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from the CEO

Dear Friends,

I'd like to express my gratitude to everyone who stepped in to help us overcome unprecedented challenges over the past few months. Puppy raisers, dog hosts, donors, volunteers, and staff members—you have stood by our side. It's wonderful knowing we can count on you as



together we continue to change people's lives.

Opportunities can be found within every crisis, and we've been working diligently toward the goal of emerging even stronger than before, to meet the needs of our dogs and the people who need them.

Why? Because dogs and people matter. People like those you'll find within these pages, as well as our nearly 600 alumni, our over 250 applicants-in-waiting, the families who share their journeys, and the communities where they live, love, and belong.

When times are hard and days are long, friends, freedom, and hope are more important than ever. For people with vision loss, veterans with disabilities, children with significant challenges, and the dogs that enrich their lives, we're pressing forward, together. Thank you for making it possible.

Warm regards,

Titus Herman

Chief Executive Officer

Titus Herman

WALTER DANIEL WAS BORN IN 1950 IN BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA, WITH NO VISION IN ONE EYE AND LEGALLY BLIND IN THE OTHER, NOW 70. HE REMINISCES ABOUT GROWING UP BLIND IN A COMMUNITY OF KINDNESS, FUELED BY HIS OWN CHEERFUL DETERMINATION TO KEEP UP WITH—AND SURPASS—THE KIDS IN HIS CLASS.

Schools were segregated then, despite the 1954 U.S. Supreme Court decision in Brown v. Topeka Board of Education that said separate schools cannot be equal. "I had all Black teachers until I got to the University of Alabama at Birmingham, Walter recalls. "I experienced good-natured, good-humored encouragement from teachers, and they never treated me any differently. They never cut me any slack, and I always felt like part of the class."

At first, Walter struggled to keep up with the others. But a fire burned inside, and he pushed himself until he read better than most, despite not having special accommodations for his vision. A natural leader, he became vice president of his senior class and enjoyed top roles in plays and singing groups.

The Kindness of Friends

School friends gave him a hard time about his vision, but Walter laughed with them. "Walter, quit smelling that book you're holding it so close to your face!" they teased, but then they took turns taking extra sets of notes. "One student always stayed on my right, and they copied their lessons and my lessons," he explains. "When they got tired of making two copies, they'd pass it behind me, and then pass it to the other side. By the end of the day, I had the same lessons everyone else had. Then I could go home and 'smell it.'"

The kindness Walter experienced from classmates and teachers motivated him to become an elementary school teacher, a career he cherished for 30 years.





Hellos and Goodbyes

In 2008, just as Walter approached retirement, a fellow teacher said, "Walter, I've been thinking about you a lot. Have you ever thought about getting a 'seeing-eye dog'? It would help you so much!" Walter did his homework, applied to Southeastern Guide Dogs, and within four months, was accepted.

A beautiful black Lab named Duchess Hannah became his first guide, and she and Walter shared an unbreakable bond. Walter enjoyed traveling, but Duchess made it so much easier. "Me and Duchess were all over the place," he says. "When I had my Duchess, I didn't worry about a thing. We went to seven states, we took a cruise to Cozumel, Mexico, and we flew to Canada."

As Walter thinks of Duchess—the way she constantly looked back to check on him; the many times she pushed him back from curbs and saved him from falls; their shared adventures—his voice begins to tremble. As he shares about her final days in April 2019, he sobs, unable to speak. She was his family, and the loss was profound.

With encouragement from our Alumni Support team, Walter returned to Southeastern Guide Dogs in September 2019 to train with a new guide dog. He hoped for another black Lab, just like Duchess Hannah.

Disappointment to Delight

Meanwhile, our training teams put enormous effort behind matching just the right dog with just the right person. Pace, pull, personality, lifestyle, and intuition help our trainers make this important decision, and for Walter, they chose a sweet, smart yellow Labrador.

"What is this?" thought Walter, fighting disappointment that his new dog didn't look like Duchess. "But then they told me his name was Arthur, and I knew he was my dog." Arthur shares his name with Walter's favorite grandfather, an old man who spent every Sunday morning with a young blind



boy as they walked together to church and sat with the other trustees. At age six, Walter felt important with his granddaddy Arthur by his side.

And now another Arthur stays by his side, giving Walter the same sense of confidence and affection. "He's a loving dog," Walter says. "He loves to be touched and petted, and he's always so sweet. My dogs have given me peace, happiness, and joy. I'm a better person because of my dogs."

