

## About our Adoption Program

Southeastern Guide Dogs

Effective February, 8 2010

Thank you for your interest in adopting a Southeastern Dog! We are committed to finding quality and loving homes for the dogs who have not met the very strict guidelines for guide dog work.

You may have a lot of questions about our adoption process and about the types of dogs that we have available. This brief FAQ will help familiarize you with our Adoption Program and help you determine if you would like to move forward with the commitment that comes with dog ownership.

### **Q: What type of dog can I expect to be made available through the adoption program?**

A: Dogs that become available for public adoption are dogs that have not met very strict standards required to be a successful guide dog and do not meet the criteria for other professions such as Arson Detection, Narcotics Detection, etc. for an assortment of reasons. Some of these reasons may include fear of children or animals, they may be easily distracted, or they may have some medical concerns that exclude them from guide dog work.

### **Q: Will my dog be trained?**

A: Most dogs that are available for public adoption have been trained to obey basic commands. "Sit", "Stay", and some other basic commands have been ingrained into the dogs from a very young age. It is important to note that dogs that are available for public adoption have been made available for public adoption prior to their enrollment in formal guide dog training at our campus. Training to this point in their lives has been managed by dedicated Puppy Raisers who trained the puppies from 8 weeks of age.

### **Q: What about bathroom habits?**

A: Dogs available for public adoption have been housetrained.

### **Q: What types of medical issues may my dog have?**

A: In most cases, the medical issues that require Southeastern Guide Dogs to dismiss a dog from its guide dog program are not severe. Often, knees and hips prevent a dog from moving forward with their guide dog development. In many instances, the problem will never develop into a major issue, but it is possible that a dog with medical needs may require veterinary attention during its life. It is important to consider the possible financial implications that come with adopting a dog that may need veterinary care.

### **Q: I am not sure if I want to accept a dog with medical concerns. What should I do?**

A: Southeastern Guide Dogs is committed to quality placement. If you decide, as a family, that you are not willing to accept a dog with medical concerns, simply let

us know by marking it appropriately on your application. Keep in mind, families that are willing to accept this responsibility traditionally have a dog placed more quickly.

Should you make the decision to consider a dog with medical issues, we will always share with you any medical concerns we are aware of before you adopt a dog with us. You will be able to make a reasonably informed decision if you would like to move forward.

**Q: How long will I have to wait for dog?**

A: Southeastern Guide Dogs has committed itself to finding alternative careers to guide dog work before placing a dog in the public adoption program. As a result, we may have as few as 10 dogs per year to adopt publically and will have a wait list of up to two years. Families who have fewer breed/color restrictions or who are willing to adopt a dog with medical issues usually experience placement more quickly.

**Q: The wait list seems very long. I don't want to wait. What should I do?**

A: Florida Lab Rescue has a wonderful program for the adoption of rescued labs. You can visit their website to determine if this is a viable alternative for you. (Phone: 561-719-7914 or <http://www.labradorrescue.net>)

**Q: Will I be able to pick out my own dog?**

A: While we will make every attempt to match your preferences to the dogs we have available for adoption, we do not allow the public to select their own dogs. We carefully identify the strengths of each dog and match them with families – taking into consideration the history of the dog and any idiosyncrasies he/she may have.

**Q: Once I submit my application, what happens?**

A: Your name will be added to our wait list. When a dog becomes available, our Programs Coordinator will call you to let you know of the dog available. You will make arrangements to visit the school and pick up the dog. If a dog has not yet become available, you will remain on the wait list and the Programs Coordinator will reach out to you once a year to establish your continued interest in remaining on the list.

**Q: Does Southeastern Guide Dogs charge anything to adopt a dog?**

A: There is a \$1,200 fee required for the adoption of a Southeastern Guide Dog made available through Public Adoption. This fee helps us recuperate the costs incurred during the dog's time in our program including medical expenses, vaccinations, and basic care. In all, the total cost to fully train a guide dog team is \$60,000. Your support will help us continue the breeding, raising, training and placement of guide dogs with visually impaired individuals.