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Puppy Prints



North Carolina Puppy Raising Program Newsletter

Summer 2005

Meet the NCPRP's Newest Puppies!

Diego, a black male lab, is being raised through his puppy months by Wendy and Jim Bierwirth of Raleigh, NC. This is the Bierwirth's 6th puppy. Diego's vet sponsor is Oberlin Animal Hospital of Raleigh and the Bierwriths are his food sponsors.

Dominique, a black female lab, is being raised by Kristen Shamblin of Knightdale, NC. Dominique is Kristen's 3rd puppy. Dominique's vet sponsor is Neuse River Veterinary Hospital and her food sponsor is Diversified Systems, Inc. of Raleigh, NC. Kristen provided the following about Dominique:

Dominique is a playful, energetic puppy who loves everyone she encounters. She manages to have fun wherever she goes. Recently, at her vet's office, Dominique entertained the staff by chasing her shadow all around their shiny floor. She eats with a vengeance, dancing around her bowl and wagging her tail while she inhales her meager (in her opinion) rations. She is quite a treat!



Dominique



Elaine

Elaine, a black female lab, is being raised by first-time raiser Jane Vignovic of Cary, NC. Elaine's vet sponsor is Mayfair Animal Hospital and her food sponsor is Jane. Jane provided the following about Elaine:

When she is hot, Elaine lives for digging the water out of her bowl and laying in it. I am working on it, but it is hard to get upset, because she looks so satisfied laying there. If there is water around, she will find it! She is growing like a weed. I got her when she was 9.8 pounds, and now she is pushing twenty 5 weeks later. Granted, everyone keeps reminding me it is all perspective, because she really is a little peanut compared to most. She has the most expressive eyes, and they can make a person melt. Most of my family members are not "animal people", but they came for a visit one weekend, and she had them won over in minutes. When they left, they spent more time saying goodbye to her than they did to me.

Oreo, a black female lab, is being raised by Rick & Glynis Tanner of Carrboro, NC. Oreo is the Tanner's 4th puppy. Oreo's vet sponsor is Timberlyne Animal Hospital of Chapel Hill, NC and her food sponsors are the Tanners. Glynis provided the following about Oreo:

Oreo is an especially bright girl who is sassy and sweet. She specializes in the "who me?" look. So far she seems pretty fearless and eager to try anything, including walking over grates and climbing on construction equipment. We

are beginning to wonder which of our previous GEB dogs she might be channeling: Badger, Unix, or Jordan. Does this question ever come up in the minds of other raisers?

O'Shea is a black male lab and is being raised by Brenda & Jerry Quesenberry of Franklin, VA. O'Shea is the Quesenberry's 9th puppy. O'Shea's vet sponsor is Southampton Veterinary Clinic and his food sponsors are the Quesenberrys.



Oreo



Pancho & Maria Cucurullo

Pancho, a male yellow lab, is being raised by 1st time raisers Irene & Maria Cucurullo of Raleigh, NC. Pancho is the son of Unix, who was raised by Rick & Glynis Tanner. Pancho's vet sponsor is Bayleaf Veterinary Hospital of Raleigh and the Cucurollos are his food sponsors. Maria provided the following about Pancho:

Pancho is laid back but he can easily be distracted by other dogs. He has had the opportunity to travel around to many other puppy raisers. After we finished our training, Pancho was 14 weeks old when he became apart of our family. Pancho enjoys meeting and playing with different puppies at his classes we attend. When we are not at class, Pancho loves to go for walks and play with our two other dogs. Pancho also likes to go for car rides and exploring new places and things.

Maya, a female black lab and her puppy raisers, Peter & Laura McNamara, have recently moved to Charlotte.

Urlika, a female lab/shepherd mix and her puppy raiser, Kristen Wiltse, have recently moved to Concord, NC. Urllika is 7 months old.

Where are they now?

Belinda, a female German Shepherd raised by Brenda & Jerry Quesenberry of Franklin, VA, did not pass her in-for-training test and will soon join her new adopted home. Belinda's vet sponsor was Southampton Veterinary Clinic and her food sponsors were the Quesenberry's.

Gaston, a yellow male lab raised by the Danny Overcash, was recently released from his duties as a Guide Dog due to elimination on walks. Gaston will soon join his new adopted home. Gaston's vet sponsor was Lakewood Veterinary Clinic and his food sponsors were the Overcash's.

Jordan, a black male lab raised by Glynis & Rick Tanner of Carrboro, NC, passed his in-for-training test and is currently in training at GEB. Jordan's vet sponsor was Timberlyne Animal Hospital of Chapel Hill and his food sponsor was the Tanner family.