"They both have a song, you know," Walter adds. "Arthur's song is *Someday, My Prince Will Come*, because he's my prince. And Duchess' song is *Somewhere There's a Place for Us*, because in my heart, she's here."

Somewhere

There's a place for us
Somewhere a place for us
Peace and quiet and open air
Wait for us somewhere



YOU—THE SOUTHEASTERN GUIDE DOGS COMMUNITY

As a child, Walter's community stood with him in his determination to be independent and successful. His confidence grew as they shared his unique journey. Today, you create another branch of Walter's community the Southeastern Guide Dogs family. Because of your generosity and kindness, Walter and others like him enjoy the freedom and confidence found in our beautiful dogs.

MY DOGS

have given me
peace, happiness,
and joy. I am a
better person
because of
my dogs.

STEFANIE MARVIN-MILLER & SERVICE DOG LELAND

A Good Soldier

Before the shattering assault in her comfort able, off base home, 22 year old Stefanie Marvin Miller was a good Army soldier, a plucky leader, and a young woman full of dreams. I wanted to do something bigger. To be that solid, dependable soldier that anybody could count on. To earn the rank of master sergeant and be called 'Sergeant Marvin.' To plan my wedding. To be a mom. I wanted the big house, the four screaming kids, and the mini van. I wanted it all.

That was before the night that exploded her psyche like a landmine.

It was 2016, just three years after her enlist ment. They'd been on a mission to deliver supplies to another unit. Back home, Ste fanie encountered a "friend." They'd worked together, served together, shared meals together. And now they shared something new: his violent, soul ripping sexual assault.

That instant, her every dream died. And for the next few years, Stefanie barely existed. That is, until she met her service dog, Leland.

Before Leland rescued her, she tried to find her voice. She tapped into her bravery, came forward, faced the backlash, fought the rumors, and felt the brunt and blows of the he said, she said, relive it again trauma.

"I was not living," Stefanie shares. "It was a mechan ical process of doing the bare minimum. I became

reclusive. I wouldn't go outside except out of pure necessity. The headaches, balance issues, and night terrors were debilitating. I gained weight. I rarely spoke to my family and friends, including my fiancé, Josh."

Traditions and Terrors

Stefanie eventually married him, this kind and understanding man, but the joys surround ing a wedding were gone. Her mom coaxed her once into trying on wedding dresses. "It was fight or flight, and I was counting down the seconds until I could get out of the building," Stefanie says. Instead, she sewed her own dress and refused the bachelorette party, avoiding the world beyond her walls.

"I don't remember most of my wedding day," she muses. "I remember clearly the panic attacks that I had that morning I couldn't catch my breath and I felt like I was going to die but I can't tell you what it felt like to say my vows. I can't remember most of our honeymoon, but I can tell you about the night terror that I had on our first night, at our cabin."

Finding Hope Again

In her search for help, Stefanie applied to 11 service dog organizations. Only Southeast ern Guide Dogs accepted her; she believes



NashvilleGulch @KelseyMontaqueArt



that the other rejections came because her post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) wasn't combat-related. She arrived to train on our Palmetto, Florida campus on June 3, 2018, exactly 98 days after her medical discharge from the Army. That's the day she met Leland, the mellow yellow Labrador who steered her story towards a happier-ever-after.

Leland's Gifts

"When I held Leland, that was the first time I'd felt hope since I could even remember," Stefanie says. "Since then, he has given me so many gifts; it's like Christmas morning for a 5-year-old. He's given me a sense of direction again, and stability. He's helped repair my foundation. He's helped me stick to the truest of truths inside of me; even through reporting (the assault), he really helped me stick to it. He's helped me become a human again. I'm no longer a robot, living mechanically; he's given me this life and it is mine to enjoy again."

Stefanie recalls one of her first outings with Leland, a trip to Nashville with Josh.

"I'll never forget—I have a picture of Leland in front of a mural with these angel wings. It was a very busy area of Nashville, and the fact that I was able to stand in a crowd and take that picture—that was only possible because of Leland."

Within 90 days of graduating from South-eastern Guide Dogs, Stefanie, Leland, and Josh traveled to Nantucket Island. "We went through the airport; we were fine through the airplane ride; and we had a second honeymoon. All because of Leland."

