



The Chatterbox

Guide Dogs for the Blind

BY BETTY KAISER
For the Sentinel

At our house, sunshine and happiness radiate from two little red Dachshunds. They get up happy in the morning and go to bed happy at night. All day long they bring a joy into our lives that is beyond measure. They are ready to join us in almost any adventure; they alert us to danger, their tails seldom stop wagging, and they offer kisses when they sense when we are sad.

Today I'm going to introduce you to an organization that brings that same companionship, joy and security to the visually impaired. Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) was established in 1942 to provide guide dogs for veterans returning from World War II. It has no government funding, and there is no charge for services. All services, including the cost of the dog (\$50,000), are funded by gifts.

Recently my friend Charlene invited me and my husband to a presentation in Eugene by this organization. Charlene has long been active in GDB, but this was our first introduction to how long it takes a village to turn a puppy into a guide dog.

We learned that the mission of GDB—matching the visually impaired with the perfect puppy—is not magic. It is hard work that begins when puppies are born on their San Rafael, Calif. campus. It begins before the pups are born when their parents are bred for good health and temperament. The breeding, veterinary and neonatal staff ensures that the pups are happy and healthy from the get-go.

Then the fun begins as volunteer puppy socializers cuddle and pamper those precious babies. Everything is exciting, so they gently introduce them to their new world — people, sights, sounds, dirt, grass and pavement are all waiting to be explored.

Just about the time they're getting familiarized, they board GDB's puppy truck to new homes all up and down the West Coast, where they are eagerly awaited by puppy trainers. Some pups land in Eugene, but others have found loving homes from San Francisco to Bend. All trainers volunteer their time, food and toys!

At the meeting we were greeted by two adorable puppies in training. Gallagher, a Golden Retriever, and Valerie a Yellow Lab, arrived in Oregon on the Puppy Truck in early February to live with their volunteer puppy trainers until they're 14-16 months old. These pups were well behaved and so cute I wanted to smuggle one home.

Kimberly and Jackie are their veteran Eugene puppy trainers, having trained about 13 pups between them. Here are some things you'll need to know if you're thinking of being a puppy raiser: The dogs go everywhere with them that is open to the public. They are taught good house and public manners. They practice positive re-enforcement. Bad behavior is ignored. Pups are on a strict natural balance diet. No table food or treats. Good behavior is rewarded with "one"



A guide dog in training (no, the leader doesn't hurt!)

piece of kibble. A working dog wears a jacket and a Gentle Leader in public. No, you should not pet a working dog without permission. Puppies are puppies! Even though they have lots of training they can play in the yard, etc. Puppy raisers want confident, happy, successful dogs!

At the end of their training time here in Oregon, Gallagher and Valerie will return in the puppy truck to San Rafael or the Boring, Ore. campus. Tears will flow BUT new pups will take their place. Now the formal guide dog training begins. The pups will be made comfortable and meet their new trainer who (over the next year) will teach them the specific skills needed to guide a blind person.

This is where the rubber meets the road. GDB will find out if the pups are suitable for the job. Someone said, "Dogs are like high school students. Some are ready for college and some are not. Those who do not meet the requirements needed are described as making "career changes." Perhaps they are divas who need a more sedentary life or they might be inclined to police work. There will always be a place for them.

Once the dog's guidework training is finished, there is a celebratory graduation that the public is invited to attend. Then it is time to be paired with a human partner. Some people like quiet dogs. Others prefer those who are active and ready to go at a moment's notice. We were told that the right personalities just click.

Colleen M. is athletic, vivacious and vision impaired. She told her story with her

dog Nectarine (a large black lab) at her side. She is an active young woman who began losing her vision about 12 years ago. She lived in Texas and had a high profile job. One day while she was driving she noticed that her vision was compromised. Fuzzy. And no matter what she tried, it didn't clear up.

Her vision tested at 20/50 and deteriorated from there. Eventually she had to give up her driver's license and move back home to Portland, where her twin sister and family live. It was hard to get around, and using a cane was difficult. Life was depressing. At the Oregon Commission for the Blind she learned about GDB.

Colleen said, "I was open to anything to give me independence. I went to Boring for two weeks of training and the whole experience was amazing. It was the start of a new beginning for me." She and Nectarine became a great pair, walking the neighborhood, crossing Portland's bridges and riding the bus to work.

Then she had a near-death experience. She wanted to cross a street and tried to step off the curb, but Nectarine wouldn't let her. Then a car whizzed by.

"She over-rode me with her intelligent disobedience. She's the smart one. She moved me from an unsafe situation to safety," said this grateful woman.

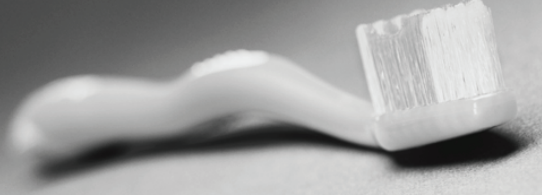
Colleen and Nectarine happily walk together 10-15,000 steps a day! It looks like Gallagher and Valerie have a happy and active life ahead of them.

