



Recall for Training Phase Descriptions

The Balanced Education System of Training Guide Dogs™ (BEST Guide Dogs™)

Formal Guidework Training Phases

In an effort to keep raisers and leaders informed about the progress of dogs in formal training, Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) provides weekly reports to each puppy raising club that tells the training phase of each dog. There are currently eight phases of training.

Descriptions of activities included in each phase are attached. Puppy raisers can track the dog they raised by the phase number and then refer to the matching phase narrative to better understand GDB's training process and their individual dog's role in it.

Guide Dog training is a systematic and often seamless process; each dog is treated as an individual and progresses at its own pace from one phase to the other as skills are learned.

Phases generally last a week or so, depending on the individual dog. At times, it may seem like some dogs advance quickly through phases and others linger. Neither situation necessarily indicates success or failure in the program. If a dog remains in a certain phase longer than average, it may mean that the dog is working on proficiency in one area, or training or veterinary staff are investigating potential chronic behavioral or health issues. Raisers ought not to feel discouraged if progress seems slow. Likewise, puppy raisers are advised to refrain from becoming too eager if progress seems quick.

Raisers are cautioned against plotting out on a calendar an anticipated graduation date. Once a dog begins formal training, it can last two to four months, and some dogs may be at GDB longer. If a dog stays a long time in training, raisers ought not to be discouraged. GDB's training model allows Guide Dog Mobility Instructors (GDMLs) to spend comprehensive, one-on-one time, every day, developing each dog. Extra time spent in training likely means that GDB training staff like the dog very much and they are doing their best to give the dog all the love, care, and training that it needs to become a Guide Dog prospect.

In some ways, today's Guide Dog needs to be "*Super Dog*." In the last few decades, the world has become an increasingly more demanding environment for Guide Dogs. Cars are potentially more dangerous (faster and quieter); noise has increased (construction equipment, concerts, movie theaters); intersections are varied with different designs of intersecting paths, slopes, and angles. Take a walk on a busy city street and study it from the perspective of a Guide Dog needing to travel it safely, calmly and confidently. Quite amazing, isn't it?

At times, dogs that may have been ideal guides in the more slowly-paced, straightforward world of yesteryear might be career changed today. GDB believes that we are breeding better dogs, have high screening standards for both health and temperament, and raisers and instructors are working harder than ever to prepare each dog... all in an attempt to keep up with a world that seems to be getting more complex.

In the following phase descriptions, GDB shares training exercises and verbal cues that are not taught in the raiser homes. The success of our program depends on all raisers' support. It is important for puppy raisers to refrain from using these words and teaching these exercises in their homes. Raisers who attempt to give their dogs "a head start" by teaching the guidework discussed in this package may, in fact, negatively impact the dog's potential to become a guide. Raisers are expected to *only* teach the behaviors outlined in the GDB Guide Dog Puppy Raising Manual.

Upon recall, puppy raisers are informed if their mature puppy will be evaluated for breeding. If so, these dogs will not show up on the weekly phase reports. The breeding evaluation process can take up to two months (or longer, depending on the circumstances). Any dogs on the BRD EVL list that have mild health or temperament issues that preclude them from being breeding stock, may still be eligible for training; if so, they are then neutered or spayed and prepared for a training string.

Dogs that are released from the program for temperament, behavioral, work or health reasons are referred to as "career change" dogs. Many dogs that are placed as pets go on to do activities such as agility, tracking, or pet therapy with their adoptive families. Additionally, there are many different formal career paths open to these dogs than ever before! Some dogs go on to do search and rescue work, support law enforcement, help people with diabetes or hearing deficits, and others are taught to alert for cancer. Other dogs are placed as K9 Buddy dogs for blind or vision-impaired young people not yet ready to work with a Guide Dog.

GDB facilitates the aforementioned strategic placements of career change dogs as well as placement into loving, caring adoptive pet homes. Dogs can be career changed for many factors not in a raiser's control. A raiser's success is measured by the amount of love, effort, and time spent with their puppy, not whether the pup becomes guide or not.

At the end of this packet, there is information that discusses the options related to career change dogs.

GDB is a successful organization due in large part to our raisers. Raisers teach basic, yet crucial, aspects that are the foundation for a compatible Guide Dog. Mature puppies come into formal training reliable in the home, relieving on command, responsive to obedience verbal cues, are socialized and comfortable in the environment, and loving and trusting of people. Raisers are commended for their valuable contributions to GDB's mission!