Today, Stefanie is busy studying for her college degree while earning stellar grades. She reaches out to other veterans in hopes that her story can help. Living through Covid-19 has been a challenge—seeing people in masks became a trigger for Stefanie—but Leland's training and her trust in him means that she can quickly find calm again. Meanwhile, she and Josh are making plans. One day soon they'll buy a fixer-upper with plenty of room for kids, a minivan, and one important member of

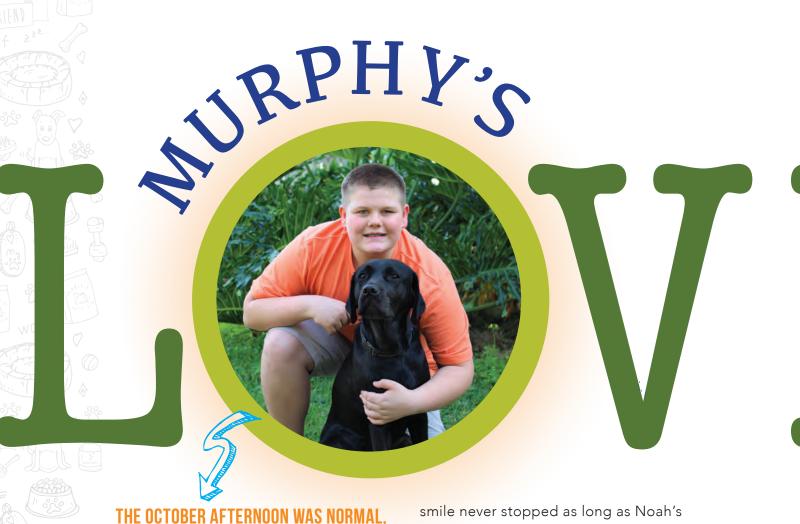
their family—Leland.

AND HERE YOU ARE

ES, YOU

You know who you are. You're the one who gave the gift of Leland to save a soldier named Stefanie. Because of you, Stefanie's dreams are alive again. But did you ever consider what your support of Southeastern Guide Dogs means for Stefanie's husband and their hoped for children? And to the veterans in Stefanie's reach? Because of you, Stefanie and other veterans can face a future with hope and new possibilities.

Stefanie shares about life with Leland on her blog, lelandthesuperdog.com, and is available as a guest speaker for organizations and events.



BRENT AND KIDS COMPANION DOG MURPHY

before it happened. Nobody was to blame. But that's the thing about horrible accidents—they are unpredictable, and they change everything.

After 13-year-old Brent's brother's paintball party, friends came back to the house to hang out. Someone picked up a practice target bow, wondering how it worked. Brent blew a few notes on his saxophone, just for fun. The sound startled the friend, who abruptly turned toward Brent—and that's when the arrow pierced Brent's eye.

Visitor on a Mission

While recovering from surgery at Johns Hopkins All Children's Hospital, Brent saw a photo card introducing Noah, a therapy dog. "Mom, I love that dog!" Brent said. "I hope that dog comes to see me!"

Sure enough, Noah the black Lab arrived the next day, and Brent's face lit up for the first time since the accident. His wagging, warm body pressed against his. That day Noah's owner—Southeastern Guide Dogs campus volunteer and ambassador Joanne Moore—shared with Brent's stepmom, Genna, all about our dogs, especially our Kids Companion dogs for kids with vision loss.

"During one of the most traumatic times of Brent's life, that dog was the only thing that took everything off of his mind," Genna recalls, a fact that prompted her to

apply for a Kids Companion dog for Brent. Just a few months after Noah's visit, Genna got the call that a special black Lab needed someone like Brent. just like Brent needed her. On December 31.

2019, Murphy officially established herself as Brent's new best friend. "They are literally inseparable," Genna says. "Murphy is a perfect fit for our house."

Murphy's Love

"There's multiple things about Murphy that I really love," Brent says. "One of them is snuggling with her on the floor, and running around in the back yard is really fun too. When I get emotional, she walks up to me, nudges my hand, and tries to get my attention and comfort me." Brent takes full responsibility for caring for Murphy—she's 100% his dog, but don't tell his baby sister that. At three, she's in love with Murphy too.

"Murphy has been the biggest blessing, not only for Brent, but for the whole family," Genna says. "If he gets really sad or goes through different emotions with his injury, Murphy will not leave him alone. She won't stop nudging him until he pays attention, and she brings a smile and lifts him up. They're two peas in a pod." Genna's voice softens as she says, "They were meant to be. They really, really were."

YOU MAKE AN AWESOME IMPACT

Hey volunteers and donors, people like you make a world of hoping to help out any way he can. Just like you!







