

IAM's Guide Dog program breaks ground on new education center

SYLMAR, Calif. — International Association of Machinist-founded Guide Dogs of America (GDA) will break ground April 13 on a new 15,900-square-foot indoor/outdoor education and visitor center at its 7.5-acre campus in northeast San Fernando Valley.

The nonprofit charitable organization has been providing professionally-trained guide dogs to visually-impaired individuals since 1982. GDA services are provided at no charge, and the organization receives no funding from government agencies. All donations come from individuals, businesses, foundations, clubs, and organizations as well as through wills and bequests.

Much of the funding is raised at Machinist Union-related events throughout the country. For example,

Gladstone, Oregon-based Machinists District W24 hosts an annual golf tournament, motorcycle "poker run," and salmon fishing derby to raise money for GDA.

"It's through the continued generosity of supporters such as this and all the other donations that Guide Dogs of America receives, that we continue to provide the best benefit to those in need," said Bob Petroff, assistant directing business representative of IAM District W24 and a member of the GDA board of directors.

The cost to produce a qualified guide dog companion, train the guide dog and recipient as a team, and provide the follow-up services that ensure safety and effectiveness throughout the team's working life, is \$42,000. Guide Dogs of America breeds its own specially selected Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, and German Shepherds.

Last year, 54 guide dog teams graduated from the school.

It has graduated more than 3,200



Machinists Lodge 63 and IAM District W24 sponsor the Guide Dog Dash each year to help raise money for Guide Dogs of America.

guide dog teams since its inception.

The new education center will be named the Phil and Macki Singer Visitor and Education Center. The Singers have supported Guide Dogs of America since 1994. When Phil passed away in 2004, a significant gift was dedicated to the school, which allowed for construction of the center.

To learn more, call 818-362-5834 or go on line at www.guidedogsofamerica.org.

Postal unions form alliance

Declaring that "the U.S. Postal Service (USPS) is under unprecedented attack," the presidents of the nation's four postal unions have formed a historic alliance to fight back.

The Postal Union Alliance commits the American Postal Workers Union (APWU), the National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC), the National Postal Mail Handlers Union, and the National Rural Letter Carriers Association to work together to protect service and oppose the subcontracting of work and privatization of services. It also vows to expand service to include basic banking, notary, check-cashing and other services.

The four union presidents — Mark Dimondstein of APWU, Fredric Rolando of NALC, John Hegarty of the Mail Handlers Union; and Jeanette Dwyer of the Rural Letter Carriers each signed a proclamation that reads in part:

"A congressionally-manufactured financial crisis drains the USPS of vital resources. Six-day delivery is under constant threat of elimination. The reduction of service standards and the elimination of half of the nation's mail processing centers has slowed service and wiped out tens of thousands of good jobs. Post offices in cities and small towns are being sold or closed or having their hours cut back.

"Our efforts will benefit all postal employees and the people of this coun-

try who expect and deserve a vibrant, public Postal Service for generations to come.

"Corporate privatizers seek to gain control over larger segments of postal operations — and to get their hands on the Postal Service's \$65 billion of annual revenue. The postmaster general's policies of subcontracting and degrading service are fueling the privatization drive," the proclamation declares.

Union vote scheduled for Portland park rangers

This month, park rangers at the City of Portland will finally get what they asked for over a year ago: The right to join the union of their choice.

On March 29, 2013, a majority of the 15 park rangers asked Mayor Charlie Hales to recognize their choice to join Laborers Local 483. Instead, the City Attorney's office filed a hodge-podge of legal objections with the state Employment Relations Board. The City lost, appealed, lost again, and was ordered to get on with it.

Now mail ballots will go out April 21. They're due back May 5, and will be tallied May 6 at 10 a.m. If the majority vote "Union Yes," they'll become members of 900-member Local 483, which is part of the seven-union coalition known as the District Council of Trade Unions.

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