Phase Zero: Arrival Period

Before formal training begins, the new dog is introduced to the GDB kennels, campus walks and the formal training program.

Health Screening and Kennel Socialization

During this important transitional period, each dog receives a preliminary physical exam, performed by a Canine Welfare Technician (CWT). The CWT thoroughly inspects each dog from head to tail and checks the nose, teeth, eyes, ears, coat, skin and feet. Any ailments, abnormalities or concerns are noted and brought to the attention of GDB's veterinary staff. Most dogs that enter training are in excellent condition, although some may require medication for minor ailments such as an ear or eye infections.

During the first week on campus, dogs receive the following:

- ✓ Hip X-rays
- ✓ A formal in-for-training physical by a GDB veterinarian
- ✓ An eye exam by a veterinary ophthalmology specialist
- ✓ An accurate weight

During the veterinary physical examination, each dog also receives vaccines for:

- ✓ Distemper Adenovirus
- ✓ Parvovirus
- ✓ Parainfluenza
- ✓ Bordatella
- ✓ Rabies

Once physical examinations are finished, each dog is formally assigned to a group of dogs (called a "string") and a specific training kennel. Instructors train four dogs at a time, which enables them to get the dogs out approximately twice a day, every day. A string can range from 8 to 20 dogs, depending on the campus, staffing capabilities and overall class matching needs.

During this introductory period, each dog's personality and manageability are evaluated to help prepare instructors in how to motivate and teach each dog most effectively.

Phase Zero normally coincides with the team of instructors returning from a session in class followed by visits to clients in their home areas. Prior to the team's return, CWTs, float instructor staff, and qualified volunteers care for the new dogs helping them adapt to the kennel environment in an engaging and positive manner. Dogs are initially put into a kennel by themselves, which is conducive to cuddling and ice cube enrichment. Once X-rays and physicals are done, dogs are often paired ("doubled") together in a kennel.

Week Zero Activities

- ✓ Walks on campus and playtime in an enclosed grass paddock
- ✓ Doubling kennelmates that play well together
- ✓ Daily grooming
- ✓ Medication administration, as needed
- ✓ Human and dog interactive play or cuddle sessions
- ✓ Introduction to community run playtime
- ✓ Kennel enrichment activities

Kennel enrichment is anything that stimulates the senses and puts the dogs at ease in a kennel environment. The primary focus of the CWTs is to care for and provide kennel enrichment for the dogs. Some enrichment activities take place daily for every dog, other activities are done intermittently, and others still are targeted towards specific dogs (for example, dogs that are slow to adjust to kennel life; boarding or retired guides; career change dogs, and breeding stock dogs waiting for homes). Kennel

enrichment activities are continuously evolving and the CWT staff is always coming up with ways to entertain and stimulate the dogs. Enrichment activities are many, including:

- ✓ Bones and chewable toys; food stuffed Kongs and ice cubes
- ✓ Hanging toys with or without food in them
- ✓ Plush and squeaky toys – closely monitored (not recommended for raisers or clients)
- ✓ Interactive toys (rings, etc.)
- ✓ Baby pools filled with water or a toy and/or playground equipment
- ✓ Scents: vanilla, peppermint, anise, lemon, almond, etc sprayed in the kennel
- ✓ Bubbles, mirrors, wind catchers, sound machines, music
- ✓ T-Touch, Pilates, massage and Reiki
- ✓ Behavior training for dogs that need additional socialization, or for career change dogs or breeder dogs awaiting placement.
- ✓ Exercise: walks, treadmill, enclosed grass paddocks
- ✓ Cuddle time

Training Department staff carefully observes each new string of dogs to make sure that each dog makes as smooth an adjustment to the kennels as possible.

Selected dogs may receive any additional attention in the following areas as needed:

- ✓ Agility programs
- ✓ Extra play sessions in community run
- ✓ Frequent walks on campus
- ✓ Consistent, supervised time in the Training Department office
- ✓ Nights spent supervised in the dormitory
- ✓ Any specialized programs specific to the needs of that dog (vet care, extra time in the office, etc.)

PHASE 1: Formal Training Begins – On Campus and In Town

Food Reward and Clicker Techniques

Food rewards are used in the GDB training program as a powerful motivation and reinforcement tool for learning and maintaining desired behavior.