New CARES Act Tax Benefits

New legislation and guidelines of the CARES Act have been implemented to offset the economic hardships faced by nonprofits, creating new tax benefits that encourage giving. Changes and benefits include:

- ★ For taxpayers who do not itemize, a deduction for up to \$300 in contributions can be applied.
- ★ For taxpayers who itemize contributions, there is no longer a limit to the deductions you can take for charitable contributions. Previously, a maximum of 60% of adjusted gross income (AGI) could be deducted for charitable contributions. Now, 100% of charitable donations will be tax deductible.
- ★ For philanthropic corporations, the CARES Act raises the annual cash gift limit from 10% to 25% of corporate taxable income.

Donor Advised Funds

A donor advised fund is a charitable, tax-deductible giving account intended to make a meaningful impact. This giving vehicle remains with financial organizations until designated to a charity of choice. In the U.S., it is estimated that there are over **100 billion dollars** idling in donor advised funds, waiting for the proverbial rainy day.

Do you have a donor advised fund? Now is the perfect time to put those philanthropic dollars to work on behalf of our extraordinary dogs, transforming lives. Visit Guidedogs.org/DAF for a convenient way to designate your funds.

Today's Generosity, Tomorrow's Legacy

Remembering Southeastern Guide Dogs in your will creates a legacy of kindness, and gifts of any size impact our extraordinary dogs. Don't have a will? We've partnered with Freewill to give you a simple, convenient way to write a legally valid will, at no cost. Get started on your will today by visiting Guidedogs.org/will

Consult your tax professional for advice, and thanks for giving!

PARTNERSHIPS SUPPORT OUR ALUMNI

"I Feel Like I've Won the



(and other enthusiastic responses from alumni)

he phone rang more than usual that day.

"Is this for real?" and

"I feel like I've won the lottery!" were a few of the responses we heard. One woman, a single mom and a guide dog handler, cried on the phone. A veteran with a service dog men-



The calls came on the day that we announced to our nearly 600 guide and service dog alumni that Fromm Family Pet Food now offers to provide them with dog food, free of charge; Elanco now offers to provide them with free Trifexis, a monthly preventative for fleas, intestinal parasites, and heartworms; and private donors and veterinarian partners now offer to cover the annual veterinary wellness visits and vaccinations for their working dogs.



Rachel Weeks with Plum

Alumni benefits administrator Rachel Weeks helps connect our alumni with these new benefits. With firsthand experience caring for her guide dog, Plum, she understands the impact. "This is an amazing gift," Rachel says. "I know exactly what it is

like to walk into the vet office hoping the bill will not derail my budget. It is important to put food on the table for a family and also imperative for our dogs to receive top-of-the-line care. Our graduates can now go forward confidently to the highest level of independence and freedom."

We are very grateful to
Fromm, Elanco, our donors, and
our veterinarian partners. Your
impact has never been felt deeper
than right now. Thanks to you, we
now offer the most comprehensive
Alumni Support Program in North
America's working dog industry.

Thank You!





PRIVATE DONORS

VETERINARIAN PARTNERS

JEFF LOWERY AND GUIDE DOG QUINCY

Taking a Beating

"Protect the innocent, extinguish the threat." That mantra repeated itself in Jeff Lowery's head when the children under his charge—victims themselves—tried to harm each other, or worse. As a program director and behavior analyst in a residential program for severely abused youth offenders, Jeff tried to help them find healing while keeping the peace.

A muscular guy, he was perfect for the job. Armed with a solid education, experience working with youth, and training in nonviolent crisis intervention and disarmament, Jeff was ready. But repeated crises took a massive toll on his body.

Picture a football player taking linebacker hits, without the helmet.

"In that field, you get beat on, but you can't hit kids back," he explains. "I've taken one too many beatings and a lot of blows to the head in my career. I've lost teeth and been stabbed in the arm, chest, and lower abdomen. I've had to fight for my life."

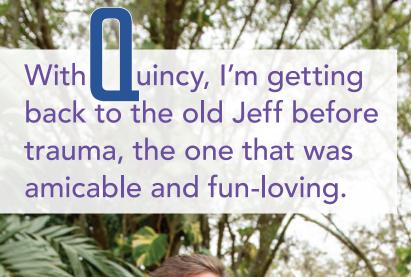
Dark Diagnosis

After repeated trauma and concussions, Jeff ended up with

brain damage and intense post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Five years ago, his vision started acting up; he'd see flashing lights and what looked like birds swooping toward him. Then things went gray; doctors declared him legally blind with post-concussive syndrome and Charles Bonnet syndrome.

