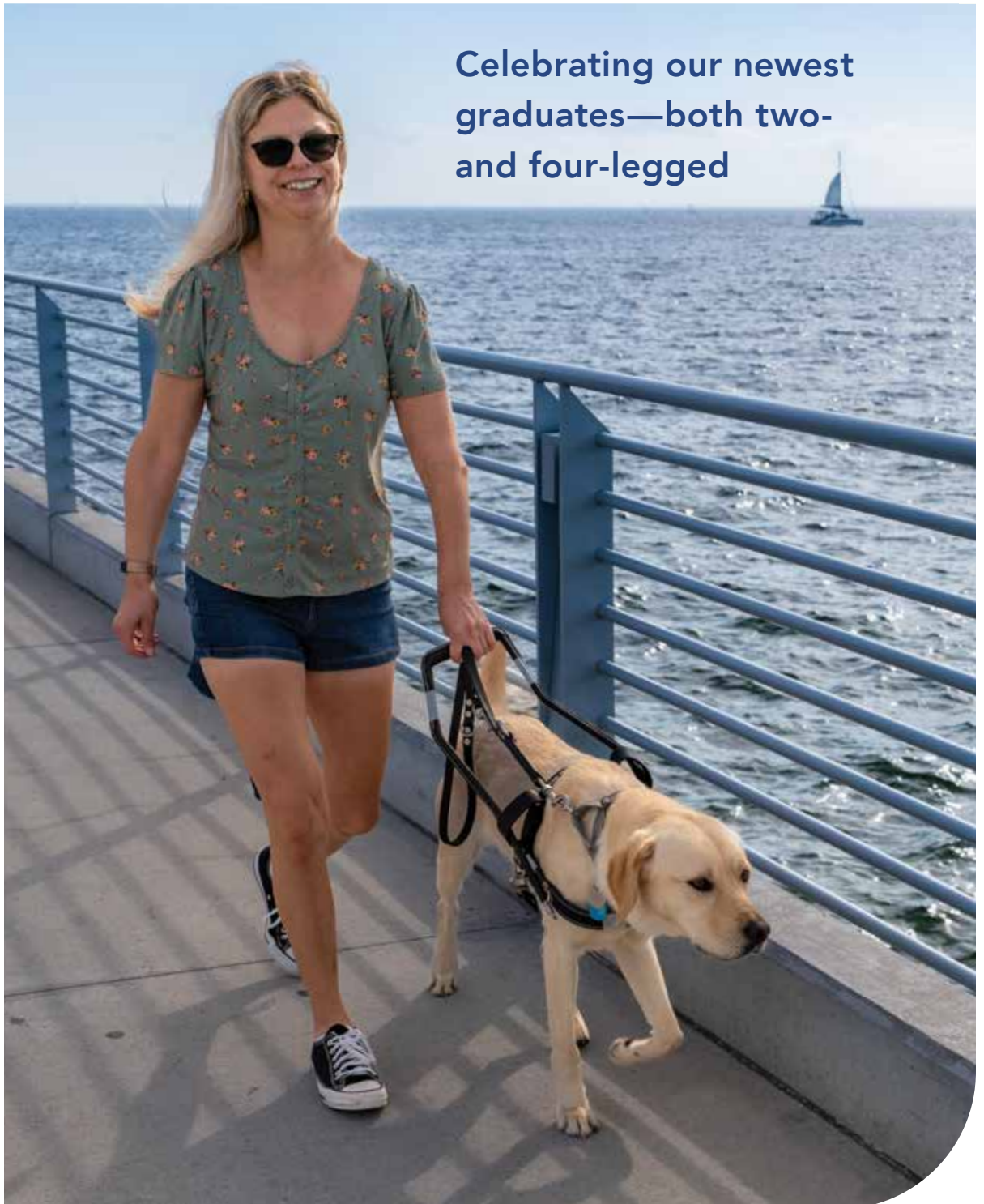


SIDE SIDE

 Southeastern
GUIDE DOGS

Celebrating our newest
graduates—both two-
and four-legged



SPRING 2023

About Us

SIDE by SIDE is a publication of Southeastern Guide Dogs

Thanks to the generosity of our donors and volunteers, our extraordinary dogs transform the lives of people with vision loss, veterans, and children throughout the United States—at no cost to the recipients.

EXTRAORDINARY DOGS

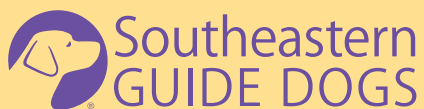
What makes our dogs so special? Top-notch pedigrees, perfected over four decades of selective breeding. And thousands of hours of training, care, and love. The heartwarming result? Highly skilled four-legged friends who shine as true examples of unwavering loyalty.