Clicker training is the popular term to describe a training method that uses operant conditioning -- the animal intentionally performs a behavior in order to gain a desired reward. GDB uses clicker training as a tool for teaching various aspects of guidework and obedience responses. The clicker serves as a “marker” for the exact behavior the trainer would like to see the dog perform and repeat (e.g. targeting a curb, stair, escalator, elevator, crosswalk button, seat, etc.). It is a positive reinforcement-based system that associates high value rewards (food) with desired behaviors. The use of the clicker in guidework training encourages the dog to be an active participant in the learning process.

Enjoyable consequences (“rewards”) and the entire reward process is called “reinforcement.” Clicker trained dogs will actively try to learn new behaviors and will remember those behaviors years later. Clicker trained behaviors are performed by the dog with confidence and enthusiasm because the dog plays an active role and has control over when it receives rewards. They are enthusiastic because they understand that their performance will be rewarded with something very pleasurable.

With these training techniques, dogs in training demonstrate higher levels of confidence in the work, and clients experience quick and encouraging results with food use as a supplement to praise.

NOTE: Unless otherwise indicated, puppy raisers do not use the clicker with their puppies. This allows dog to enter training with a ‘clean slate’ regarding clicker associations.

Obedience Responses and Teaching Focus around Distractions

In order to both successfully teach guidework and for the client to easily manage their guide, collar response is important. Collar response means that a dog readily follows or yields to even slight tension on the collar. For example, it is a useful tool that allows the instructor to physically cue the dog from its following position to move left or right in guidework. Alternatively, it discourages a guide from pulling in the collar on leash with a client.

Formal Obedience:

The verbal cues “sit,” “down,” “heel” (both moving and stationary), and “stay” are introduced as precise positions in relation to the handler. Precision is important so the dog does not interfere with or disorient the client. The “come” recall is practiced on leash in a variety of areas and off leash in enclosed areas,

Focus is taught before and during basic obedience work. Distractions are used to teach focus and concentration toward the job. Distractions may include: other dogs, food, overly friendly people, scents, and balls. Any dog that demonstrates below average ability to progress around distractions may receive additional attention in the following areas: different types of play sessions; higher value food reward to increase the dog’s motivation to work for the handler; extra time relaxing with their instructor to develop a closer relationship; extra abbreviated obedience sessions without distractions to improve collar response.

Dogs in training wear one of three standard collars: Martingale, chain slip or nylon slip collar.

Food Refusal Protocol

All dogs learn how to politely accept food rewards and how to refuse food in all other situations. This specialized food protocol training is designed to handle the delicate balance of using food as a motivator while ensuring that no negative behaviors develop around food. In addition, the dogs are taught how to avoid and refuse food on the ground or offered by others.

Socialization

Dogs are introduced to riding in the van crates prior to actual riding in the training vans. A configuration of crates, identical to those in the vans, is located in the kennel complex. All dogs are introduced to jumping in and out of this “mock” crate set before being put in an actual training van. Dogs then experience loading and unloading from crates in the van, riding comfortably and quietly, and waiting quietly in the van

for their turn at a training route. If a dog makes a slow adjustment to the van crates, they are given additional or specialized socialization programs for either fear or distraction.

Body Handling Acceptance

Dogs are exposed to comprehensive, hands-on body handling, which includes grooming, pilling, bathing, ear cleaning, teeth cleaning, feeding, and play sessions that are conducive to interaction with a vision-impaired handler (e.g. no excessive vocalization, no jumping up or running into a person). Any issues with body handling are evaluated and programs developed to improve issues are implemented as needed.

Introduction to the Harness

Dogs are given a calm introduction to being harnessed. They initially stand, then walk around in harness as well as wear it in relaxed settings. Dogs with above average sensitivity to wearing the harness are put on a socialization program to improve their response and comfort level while wearing the harness.

Treadmill Training

Treadmill work introduces the dogs to the biomechanics of pulling into the harness and how to maintain a lead. Dogs are introduced to the verbal cues of “forward,” “halt,” and “hopp-up” as they learn to pull with a straight body position. A comfortable gait and speed are identified for each dog. Most dogs adjust quickly to the treadmill through a systematic and careful introduction, food reward use and lots of support and praise. Training staff ensures the dogs are not only safe, but also enjoy their time on the treadmill. The introduction techniques are so successful that it’s common to see dogs trying to get on the treadmill whenever they walk past one!

Dogs receive two treadmill sessions before beginning harness workouts (pattern training) downtown with their instructors.

NOTE: Puppy raisers should never put pups on treadmills or escalators.