Vision loss is tough to swallow for a guy who needs a clear view to assess behavior and deter threats, and who relies on visual distractions to avoid thinking about the "despicable things people do to each other." As he lost more







independence. Jeff became reclusive. and fear and flashbacks intensified.

The Clean Break

Something had to change. Along with his wife, Sara, and their three children ages 20, 19, and 7, the family moved to Florida. Jeff found a position with a faith-based organization where he travels internationally, speaks to large groups, and shares leadership skills with global missionaries and staff. When he started traveling, he often tripped and fell down, the normal pitfalls of low vision, and he relied on Sara to be his constant guide. So except for his job, Jeff mostly stayed home.

But then he learned about Southeastern Guide Dogs. And then he got his life back, with help from a little yellow Lab named Quincy, his new guide dog.

A Surprising Before and After

When Jeff remembers life before Quincy, his voice rises with emotion. "It's hard to tell a sighted person what it's like to be non-sighted," Jeff says. "They can close their eyes, but then they can open them again. My whole world—as I knew it ended. When you lose your vision, you take away your security...your trust...your emotional security... and you're trapped in a dark and darkened world. I grieve normalcy. I miss driving so much. I miss blending in, and not being able to have our shades open, and not having to go to a meeting and sit somewhere where the light isn't in my eyes. I miss not bumping into things. And then with PTSD, you're rooted in fear and anxiety."

After training together for three weeks on our campus, Jeff and Quincy returned home to Orlando. The team graduated in February 2020, just weeks before the Covid-19 shutdown. And Jeff couldn't be more surprised at the difference a dog makes.

"I'm not afraid anymore," Jeff explains. "With Quincy, I'm getting back to the old Jeff, before trauma, the one that was amicable and fun-loving. And I'm getting back to independence.

Before, I wouldn't go anywhere. But Quincy is flawless in public; unbelievable. I'm not embarrassed anymore, like I was with the cane. I hate that cane; it so slowed me down. I've gained confidence. I feel better about myself— I'm down 25 pounds. Before the shutdown, I was speaking at a seminar, and I was walking with a group and conversing. I gave her the "follow" command and she followed, and I got to be a person in the crowd again.

Quincy gives me a sense of normalcy that I'm content with. I won't ever go back to the life I had before—I don't get to—but with her, I've moved to acceptance. I don't feel lost anymore. Before, I didn't see much hope. But that part of acceptance that I've gotten with Quincy means that I can live my life, and I have all the tools I need to travel independently."



BECAUSE OF YOU

When you stand shoulder to shoulder with Southeastern Guide Dogs, you impact lives beyond what any of us can imagine. When you helped Jeff get Quincy at no charge you changed his life more than he ever expected. And now Jeff can live to his full potential, and be his best self for his family, his coworkers, and people around the world that Jeff impacts through his work. Well done, you.



from our chairman of the board

Dear Friends.

At Southeastern Guide Dogs, we specialize in hope.

Indeed, our extraordinary dogs give the priceless gift of hope for a brighter future to people with visual impairments, veterans with disabilities, and children with significant challenges such as vision loss or the loss of a parent in the military.

And because of you, those waiting in the wings for a dog of their own can hold on tightly to hope. Hope for better days ahead, and hope for a dog that will guide them straight to freedom.

Your friendship makes all the difference, in ways beyond measure. Thank you for making hope possible.

Warmly,

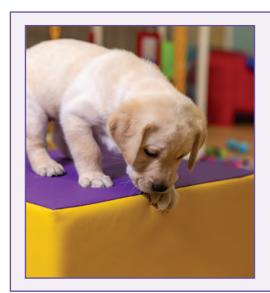
Raymond W. Bishop Chairman of the Board

P.S. You are important to us—so please practice safety in all that you do.

MISSION made POSSIBLE

HOW YOU HELPED US RESPOND TO COVID-19

When the pandemic changed everything with its closures and adjustments, this remained constant: our dogs continued to need us and our people continued to need our dogs. We had to find new ways to uphold our mission, and we couldn't have done it without the agility, flexibility, and generosity of the Southeastern Guide Dogs family. Here's how you—our community—stepped up and made our mission possible during the most challenging months of Covid-19, starting with our youngest puppies.



PUPPIES: NEWBORNS-8 WEEKS

No matter what happens in the world, life goes on in our puppy nursery. During April, our moms and babies remained on our campus, with a peak of 54 puppies cared for by the loving hands of dedicated volunteers and staff.

