

ISSUE 9  
**Life**  
**UNLEASHED**

The POWER of

# Love

Gifts of friendship, guidance, and hope

One tale of  
**FATE** changes  
everything

A faithful  
companion  
gets **HOPE**  
back on track

How a child  
finds a new  
**ZING** for life



# contents



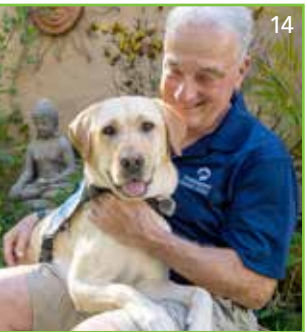
6  
**3** From our CEO



8  
**5** From our Board Chair

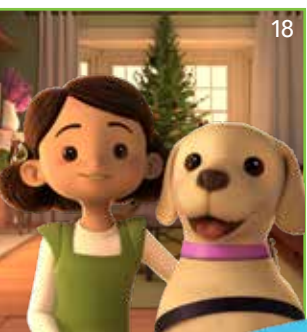
6  
**6** A Vision of Hope and a New Zing for Life

8  
**8** Discovering Destiny



14  
**12** Send Love Challenge

14  
**14** A Track to Healing



18  
**18** LUCY: Christmas Edition



Baby Hugo prances around the Puppy Academy. Check out the rest of his story on page 8.

## from our CEO

Dear Supporter,  
Love, a word too powerful to define. A feeling? An action? That which makes the world go 'round?

I won't attempt a definition, but I'll give you a picture of love: it looks like four paws, warm fur, and an even warmer heart.

It looks like a teenager with vision loss no longer navigating high school alone. A veteran haunted by tragedy, facing today's battles with a steady presence at his side. A little boy finding his new normal, feeling calm in the gentle paws of his new best friend.

And it looks like you and your continued, generous support. Because of you, our wonderful dogs can give the best kind of love—unconditional love—to those who need it most.

Thank you for believing in the power of love, especially the pure, devoted love of a dog.

Warm regards,



Titus Herman  
Chief Executive Officer





# MAKE A LASTING DIFFERENCE

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**.

# Life UNLEASHED

ISSUE 9

A publication of  
Southeastern Guide Dogs

Our extraordinary dogs transform lives throughout the country—at no cost to recipients. What makes our pups so special? Top-notch pedigrees. And countless hours of training and love. These highly skilled wonders turn darkness into light for people with vision loss. Restore freedom for veterans. Heal broken hearts for children struggling with loss. And they never ask for anything in return. Neither do we. We offer our clients their loyal friends, expert instruction, and lifetime support completely free of charge—thanks to big-hearted donors and volunteers.



Southeastern  
GUIDE DOGS

4210 77th St E. | Palmetto, FL 34221  
[guidedogs.org](https://www.guidedogs.org) | 941.729.5665

## from our board chair

Dear Supporter,

The most valuable life lessons are sometimes those we learn from the most patient teachers—like the gentle pups at Southeastern Guide Dogs. While these loyal companions might attend Puppy Kindergarten and Canine University to learn new skills, there are a few life lessons they teach us every day.

How to love. How to live in the moment. How to enjoy the little things. There's no class for these valuable life lessons, but our dogs teach them to us without even trying. They do this in the way their tails wag without hesitation, and in resting their heads in the arms they trust. They love without expecting anything in return and give without holding back.

Thank you for showing this type of unconditional love to our faithful furry friends so they can continue teaching us all what it means to love!

Sincerely,

Tim Griffy  
Board Chair, Southeastern Guide Dogs



### Board of Directors

Members of our prestigious board of directors are dedicated to governance, strategic planning, financial management, advocacy, and resource development. This group of leaders brings passion and commitment to the organization and plays a pivotal role in our work of providing extraordinary dogs and life-changing services to the people who need them. **Members include:**

- Tim Griffy** Chair, Richardson, TX
- Vice Admiral Joe Maguire, USN (Ret.)** Vice Chair, Tampa, FL
- Kathy Saunders** Secretary, St. Petersburg, FL
- Andy Taylor** Treasurer, Lakeland, FL
- Drew Asher** Member, Tampa, FL
- John Compton** Member, Siesta Key, FL
- Kenneth Folkman** Member, Tampa, FL
- Gary Johnson** Member, St. Petersburg, FL
- Robert Meade** Immediate Past Chair, Sarasota, FL
- Bobby Newman** Lifetime Member, Tampa, FL
- Carol Sanders** Member, Bradenton, FL
- Harris Silverman, M.D.** Lifetime Member, Sarasota, FL

### Mission Advancement Council

Our dedicated Mission Advancement Council works tirelessly to create and implement our "friendraising" strategy—forming and cultivating relationships with individuals who share our values and vision to secure the long-term success of our organization.