TRANSFORMING LIVES

Our dogs form unbreakable bonds with their human partners. They turn darkness into light for people with vision loss. They restore freedom for veterans who have sacrificed for ours. And they heal the broken hearts of children struggling with loss.

AT NO COST TO RECIPIENTS

And here's the best part. Our dogs offer an invaluable service and give their love unconditionally, never asking for anything in return—and we follow their lead. We offer our clients their loyal friends, expert instruction, and lifetime support completely free of charge.



4210 77th St E, Palmetto, FL 34221
guidedogs.org | 941.729.5665

Hello

Dear Friend,

Thank you for delivering hope to another group of inspiring graduates. With their extraordinary dogs by their side, they embark on a new journey filled with adventures and possibilities.

As you say hello to the wonderful people and dogs featured in these pages, know that your friendship and support mean the world to them—and to us.

Together, we're changing the world, one life and one dog at a time.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in green ink that reads "Titus Herman".

Titus Herman
Chief Executive Officer



Our Dogs

WE PROVIDE OUR DOGS

& SERVICES AT NO COST



GUIDE DOGS offer freedom and confidence to teens, adults, and veterans with vision loss.



SERVICE DOGS offer help, healing, and hope to veterans.

- ▶ *Service dogs help veterans heal from physical and invisible wounds.*
- ▶ *Therapy dogs assist patients and healthcare workers at military facilities to recover from pain and distress.*



SKILLED COMPANION DOGS

offer comfort and companionship to their human partners. They give:

- ▶ *Friendship to children, teens, and adults with vision loss facing isolation.*
- ▶ *Hope to veterans battling with despair.*
- ▶ *Relief to military families grappling with stress.*
- ▶ *Love to Gold Star families coping with grief.*



Brittney Wright
Guide Dog Hayley
ST. AUGUSTINE, FLORIDA

Brittney Wright's life centered around vision challenges for decades. As her vision continued to deteriorate, getting a guide dog became a practical necessity. After working with her kind and gentle yellow Lab, Hayley, the results were instantaneous and remarkable. "When Hayley walked through that door, all my fears just faded away," Brittney shares. "I said to myself, 'Your life, a new chapter starts today.' But not just a chapter—it's a whole new book. And it's gonna be amazing!"

Hayley was raised by Joan Karlson and Jacqui Bernard.



Becca | Rockwell
Skilled Companion Dog
BOAZ, ALABAMA

Bubbly, outgoing Becca lost her sight before she turned 9. Until then, declining vision never stopped her from being a happy child known for running and playing freely. How is Becca reclaiming her confidence and joy? The attentive and loving Rockwell, who runs with her and never leaves her side. "My whole family believes this was the turning point for Becca," says her mom. "We are forever grateful to have such a great dog in our home that has made such an impact for our daughter."

Rockwell was raised by William and Robbin Dick.

"For me, it's all about freedom. How would you feel if you were in a jail cell—and suddenly weren't? That's how it feels now that I have Scotty."



Joe Anstett | Guide Dog Scotty
CAPE CORAL, FLORIDA

Scotty was raised by Terence Kiernan.



Vance Kondon | Service Dog Charlie

U. S. AIR FORCE VETERAN 🇺🇸
KEY LARGO, FLORIDA

For Vance Kondon, 30 years of high-stress assignments began with serving as an Air Force security policeman in Panama while helping to oust Central American dictator Manuel Noriega. He spent 12 years in air traffic control and a decade of leadership responsibilities as a chief master sergeant.

Mounting post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms stalked Vance on deployments to Qatar, Iraq, and Afghanistan, but he managed to keep his issues in “boxes” until his 2016 retirement. Then, PTSD took on a life of its own, precipitating hard times, self-isolation, and undesirable behaviors.

The PTSD may never go away, Vance admits, but his service dog and best friend Charlie offers love and support while distracting him from tough issues. This beautiful, amazing, funny, and mellow black Lab senses his needs and renews his focus. “He’s my mission now, and I’ve got something to put my time and effort into,” Vance says. “Something that’s positive and not anything destructive or that feeds into the PTSD issues. Charlie allows me to function better and gives me that purpose to get up in the morning. He likes to be up and about and getting around, which is good because it forces me to do the same.”

Charlie was raised by Maria and Ed Cerbone.

Ana | LauraDean Skilled Companion Dog

PITTSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

“LauraDean’s sweet demeanor is a great fit for us,” says mom, Lori. “She’s loves Ana but also gives her space when she needs it. Ana has told me several times that she likes having a dog and she’s glad that LauraDean is part of the family. She’s been a blessing, and we’re thankful for her sweet personality!”

LauraDean was raised by Michael Lawson.



“It’s amazing to me that Saint can sense when my girls are sad. He helps them feel comfortable and safe when they’re missing their daddy.”

