millie supervising Pilates class



Zazu is wisely counting his chickens after they've hatched



Frankie showing how it's done - sitting beautifully in his harness



Happy birthday to meeee! Harmony with her new friend



Clever Tyson speaks Dog, understands English, and is now learning French



Isaac says isolation is no excuse for not looking one's best



Ziggie keeping an eye out for anyone considering tasting her treat



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Benji finds his true calling

"I hope the people who put all that work into raising and training him can see just what a difference he's making."

Benji came to Guide Dogs Tasmania at about ten weeks of age and went through our training program. He was a bit too interested in other dogs to make it as a Guide Dog, but the big black Labrador has found his true calling providing comfort and support to Tasmanians doing it tough.

The gentle giant, who weighs in at about 38 kilos, is thriving in his work as a crisis support dog at the Salvation Army Glenorchy City Corps, and is a calming presence for community members who come in for emergency relief and case management.

Benji provides comfort for vulnerable people, helping to ground them and assist with their emotional regulation and a return to more logical thinking when they are in crisis.

"Benji came to us in December very, very well trained; you could tell there was a lot of time invested in him. His social skills, his people skills – he's just spot on, you can't fault him at all," says Doorways program facilitator Shelley Hyland.

"I hope the people who put all that work into raising and training him can see just what a difference he's making."

"I still can't believe how blessed we are to have him."



Exclusive sneak peek!

Old dogs, new tricks

Our Collection Dogs program is back up and running and to celebrate, we want to give you, our most valued supporters, a special sneak peek at what is both a salute to our important history and an exciting new development in this iconic program.

These are our vintage model dogs – some of them nearly as old as Guide Dogs Tasmania itself – which have been painstakingly refurbished ready to get back on the job collecting the community donations that help us continue to support Tasmanians with disability.

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers who sanded back layers of old paint, and B-Spoke Design in Launceston, who restored them, the 21 (very shiny!) dogs will be ready to be deployed to prominent locations around the state as soon as they have their new leather harnesses.

So, if you see them, or any of our many other collection dogs (big or small) when you're out and about, please feel free to drop in any spare change, as our volunteer team is now collecting the donations, and every cent does make a difference!



Resourcefulness and resilience help us through COVID

"Having dogs at home was so valuable to many of us, lessening the isolation and keeping us more connected with community interested in the work we were doing and offering to help out where possible."



Our heartfelt thanks and congratulations to our volunteers and staff who rose to the challenge of continuing to raise, socialise and train our pups and dogs throughout the COVID isolation period.

Program Manager – Guide Dog Services, Kim Ryan, said it had been critical to keep up socialisation and training work, and to support the volunteer puppy raisers and boarders to maintain their own and the pups' general wellbeing.

To do this, the team embraced a range of communications platforms. Online video chat services Zoom and FaceTime replaced face-to-face work including monthly group training sessions, supporting puppy raisers on walks and introducing pups to new experiences around the house, and coffee catch-ups for mentors.

Program staff also created PowerPoint and video learning opportunities for puppy raisers and volunteer recruits; developed a system for regular phone check-ins with puppy raisers and clients; and formed a closed Facebook group which was spectacularly successful in bringing our northern and southern volunteers together to share stories, photos and information.

Mindful that many puppy raisers also had their hands full supporting their children through home schooling, our staff set up fun activities for children to complete with the pups in their care, including backyard scavenger hunts, backyard cafes so pups could continue to learn how to behave in different environments, and puppy bingo based on training tasks.

Kim said she and other staff took extra dogs into their own homes, enabling them to continue training and ensuring we have dogs ready to place with clients. "Aside from that though, having dogs at home was so valuable to many of us, lessening the isolation and keeping us more connected with community interested in the work we were doing and offering to help out where possible," she said. "It was just great."

Meet your latest puppies!



Shadow

Date of Birth: 12 October 2019
Gender: Male
Lives: Southern Tasmania

Sponsored by: Bruce Wall Trust

Shadow is named after the wise old Golden Retriever in the movie, *Homeward Bound*. He is ¾ Labrador and ¼ Golden Retriever and he's very fluffy, bouncy energetic, and very loving.



Sasha

Date of Birth: 11 November 2019
Gender: Female
Lives: Southern Tasmania

Sponsored by: Bruce Wall Trust

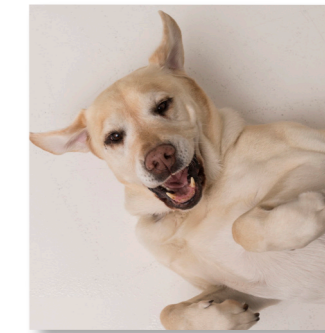
Sasha's name means 'protector of mankind.' She adores cuddles, especially with the three children in her puppy raising family, and she's Shadow's sister, so she, too, has a lot of fluff going on.

And while we warmly welcome our newest puppies, we also bid some fond farewells



Wizard has recently retired, after 10 years of helping her Launceston handler, Gunter Breier, adjust to his decreasing vision and allowing him to remain safe, independent and active in his community.

"Wizard is part of our family, and will remain a much-loved pet for myself and my wife," says Gunter.



Visit our YouTube channel to watch Dexter's retirement video

Last month, our adored Ambassador Dog, **Dexter**, officially hung up his working coat after eight years of dedicated service.

A special thankyou to Fairbrother Foundation, sponsor of the Ambassador Dog Program; Silver Pet Prints Australia and Zanzo Portraits for Dexter's beautiful retirement gifts (including this joyful photo), and to Dexter's volunteer boarding family, who will continue to care for Dexter in retirement.