

# *Volunteers*

CELEBRATING OUR



B.C. Guide Dog Services



2010 ANNUAL REPORT

# Patrons: Howie and Leah Meeker



Winning the Stanley Cup requires strong teamwork from many people, most of whom do their work quietly, behind the scenes. In the same way, placing a guide dog with its new guide dog user is the culmination of nearly two years of intense effort at every stage along the way. From caring for newborn puppies to boarding dogs in advanced training, the many activities involved in raising and training a guide dog are all supported by a vast team of volunteers. We are proud to represent these wonderful people.

Volunteers, thank you. Because of you, over 80 people in BC and Alberta have had their lives changed as a result of help from their guide dog.

You really do make a difference.

– Howie and Leah Meeker

## Directors

Chair: Verne Blyth

Vice-Chair: Dave Winters

Secretary: Jeremy Gomersall, B.Eng., A.C.S.M

Treasurer: Rupert Bullock

Director: C. Wayne Reeves

Director: Norman E. Sayfy, B.Comm.

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Charlette Keller, D.V.M., D.A.C.V.O., D.E.C.V.O.

Victor Kern

Irene O'Brien, D.V.M.

Graham T. Lewis, D.V.M., D.I.P., A.C.V.O.

Daniel Schwartz, D.V.M.

Joanne Sutton

## Chief Executive Officer

William S. Thornton, G.D.M.I.

## Mission Statement

To meet the demand for professionally-trained guide dogs for blind and visually-impaired citizens of British Columbia and Alberta, at all times meeting or exceeding international standards as set by the International Guide Dog Federation.



British Columbia and Alberta Guide Dog Services is a proud member of the following professional associations:





"Volunteers are the only human beings on the face of the earth who reflect this nation's compassion, unselfish caring, patience, and just plain love for one another."

- Erma Bombeck



**ABOVE: L-R:** Roberta Whiley, (Electra), Bev Bullock, Purdy, Rupert Bullock (Treasurer), (Richie), Ashley Clark (instructor), (Busson), Jess Passey, Jacuzzi; **LEFT: Top to Bottom:** Susie, Purdy, Cookie **FRONT COVER:** Bev Bullock, Purdy, Rupert Bullock, Richie

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## 2010: Message from the Chair and CEO

It is our pleasure to dedicate the 2010 Annual Report to our volunteers, who truly are the backbone of our organization. Volunteers at BC & Alberta Guide Dog Services help in many ways: puppy raisers, brood bitch and stud dog holders, coin counters, stamp and pull tab collectors, board members, chapter members and all those who assist at our special events. We are grateful for each and every one of you.

Thanks to our staff, volunteers and, of course, all of our generous donors for their continued support, each of whom believe and share in our vision. We celebrated another successful financial year in 2010. During this fiscal year we graduated 11 guide dog teams and 8 autism support dog teams – another record year for us. This brings the number of teams (as of June 30, 2010) to 80 guide dog and 10 autism support dog teams, a total of 90 teams. We look forward to our 100<sup>th</sup> team in the first half of 2011.

With the global recession and with the impacts on our local economy, we have not, as yet, moved forward with our new training center. The pre-design schematics and a capital campaign prospectus have been completed. It is our intent to move forward with this project in early 2011.

Plans to expand the training department from three to four instructors have been successful. In January 2011, Ms. Henny van der Leeuw, with ten years experience as a Dutch Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, will be joining our training department. We know she will be a valuable addition to our training department.

Plans for future development on Vancouver Island are firming up; we will open an office in Victoria early in 2011. We have recruited Ms. Barbara Haley as management/development officer for Victoria and Vancouver Island. She will join us in January 2011. Barbara brings valuable experience from her time spent working with other not-for-profit organizations in Victoria. We also plan to transfer one of the Guide Dog Mobility Instructors from Delta to Victoria in early 2011.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank retiring board member, Norm Sayfy, for his many years of dedicated service to BC & Alberta Guide Dog Services. Norm joined the Board in 1999 and has served as a Director, Treasurer, and Chair. Norm and his wife, Nancy, first became involved with BC Guide Dog Services when they received our first brood bitch, Val, who came from the Royal New Zealand Guide Dog Association. Norm, on behalf of the board, staff, all of the graduates and volunteers of BC Guide Dog Services over the years – thank you. We know that Norm and Nancy will continue to support our vision in the years ahead.