Melissa | Gold Star Family Dog Saint

ORANGE PARK, FLORIDA



Saint was raised by Trudy Vetter and Shelby Verity.



Greg Capps | Guide Dog Wisty

EAST FLAT ROCK, NORTH CAROLINA

Energetic and affectionate Wisty is Greg Capps’ second guide dog. “She’s really good at being observant and wanting to do things right, and she really works hard,” Greg says. Wisty empowers Greg with confidence and independence, so he doesn’t need to be attached to another human. “She provides a reason to get up in the morning and have a routine,” Greg adds. “There’s more to life than just me.”

Wisty was raised by Linda and Jeff Pyper.



Traci Norton | Guide Dog Olson

GUNTERSVILLE, ALABAMA

Traci Norton thought she wasn't "blind enough" for a guide dog, even as retinitis pigmentosa (RP) progressively robbed her of her vision. She gave up her job in a mental health facility and her dreams of becoming a counselor. She stopped driving and relied on a white cane and sighted guides. Tunnel vision made daily obstacles a source of anxiety, especially stairs, curbs, and nighttime walking. Traci kept her head down and her guard up until one day, she saw a video of a woman with RP using a guide dog. Through happy tears, she resolved to apply for her own dog, a decision that would change her life.

Now, sweet, smart, and dedicated Olson provides confidence, comfort, and security, filling Traci's heart with love every time she guides her safely home. "I have taken several night walks," she relates. "I walk with a full stride now, instead of taking small steps, afraid of tripping. I got a compliment the other day from one of my neighbors. She said, 'You were walking with your head up. You were walking like you had a purpose!' Isn't that wonderful?"

Olson was raised by Wendy and Taylor Royal.



“Reilly keeps me from walking out into traffic, from hitting the curb and falling. I feel like I’m getting my independence back.”

Barbara Brugger | Guide Dog Reilly

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FLORIDA

Reilly was raised by Carrie Carpenter and Megan Manzie Tappe.

Edward Perry | Service Dog Jake

U.S. MARINE CORPS & U.S. ARMY VETERAN 
VACAVILLE, CALIFORNIA

Edward Perry’s dog, Jake, provides love, companionship, stability, and coping skills that ease his handler’s post-traumatic stress disorder. He tags along to Edward’s night job, but until recently, Jake lacked public access rights and wasn’t allowed at Edward’s workplace at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. That restriction is gone since Jake recently retrained and became a service dog, after previously being placed as an emotional support dog. Now, their bond has grown closer, and Jake gives Edward fresh confidence, 24/7. It’s a new day for this team!

Jake was raised by Laurel McDevitt.



**Nancy Bergstrom
Guide Dog Gordy**

LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

Nancy Bergstrom’s retinitis pigmentosa never stopped her, until the need for a guide dog hit her like a ton of bricks. “I look down when I walk to make sure I don’t trip on something, and I literally walked—full on—into a brick wall.” That wake-up call led her to Southeastern Guide Dogs and an energetic Lab named Gordy. He’s sweet and caring and gives Nancy a much-needed sense of safety. “I rely on Gordy to get me through. On my own, I always felt alone, but now, Gordy’s going to help me, and lead me through it all.”

Gordy was raised by Laura and Troy Ledbetter.





Maribeth and Rob Bridgeford Skilled Companion Dog Sushi

MILITARY FAMILY 🇺🇸
LAKEWOOD RANCH, FLORIDA

Emotional upheaval often invades the Bridgeford family of five when the Army Reserve deploys Rob to battlespaces or sites of natural disasters. Now Sushi brings them joy. Rob shares, "He helps me stay centered and on mission. I get stressed out about my work or the Army, and he helps me focus on what's important."

Sushi was raised by Kathryn Vande Logt.



"With Buttons, I already feel more confident to go out to places that I don't know . . . Buttons will keep the world open for me!"

Madison Toney | Guide Dog Buttons
BRANDON, MISSISSIPPI

Buttons was raised by Mackenzie Hunt and Carson Freeman.



Jeremy Johnson Service Dog Josey

U.S. AIR FORCE VETERAN 🇺🇸
METTER, GEORGIA

Jeremy Johnson served with an elite Air Force security forces team. An explosion in Iraq shattered his spine and wrecked his life. Now Josey wakes him from nightmares, retrieves objects, and helps him go out in public. "I'm ecstatic above anything I can imagine, knowing I have a battle buddy I can trust," he proclaims.

Josey was raised by Tiffany and Sage Frye.



"Everyone here is clearly behind the mission. It humbles me, and I'm so thankful."

Adam Craddock | Guide Dog Grace
VIENNA, VIRGINIA

Grace was raised by Gillian Brooks.