Pattern Training

Pattern Training is a method of introducing guidework behaviors to the young dog in a very positive manner. The instructor cues the correct guiding behavior to the dog, allowing the dog to complete the exercise without any mistakes. In this way the instructor keeps all guidework-related learning very upbeat for the dog. Obedience is used during guidework to regain attention on the work as needed. Once the dog is attentive, guidework pattern training resumes. Pattern training lasts for several sessions (approximately two weeks) and is gradually weaned off as the dog gains a better understanding of its responsibility. During pattern training, dogs are worked in a variety of environments, even challenging areas. However, advanced environments, such as heavy urban area with crowds, loud noise, etc., are avoided.

Dogs are introduced to the following guidework behaviors during patterning:

- ✓ Stopping at streets, regardless of the type of curb or wheelchair ramp
- ✓ Clearing for the handler on the right and left sides as well as above dog’s head
- ✓ Crossing streets on a line that efficiently reaches the up curb on the other side
- ✓ Maintaining consistent pace and drive with the verbal cue “forward”
- ✓ How to respond to the various uses of the ‘hopp-up’ verbal cue – resuming or increasing pace; moving closer to a stopping point; or for re-focus
- ✓ Stopping and standing calmly after the verbal cue “halt”
- ✓ Leading the handler in a 90 degree turn to the right and picking up the new travel line on “right”
- ✓ Leading the handler in a 90 degree turn to the left and picking up the new travel line on “left”

Up Curb Exercise # 1

Dogs are taught to target up curbs via clicker training and food reward by placing their front feet on the curb. The first up curb exercise is done on campus, and subsequent exercises are done on route.

Developing Physical Agility

Dog Agility Walk - Dogs are introduced to a low height agility obstacle in a controlled and measured way to promote confidence on unusual surfaces and develop coordination for stair and escalator work. This work teaches the dogs to carefully place their feet on the obstacles at slow speeds, which is very different from methods of teaching pet dog agility.

Back Up Chute - Dogs do not know how to naturally move backwards. Coordination training in how to physically back up is introduced at this time and continues for several weeks to prepare the dogs for future traffic avoidance training. In traffic avoidance, dogs are taught to speed up or stop, hold, and back up (if needed) in a straight line while facing the oncoming vehicle. The backup chute activity teaches dogs the mechanics of backing up in a very positive and fun way.

Obstacle Course - On campus obstacle courses are convenient opportunities for the dog to learn how to safely navigate past objects. The instructor patterns the dog to move past the obstacles with caution. Dogs are encouraged to walk slightly ahead of the instructor. Early on, the courses are designed so that new dogs do not need to stop on the course.

Phase 2: In Town and Responsible Lead

Obedience and Distraction Training

General collar responses and formal obedience responses continue to develop. More challenging distractions are introduced at a closer proximity, including: various dog breeds, food, solicitous people, and unusual scents.

The verbal cue “over here” is introduced. This cues the dog to move from heel position, behind the handler’s back, to the right side of the handler in order to walk safely through a door that opens to the left (hinge on left). This is also helpful when going through revolving doors and store turnstiles.

Body Handling Acceptance

Body handling acceptance continues to be developed and improved. Grooming, pilling, bathing, ear cleaning, teeth cleaning, feeding, and playing are done to simulate client handling. The dog is taught to lie down and roll over in a variety of settings for inspection and care as needed.

Kennel Adjustment and Routine

CWTs continue to focus on kennel enrichment activities, relaxing time in community run, grooming and campus walks. Specialized programs continue, such as kennel enrichment, harness socialization, etc.

Wearing the Harness

By now, the dogs are comfortable wearing and working in the harness. Any dogs with sensitivity to wearing the harness are put on specialized programs.

Pattern Training Progression

Instructors now allow the dog more freedom to make decisions and make some mistakes. When errors begin to occur, instructors show the dog the correct answer before the dog gets confused. Basic level guidework responses are directed as a client might do.

The dog experiences all guidework behaviors and the instructor still patterns any advanced responses.

Guidework responses progress to the extent that the dog can respond to each verbal cue consistently with minimal leash gestures or leash use, and maintain a straight line of travel with the instructor under blindfold. The dog learns to ignore the handler’s body position or movements, and to compensate for same as needed.

Planned Distraction Route **NEW!**

While everyday routes in town present natural distractions to the dogs in training, these distractions are variable and often unpredictable. Also, not all dogs may have the opportunity to encounter that same distraction nor have the ability to use it in a productive manner. For example, if a pet dog comes around the corner suddenly yet also leaves suddenly, the dog in training does not have an opportunity to either make a choice to ignore the distraction or re-focus in the midst of that distraction. To afford all dogs in training the opportunity to develop this important skill, instructors work a route that includes two or three “set up distractions” – staff-held pet dogs in pre-determined areas on a route. These distractions can be seen from a distance, and the dog in training learns to remain focused both leading up to and passing the distraction.

