



Puppy Prints



North Carolina Puppy Raising Program Newsletter

Spring 2010

Congratulations NCPRP's Most Recent Graduate: Vance!

Vance is now headed off to Massachusetts, where he will provide newfound independence for his blind handler. Vance was raised by Susan Piron and Joe Brown, and Jo Anne Farr. Jo Anne shared the following about their trip to NY to watch his graduation. "Vance graduated with eight other dogs on March 20. Susan, her husband, her mother and I all sat with Kleenex at the ready and we did our share of weeping. But, it was a very memorable and precious event, and Susan and I are extremely proud and happy for Vance and his new partner.

We were able to spend quite a bit of time with Vance's new partner, who lives in Massachusetts. Vance instantly recognized us and seemed like he would wiggle himself silly. It was wonderful to see him again and we left his partner's room once again covered in Vance hair. We enjoyed tours of both the Canine Development Center and the Training School, and successfully returned home without a new puppy in hand. (Well, sort of - I understand Susan is awaiting details on her new pup).

For me, listening to the graduates express how grateful and excited they are about the independence and new opportunities provided by their guide dog really hit home.

Going forward, understanding full circle about GEB - the staff (esp. Maria), other volunteers (the family who fostered and then adopted Vance's mother, Fable, came to graduation to see him again), closed cameras in the whelping rooms, training techniques (especially the puppy-lords with the month-old pups) and the wonderful community play areas; my understanding of the program is so much more expansive and I'm really proud to be a GEB volunteer."

Vance's vet sponsor while with Susan was Pine Hollow Animal Hospital of Warrenton, and his food sponsor was Citizens for Animal Protection (CAPS) of Warren County. Six Forks Animal Hospital was Vance's vet sponsor when he moved to Raleigh with Jo Anne, and Jo Anne was his food sponsor.



Jo Anne Farr and Susan Piron with Vance



Vance can't contain his excitement at seeing Jo Anne again!

Meet the New Puppies!

Amigo, a black male lab, is being raised by Danny and Walter Overcash. Amigo is Danny's 13th puppy! Amigo's vet sponsor is Lakewood Veterinary Hospital in Mooresville, and Danny and Walter are his food sponsors. Danny provided the following introduction to Amigo. "Bienvenido Amigo! Puppy number 13, Amigo, joined GEB-release Pawling and 2 Siamese cats in the Overcash household early in March. He's the smallest puppy we've ever had (out of a litter of 11, how big can you be?!) so we thought of him as a true baby...were we ever wrong! Amigo is smart and confident. He loves going places with me to show off and beam at folks while they praise him to the heavens. He sits quietly through Weight Watcher meetings and visits the library like a pro. On an introductory visit to Savvy Salon and Day Spa, he was calm and collected amidst lots of people, sounds (hairdryers, anyone?), and smells (who knows what all!!) and showed off position changes and polite loose leash walking as though he were closer to IFT than birth. What a joy! He has good house and crate manners, sleeps well at night and is fine-tuning bathroom habits while giving in occasionally to bitey puppy behavior. If it weren't for the sharp baby teeth, I'd think Jane and her staff had perfected a new breed of mini-Labrador Retriever! I'm sure he'll grow and even develop a bad habit or two but for now, he's perfect. As for the next several months, mi casa es Amigo's casa and I am happy to have it that way. Bienvenido, Amigo, welcome!



**Amigo's adventure in the horse-shoe pit.
Nothing like a little sand or snow to make a
cute black puppy even cuter!**

Jamaica, a female yellow lab, is being raised by Jesika Baur. Jamaica is Jesika's 2nd GEB puppy! Jamaica's vet sponsor is Atrium Animal Hospital in Charlotte, and Jesika is her food sponsor.

Nigel, a male GLAB (Golden Retriever/Labrador Retriever), is being raised by Alexander Waddell. This is Alexander's 1st GEB puppy. Nigel is being raised as part of Alexander's Eagle Scout project. Nigel's vet sponsor is Sandhills Veterinary Hospital in Southern Pines, and the Waddell's are his food sponsors.



Alexander and Nigel admire their snow dog!

Puppy Updates: Where are they now?