"Puppies are pure happiness! Volunteering has been so helpful in maintaining a positive outlook and remaining upbeat throughout this period. It's difficult to feel down when surrounded by such happy, playful pups! It sure did make me feel better being able to leave the house and get out."

—Kristen Smith, volunteer

PUPPIES: 8 WEEKS & UP

Usually, our puppies leave our campus at 10–12 weeks, but because of the stay-at-home mandate, our older puppies needed homes quickly. The generosity and dedication of our puppy raisers and sitters enabled us to place 56 puppies into homes during the first few weeks of the Covid-19 response, and 106 puppies between March and mid-May.

"Having a puppy forces you to stay in the moment and just take it day-by-day, which is what we all needed,"

—Kristen Rogers, volunteer puppy raiser

"If our puppy wasn't here, I'd just be sitting here bored doing homework. I've been really grateful." —Zoe, Kristen's 16-year-old daughter and co-raiser



DOGS IN TRAINING

In March, we placed over 115 dogs-in-training into the homes of trainers, staff members, and pre-screened volunteers, including about 90 host families. These families opened their hearts and homes to give our dogs an abundance of love, affection, playtime, and exercise.

"What better way to thrive than to think perhaps—in a very small way—we helped Southeastern Guide Dogs stay strong to their mission?"

—Beth Nothstine, volunteer "Canine Camp" host

Meanwhile, our trainers continued to train nearly 100 dogs enrolled in Canine University during the pandemic. Many of our trainers conducted the training in their homes and surrounding neighborhoods.

"We've come together to overcome challenges and obstacles in unprecedented times. We are all passionate about our dogs and training them, regardless of everything else happening in the world around us."

—Emily Dombrowski, certified service dog trainer



Jennifer Johnson



Emily Dombrowski

"It's blown me away that people who have their own jobs to do or are still working from home have said 'What else can I do? What more can I do to help?'"

> —Jennifer Johnson, certified guide dog trainer and training team manager

ALUMNI TEAMS

When travel stopped during the Covid-19 response, our Alumni Support team continued to provide phone support, slowly resuming in-home support as travel restrictions lifted. Meanwhile, because of new partnerships formed and because of donations from people like you, we had recently expanded our benefits in our Alumni Support program, at no cost to our alumni. For many, these benefits came just in time! Read more on page 15.

THANK YOU, FROM ALL OF US AT SOUTHEASTERN GUIDE DOGS. WE COULDN'T HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!

Volunteers, puppy raisers, host families, partners, donors, and friends . . . you helped us survive and thrive during these trying times. Thank you! We'd like to give a big shout-out to members of our Cornerstone Society—a group of caring individuals dedicated to the ongoing support of our mission—your support makes all the difference! (To learn more about our Cornerstone Society, visit GuideDogs.org/CS) •

Here's What's Cookin'...

Double Your Donation



Join our giving challenge and help our extraordinary dogs and the people who need them.

Maximize your generosity with a dollar-for-dollar match up to \$125,000

All donations made
before **August 31, 2020**will qualify for matching funds. **Visit GuideDogs.org/match**

ARecipe of a Donor's Generosity

Ingredients:

- Absolute love for animals
- Genuine compassion for people in need
- Passion to do nice things
- Work ethic that doesn't quit
- Loyalty that lasts for years
- Driven desire to see results, and
- Extraordinary kindness resulting in a

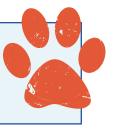
NEW \$125K MATCHING OPPORTUNITY

What do you get when you combine these ingredients?

- A generous, big-hearted donor who cares very much about the present and future of the Southeastern Guide Dogs people and dogs.
- This individual is a 12-years-and-going-strong puppy nursery volunteer, breeder host, puppy naming sponsor, Cornerstone Society and Heritage Society member, Walkathon fundraiser, naming sponsor of areas within our facilities, and an all-around wonderful human being.
- Our anonymous donor has recently announced an exciting challenge. From now until August 31, 2020, this donor will match your donation dollar-for-dollar, up to \$125,000!



Thank you for your generosity—our finest ingredient!





We're proud to support Southeastern Guide Dogs

At Fromm Family Foods, we pride ourselves on offering a wide variety of premium dog and cat foods produced using the finest ingredients. Countless families across the country trust us with feeding their four-legged family members. We are honored to be selected as the Official Dog Food of Southeastern Guide Dogs, providing nutritional excellence to their extraordinary dogs throughout the United States.



To find a retailer near you, visit frommfamily.com/retailers