

The official newsletter for Guide Dogs SA/NT

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Message from the Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to a brand new year!

Trust is at the heart of everything Guide Dogs does. From your confidence that your donations will be used wisely, to the trusted bond between a handler and their Guide Dog, Guide Dogs takes this responsibility seriously.

In this edition of Paw Prints I am proud to share a number of our special achievements with you. Achievements that would never have been possible without your support.

I am delighted to announce a match made in heaven with Archer and Autism Assistance Dog, Alvin. Your generous support of our 2018 Christmas Appeal made last Christmas one Archer, his mother Hayley, and his brother Harrison will never forget.

Your support is the reason Guide Dogs can create these life-changing moments.

I hope you enjoy reading Barbara's touching story of her journey with Guide Dogs. I know you will be just as thrilled as I was to hear she was recently matched with her third Guide Dog, Teddy, thanks to your overwhelming generosity.

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The beautiful thing about our amazing dogs is the variety of ways they can help someone in need. Whether they become Guide Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, or Therapy Dogs, every dog will benefit someone in their own special way.

In this edition, learn about the specialised training of one of our Assistance Dogs-in-training, Chevy. Chevy's training is being adapted to meet the specific needs of a client who uses a wheelchair. I hope you find this story as inspiring as I did.

What a year 2019 will be! With your support, Guide Dogs will continue providing the highest quality services for people living with vision impairment, blindness, other sensory impairment, and autism.

I hope you enjoy this issue and once again, on behalf of hundreds of people across the South Australian and Northern Territory communities living with sensory disability, and their families. Thank you, I am so grateful for your support.

Aaron Chia

Chief Executive Officer
Guide Dogs SA/NT

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The A-Team

Thanks to your support, 4-year-old Archer was matched with Autism Assistance Dog, Alvin, just in time for Christmas.

In the 2018 Christmas Appeal, Guide Dogs asked for your support to match Archer with his very own Autism Assistance Dog.

You may recall Archer started having seizures when he was just three months old. After a number of visits to the Women's and Children's Hospital in Adelaide, Archer was diagnosed with epilepsy.

Archer spent the next few years on heavy medication, and although his mother Hayley knew Archer was developmentally delayed, she thought it was related to the medication.

When Archer stopped his medication, his delay didn't improve. He was distant. He wasn't babbling, and he couldn't say the word 'Mum' no matter how much Hayley encouraged him. Hayley was heartbroken.

After months of specialist appointments and tests, Archer was diagnosed with severe autism.

"When I found out Archer had autism I had mixed emotions. Initially I had feelings of sadness and grief, but

also some relief to understand why he wasn't speaking," Hayley explains.

Archer is non-verbal. He struggles to communicate what he wants, which leaves him feeling frustrated and confused.

Archer has no sense of danger.

If a door is left open, Archer will bolt, running across the road in front of cars and toward a nearby creek. As you can imagine, this terrifies Hayley.

Even a simple trip to the shops is a nightmare for Hayley. If Archer becomes overwhelmed, he will bolt.

To keep him safe she has to pick him up and hold him. This is becoming extremely difficult for Hayley.

"I'm physically exhausted. Shopping with Archer is really hard. I constantly have to hold him otherwise he will run away. I often have to ask strangers to help me. He goes into a dead weight and I struggle to lift him," Hayley explains.

Hayley needed help. Archer was in desperate need of an Autism Assistance Dog.

Just before Christmas, Archer was matched with Autism Assistance Dog, Alvin. Can you imagine the joy Hayley, Archer, and his brother Harrison felt being told they were

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getting a special dog of their own for Christmas? It was a Christmas they will never forget.

Archer and Alvin are a perfect match. Nicknamed the 'A-Team' by the Guide Dogs staff, they're doing exceptionally well together. Hayley couldn't be happier, *"Alvin and Archer are so similar. They're both so relaxed, but also really cheeky. And they both love food!"*

Life for Hayley has become much easier. When they're out she can relax knowing Archer is safely attached to Alvin's coat through a belt around his waist.

"Having Alvin to support us while we're out is amazing. I don't have to carry him anymore, and I feel so much more relaxed," Hayley explains.

