

The official newsletter for Guide Dogs SA/NT

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Message from the Chief Executive Officer

A huge thank you for your support.

Welcome to our spring edition of Paw Prints! This year is flying by, and in eight short months, the team at Guide Dogs has already achieved so much.

Without your support, the Guide Dogs team could not do what they do. You are a vital part of what Guide Dogs achieves for our clients.

Because of you, hundreds of people across South Australia and the Northern Territory are no longer living in isolation. Your support provides safety, independence and inclusion to people living with sensory disability.

In this edition, I am thrilled to introduce you to a new match - Ian and Simba. Ian and Simba are working beautifully together. Ian's positive and encouraging character is the perfect match for sweet and sensitive Simba. I hope you enjoy reading about this wonderful match that could not have happened without your support.

As loyal supporters of Guide Dogs, you would know the training of our gorgeous puppies starts almost immediately in the Puppy Development Centre here on Morphett Street

in Adelaide. In this edition, you will meet the legendary L Litter, and learn what they get up to from birth to ten weeks old.

The sky's the limit for our fearless clients! In April, four Guide Dogs SA/NT clients living with vision impairment took on the iconic Adelaide Oval Roof Climb, in celebration of Adelaide Oval's charity month. I had the privilege of joining them on the climb as a human guide and was overwhelmed with their energy and determination. They do not let their vision loss get in their way.

“It was challenging, but that’s good. It was a really good reminder that things are possible even when you have a disability, you can still accomplish what you aim for,” Zuzia reflects on the experience.

Earlier this year our Dog Services team embarked on a ‘first’ for our dog programs, by training South Australia’s first Canine Court Companion, Zero. Canine Court Companion’s like Zero, provide a compassionate way to help vulnerable victims and witnesses to tell their stories. I hope you enjoy reading this wonderful story - innovations like this are only possible with your support.

Once again, on behalf of hundreds of people across South Australia and the Northern Territory living with a sensory disability, and their families, thank you. I am so grateful for your support.

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Aaron Chia

Chief Executive Officer
Guide Dogs SA/NT

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A perfect match – Ian and Simba

Ian's positive and encouraging nature is the perfect match for sweet and sensitive Simba.

Long-term client Ian has been living with vision loss since he was in Primary School. When Ian was eight years old, he was accidentally hit in the left eye with a football causing his retina to detach, leaving him with no sight in his left eye. Not long after the accident, Ian's Ophthalmologist discovered the presence of Retinitis Pigmentosa, an inherited degenerative eye disease that causes severe vision impairment.

The diagnosis did not affect Ian until he was eighteen years old when his night blindness rapidly increased, and his depth perception and peripheral vision plummeted.

“From the age of eighteen, my eyesight went into a downward spiral, reaching plateaus and then stabilising again, before repeating this pattern on numerous occasions over the years. Five years ago I was also diagnosed with Macular Degeneration to top off my visual afflictions,” Ian explains. Ian is now sixty-three and lives with 8% of blurred central vision in his right eye.

Ian had to face several challenges with his vision loss, **“I stopped going out and avoided crowds at all costs. My whole family bore the brunt of my disability. I was oblivious**

to my children's concerns and efforts to protect me, which I truly regret. As time passed and my eyesight diminished, anger and frustration overtook every aspect of my life. I would walk around as though I was wearing a straight jacket, so tense, stressed, and confined. Accepting that I needed help was my most pressing obstacle and challenge to overcome."

Ian has been a client of Guide Dogs for over 25 years. He has received Orientation and Mobility services such as white cane training, counselling, case management, and has had five beloved Guide Dogs, Zebedee, Volku, Nudge, Wren, and now Simba.

"Each dog with their own personality and skill sets have had a huge impression and impact on my life. To walk around with confidence and ease, the freedom of mobility and independence, being happy and enjoying what I can see, and letting my Guide Dog take care of what I am unable to see, and the relieving of pressure on my family cannot be underestimated. I can't ask for much more than that," Ian said.

After eight years of loyal service, Wren is happily living out her retirement with Ian and his wife, Chris. With Wren's retirement, Ian needed a new Guide Dog, and Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, Lisa, had the perfect dog in mind for him - Simba.