**Members include:**

- John Whitcomb** Chair, Tampa, FL
- Carol Sanders** Vice Chair, Bradenton, FL
- Eric Prouty** Administrator, Lakewood Ranch, FL
- Philip & Carol Beauchamp** Belleair, FL
- Paula Cummings** St. Petersburg, FL and Sturgeon Bay, WI
- Leo & Trish Eineker** Bradenton, FL
- Colleen Flaherty** Parrish, FL
- George & Mary Graner** Placida, FL
- Kathy Pou** Lakeland, FL
- Susan & John Rapp** Lakewood Ranch, FL
- Brian & Sherry Soucy** Canton, GA



A VISION OF HOPE

and a new

ZINGER For life



"ZINGER is having

an exceptional impact on a child who is learning his new world."

Because hope is the key to seeing the light beyond the darkness of circumstance.

During days spent at the hospital and nights recovering from surgeries, Camden's arms opened to a furry friend, Zinger. A steady presence that Camden grew to sense in any room. "Where's Zinger?" he asks, if his little hand can't find his best buddy's soft ears.

When the road feels bumpy, and the twists and turns uncharted, the wagging tail of a playful skilled companion dog makes everything better.

He fulfills his destiny in befriending a brave little boy. He carries his purpose in every warm hug that whispers it will all be OK.

"Having Zinger gives us hope," Austin says. "He gives us hope that life can be normal again."

He's right. Days that once held uncertain trials now boast brushstrokes of colorful celebrations. Everyday moments of joy. Summers spent at their North Carolina cabin, Zinger sunbathing on the deck as Camden and his brother play. Family hikes to witness magnificent waterfalls. Zinger's faithful companionship through it all, confidently assuming his forever role with his people. A gentle yet strong reminder that life can be normal after all.

And while many parents crave to see the world through their children's eyes, Camden explores his magical world a different way—through Zinger's. ●

To see the world through the eyes of a child. The wonder, the magic. From first steps and first words to the first day of school. The world so big—the dreams parents hold for their children, even bigger.

When little Camden's parents learned of a brain tumor that pressed on his optic nerve, causing him to lose his eyesight, their dreams awoke to a painful reality. A colorful canvas of possibilities turned to the blank pages of unknowns. The sting of the diagnosis. A mission to make it through just one day at a time.

Camden's dad, Austin, dug through uncertainty, determined to find the hope they so desperately needed.

"One of the things that is so important in terms of seeing the future and having a long-term perspective, is having hope," Austin says.

### Skilled Companion Dogs: Building a Bridge to a Brighter Future

Partnering with a guide dog takes great care and responsibility. And for little ones, there's much to learn. Our skilled companion dogs step in as loyal listeners and faithful friends. And for children with vision loss, these special pups help prepare them for the joys and responsibilities of one day partnering with a guide dog of their own.

"We want to prepare Camden for the future, so at the appropriate time if he has the interest and ability necessary, he can have a guide dog of his own."  
—Camden's dad, Austin



# DISCOVERING Destiny

The tale  
of a  
fateful  
friendship

## Who am I?

What's my destiny?  
A future brimming with  
trials, triumphs, and  
tendrils of joy.

## A cuddly puppy. Hugo.

Bright eyes finding his place  
in the world.  
Attentive ears ready to learn.  
A silly spirit and natural  
curiosity for exploring—  
something special.  
Different.  
His purpose near, yet still unknown.



**A teenage girl. Emily.** Hiding a secret from the world.  
Unsure of how to share her whole self with those around her.  
Hiding behind the guise of "shyness" to avoid the need to explain.  
To tell them she can't see. The three flights of stairs at high school,  
a daunting reminder. Stress. Frustration.

Can she ever let down her guard?  
Hope knocks on the door one January. The January Emily  
attends Guide Dog Teen Camp. A glimpse of a different life.  
A better future.