We would also take this opportunity to express our condolences to Tammy and Franki Winters, the family of Dave Winters, on his untimely passing. Dave served on the board since 2006, including two years as Vice-Chair. He provided valuable service on behalf of both BC & Alberta Guide Dog Services within the province of Alberta, and will be missed by us all.

Once again, thanks to everyone for assisting BC & Alberta Guide Dog Services for another successful year.



A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Verne Blyth".

Verne Blyth, Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William Thornton".

William Thornton, CEO





# Volunteers: Making a Difference



**LEFT:** Diane Mott with Lilly (R) and Tess, one of her pups. **ABOVE:** Mary Vickars shares a tender moment with Maggie in the corner of a coffee shop.

## Breeding

As birthing time nears, Diane Mott is on high alert, watching for signs of imminent labour. “Dogs, like humans, don’t always choose the most convenient times or places to deliver,” she laughs as she recounts tales of following a very pregnant Lilly outdoors in the dark of night, “just in case.”

It’s a good thing she does: more than one puppy has suddenly arrived, post-midnight, outside on the grass! Linda Thornton, puppy raising manager, supervises the delivery once it starts, and then Diane settles in to spend the next seven weeks denning in with mother and a houseful of pups.

*Volunteers are seldom paid;  
not because they are worthless,  
but because they are  
PRICELESS!*

*– author unknown*

“I get nothing done around the house,” she says, “and I just love it! The puppies are so much fun to watch, they are so entertaining.

“They are so keen to learn, and so fun to teach. I’m always sad to see them go to their new homes, but I’m also so excited to see them succeed. I feel such pride when I hear about one of ‘my babies’ graduating!”

## Puppy Raising

Puppy raisers take a little bundle of fur into their homes in Calgary, Victoria, or Vancouver, and begin the long journey of teaching them all the basics they need before they begin advanced training when they are about 18 months old. In order to serve as guide dogs, each pup must learn how to behave in a human world, to lead with energy but to be obedient, even to develop a habit of sitting at obstacles that could be a hazard for a blind person, such as a flight of stairs or a kerb.

Sarah Papke and her family took on puppy raising as a family project. She and her husband, Kevin, wanted to teach their children to get involved

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without expecting payback, to make a difference for someone they may never meet. What they all discovered, however, is that they *do* get a lot back, from the interesting people they meet to receiving “buckets of puppy love.”

*“It’s one of the  
biggest volunteer jobs  
you’ll do in your life!  
And yet, we get back  
more than we put in.”*

*– Victoria Kirby, Puppy Raiser*

“That one lick from that tongue is worth all the money in the world,” she says. “First thing in the morning you see that happy face just waiting for you to wake up.”



**ABOVE:** Mary Waggoner teaches puppy raisers about dog discipline. **RIGHT:** Puppy raisers Sarah Papke (R), Hannah (L) and Jenae (Middle), with Quinn.

Often asked, “How do you feel about giving up your puppy?” Donna Hundt replies, “If I weren’t so invested in my puppy that I find it easy to give her up, I’m not the right person to be a puppy raiser.

“In fact, giving my dog up is a positive! It means she’s going to make a *huge* difference in someone’s life. Of course we’ll be sad, but we’ll be happy, too, and we’ll be looking forward to our next puppy!”

Adds Victoria Kirby, “We’re preparing a gift; it’s about something so much bigger than us. It’s an awesome responsibility, but we get back so much more than we put into it.”

### Obedience Training

For the 16 or so months that puppies live with their puppy raiser, they have a lot of “studying” to do: sit before eating, ring the bell to go out, stay off the furniture, ignore food on the ground (that’s a tough one!), wear a jacket, find things by name (door, toy, elevator button), and so much more... and all without the incentive of dog treats!

In addition to their home study, puppies attend class together every two weeks so they can show off what they have learned, and discover what they need to practice at a little harder at home.

Mary Waggoner, puppy class assistant, loves helping teach young pups new skills. She



**ABOVE:** Veterinarian Irene O'Brien checks Tim's eyes while Linda Thornton, puppy raising manager, cuddles him.

encourages puppy raisers to know what their training goals are, and to be very clear and consistent. She says, “It’s so rewarding to see the ‘penny drop.’ You can see it in their faces, their eyes, when they understand!”

### Boarding

Just as young people finish school and head off to college, young guide dogs-to-be move to Ladner to enter advanced training. Hazel Cooksley and her family host dogs in their home





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during the six-month course, giving them a loving place to play and relax after a long day of training.

"We really do get attached to each one, even though we don't have them for all that long. When they graduate at the end of their advanced training, we feel euphoric, we are so proud!"