“Simba is a very willing dog. She loves to work and is eager to please, but she also has a sensitive side. Ian is an excellent handler. He is patient and encouraging, so I thought they would make a great match. Ian also enjoys walking outdoors along the esplanade and through the wetlands, so he needed a dog like Simba that can work well in these environments,” Lisa explains.

Ian and Simba have just completed four weeks of intensive training with Lisa. Lisa worked with Ian and Simba around the home and in their local community, which included walks around the neighbourhood, through the wetlands, to the beach, the shops, and cafes. They also caught public transport to Victor Harbour, Goolwa, and Adelaide. At the end of their training, Ian and Simba needed to demonstrate they can navigate through all environments safely and independently to make graduation standards.

Ian and Simba successfully passed their training and are doing very well together as a new Guide Dog team. Ian adores Simba, **“Simba’s affection is infectious. Her willingness to work for me is unbelievable. I am aware of myself walking through the streets of Victor Harbour with a big smile on my face. All because of Simba!”**

Simba has settled in nicely at Ian and Chris’ home and is trying very hard to win over her new best friend, Wren. They love to play tug of war together and go to the dog park for a run.

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Your support is the reason Guide Dogs can match people in need like Ian with our incredible dogs. Ian would like to say thank you on behalf of himself and other Guide Dog users; **“As a Guide Dog user, I don’t get much of a chance to say thank you to the people who make my life a whole lot easier. I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to everyone involved in the Guide Dog process - the breeders, the vets, and vet nurses, the puppy raising families who do such a great job raising these beautiful dogs, and of course the Guide Dogs staff and volunteers. Last but not least I’d like to sincerely thank the Guide Dogs supporters who donate to provide our mobility vehicle and ultimate companions, our Guide Dogs.”**

To learn more about the Guide Dog program visit our website guidedogs.org.au

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Meet the L Litter

Follow Legend, London, and LG on their journey from birth to ten weeks old.

Woof! It's Legend, London, and LG here, and we're the legendary L Litter! You may have seen us taking over the Guide Dogs social media in July? Gosh, we had a heckin' good time!

We thought we'd show you how much we have grown from little puppers to big puppers! We had to learn lots of things before we left our first home at Guide Dogs Puppy Development Centre in Adelaide. The world can be scary sometimes, but our friends at Guide Dogs helped us get through it, and now we know it's not scary at all... it's really FUN!

0 weeks

Photo with Mum - This was us when we were first born. We loooove our Mum – her name is Zena. She smells so good and takes really good care of us. Our Puppy Raising Advisor's name is Kirsty; she said we were so cute when we were born, we don't see how? We couldn't even open our eyes!

1-2 weeks

Feeding photo - We're ALWAYS hungry.

Mum is so patient with us. We want to feed all the time!

Woof! It's so bright! We opened our eyes when we were two weeks old. We were so excited to see our Mum for the first time. She's really beautiful. No wonder she had such good-looking babies.

3 weeks

Do you know we get to watch TV, walk over different surfaces, and play with LOTS of toys? How lucky are we! Kirsty says the TV gets us used to different sounds – there are some weird things on TV. The different surfaces mean when we're bigger we won't be afraid to walk over anything such as door mats, grates, and tactile tiles. Our toys come in lots of different shapes, sizes, and textures. We LOVE them! We get so tired after a morning of play so we sleep a lot.

4 weeks

Errghhh what is this thing! It's SO itchy! Kirsty said we have to get used to wearing these things she calls 'collars'. I guess she's right they're not that bad!

5 weeks

Yummmm this food is sooo good! It's a bit different from what Mum gave us. Kirsty is teaching us to be patient and

wait nicely for food. Sometimes we find it hard to wait we're just so hungry!

6 weeks

We went to a place called the Vets this week. They were nice there. The man named 'Vet' gave us what they call a 'vaccination'. Legend didn't like it – he said it stings, but the rest of us didn't even notice! We all got lots of yummy treats – we think we will like coming here!

7 weeks

We love it when Kirsty gives us a KONG. She hides the food in there, and we have to get it out. It keeps us busy, and it is really fun!

This is us trying on our new jackets. They are so cool! Kirsty says we have to get used to them because we will be wearing them a lot when we get big.