Crockett, a male yellow lab raised by Janet Newcity and her family recently passed his in-for-training test. Crockett's vet sponsor was Village Veterinary Hospital in Chapel Hill, and his food sponsor was The American Kennel Club of Raleigh.

Denton, a male black lab, started by Danny and Walt Overcash is now being raised by Jim and Luan Harmeson. Denton is the Harmeson's 4th puppy. Denton's vet sponsor while with the Overcash's was Lakewood Veterinary Hospital in Mooresville, and Danny and Walt were his food sponsors. Denton's current vet sponsor is Jordan Lake Animal Hospital of Pittsboro and his food sponsors are the Harmesons.

Lilac, a female yellow lab raised by Jesika Baur recently passed her in-for-training test. Lilac's vet sponsor was Atrium Animal Hospital of Charlotte, and Jesika was her food sponsor.

Pablo, a male black lab raised by Glynis and Rick Tanner recently passed his in-for-training test. Pablo's vet sponsor was Timberline-Legion Road Animal Clinic in Chapel Hill, and the Tanner's were his food sponsors.

It's a Family Reunion

By Susan Piron, Puppy Raiser

When Guiding Eyes called and said Elway was being released from training I couldn't for the life of me figure out how the most perfect candidate, the stellar of all pups (at least in my mind) wasn't going to be a guide dog. He was eligible to test out for detection work with the Connecticut state police dept. and since Elway needed a job, I agreed with the decision.

He tested well, off he went, and it was a great fit. He graduated from the State of Connecticut with the 137th graduating class for Arson Detection K9's. His graduation landed on the Wednesday before Thanksgiving and sadly, because I really wanted to meet the Detective he was assigned to work with, I was unable to attend.

Although we hadn't met Elway's Handler, Detective Wayne Opendbrouw, Wayne was kind enough to send a class DVD for us to watch and pictures of him and Elway. I could tell from the pictures that Elway had struck gold with a professional and considerate handler. I also received Christmas cards with pictures of Elway and his new family since not only did Elway have a great handler he had a wonderful new family.



Elway's Family

Almost two years later when it came time for my next pup, Vance, to graduate at GEB in March of this year I thought about the long postponed trip to visit Big E and emailed Wayne that we would be in the area and would love to visit. Wayne was very happy for us to visit and said he would accommodate us anyway he could.

On the day of our scheduled visit Wayne and his family drove over an hour to meet us at a very nice dog park close to where we were staying. We of course got there early and the wait seemed eternal, but when they drove up and that big yellow head came out the window I fell in love with Big E all over again. Elway was distracted by the other dogs in the park (go figure) and he ignored us. A few minutes later as Elway ran by Joe and me, he caught a whiff of us, spun around and was all over us, to my heart's joy.

We spent a couple of hours getting to know the Opdenbrouw family and reconnecting with Elway. Elway goes EVERYWHERE with Wayne and lives with his family when they are not working. Wayne says the kids prefer Elway's goodnight kisses to Mom's & Dad's, and are really disappointed when Elway is out on a fire call at bedtime.

I left Connecticut feeling really happy for Elway and thinking letting him go was one of my best decisions.

Mary Austin Visits The Indian Trail Lion's Club with Ogden



IN LOVING MEMORY

Kirstie
6/15/09 - 2/17/10

Kirstie, raised by Karen and Gordon Carey, lived a short life, but was very loved while she was here. Kirstie's vet sponsor was Ard Vista Animal Hospital in Winston Salem. The Carey's were her food sponsors.

Elfi
9/24/98 – 2/9/10

Elfie, raised by Kay and Glenn Jackson has passed away. Elfi was a detection dog for ATF. Handler Jerry Wainright notified GEB that Elfie has died. His e-mail also stated "She was a GREAT dog and will be missed.

I can't tell you how much I enjoyed her and the whole ATF experience. She not only made me a better investigator but also added so much to the public relations and education of others as well, thank you for everything". Elfi's vet sponsor was Swift Creek Animal Hospital, and his food sponsors were Art and Mary Lockwood.

Slater
6/30/97 – 1/24/10

Lori Sullivan, Puppy Raiser, provided the following story about Slater.