Kristoff, a black male lab raised by the Stoddart family, was recently released from training due to lack of confidence. Kristoff has re-joined the Stoddart household. Kristoff's vet sponsors were Academy East Veterinary Clinic of Fuquay Varina and Lake Hickory Veterinary Hospital of Granite Falls, NC. His food sponsor was the Stoddart family.

Maisey, a black female lab raised by Kathie Rysanek of Raleigh, NC, has started her guide dog training with the Canadian Guide Dog School. Maisey's vet sponsor was Six Forks Animal Hospital and her food sponsors were Kathie and Bill Rysanek.

Opal, a black female lab raised by the Anderson family of Apex, NC passed her in-for-training test in July! Opal's vet sponsor was and her food sponsor was the Anderson family. Opal's vet sponsor was Apex Veterinary Hospital and her food sponsor was the Anderson Family.

Othello, a black male lab raised initially by Karissa Davan of Raleigh, NC and later by Donovan Leonard of Raleigh, NC, being evaluated for detection work by Jerry Webster who did the arson demonstration at the last evaluation! Othello's vet sponsor was Swift Creek Animal Hospital and his food sponsor was Karissa Davan.

Rainbow, a female black lab raised by Kay and Glenn Jackson of Raleigh, NC, was recently released from GEB due to lack of confidence and will soon join her new adopted home. Rainbow's vet sponsor was Swift Creek Animal Hospital and her food sponsor was the Jackson family.

Rhodi, a female Golden Retriever raised by Jackie & Bob Schmidt of Oriental, NC, recently graduated as a guide dog from the Seeing Eye. Rhodi's vet sponsor was Oriental Village Veterinary Hospital and her food sponsor was the Schmidt family.

Vanilla, a yellow female lab raised by Kristen Shamblin of Knightdale, NC, recently pass her in-for-training test with flying colors. Vanilla was released from GEB due to a nail bed infection, but she has started training with the Canadian Guide Dog School. Vanilla's vet sponsor was Neuse River Veterinary Hospital and her food sponsor was Diversified Systems, Inc. of Raleigh, NC.

In Loving Memory

GEB Friday

January 1996 - March 2005

GEB Friday, a male lab raised by Zhenya LaMotte and the LaMotte family, recently passed away. GEB Friday was a faithful guide dog. Friday's vet sponsor was Oberlin Road Animal Hospital and his food sponsor was the LaMotte family.

GEB Pierce

October 18, 1993 - April 27, 2005

GEB Pierce, a male lab raised by Drs. Mike & Mary Hitchcock, recently passed away. Pierce was a faithful guide dog. Pierce's vet sponsor was Academy Animal Hospital of Durham and the Hitchcock's were his food sponsors.

The Story of Pierce, a Recently Retired Guide Dog

By Mary Hitchcock and Janet Marcous

Mary ~ Pierce entered our lives at Raleigh-Durham Airport on December 11th, 1993, flying in from the breeding center of Guiding Eyes for the Blind (GEB) in NY. Although only eight weeks old, this wonderful black Labrador was undaunted by his flight, disembarking with a bound. As enthusiastic puppy raisers for the NCPRP, Pierce was our second puppy. Our first pup, Livingston, left for NY just a few days before to be trained as a guide dog.

The role of the puppy raiser is to love and nurture the dog, to teach them good manners, provide socialization and as they get older, expose them to some of the situations they may encounter as guide dogs. Within a few days of Pierce settling into our home, we knew we had a very special puppy. He quickly gained the nickname "tremendous child." His unique intuition made him an amazing companion, and a fast learner. Pierce excelled. His great sense of humor and love of socks, and the game keep-away shone through early.

Pierce was my constant companion, accompanying me to the veterinary practices I was working in. He attended the NC Small Animal Academy meetings with me, and the NCVMA when it was still held at the vet school (he sensibly slept through most of the lectures). Two newspaper articles were written about him and GEB, and Pierce was honored as a "Wonder Dog" on a WRAL television feature. He was handsome, kind, gentle and smart. Even before formal training, he was a terrific "spokesdog" for GEB.

We were very fortunate to have Pierce in our lives at that time. We were starting many years of assisted fertility and Pierce comforted us through that emotional rollercoaster time. He seemed to sense each drop in hope, and build us right back up again with unconditional, perceptive support.



Janet Marcous & GEB Pierce

When it was time for Pierce to return to NY we were sad. We also felt tranquility knowing Pierce was going to do something he would love, and that he had all the special qualities necessary for success. We had no doubt that Pierce would qualify in the guide dog training program. While our friends and family were having babies, we had raised our "tremendous child." He was already accepted into a fine school, and was soon to start his career.

Janet, Pierce's second and more long-term visually challenged human companion, kindly provided the following account of Pierce's time with her. Most of this coincided with the *Boston Globe* newspaper article.