8 weeks

This is us going for a ride around the office. We got to meet so many new faces - they thought we were adorable. Kirsty wants us to socialise a lot which is easy because we love people!

Woohoo! This was us running down the corridor at Guide Dogs. We had a ball!! There were lots of different things in our way that we could sniff and explore. We love riding on

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the Wobble Board - it's really wobbly, so it teaches us balance and coordination.

9 weeks

Wooooaahhh all of the smells! We got to visit the Adelaide Botanic Gardens, and it was awesome! How good is GRASS? We got to run, play, sniff, and explore! There were lots of nice people there to say hello to.

We also got to visit a big shopping centre called Burnside Village. This place was HUGE! Kirsty says we will go to shopping centres like this all the time when we're bigger. The floor felt weird and slippery, but we didn't mind. We were really brave! Plus while Kirsty and the girls had a coffee, we got to snooze under the table. We were tired from our big adventure.

10 weeks

This week we got to meet our Puppy Raisers – Kirsty says they're amazing. She says they will take us into their homes for a year, feed us, take care of us, and teach us lots of new and exciting things. We will miss each other when we go, but we will still get to see one another at some training sessions with Kirsty – yay!

Thank you to all of our generous Puppy Sponsors. Your ongoing support enables Guide Dogs to turn these cute

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puppies into highly skilled Guide Dogs,
Autism Assistance Dogs or Therapy Dogs.

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Tips for dog enrichment

Puppy Raising Advisor, Kirsty, takes us through her top tips for the mental enrichment and stimulation of our beloved pooches.

Keeping your dog fit and healthy through regular exercise and a stable diet is an important part of caring for your dog. However, often dog owners forget that dogs also need mental stimulation and enrichment to keep them happy.

Our amazing trainers and Puppy Raisers use several tricks and techniques to keep our puppies-in-training and working dogs happy and motivated. They like to provide our dogs with opportunities for thinking and problem-solving through games and toys, as well as social enrichment through trips to the dog park.

Read on for some simple and practical ways to provide enrichment for your dog each day. Just remember each dog is different, with different personalities, interests, and motivations. You need to experiment and find what works for your dog.

6 enrichment tips from Puppy Raising Advisor, Kirsty.

1. KONG toys

A KONG is a mentally stimulating rubber toy that offers enrichment by helping satisfy the dogs' instinctual needs.

KONGS come in a range of shapes, and sizes depending on the needs of the dog. The traditional KONG can be used as a;

- **Fetch Toy**

- The unique shape and strong rubber make the KONG bounce in unpredictable directions, sparking chasing instincts.
- DID YOU KNOW: Our puppies-in-training aren't allowed to play with balls? Our dogs will have to work around these distractions throughout their training and career, and as dogs can become obsessed with them, a KONG is a great alternative!

- **Chew Toy**

- The KONG is durable; the rubber satisfies the dog's instinctual need to chew.

- **Puzzle Toy**

- A KONG is great as a puzzle to keep your dog stimulated and occupied when they are having a quiet day at home. Stuff the KONG with dog-friendly Peanut Butter, grated carrot, or softened kibble to keep your dog busy and happy.
- You can also give your dog a stuffed KONG when you leave the house – that way your dog won't get upset when they are left alone but

instead, they now see you leaving the house as a positive situation where they get a treat.

*Potential infographic? Top up one cup of dried dog biscuits with hot water, leave to cool, and stuff in the KONG using a knife. Tip: you could also melt through some dog-friendly peanut butter or extra grated carrot for tasty goodness. Visit kong.com.au for more filling ideas.

You can find the KONG range at your local PETstock store petstock.com.au

IMPORTANT: *read the label before giving your dog Peanut Butter. Although most Peanut Butters are okay in moderation, some Peanut Butters contain Xylitol, an artificial sweetener. Xylitol is toxic to dogs.*

2. Ice blocks and frozen treats

In summer, our dogs-in-training love ice blocks. Fill up an ice cube tray, a KONG, or a Tupperware container with stock, kibble, and grated carrot. Not only it will cool them down, but it also keeps them busy, and happy!