Across campus, Hugo conquers his Puppy Academy curriculum.  
His forever person he'd soon guide, at the other end of campus.  
Eyes not yet met. A fate so close to fulfillment.  
Finally, the special day arrives just over a year and a half later.  
Hugo runs into the arms of the one he waited for. Emily, a





teenager stepping into her full identity of confidence, embarking on her final two years of high school. Guide dog Hugo now by her side.

Confidently, Hugo leads Emily through bustling high school hallways. Crowds of teenagers, backpacks, school bells, and stairs. His two years of preparation paying off.

"I see a huge change in my independence at high school. I never identified as visually impaired," Emily says. "No one knew. Hugo makes people aware."

No more explaining herself. No more wondering what people think. And while Hugo might routinely zone out during second-period English lectures, he's fully in tune with Emily.

"Hugo has turned into my best friend," she says. "We're definitely a team."

And when high school closes for summer break? This perfect pair cherishes afternoons at the mall. Hugo's noticeable pep in his step tells Emily that he's not done shopping yet, zipping in and out of stores, window shopping with a wagging tail.

As Emily tours colleges, Hugo feels out the campuses, too. Looking up to his soulmate: What's our future? Where will we go next?

First, senior year of high school. Then, the pursuit of a dream: teaching third grade. A venture she and Hugo practice through an on-the-job experience program. Together. The class adoring Hugo, listening to Emily—learning from them both.



"Hugo has turned into my best friend. We're definitely a team."



A puppy fulfills his destiny.

A teenager finds herself.

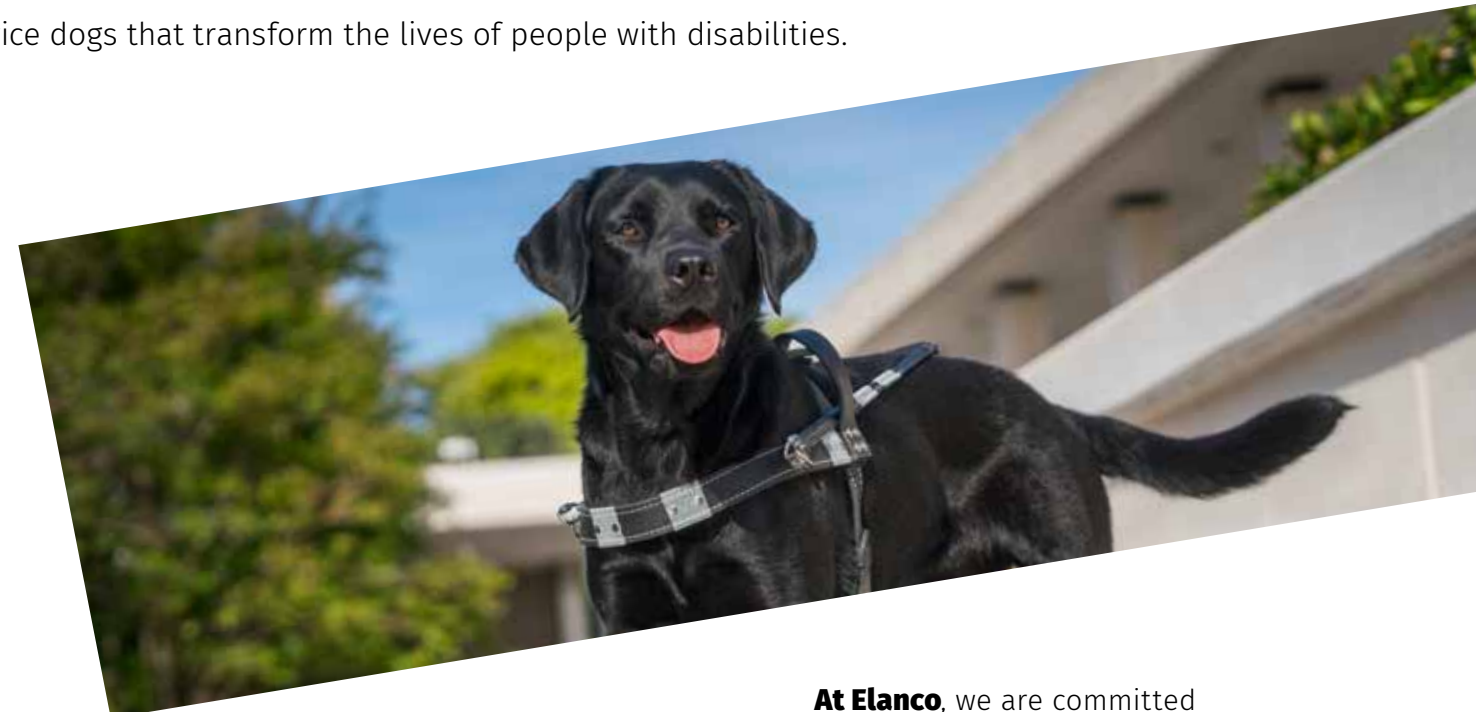
The world awaits their magic.