She says it's inspiring to see the final phase of two years of hard work that a whole team of volunteers has put into the dog her family boards.

"The people make all the difference," she says. "They really care, and it shows in the dogs. We love to be part of something bigger, and it's teaching my boys so much, too. They feel proud of 'their' dogs, and they are developing a sense of community, the importance of social responsibility."

### Puppy Sitting

Sometimes puppy raisers need a little break from their furry bundle of joy, so Mary Vickars looks after puppies and dogs short-term, even just for a night or two.

She says, "I get to meet lots of dogs and people, and I feel like I'm part of a big family; we're all related to each other through our dogs!"

"I love to volunteer in other ways, too, such as setting up a table in the mall to help spread the word about what we do here. People love to pet

the puppies, and are so interested in our dogs! I'm learning so much, and it's fun to share."

*A single sunbeam is enough  
to drive away many shadows.  
- St. Francis of Assisi*

### Health Care

A great deal of love and care goes into breeding, raising, teaching, and training our guide dog puppies, and caring for their physical health and well-being is no exception. Irene O'Brien, small-animal veterinarian, provides many of her professional services to BC and Alberta Guide Dog Services during her days off. She is touched by seeing the "difference these dogs make in people's lives."

Only the healthiest, most well-prepared dogs make it to graduation as guide dogs. If a dog gets car-sick easily, for instance, public transit can be a challenge.

"Sometimes small issues can have a big impact on a guide dog user," she explains. "We have to look at the whole picture, and the dog's health is an important part of it."

Then she laughs, "Some of the wildest puppies have turned into some of the best guide dogs! It truly is amazing what they can learn with the huge effort of the many people who love and work with them."

### Leadership

Norm Sayfy, who served as Chair of the board of BC Guide Dog Services for many of his 13 years of service, is a seasoned leader. Karen Angus, who took over as president of the Calgary chapter of Alberta Guide Dog Services this past year, is a new one. Regardless of the length of their tenure, they both share a passion for the work, the people and the dogs, and have big visions and much excitement for the future.

"I've jumped into this organization with all four paws," laughs Karen. "It's 'happy volunteering,' it's local, and it's busy! I do all kinds of things, from puppy raising to organizing events."

Norm was there nearly from the start, when BC Guide Dog Services was just getting going. "We've grown from a very small beginning in 1996/97 to over \$1 Million in 2010 donations," says Norm, his awe mixed with a little touch of pride. "We're a healthy organization, and we are still 'lean and mean'."

Although he is stepping down from the board at the end of the year, he wants to remain involved in other ways.

"I've made lifelong friendships through my service at BC and Alberta Guide Dogs," he says. "The people who volunteer here are very good people."

# Guide Dog Users: "Thank You!"

## Karl-Erik Sonvisen and Phoenix

Karl-Erik, a 19-year-old business administration student, lost his sight suddenly, just days before going for his driver's license. He worked hard to regain independence as fast as possible, but found using a white cane challenging and stressful.

Now Phoenix guides him to his college across town every day via the transit system. She even knows his schedule by heart, and takes him right to the classroom door!

"I'm much happier since I've had my dog. It's magical," he says, "Life is all about attitude. She makes a world of difference. We've even become like roommates.

"She's like a gateway into a social world: with her, people talk to me; without her, they don't."

"I feel sad for the puppy raisers because it must be hard to give up the dog, but I'm really grateful."



**TOP:** Diane Allard and Bracken; **RIGHT:** Rosamund van Leeuwen and Janey; **LEFT:** Karl-Erik Sonvisen and Phoenix



## Diane Allard and Bracken

"I can't imagine my life without a guide dog anymore," says Diane Allard of Bracken, her second guide dog. "We develop such a bond that it is unexplainable. I can leave the room and the love and affection she greets me with as I re-enter is even better than chocolate!"

When she lost her first guide dog after nine wonderful years together, she felt such sorrow. From the day Bracken arrived, she not only gave Diane her independence again, she helped heal her broken heart.

Diane wants puppy raisers to know this: "When I put Bracken's harness on, and I step outside my front door, something as simple as this will make me think... 'life is great!'"

"Every time I meet a volunteer, I instantly smile, too, because they are all part of this wonderful process of the life I can now have."

*The world is hugged by the faithful arms of volunteers.*

*- Terri Guillemets*

## Rosamund van Leeuwen and Janey

Janey is Rosamund's fourth guide dog, and she says, "Getting to know their unique personalities is fun!"