Alvin has a calming effect over Archer. Hayley is thrilled at the way Archer is responding to him, *"Alvin is so patient with Archer. It's beautiful to see. He is a safe space for him. Something for Archer to focus on and calm him."*

The whole family has bonded so well with Alvin, *"I honestly believe Alvin was meant to be with us. We all absolutely adore him. He has changed our household in such a positive way. The boys love having him around."*

Thank you for supporting our Christmas Appeal. Your support really does change lives, *"I couldn't thank the Guide Dogs staff enough and everyone who helped us be*

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matched with this wonderful dog. I am just so grateful," Hayley says.

To learn more about our life-changing Autism Assistance Dog program visit guidedogs.org.au/autism-assistance-dogs

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Specialised training programs

Meet Wheelchair Assistance Dog-in-training, 'Chevy'

The beautiful thing about our amazing dogs is the variety of ways they can help someone in need. Whether they become Guide Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, or Therapy Dogs, every dog will benefit someone in their own special way.

Our Guide Dog Services programs can be adapted to fit the specific needs of people living with disability.

C Litter puppy-in-training, Chevy, is currently going through specialised training to become an Assistance Dog for a client in a wheelchair.

"Each client is wonderfully different and unique. They require various levels of support. We adapt the training of our dogs to meet their specific needs," Principal Guide Dog Orientation and Mobility Instructor, Susan, explains.

When Chevy was a small pup, he enjoyed picking up his toys and giving them to his Puppy Raiser, Natalie. He would also present his toys as 'gifts' to new people who arrived at the house.

When Susan saw Chevy's energy and drive when retrieving items, she immediately thought how perfect he would be for one of our clients who uses a wheelchair.

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Together with Guide Dogs Puppy Raising Advisor, Kirsty, Susan has developed an intensive specialised training program for Chevy.

Kirsty has been working from a wheelchair to teach Chevy how to retrieve wallets, keys and other items, and drop them into a specific place in her lap.

Chevy is learning to recognise items by name. When Kirsty says *“Chevy – get the phone”* or *“Chevy – get the keys”*, he knows exactly which item to pick up.

Chevy is also learning to press his nose on buttons and light switches. He has to learn to target them precisely so he can turn lights on and off, cross at a crossing, use a lift, and many other things in the community.

“Chevy is doing very well so far. He is really enjoying the work, especially the retrieving, it’s fun for him,” Kirsty says.

On the next page, you can see the variety of new skills Chevy has to master before hopefully graduating as an Assistance Dog.

For more information on our Guide Dog Services, visit our website guidedogs.org.au/guide-dog-services or email support@guidedogs.org.au

A special dog for Barbara

Thanks to your support, Barbara was matched with her perfect Guide Dog, Teddy.

Barbara was 40 years of age when she went completely blind.

Losing her vision so suddenly was devastating for Barbara. Her whole world was turned upside down and she was scared, *“I was in complete shock, I didn’t want to leave the house.”*

Guide Dogs helped Barbara adjust to life without vision. She was trained to use a white cane which enabled her to travel safely and be more independent.

A few years after Barbara’s diagnosis, she was matched with her first Guide Dog, Tex, Then a couple of years after Tex retired, she was matched with Inkey. Barbara adored both Tex and Inkey, and is forever grateful she was able to have two amazing Guide Dogs in her life.

When Inkey retired, Barbara lost her confidence. She had grown accustomed to the independence and safety she had developed thanks to Tex and Inkey.

“When my beautiful Inkey retired, I felt legless. I had to be retrained with my white cane, and I had a few counselling sessions to help me adjust. I was lost without Inkey. It was almost like going blind all over again,” Barbara recalls.

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Last year Guide Dogs asked for your support to help match Barbara with another Guide Dog.

Your response to our appeal was incredible! Thanks to your support, Guide Dogs was able to match Barbara with Guide Dog, Teddy.

Barbara and Teddy are doing very well together. They have formed a tight bond and take care of each other, *"I just love having Teddy at home. He has helped me build my confidence to get out and about again. We have been busy learning our new routes together. Teddy has picked them up so quickly. I can trust him to find home. He's a very clever boy."*

Barbara is spoiling Teddy rotten, *"one of our favourite things to do is to go for a walk to the pet store so Teddy can pick out a new toy. He has quite the collection!"*

"We're also enjoying going to the dog park together. Teddy loves it! He races around and stretches his legs. We both love socialising with the other dogs and owners."