Up Curb Exercise # 2

The second up curb exercise is incorporated into a route in town. This exercise teaches and reinforces the “curb” verbal cue, which is used only in the street to indicate to the dog to move to the up curb as efficiently as possible.

Physical Agility

Programs Continue as in Phase 1.

Responsible Lead Session NEW!

In order to reinforce what the dog has learned, responsible lead lessons for each dog occur at the end of pattern training. This session occurs on a long straight path. As in the planned distraction route, responsible lead involves “set-ups” as a means to reinforce a dog’s good focus past distractions or remind a dog how to achieve the same.

Obstacle Course Progression

Most dogs are ready to guide through the clearance course, and are leash cued by the instructor to move as a finished guide might move. If not ready to work in harness, dogs continue to walk through the obstacle course on leash. **NEW!** Course design becomes more difficult, requiring more angled clearance moves by the dogs but not requiring a stop.

Phase 3: Preliminary Testing

Notable Accomplishment - Preliminary Obedience Testing

Focus and responses of the following are assessed and documented by a training supervisor:

- ✓ Dogs are expected to understand and respond to “sit”, “down”, “heel”, “come”, and “stay” amid mild distractions with consistency and a single verbal cue
- ✓ Demonstration of food refusal
- ✓ General ease of body handling

Obedience and Distraction Training

Collar and praise responses continue to develop. Reliable responses and focus continue to develop in various environments (formal, informal and during guidework). Dogs generally require minimal repeat verbal or leash cues. Instructor starts to mimic client handling more.

Notable Accomplishment - Preliminary Blindfold Testing

The instructor works a dog under blindfold on an urban/suburban area route, a distance of approximately 10 blocks. In order to pass preliminary guidework testing, a dog must demonstrate an understanding of safe guidework skills and focus on work and handler. Obedience exercises are done at some point on route, usually when distraction is present.

Dogs that pass preliminary blindfold testing progress to advanced guidework training. Dogs that do not pass receive further training and are re-tested when ready. Dogs that demonstrate major weaknesses in the basic fundamentals oftentimes are given additional training time with another string.

Grades are ‘pass’ / ‘fail’ for this level of testing.

Difficult Distractions

Continues as in Phase 2.

Body Handling Acceptance

Continues as in Phase 2.

Guidework Training

The dogs are comfortable wearing and working in the harness. Individual dogs that still have problems wearing a harness would be a concern, but are still kept on socialization programs to improve behavior.

Pattern Training

Most dogs assume the majority of the basic responsibilities of guidework at this point and no longer need patterning. The dogs generally respond to “forward,” and lead out and maintain drive on their own or with an occasional leash or verbal prompt as needed. They respond to turn cues; pivot and drive out of turns; and they maintain line during movement. Responsibility in work responses is gradually increased and tested.

Up Curb Exercise # 3

The third up curb exercise is incorporated into a route in town.

Physical Agility Programs

Continues as in Phase 2.

Obstacle Course Progression

All dogs guide in harness through the obstacle course with leash cues as necessary. Course design becomes more difficult, requiring more angled clearance moves by the dogs.

CWTs continue to focus on kennel enrichment, relaxing time in community run, grooming and campus walks.

Phase 4: Intelligent Disobedience

Formal Harness Training

The dogs now have full freedom to make decisions and some mistakes with normal guidework responses. When errors occur, instructors continue to show the dog the correct answer before confusion sets in. Instructors still pattern challenging and advanced guiding decisions and responses.

Dogs are worked past open parking lot areas and difficult travel lines to further establish responsible line stability.

Working past challenging animal and food distractions continues.

Instructors often “spot” each other (for safety), and practice short blindfold sessions with their respective dogs. This gives them information regarding what guidework behaviors are strong and weak in an individual dog. Practice routes that follow these blindfold sessions focus on development of needed areas and reinforcement of established responses.

NEW! After preliminary testing, more extensive work inside buildings begins.

Notable Accomplishment - Traffic Conditioning (Exposure)

Dogs are introduced to traffic safety problems and shown how to respond to them via leash cues. Dogs learn to “stop”, “hold line” when stopped, and “back up on their line” when a vehicle gets too close. They are also introduced to increasing their pace for any vehicle that approaches too close to the rear of the team.