3. Free-running

Social enrichment is another great way to keep your dog happy. A trip to a dog-friendly, free-run area provides an opportunity for them to run free, spend time with other dogs, and utilise all of their senses. A free run in a safe

environment is also a good time to work on your dog's recall using their favourite treats.

4. Snuffle Mat

Dogs love working for their food. A snuffle mat is a great enrichment toy for your dog (or cat!) Scattering dry food in the snuffle mat encourages your dog's natural skills at sniffing and snuffling food out. You can easily make a snuffle mat yourself (visit <https://bit.ly/2Jk5aFB> for instructions) with just a rubber mat, fleece, and sharp scissors – your dog will love you for it!

5. Food dispensing toys & puzzles

There are many different types of food dispensing toys and puzzles out there, but one of our favourites to use is the KONG Wobbler. The KONG Wobbler is an action-packed toy that is a mentally stimulating food dispenser. The KONG-shaped toy sits upright until nudged by the dog's paw or nose, dispensing tasty rewards as it wobbles, spins and rolls. The KONG Wobbler can also be used as an alternative to a dog bowl to slow dogs who scoff their food, and it also keeps them moving while they work for their food.

6. Hide and seek

Ask your dog to stay, and then run and hide from them before calling their name. Treat generously when they find

you. Hide and seek is a fun game for your dog where they can use their nose to sniff you out. It also builds a strong recall.

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The sky's the limit for our amazing clients

Four fearless Guide Dogs clients living with vision impairment took on the iconic Adelaide Oval RoofClimb to celebrate the launch of Adelaide Oval's charity month.

In April this year, Zuzia, Sarah, Jody, and Simon were accompanied by human guides from Guide Dogs SA/NT, including our Chief Executive Officer, Aaron Chia, and his plush Guide Dog puppy who provided valuable moral support.

With the assistance of a RoofClimb leader, the group braved heights as much as 50 metres above the hallowed turf to make their way across Adelaide Oval's roofline.

The RoofClimb was a once in a lifetime opportunity for these clients living with vision impairment to show how Guide Dogs' training and support had equipped them with the confidence and capabilities to achieve their goals.

"It was challenging, but that's good. It was a really good reminder that things are possible even when you have a disability, you can still accomplish what you aim for," Zuzia reflects on the experience.

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To celebrate Adelaide Oval's charity month in April, 10% of each RoofClimb ticket sold was donated to Guide Dogs SA/NT.

This exciting collaboration was made possible thanks to a two-year charity partnership between the Stadium Management Authority and Guide Dogs SA/NT, announced in December 2018.

The partnership enables Guide Dogs to raise funds and awareness for our work while supporting Adelaide Oval to create a more accessible venue for South Australians living with a disability.

Congratulations to Zuzia, Sarah, Jody, and Simon as well as the human guides who accompanied them. Their courage and determination prove the sky is truly the limit for people living with vision impairment or blindness.

Thank you Adelaide Oval for your support. If you're game to 'Take On The Icon', book your RoofClimb at roofclimb.com.au

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Innovations in Dog Services

Introducing South Australia's first Canine Court Companion, Zero.

At Guide Dogs, our goal is to lead the way in the breeding, development, training and assessment of Guide Dogs, Autism Assistance Dog, and Therapy Dogs.

For more than 60 years, thanks to the support of people like you, Guide Dogs has enhanced the quality of life for people in need through a culture of innovation, incredible dogs and highly qualified trainers.

Earlier this year our Dog Services team embarked on a 'first' for our dog program, and for the South Australian government, by training South Australia's first Canine Court Companion, Zero.

Guide Dogs SA/NT and the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) are undertaking an innovative pilot program for Court Companion Dogs in South Australia. This 9-month pilot program will see how Zero can make a difference to the often demanding court process by providing quiet companionship to traumatised victims and witnesses.

Former Director of Public Prosecutions, Adam Kimber SC, spearheaded the pilot program after identifying the need for an extra form of support for vulnerable children going

through the stressful court process,
“the idea first came from the DPP in Victoria, they have access to a facility dog there and have had for about 18 months. We’re always looking for things to do to make victims more comfortable, more able to communicate with us, and more able to get across to us what they need to in what are often extremely stressful circumstances. So as soon as I heard from Victoria that it (the Canine Court Companion program) was in their view positive and was working, I said to Dean, our Manager of Witness Assistance Service, we need to take a look at this, and we need to make it happen.”