Here they come. ●



## 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™**





# Double Your Donation!

# SEND Love CHALLENGE

Love surrounds us—in the closeness of an embrace and the separation of loss. In the warmth of a smile and the cherished memory of a loved one.

**What if the cracks of a broken heart became openings for love?**

Those hearts lost in the darkness of vision loss. Veterans battling unseen trauma. Children facing the ache of loneliness. Our dogs deliver steadfast guidance, faithful service, and heartwarming friendship. But most of all, they bring love.

And while our precious dogs never ask for anything in return, we become their voice, asking you to send your love to fill them with the magic to make a difference.

Send the power of love today and multiply your impact, because **your donation will be doubled by the Matchmakers of the Send Love Challenge.**

## Meet Our Matchmakers

Our Matchmakers are champions of compassion, transforming lives with wholehearted generosity, doubling your donation's impact. Join them in filling hearts with the magic of love. Embrace the power of love today, and let it soar through their generous match.

- The Maxwell Thomas Bras Foundation
- Paula Cummings
- George and Mary Graner
- Gary and Melody Johnson
- McKnight Family Foundation
- Marcia and Stephen Miner
- Ray Foundation
- Jim and Denna Sweeney
- Estate of Sandy Ullman
- Estate of Catherine Van Velzen



**Send Love. Double your heartfelt gift!**

From November 1 to December 31, all eligible donations will be met with a heartwarming embrace—a dollar-for-dollar match,

**up to \$1.2 million!**

Give today at [GuideDogs.org/sendlove](https://www.GuideDogs.org/sendlove)






# A TRACK to Healing

A FAITHFUL COMPANION CONDUCTING THE WAY

**A** day he feared would haunt him forever. The men he promised he'd never forget.

John Tempone served 32 years in the Marines. Years of memories, experiences, and traumatic events painted in *anything* but black and white. A crucial turning point and twist of fate in Beirut, Lebanon in 1983, perhaps the most vivid.

John transferred from his unit before a suicide bomber killed 241 of his Multinational Force comrades. Decades later, he still carried the crushing weight of survivor's guilt. ►

 A friend at John's train club suggested that a service dog could help with post traumatic stress disorder. What he never expected was a new buddy for his model train hobby and a dog who would change his life.



“If I could sum Deedle up in two words?”

JOY and PEACE”



His worldview continued to live as hostage to the blaring colors of a traffic light. “Red, you’re in a gunfight,” John explains. “Orange, you brace yourself. Green, you’re safe and relaxed.”

Stuck in a perpetual state of orange, John’s mind never rested. Always plotting multiple backup plans, finding the exit, bracing for bad things. On the outside, he fought to maintain composure and hide the orange glow of anxiety. Bury the inner turmoil. Don’t let anyone see the pain.

But the buddies he lost . . . the sights he witnessed. It all became too much.

Not too much for Deedle, though. A furry confidante that runs toward the sorrow, ready to lighten the burden. A gentle set of eyes seeing into the hurt, knowing what it takes to carefully bring a life from the high alert of orange to a safe place of green.

John’s *I can do this alone* Marines mind-set met its match in calming Deedle. A service dog who loves him through the post-traumatic stress, bringing him to the light.

“I didn’t think I could get this zen this quickly with a dog,” John admits. “After two weeks, my wife noticed a difference. And every advocate who has helped me get here says I’m more mellow.”

Sweet Deedle’s head in his lap calms the sudden rush of red-hot frustration and piercing sting of loss that bring John back to that day in 1983. “Deedle reads me,” John says. “And if I could sum her up in two words? Joy and peace.”