“In addition to guiding me, I know that I have this companion who is ready for me anytime I need him.”

London Pickett | Guide Dog Rudy
LEWISVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Rudy was raised by Melissa Creter.

Guide Dog Camp

for Teens with Vision Loss

At Guide Dog Camp, 14 to 17-year-olds with vision loss and their parents learn how our guide dogs can change a teen’s life. There’s no charge for this overnight, two-day camp where teens experience the freedom of walking with a guide dog, and families learn what’s next in their journey toward independence.



How do teens and parents describe Guide Dog Camp in one word?



“TRANSFORMATIVE”



“EXCITING!”

“FUN”

For more information or to apply, visit [GuideDogs.org/Camp](https://www.guidedogs.org/camp)

Generosity can live forever.



Nola Timmins & Guide Dog Brizzy

Class Supporters



Thank you for your thoughtful and compassionate gift. We recognize your desire to make a difference and your ability to create a lasting impact through meaningful giving.

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- Laura J. Niles Foundation
- Jim & Lynn Smith

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The Southeastern Guide Dogs **Cornerstone Society** is an exceptional community of like minded friends. Members make a profound impact on our mission through a multi year commitment.

You're invited to join the **Cornerstone Society** today.



MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

- Partner** | \$1,200–\$4,999 per year
- Benefactor** | \$5,000–\$9,999 per year
- Visionary** | \$10,000–\$49,999 per year
- Guardian** | \$50,000–\$99,999 per year
- Founder** | \$100,000+ per year



Enjoy exclusive events and other benefits. Join at [GuideDogs.org/CS](https://www.GuideDogs.org/CS) or call **941.729.5665**.

HERITAGE SOCIETY

Join our Heritage Society by including Southeastern Guide Dogs in your will, and leave a legacy that lasts.

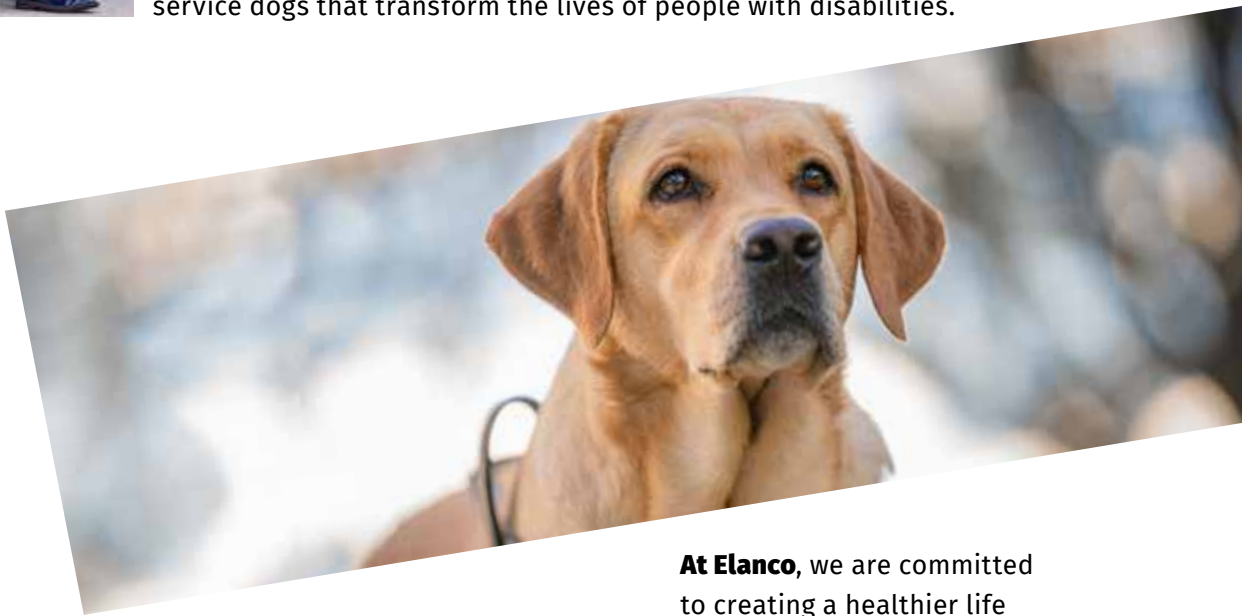


Learn more at [GuideDogs.org/HS](https://www.GuideDogs.org/HS)



Elanco is proud to be the Official Sponsor of Preventative Health Products for Southeastern Guide Dogs

We support long and healthy lives for the incredible guide dogs and service dogs that transform the lives of people with disabilities.



At Elanco, we are committed to creating a healthier life for animals everywhere. That means a more comprehensive portfolio of products along with unparalleled service and support for the health of animals, and for the good of people and the planet.

Elanco Healthy Purpose™