When Pierce came to me, I had already worked with three guide dogs over the past several years, so was quite experienced as a handler. I recall my first words when I saw Pierce - 'oh my, he is big!' Indeed, a gorgeous large black lab, larger than any I had before. It took me some time getting used to his size, however, it took almost no time for us to bond and get used to one another. On the first day of his arrival into my life, we did not begin work. It was a day to get to know one another and sort of hang out. I can vividly recall how Pierce would lie down with his front paws crossed over, looking elegantly as if waiting for his afternoon tea. A true gentleman, his nature touched everyone he met, he radiated a sense of serenity. He brought joy into our lives every single morning when he would awake with a happy wag and kisses. I never felt such a sense of safety and security with any other guide. Pierce was my "other half." We worked together in every imaginable situation for almost seven years. He was my faithful companion, always with me, he loved to put his huge paws on my foot when resting, and would take his head and hang it on my foot that was in mid-air when my legs were crossed. He would do this when we were on the subway, very relaxed, the two of us like dust balls in a rug. We traveled into the city using commuter rails, subways and buses, flew several times, and we camped. He loved camping because we would all sleep on the same level together. Picture this scene: Our tent was set up with the air mattresses and sleeping bags ready for occupation. Beside me was Pierce's "spot" - his own mat. Once the evening came, and the fire was started, Pierce always wanted to head into the tent first - while we lounged around the fire. We found out why he liked to head into the sack before us - he got to sleep on the air mattresses inside our sleeping bags!

Pierce was the most exquisite of all my guide dogs. His intelligence and ability to determine the safest routes were amazing. If we went some place for the very first time, he remembered where it was. The next time, no matter how much time had passed, he knew where to go. We were a team, just like an expert dance duo - we moved together through all kinds of terrain, obstacles and people without a problem. So, it was such a shock when I learned that Pierce had glaucoma, and had already lost vision in one eye. He had never shown any signs of having a vision problem. The day we were told that he could no longer work we had already traveled into Boston (from Gloucester) attended a meeting, went to the State House to lobby on behalf of a program I had co-founded, took the subway into another city, done errands, then taken the commuter-rail back to Gloucester. When we arrived at home, the telephone was ringing. Pierce still had his harness on while I was being told by the GEB vet, that indeed he did have glaucoma and that he had to be retired immediately. My beloved Pierce and I were no longer to be a team, and I felt the sense of loss so deeply, I could not imagine myself going anywhere without him ever again. His glaucoma was progressing rapidly, and as much as we tried to reduce his pressure with drops and regular eye checks, the more diseased eye had to be surgically removed. When he came back after his recuperation, he still had the grand spirit as always. Once he settled down, and both he and I were on the floor, he just let himself fall asleep in my arms - needless to say, I cried. His other eye was in need of constant care, as the pressure in that one mounted too. The stress of being a blind person with a guide becoming blind as well was enormous. After much thinking and talking it became clear that I would not be able to care for him while trying to work with a new guide dog. But before I was willing to give him up, I called Mary (we had stayed in touch over the years) and asked her if she would take him back. When she said "of course," I was able to let him go with tears, but not with fear.

Mary ~ Resuming this story from North Carolina, I always had a feeling in my heart that Pierce would come home. We didn't hesitate to offer him a loving place for retirement. We were sad that the reason he was returning to us was his impending blindness, and that his guiding career had been cut short. Pierce had wonderful years guiding in Boston before his return to NC. He had one already blind eye enucleated, minimal vision in the second, and early kidney disease. I had an irrational moment of foreboding that destiny may be bringing him home to help us through some unknown difficult time ahead of us - as he had once before. A dear friend and dog-person, Liz, said 'No Mary. He's coming home because it's your turn to take care of him.'

When I went to pick Pierce up I was very apprehensive. Would he remember me? What did he look like? How much had his personality changed? He was happy to come with me and seemed to realize that I was someone who cared a great deal for him, especially when it came time to apply the multiple eye medications, but I did not have a sense that he recognized me as his 'first mom.' En route, we stayed in a hotel in Richmond, VA. I was awed when we would walk together on sidewalks and felt his skill as a guide. The next morning I woke up to a very playful face containing my sock in his mouth. I knew he recognized me then.

When we returned home, Pierce had a wonderful reunion with Kiwi, the Chesapeake Bay Retriever he helped us raise. I guess the smell of a brother stays imprinted permanently in the brain of a dog. Pierce made the transition back to our household seem effortless. He had about 6 weeks of fading sight in his remaining eyes, before Dr. Mark Nasisse had to surgically relieve the pain of glaucoma that was no longer controlled by the medications. In that time, Pierce became familiar with our home in Yadkinville and also in Beaufort, NC. He became a wonderful companion for our 4-yr old twins. He gives our son a sense of accomplishment by showing he trusts Will to lead him and he gives our daughter Katie a warm, loving body to snuggle up to. His life of service and companionship continues.