Deedle’s love starts a domino effect of hope. She’s there to make a once-overwhelming grocery store trip a breeze, and she’ll be there when John attends the annual Beirut Memorial Observance for the very first time. “I’ve never gone,” John says. “I’ve buried too many friends; I just couldn’t do it.” But this year is different. Four paws of a loyal companion amongst the survivors. Forty years since the tragedy. Healing in the midst.

A man standing tall, remembering fallen comrades. His faithful companion, her soft yet strong presence, nuzzles at his side. ●



Generosity can live forever.



Gary Erneus & Guide Dog Tahoe



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](http://GuideDogs.org/HS)





# LUCY

Christmas Edition

## Unwrap the wonder of the season with our heartwarming holiday reminder that love lives all around us.

Last summer, you met Lucy in our magical tale of two new best friends. Now, we present *Lucy: Christmas Edition*, a heartwarming holiday public service announcement about the power of love.

This newest animated story presents a gift that can't be found wrapped in a box, sprinkled into Christmas cookies, or topped on a tree.

Discover holiday joy in the company of loved ones and the cherished memories your heart forever holds dear.



**Watch now**  
on a screen near you.

[GuideDogs.org/love](http://GuideDogs.org/love)

*The memory of Chloe's beloved dad tugs at her little heart as she hangs his stocking. But something goes wrong, and only Lucy knows what it takes to make things right.*



Open the gift of love in this holiday animated story, ***Lucy: Christmas Edition***.

A heartfelt thank you to Gary and Melody Johnson for sponsoring *Lucy* and *Lucy: Christmas Edition* and bringing the power of love to viewers everywhere.

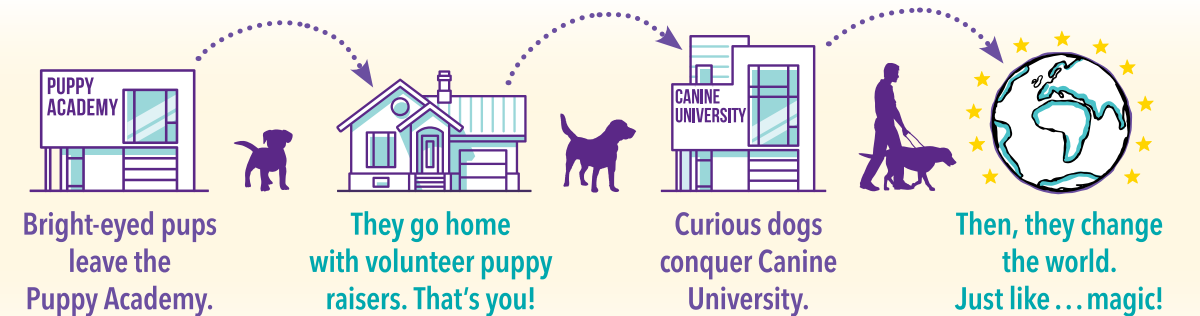


# What's your magic number?

Take me home for 3, 6, or 12 months. Love me forever.

Become a puppy raiser with Southeastern Guide Dogs and open a world of magic to those with vision loss, veterans with disabilities, and children who need a best friend.

**Did you know?** Every guide dog starts as a puppy, and every puppy needs someone like you.



**Your mission as a puppy raiser is simple.** Take home a cuddly bundle of joy and bring back a happy, socialized, well-mannered dog. That's the magic of making a difference.



- \* **Choose your own adventure:** The joys of puppy raising are endless, but the time commitment doesn't have to be. Raise a puppy on your own or choose your dream team. You can share the journey with family, friends, colleagues, and more.
- \* **Take a paws:** Have a getaway planned? Take the vacation or well-deserved break. Our puppy sitters jump in and take the leash.
- \* **Just add love (+ food and water):** We'll take care of the rest. Puppy raisers receive a kit stocked with all the necessities to raise a happy, healthy pup. Plus, we cover all veterinary care and medical expenses.

**Unleash the fun!** We'll support your puppy-raising adventure from start to finish—no matter where you live in the United States. Ask about puppy raiser clubs in your area for optional outings to connect, laugh, share tips, and swap stories with fellow raisers.

# 12

## Be a part of the magic. Raise a puppy.

**Southeastern Guide Dogs**  
GuideDogs.org/pup





## 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](http://frommfamily.com/retailers)