Rosamund and Janey love to go for long, brisk walks every day, and often Rosamund doesn't even know all the obstacles Janey has guided her around unless someone tells her.

"I still take responsibility, but she's such a huge help. She finds the bus stop, elevator button, and even the exit from the mall – something sighted people sometimes can't even help me do!"

"Without Janey, I'd feel marooned," she adds.

"The volunteers do such an amazing job, they put so much effort into looking after the pups. I'd like to thank them for the very careful work they do. Even nine years later, she knows what to do."





# Our Financial Supporters



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### Founding Donors

Husky Energy  
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Edmonton Public Teachers (Local No. 37, Alberta Teachers' Association)

*"It takes a community to raise a guide dog!"*  
- Irene O'Brien, Veterinarian



*"I can no other answer make, but, thanks, and thanks."*  
- William Shakespeare



## Bequests

Victoria Adams  
Thelma Blackburn  
Anonymous  
Janice Canning  
Anonymous  
Roberta Greig  
Dorothy Mitzel  
Walter Sukaroff



## THE L.M. VERMEULEN GROUP INC.

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

### BRITISH COLUMBIA GUIDE DOG SERVICES

Financial Highlights  
As at June 30, 2010  
(Audited)

	2010	2009	2008	2007	2006
<b>Results for the year:</b>					
Revenue	\$1,210,371	\$1,062,239	\$1,092,771	\$1,108,552	\$554,958
Fundraising activities expenses	197,294	111,602	132,305	120,047	69,328
Training/client services expenses	777,332	683,397	578,486	450,763	409,621
Administrative expenses	140,957	143,282	136,977	127,625	74,067
Total expenses	1,115,583	938,281	847,768	698,435	553,016
Excess revenue over expenses	94,788	123,958	245,003	410,117	1,942
Transfers to endowment funds	0	8,272	5,472	0	0
Transfers to capital fund	0	51,195	320,937	158,180	0
<b>Year end:</b>					
Operating fund cash/investments	\$258,143	\$ 293,280	\$ 217,605	\$ 294,933	\$ 145,400
Endowment fund investments	215,736	204,059	185,547	179,139	171,011
V. Adams fund cash/investments	495,680				
Capital assets at cost	802,847	793,036	772,349	707,443	114,235
Bequests receivable**	1,168,959	1,167,257	242,257	77,257	77,257
Total assets	2,945,549	2,409,929	1,341,475	1,209,028	495,479
Accounts payable	29,344	48,838	34,658	18,603	12,267
Mortgage payable	0	0	32,462	282,000	0
Deferred revenue**	1,701,229	1,240,903	278,126	157,199	142,103
Net assets	1,214,976	1,120,188	996,229	751,226	341,109

\*\* Includes amounts for restricted use: 2010: \$1,100,000; 2009: \$1,000,000







*Sponsor us, and watch us grow up through pictures and newsy letters!*

### **BC Guide Dog Services**

**Address:** 6050 44th Avenue, Delta, BC V4K 3X7

**Phone:** (604) 940-4504 • **North American Toll-Free:** 1 (877) 940-4504 • **Fax:** (604) 940-4506

**Email:** [info@bcguidedog.com](mailto:info@bcguidedog.com)

*British Columbia Guide Dog Services is registered under the Society Act of British Columbia*

### **Alberta Guide Dog Services**

**Mailing Address:** P.O. Box 5471, Station 'A', Calgary, AB, T2H, 1X8

**Office Address:** #303 - 6707 Elbow Drive SW, Calgary, AB T2V 0E5

**Phone:** (403) 258-0819 • **North American Toll-Free:** 1 (877-258-0819 • **Fax:** (403) 258-0842

**Email:** [info@albertaguidedogs.com](mailto:info@albertaguidedogs.com)

*British Columbia Guide Dog Services is registered under the Alberta Corporations Act.*

*Alberta Guide Dog Services is a division of British Columbia Guide Dog Services.*

### **British Columbia and Alberta Guide Dog Services**

**Registered Charity No.: 89131 1763 RR0001**

**Website:** [www.bcguidedog.com](http://www.bcguidedog.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/bcandalbertaguidedogservices](http://www.facebook.com/bcandalbertaguidedogservices)

British Columbia and Alberta Guide Dog Services is a proud member of the following professional associations:



*"If you don't have any  
charity in your heart,  
you have the worst  
kind of heart trouble."*

*-- Bob Hope*