"Twelve years ago, Slater came into my life at 7 1/2 weeks old. As a puppy, Slater disliked being hugged but he showed affection by stuffing a tennis ball up against my ear. Apparently, jamming this toy at me was his way of saying I love you Mom. Throughout his life no one ever shied away from Slater even at the end when he showed signs of age. Even the little children in the neighborhood gave him hugs and called him Grandpa. As a Puppy Raiser, I am blessed Slater came back to me for retirement and for the bond he had with our kids, and especially my husband Kevin who loved him dearly.

During Slater's years as a Guide I was blessed by the consideration his person, Deborah Groeber, offered to me as her Puppy Raiser. Deborah made sure I got to see Slater every year since he graduated. When I would meet Slater's airplane at the gate, he would come bouncing off the jet way, snoopy dancing and somersaulting-his unique way of showing recognition and happiness. Deborah graciously explained to bystanders about Slater's journey from Puppy Raiser to graduate. Slater visited on special occasions that included wedding dress shopping. Slater sat with paws crossed sitting in the dressing room watching all the excitement. Slater was in my wedding, and even closed on my house with me. I was one lucky Puppy Raiser.

During the visit prior to Slater retiring, Deborah was given our son's bedroom and the boys camped out on the living room floor. Slater must have known with his innate wisdom he was going to live with us. He came downstairs once Deborah was asleep and selected our son, Ian, as his future person, by sleeping next to him the entire night.

Our family is so grateful to Deborah for choosing us for Slater's remaining years. We felt a mix of intense compassion and sorrow for Deborah having to give Slater up. I was very proud of her strength to do what was best for her navigational needs and Slater's comfort and medical needs.

Slater came in and got comfortable taking a snooze by my left side. Deborah chose to leave while Slater was asleep, certainly an easier way for her to depart from this extraordinarily painful moment and perhaps better for him as well. Slater was given endless love and attention by our son's Brian and Ian. Slater disregarded our other GEB career changed dog, London's need to always be number one. Slater was not intimidated as he drop toys on London's face. London tried to ignore Slater but the need to play always prevailed. Slater ran victory laps around our sofa and preferred to take the heads off his toys. Slater would also come over to you and roll his tongue out on your leg-leaving it there while looking up at you. We called this "the tongue thing". He was one strange dog!

Everyone noticed Slater adored our son, Ian, as his favorite being. However Slater liked to block my husband from stairs and area's he perceived as needing his Guide Dog expertise. My husband never expected these moves and was often abruptly halted without noticed. We found it amusing. Slater found it necessary to still be connected to his work. I lined up businesses that allowed Slater in to wean him off his need to be on the go.

Over the next four years, our family looked like the traveling clown car packed with 2 adults, 2 or more teen age boys, 2 full size Labradors, racing bikes, major cycling equipment, and more to events. Our sons raced, and London and Slater loved to watch those 2 wheel things. We felt privileged that both dogs were invited everywhere with their

GEB reinforced manners. Even as trained as he was, Slater always entered a room like he was cannon balling into a pool. Slater could care less who was watching with his notable sense of confidence and calculated decision making. Folks always marveled over his Guide Dog resume. I always was in awe that he was my boy.

Slater was quite the Guide Dog living in the Czech Republic, hanging out in the bar while his person skied in Aspen, and most honorably on assignment at the White House as Deborah was a President Clinton appointee.

However, near the end I was congratulated for making a marshmallow out of Slater. Every night, *my husband especially thanked me for this one*; Slater insisted I sit with him on the floor at the foot of our bed before tucking in for the night. If you got into bed he would stare at you until you broke so it was easier to do it his way, a move I have no regrets over. Slater would lay on my left with his head over my knee then roll on his side letting out a sigh as I rubbed his back and sweet ears. He finalized this nightly routine by rolling on his back and sleeping with his feet in the air.

One terrible Sunday night my boy laid his head over my knee and it was clear the end was near. I was just released from the hospital from surgery, I was immobile, plus we did not want to move this very uncomfortable dog. I held Slater and thanked him for being my dog telling him how wonderfully he changed my life as he passed.

Our deepest appreciation to Dr. Brenda Yercheck, our angel, who climbed out of her bed with the flu to help our boy in his final moments at our home. Brenda and Richard Yercheck were puppy raisers and offered valuable assistance to GEB and Slater over the years. Importantly, Brenda's amazing care shows how the bond of raisers never ends even after 12 years.

