

# Oregon woman and guide dog help others

By Kathy Aney  
East Oregonian

PENDLETON (AP) — As a young woman, Sharon Zenger traded in her driver's license for a seeing eye dog.

Zenger started life with almost normal vision, but as a toddler was diagnosed with a degenerative eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa. Growing up in Pendleton, the girl spent years preparing for blindness, practicing with a white cane and learning to read Braille. When her sight dimmed, she was ready.

Zenger, now 37, trains visually impaired children in six Oregon counties as an employee of the InterMountain Education Service District. Tod Zenger chauffeurs his daughter and her guide dog, Jude, from school to school each day.

Except for the ever-present Jude, one might not realize the Pendleton woman can't see. She walks with an air of confidence, following her German shepherd's subtle guidance. She wears glasses and appears to look directly at people who speak to her, though in reality she sees only blur or blackness, depending on the brightness of the environment.

Zenger's easy nonchalance belies her toughness. She got her first guide dog at the Guiding Eyes for the Blind guide dog school in New York City. To graduate the month-long training, students must navigate the Big Apple's legendary traffic and multilevel subway system.

"I walked out of Grand Central Station and had to find my way to Central Park," Zenger recalls.

After reaching her destination, she headed to the subway, found a train to the upper east side, got off at the proper stop and found a pub where she met her classmates and instructors. Getting around in New York City can rattle even sighted people — doing

it with impaired vision takes nerves of steel.

"I remember thinking I'm glad I don't live in New York," Zenger said.

She returned to Oregon, where she earned undergraduate degrees in social science and teaching and a master's degree in education at Portland State University. She memorized the campus and surrounding cityscape. She knew the exact number of steps and stairs in various PSU buildings from front door to classroom.

She learned to navigate through the school's underground tunnel system.

After graduation, Zenger taught for 10 years at the Utah Schools for the Deaf and Blind. In the three years

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## MOOREHEAD: Oregon man moves on to regional competition

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requiring high-crawls through the ocean surf in full battle gear to shore. Once on shore, Moorehead had to carry two cement-filled ammunition canisters to the top of a steep sand dune and then race back down to the finish line.

The stress-shoot portion of the event included three timed M9 pistol firing sequences while enduring stressful distractions such as smoke, sirens, yelling, and evacuating a simulated casualty from an Army vehicle. Other physical challenges included climbing ropes, crawling under wires, and maneuvering through a number of other obstacles.

Besides the physical testing, soldiers were required to complete a written exam and essay as well as face a board



PHOTO PROVIDED

Sgt. Dane Moorehead competing in the Omaha Beach event during the recent 2017 Oregon Best Warrior competition at Camp Rilea.

of sergeants major that tested their Army knowledge.

Moorehead will next represent Oregon in regional competitions to be held in Alaska in May 2018.

The son of Rod and Carol Moorehead of Sisters, he was named a National Merit Commended Scholar at SHS. He also participated in track

and field and cross-country, as well as serving as the manager for the varsity basketball team.

When not training or deployed, Moorehead lives in Monmouth while attending Western Oregon University where he is majoring in psychology with a minor in biology.

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Gabe Gabrielle is an engineer, educator, and a motivational public speaker. He tells stories wrapped around the space program at NASA which inspire kids, teachers, professionals, and others. Gabe's laid-back and honest approach reaches people at all levels. Gabe's lecture includes short videos on shuttle launches and stories of space station astronauts, Mars rovers, and NASA's future. Building on these inspirational tales of adventure and achievement, Gabe encourages listeners to believe in themselves, to turn dreams into goals, to have fun and, above all, to have hope.




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