Pierce had adapted amazingly to being blind. We are humbled that Pierce would trust us in leading him. He's happy to receive as well as to have given. On a retractable leash he romps and plays and has learned to stop quickly when I yell 'tree!' or adjust his balance when I say 'down hill.' He has his favorite field to sniff around and keeps other

dogs in their place when necessary. Best of all he's quick to find the sock that falls from the clothes dryer onto the floor, and play keep-away. He know's what's important.

Janet's comments in closing: Pierce belongs to the Hall of Fame for the service he provided me as a guide, for the hopefulness he produces in others, for his perseverance in adversity, for the love he gives to everyone, an da most special presence that comforts others. I love him dearly and always will. Knowing he is so well and happy with Mary makes this an amazing circle of life with our shared companion.

Congratulations to Patricia Neve!!

Patricia Neve gave an oral presentation at 4-H District Activity Day on June 30th in Nash County. She won first place in her age division for her speech entitled "Lucas, Our Family's Service Project". She went on to compete at the State level on July 19th in Raleigh and won 1st place again. Congratulations Patricia!

You are Invited to the Annual NCPRP Potluck Social!!!!

When: Saturday, August 6, 2005, 12:30-1:30

Where: Raleigh Church of Christ (directions below)

What: Baked or Fried Chicken and drinks will be provided. For those located in the Triangle area, please bring a side dish to share. For those traveling from Charlotte or the coast, please bring a dessert.

Who: All raisers, sitters, sponsors, friends, families and anyone interested in GEB!

DIRECTIONS to Raleigh Church of Christ for Evaluation:

From I-440:

- Take exit 1C, Jones Franklin Rd and drive North approximately 0.35 miles
- Turn Left onto Barringer Rd and the church building will be on the Right about 0.11 miles

ATTENTION ALL PUPPY RAISERS:

Please bring an accurate reading of your puppy's weight to the next evaluation and don't forget to fill out a Quarterly Evaluation Report (www.guidingeyesbcweb.org)!



Puppy raiser Carrie Barnett introducing GEB Lenny to a Storm Trooper at the opening of Star Wars

EVALUATION SCHEDULE, Raleigh Church of Christ

Friday, August 5th

	Team 1		Team 2	
	Puppy	Raiser	Puppy	Raiser
1:00 PM	Newton	Cooke	Lucas	Neve
1:45 PM	Rocky	Bennett	Benny	Geiner
2:15 PM	Pancho *	Cucurullo	Elaine*	Vignovic
3:15 PM	Dominique *	Shamblin	Sherman	Haynes
3:45 PM			Lacy *	Anderson
4:30 PM	Wisdom	Echols		
5:00 PM	Class for Assistants			

Saturday August 6th

	Team 1		Team 2	
	Puppy	Raiser	Puppy	Raiser
8:00 AM	Diego *	Bierwirth	<i>New Pup *</i>	<i>Smith</i>
9:00 AM	Lenny	Barnett	BJ	Rosenthal
9:30 AM	Oreo *	Tanner	Dustin	Spain
10:15 AM			Roxy	Piron
10:30 AM	Cora *	Inger		
11:00 AM	O'Shea *	Quesenberry	Ogden	Schmidt
11:30 AM			Maya *	McNamara
12:00 PM	Ralph	Overcash	Ulrica *	Wiltse
12:30 PM	<i>GENERAL MEETING & POTLUCK SOCIAL!</i>			
1:45 PM	CLASS for Raiser Group #1			
	Rosenthal	Inger	Quesenberry	Wiltse
	McNamara	Overcash	Spain	Bennett
2:30 PM	CLASS for Raiser Group # 2			
	Cooke	Neve	Schmidt	Bierwirth
	Cucurullo	Geiner	Piron	
3:15 PM	Class for Raiser Group #3			
	Tanner	Barnett	Vignovic	Smith
	Anderson			

** Beside Pup's name and Raiser's name indicates need for photograph by Rick Tanner after 10:30AM on Saturday.*

UPCOMING EVENTS - 2005

August 5-6, 2005

Raleigh Church of Christ, Raleigh, NC

November 11-12, 2005

Prince of Peace Episcopal Church, Apex, NC

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 37202, Raleigh, NC 27627

Raleigh Area: Sharon Cooke 919.677.8365

Charlotte Area: Julie Haynes 704.821.6521

Western Area: Mary Jane Gibbons 828.926.3501

Area Coordinators: Sherry&Don Dodson 919.642.0185

WEBSITES: www.guidingeyes.org

www.guidingeyesnc.org

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P.O Box 37202

Raleigh, NC 27627