Betty Kaiser's Chatterbox is about people, places, family, and other matters of the heart. Contact her at 942-1317 or via e-mail — bachatty@bettykaiser.com



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Worship Directory

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6th & Gibbs Church of Christ
195 N. 6th St. • 541-942-3822
Pastor: Aaron Earlywine
Youth & Families Pastor: Seth Bailey
Services: 9am and 10:30am
Christian Education
Nursery for pre-k - 3rd Grade
www.6thandgibbs.com

Calvary Baptist Church
77873 S 6th St • 541-942-4290
Pastor: Riley Hendricks
Sunday School: 9:45am
Worship: 11:00am
The Journey: Sunday 5:00pm
Praying Thru Life: Wednesday 6:00pm

Calvary Chapel Cottage Grove
1447 Hwy 99 (Village Plaza)
541-942-6842
Pastor: Jeff Smith
Two Services on Sun: 9am & 10:45am
Youth Group Bible Study
Child Care 10:45am Service Only
www.cgcalvary.org

Center for Spiritual Living Cottage Grove
700 Gibbs Ave (Community Center)
Rev. Bobby Lee
Meets Sunday 3:00 p.m.
(907) 230-5070
www.facebook.com/CSLCottageGrove

Church of Christ
420 Monroe St • 541-942-8565
Sunday Service: 10:30am

Cottage Grove Bible Church
1200 East Quincy Avenue
541-942-4771
Pastor: Bob Singer
Worship 11am
Sunday School: 9:45am
AWANA age 3-8th Grade,
Wednesdays Sept-May, 6:30pm
www.cgbible.org

Cottage Grove Faith Center
33761 Row River Rd. • 541-942-4851
Lead Pastor: Isaac Hovet
www.cg4.tv
2 Sunday Services: 9am & 11am
Full Children's Ministry available

Covered Bridge Nazarene Church
152 S. M St.
541-942-4422
Pastor: Cindy Slaymaker
Sunday School: 9:30am
Worship 10:30am

Delight Valley
Church of Christ
33087 Saginaw Rd. East
541-942-7711
Pastor: Bob Friend
Two Services:
9am - Classic in the Chapel
10:30am - Contemporary in the Auditorium

First Baptist Church
301 S 6th St 541-942-8242
Pastor: Steve Johnson
Sunday School: 9:30am
Worship: 11:00am
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First Presbyterian Church
3rd and Adams St • 541-942-4479
Pastor: Karen Hill
Worship: 10:00am
Sunday School: 10:00am
www.cgpresbynews.com

Grove Community Church
77820 Mosby Creek Rd.
Cottage Grove, OR 97424
541-942-0123
Pastor: Bryan Parsons
Worship: 10:30 a.m.
Nursery: Infant - Pre-K
Kid's Church: K to 5th grade

Hope Fellowship
United Pentecostal Church
100 S. Gateway Blvd. • 541-942-2061
Pastor: Dave Bragg
Worship: 11:00am Sunday
Bible Study: 7:00pm Wednesday
www.hopefellowshippupc.com
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Living Faith Assembly
467 S. 10th St. • 541-942-2612
Pastor Rulon Combs
Sunday School All Ages 9am
Worship & Children's
Church 10:30 am
"The Bridge" Sat Evening Service 6:00pm
Youth 180 Mondays 5:30-8pm
Children's Breakout Class: Wed. 6:30pm

Non-Denominational Church of Christ
1041 Pennoyer Ave * 541-767-0447
Preachers: Tony Martin & Robert Evans
Sunday Bible Study: 10:00am
Sunday Worship: 10:50am & 5:30pm
www.pennoyeravrecoc.com

Old Time Gospel Fellowship
103 S. 5th Street • 541-942-4999
Pastor: Herb Carson
Sunday Service: 10:00am
Sunday Bible Study: 6:00pm
We sing the old time hymns.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Philip Benizi
Catholic Churches
1025 N. 19th St.
541-942-3420 / 541-942-4712
Pastor: Roy L. Antunez, S.J.
Euch. Liturgies; Sat. 5:30pm
Sun. 10:30am
St. Philip Benizi, Creswell:
552 Holbrook Lane • 541-895-8686
Sunday: 8:30am

St. Andrews Episcopal Church
1301 W. Main • 541-767-9050
Rev. Lawrence Crumb
"Church with the flags."
Worship: Sunday 10:30am
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Seventh-day Adventist Church
820 South 10th Street
541-942-5213
Pastor: Kevin Miller
Bible Study: Saturday, 9:15 am
Worship Service: Saturday, 10:40 am
Mid-week Service: Wednesday, 1:00 pm

Trinity Lutheran Church
6th & Quincy • 541-942-2373
Pastor: James L. Markus
Sunday School & Adult Education 9:15am
Sunday Worship 10:30 am
Comm. Kitchen Free Meal Tue & Thur
5:00pm TLC Groups
tlccg.com

United Methodist Church
334 Washington • 541-942-3033
Pastor: Lura Kidner-Miesen
Worship: 10:30am
Adult Sunday School: 9:30am
Comm. Dinner (Adults \$5, Kids Free)
2nd & 3rd Monday 5-6:00pm
cottagegroveumc.org

"VICTORY" Country Church
913 S. 6th Street • 541-942-5913
Pastor: Barbara Dockery
Worship Service: 10:00am
Message: 11:00am
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