With Teddy, Barbara is excited to get back into volunteering for Guide Dogs, *"Inkey and I used to love talking to the community about Guide Dogs. I got to meet so many wonderful people! I think Teddy will really enjoy it."*

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Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, Mike, has been there every step of the way with Barbara and Teddy, and is helping them adjust to life with each other.

“Barbara and Teddy are a wonderful match. I’m thrilled to see them work together so beautifully, and Barbara’s confidence is increasing by the day. I couldn’t be more proud of this team,” Mike says.

You may recall in our letter Guide Dogs also asked you to write a message of support to Barbara. Your response was wonderful! She received hundreds of thoughtful and encouraging messages. Barbara was overwhelmed with emotion.

“I want to sincerely thank everyone for their messages of support. My friend Sue read them all to me and we both had tears in our eyes! It meant so much to me to hear your messages - I’m just so grateful. Thank you so much.”

To support our life-changing Guide Dog program call (08) 8115 6060 or visit our website guidedogs.org.au/donate

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Meet the G Litter

Introducing the gorgeous G and I Litter - Gizmo, Gem, Gilbert, Imani, and Iris

Gizmo, Gem, and Gilbert were born at the Guide Dogs Puppy Development Centre at Morphett Street, Adelaide. Imani and Iris are all the way from Guide Dogs Queensland. As a part of the strong national relationship, Guide Dogs is sharing resources to best provide services to our local communities.

Gizmo, Gem, Gilbert, Imani, and Iris are five adorable puppies that make up the G and I Litter. All with big personalities, and an eagerness to learn, these pups are busy training to become Guide Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, or Therapy Dogs.

To sponsor the G and I Litter and help them on their journey visit our website guidedogs.org.au/puppy-sponsorship or phone (08) 8115 6060.

G Litter

Date of birth: 31 July 2018

Place of birth: Adelaide

Breed: Labrador

Mum: Willow

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Dad: Quin

Gender: Two boys and one girl

Gizmo - My name is Gizmo! If I had to sum myself up in one word, it would be ENERGETIC. I am always on the go, ready to tackle the day ahead. I am cheeky and love to push the boundaries. I am also a bit of a daydreamer you will find me napping on my back in my off time.

Gem – Hi, my name is Gem! Some say I am the gem of the litter! I love cuddles, especially with my teddy bear! I am a pocket rocket and I love meeting new people.

Gilbert - My name is Gilbert. I like to think I am the leader the pack, because I am the biggest of my siblings. I am the life of the party. I am a bit of a water baby, if I am not at the beach I am in my pool.

I Litter

Date of birth: 4 October 2018

Place of birth: Queensland

Breed: Labrador

Mum: Sarah

Dad: Dylan II

Gender: Two Girls

Iris – Hi my name is Iris! I am a bundle of fun! I am ‘Miss Independent’. I LOVE playing with my favourite toy or toys... I have too many to choose from!

Imani – I might be small but I am a big ball of energy! I am a very curious girl and I can’t keep still because there is just so much to see and do! I am known for keeping everyone on their tippy toes!

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Life Skills Camp

Helping children and teenagers living with a vision impairment to develop skills for independent living.

The Guide Dogs Life Skills Camp is the Vision Services team's favourite time of the year! Held annually, the camp is about supporting children and teenagers living with vision impairment to develop skills for independent living, form positive friendships and have fun during the school break.

Held in the school holidays at Warradale Urban Camp School, the Life Skills Camp is a great way to catch up with friends.

Our Vision Services team encourages campers to work towards their personal goals for improved independence, confidence and wellbeing, while learning the value of leadership and teamwork.

“Just like any other young person, someone with vision loss wants to fit in, be independent and confident in living a life they want. Through this camp, we aim to help build confidence and break down some of the potential isolation of living with a vision impairment. We also aim to give the young people the confidence to ask for help and assistance when they need it,” Guide Dogs Team Leader Vision Services, Janelle, explains.

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The campers are given guidance on preparing their own meals, grooming and haircare, shopping, handling money, navigating the city and using public transport.

The group went on a trip to Bunnings where they could touch and smell herbs. They were able to purchase a home herb garden and learnt how to prepare nutritious meals at home using their fresh herbs.

They also participate in other fun activities such as a Goalball match and they even climbed Mega Adventure Park at West Beach.

“While it’s a natural part of life, it’s difficult enough moving from childhood to adulthood. Just like others, young people with vision impairment also want to fit in, make sure they look confident and know what to do,” Janelle says.