My sincere appreciation to Sherry Dodson for accepting me into the GEB program with all her mentoring and gentle training which still serves me well today, and to Jane, for assigning a power ball of a dog which made my life difficult and exceedingly remarkable.

To all the Puppy Raisers who helped with Slater;
especially Elizabeth Oliverio, Mary Jane Gibbons, Marie and Gary O'Neil.
My sincere gratitude for your assistance, memorable company and laughs."



Slater Sullivan
Born June 1997
Passed January 2010

EVALUATION SCHEDULE

FRIDAY, April 30, SATURDAY, May 1, 2010

Pittsboro Baptist Church, 121 West Salisbury Street, Pittsboro, NC 27312

Friday 4/30	PUPPY	RAISER
2:15 PM	Simba w/Jane	Cucurullo
2:15 PM	Abigail w/Lee	Foote
3:00 PM	Bangle w/Lee	Alsmeyer
3:00 PM	Harper w/Jane **	Piron
4:00 PM	Briana w/Jane	Gilleland
4:45 PM	Ogden w/ Lee	Haynes
5:45 PM	Class for TEAM	
SATURDAY 5/1/10		
9:00 AM	Denton w/Jane **	Harmeson
9:00 AM	Alise w/Lee **	Shamblin
10:00 AM	Kayla w/ Jane	Flinchum
10:00 AM	Timmy w/ Lee	Meyer
11:00 AM	Nigel w/ Jane	Waddell
11:00 AM	Octavian w/ Lee	Coney
12:00 NOON	General Meeting	
1:00 PM	Amigo w/ Jane	Overcash
1:00PM	Barb w/ Lee	Bennett/Austin (sitter)
2:00 PM	Jamaica **	Baur
3:00 PM	? Class for TEAM	For 45 min ONLY

**** Beside Pup's name and Raiser's name indicates need for photograph Saturday morning or with someone on Friday. Please let Sherry know if you can't make it on Saturday if you need a photo.**

PLEASE REMEMBER to bring your evaluation DVDs

Raisers, please be a little early for your evaluation as we may be running ahead of schedule. Thanks!

DIRECTIONS to the EVALUATION

**Pittsboro Baptist Church
121 West Salisbury Street
Pittsboro, NC 27312**

Driving Directions to Pittsboro Baptist Church for the Spring Evaluation:

From Raleigh

Take 64 West across Jordan Lake and continue on 64 until you reach the 15/501 exit (Exit #383 – this is the exit after the 64 Business/Pittsboro exit). Turn left at the top of the exit ramp.

****** Travel about 2 miles into Pittsboro to the first traffic light.

Turn right at the light onto West Salisbury Street and go one block (note: the street sign for Salisbury street is a small white one on the far left corner. It is not easy to see but it is the first, and only, traffic light). The church is on the left at the next corner. Parking is across the street. The Fellowship Hall is on the ground floor on the far right of the church complex. The entrance is off the small parking lot to the side.

From Chapel Hill/Durham

Follow 15/501, cross over 64, and follow the ****** directions above.

From Siler City and West

Take 64 to the 15/501 exit (this is the exit after the Burlington/Spring Lake exit). Turn right at the top of the exit ramp and follow the ****** directions above.

UPCOMING EVENTS: 2010

April 30-May 1, 2010

Evaluation, Pittsboro, NC
Pittsboro Baptist Church

July 30-31, 2010

Evaluation, Raleigh, NC
Raleigh Church of Christ

November 5-6, 2010

Evaluation (Location to be confirmed)

MISSION STATEMENT

Guiding Eyes for the Blind is dedicated to enriching the lives of blind and visually impaired men and women by providing them with the freedom to travel safely, thereby assuring greater independence, dignity and new horizons of opportunity.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Guiding Eyes for the Blind

North Carolina Puppy Raising Program

P.O. Box 214, Pittsboro, NC 27312

Raleigh Area: Sharon Cooke 919.677.8365

Charlotte Area: Julie Haynes 704.821.6521

Area Coordinator: Sherry Dodson 919.642.0185

WEBSITES: www.guidingeyes.org

www.guidingeyesnc.org



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P.O Box 214

Pittsboro, NC 27312