Zero was specially chosen for the role for his calm and gentle nature, his adaptability, and because he is good around children.

Throughout his training, Zero was introduced to a variety of environments like busy shopping centres, crowded restaurants, elevators, open working spaces, public transport, and has worked with both adults and children.

Zero has been taught to lie or sit quietly next to a child, or on his mat, and introduce himself to the children by bowing. To create a relationship with the children he was also taught to play ‘play and retrieve, to ‘read’ his book, and cuddle (not that he needed any help in that area!)

Guide Dog Mobility Instructor, Lisa, worked closely with Zero's new primary handler, Darren, to ensure he can handle Zero in public and care for Zero throughout the nine-month trial, and ultimately his lifetime of work and at home.

In April, Zero and Darren successfully passed their Public Access Test and graduated as a certified Canine Court Companion team!

"I was thrilled to get through the PACT with Zero. While I was nervous, I felt that I could handle whatever came up because I had learnt the skills to cope with whatever I might encounter. Lisa was particularly good at helping me build the skills required to confidently handle Zero in all situations," Darren explains.

Zero is halfway through the program and is doing very well, already providing much-needed support to many young South Australian's during their time in the Criminal Justice System.

"Zero has taken to being a Canine Court Companion well. Zero's loving and playful nature and his calm and friendly presence make him the perfect support for victims of crime while they discuss traumatic memories. We have been very pleased with his progress and how well he has taken up the role," Darren said, **"Zero has already helped a number of vulnerable victims of crime. His impact starts**

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well before they ever meet him, but rather when they find out he will be coming to their meeting. The experience of attending at the ODPP (Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions) is changed from a negative and difficult experience that they are not looking forward to, to one that has a positive side to it and they are happy to attend.”

Innovations like this in our Dog Services are only made possible with your support. Your support makes a difference to many people living in the South Australian and Northern Territory communities. Thank you.

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The C Litter graduated!

A big thank you to all the amazing C Litter Puppy Sponsors who made the C Litter's journey possible!

The C Litter recently graduated in February this year. Graduation is a major milestone in their journey, marking the start of formal training in their professional field. It was a delight to see so many Puppy Sponsors celebrating with the C Litter on their special day.

A special thank you to Hotel Grand Chancellor for welcoming Guide Dogs and our supporters on the day.

Words from the C Litter puppies as they graduated from the Puppy Program...

Chevy

Hi Suppawters, wow can you believe I graduated? I am forever grateful for your generous suppawt. I am now an Assistance Dog-in-training, learning to assist a client who uses a wheelchair.

Coral

I graduated from the Puppy Program! I loved seeing all the amazing suppawters at graduation. Thank you so much for celebrating this special occasion with us.

Coco

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Did you hear? I graduated from the Puppy Program! Woof! When I started my advanced training, I became a little unsure of my decision to become a Guide Dog. After a belly scratch and chat with my trainer, I made the decision to become a pet dog! This incredible journey would not have been possible without your suppawt.

China, Captain, Chia, Cookie, and Cricket also decided the working life wasn't for them, they're now much-loved and very well-trained pets.

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What's on at Guide Dogs

PAWGUST

There's still time to sign-up!

Take on the challenge! Visit pawgust.com.au to register or for more information.

White Cane Day

Tuesday, October 15, 2019

“My white cane is a sign of my independence.” – Sarah,
Vision Services client

Tuesday 15 October is International White Cane Day, when we celebrate how this simple mobility aid enables people living with vision impairment to go where they want, when they want – safely and with independence. White Cane Day is also a chance for clients like Sarah to share how Orientation and Mobility training has made a real difference in their lives. Learn more about our vision services at guidedogs.org.au/vision-services

Life Skills Camp 2019

September 30 – October 4, 2019

The Guide Dogs SA/NT Life Skills Camp helps children and teenagers living with a vision impairment develop skills for independent living. To find out more about our Life Skills

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Camp contact our Vision Services team
on **1800 757 738** or email support@guidedogs.org.au