Many of the camp participants are white cane users but one day may wish to have a Guide Dog as their mobility aid. At camp, the group is given the opportunity to meet a qualified Guide Dog, and have a pat and cuddle. They can also go on an experiential walk to find out what it is like to be guided by our highly trained dogs.

To find out more about our Life Skills Camp contact our Vision Services team on **1800 757 738** or email support@guidedogs.org.au

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PAWGUST is a FURnomenal success!

A huge thanks to all who participated and pounded the pavement with their furry friend.

In 2018, PAWGUST challenged people to walk their dog 30 minutes a day for 30 days during the month of August, and raise vital funds for Guide Dogs-in-training.

As a first-year event, our team was overwhelmed by your incredible support. Over 5,000 people (and their pups) registered to put their paws to the pavement and support Guide Dogs across Australia.

Your support raised a phenomenal \$596,151! This will cover the cost of 11 puppies-in-training, on their journey to change the lives of people living with vision impairment.

"It was so rewarding, and fun to be part of PAWGUST!" –
Cathy, PAWGUST participant

For more information or to pre-register for PAWGUST 2019, visit pawgust.com.au, or email PAWGUST@guidedogs.org.au

A fun way to support Guide Dogs

Host a fundraising event before the end of May and WIN!

As a loyal supporter, Guide Dogs know how passionate you are about the vital work we do for people living with sensory disability in the community. Another fun way to show your support is to host your own fundraising event.

Holding a fundraising event is one of the most rewarding ways to support Guide Dogs, and if you do so before the end of May, you will go in the draw to win some amazing prizes!*

What to do

- **Choose an idea** - There are so many FUNdraising ideas to choose from, simply pick one from our list on the website, or come up with your own PAWsome event.
- **Receive your free fundraising kit** – When you register, you'll get your very own online giving page, plus a free fundraising kit packed with everything you need. Our team of fundraising experts will also be there every step of the way to help with all of your fundraiser needs.
- **Go in the draw to WIN** – If you host your event before the end of May, you will go in the draw to win some amazing prizes, including a doggy hamper for your

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pooch, and a meet-and-greet with one of our Guide Dogs-in-training.

- **Make a difference** – Guide Dogs relies heavily on the generosity of supporters like you to continue changing the lives of people living with sensory disability. Hosting your own fundraising event is another great way to support these vital services.

Visit fundraise.guidedogs.org.au to register your event and start fundraising!

If you have any questions about fundraising for Guide Dogs, please call the team on **(08) 8203 8302** or email fundraising@guidedogs.org.au

*check out fundraise.guidedogs.org.au/prizes to see the prize details and terms & conditions

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What's on at Guide Dogs

Join the Paws Parade

International Guide Dog Day 2019

Guide Dogs SA/NT will celebrate International Guide Dog Day on Wednesday 24 April with our annual Paws Parade to honour the life-changing work of Guide Dogs, Autism Assistance Dogs, and Therapy Dogs. The Parade departs at 9.30am from our office at 251 Morphett Street, Adelaide, and continues along Morphett, Franklin and King William Streets to Government House. We'd love to see lots of supporters alongside the parade route cheering on our amazing dogs!

Beau's DayCare now open!

Have a busy day and don't want to leave your precious pet by themselves?

Drop them off at Beau's Pet Hotel DayCare! Spoil your pet with a range of packages that can be purchased for half, full, or extended day programs. You will be able to get on with your day knowing your pet is having a ball, and is in the safest of hands with Beau's trusted and professional staff. Phone **(08) 8115 6080** or visit beaus.org.au/daycareenquiry for more information.

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National Volunteer Week
May 20-26.

From 20-26 May 2019, we'll be celebrating National Volunteer Week and the incredible contribution that our volunteers make to Guide Dogs SA/NT. From fundraising to puppy raising, our volunteers provide essential support for each service and program we deliver. To learn more about volunteering with Guide Dogs SA/NT, call **08 8115 6050** or visit guidedogs.org.au/volunteer

PAWGUST is back!

Raise vital funds for Guide Dogs by walking 30 minutes and day for 30 days with your dog.

Take the challenge this August! For more information or to pre-register for PAWGUST 2019 visit pawgust.com.au or email pawgust@guidedogs.org.au