Body Handling Acceptance

Continues as in Phase 3. . **NEW!** New handlers are added to assess the dog’s comfort and willingness with strangers.

Physical Agility Programs

Continues as in Phase 3.

Obstacle Course Progression - Intelligent Disobedience Training Begins

All dogs guide in harness through a challenging obstacle clearance course with leash cues as necessary to move as a finished guide. Course design becomes increasingly more difficult, requiring problem solving skills.

NEW! Some clearances now require a stop. **Intelligent disobedience** responses are introduced after successful preliminary testing. Intelligent disobedience is when a Guide Dog purposely does not respond to a handler’s guidework verbal cue because it is either unsafe or impossible to follow through with the response.

NEW! Addressing errors is now introduced for basic clearance work. Dogs are given an opportunity to re-do the area (“re-work”) after being shown the error.

NEW! An **overhead clearance** is any obstacle that is above the dog’s head. Dogs are initially taught to target this type of clearance. The dogs are then taught to look up for overhead clearances through a graduated approach (teaching bar starts low, and is gradually raised as dog gains proficiency).

Socialization

Extra socialization assignments are done with individual dogs as needed. Some examples: harness or surface sensitive dogs; dogs that are reluctant to relieve on leash; or dogs that have questionable kennel behavior that needs “proofing” or further development in a “house” (office or dorm) setting (dogs that vocalize on tie down or crate, chewing propensities, etc.).

CWTs focus on additional relaxation sessions for all dogs as training progresses. These sessions could include one or several of the following activities: community run time, kennel enrichment programs, grooming, individual play sessions, office time at staff desks, and relaxing campus walks.

PHASE 5 –Traffic Training & City Work

Advanced Obedience and Distraction Training

New animal and common dog interest distractions (scent, cat, etc.) are sought out. Responses are evaluated.

Distraction interests for individual dogs are worked on separately (i.e. squirrels for some, birds for others).

Advanced Guidework Training

Routes continue in suburban areas and may progress to downtown urban areas.

Building exposure continues (stair work, elevators, tight clearance work on slick floors, etc.)

Focus on improving any weak responses noted at preliminary blindfold testing.

Focus on working the dogs at a pace and pull that is appropriate for a client.

City Routes (San Francisco/Portland)

New work areas include difficult crossings, clearances, and challenging line and curb approaches, animal distractions, surface issues, and pedestrian islands.

- ✓ Heavy urban environment: crowded sidewalks, heavy/close traffic, different pedestrian climates
- ✓ Large government and business building work
- ✓ City bus ride

Intensive Indoor Mall and Store Training

- ✓ Slower pace for more cautious work past store displays and shoppers
- ✓ Crowded aisles
- ✓ Elevators
- ✓ Multiple Stairways (Up and Down)
- ✓ Various colors and textures of slick, shiny floors
- ✓ Patience is reinforced for standing in line, working with a cashier, etc.
- ✓ Work past food held low, on seats / benches, or on ground (food court)

NEW! Escalator Introductions and Training - Boarding/Riding/Exiting

Dogs are taught how to safely step onto moving stairs (escalators), acquire a safe stance, ride the escalator without moving, and exit safely with the appropriate energy.

NOTE: Puppies are NOT to ride escalators.

Notable Accomplishment - Formal Traffic Training

Dogs are taught responsibility in making emergency decisions with traffic problems. Dogs learn to decide when to “stop,” “hold line,” “back up” or even “scoot forward” on their travel line for safety of the team. Dogs learn to maintain position, face the vehicle, and to proceed on original line when danger has passed. Lots of support, praise and food reward are used to reinforce the decisions and instill confidence in the dogs.

For dogs that need to either build confidence or create more of a buffer from the vehicle, supplemental training in backing away from a slow-moving vehicle is done on campus.

NEW! Total Barricade Training

Dogs are taught to show the handler any objects (most often parked vehicles in driveways) that completely block the travel path (sidewalk), and are then taught how to work safely around them.

Obstacle Course Progression

Dogs guide through challenging clearance courses as more finished guides. Course design becomes increasingly more difficult and requires continued development of problem solving skills and intelligent disobedience responses.

Advanced clearance problems that were first introduced to the dogs on the campus obstacle course are now sought out on real environment routes. Situations continue to be set up to reinforce both cautious navigation and intelligent disobedience.

Body Handling Acceptance

New handlers are regularly added to body handling sessions. Any issues that are still present at this stage are concerning and may interfere with a dog's viability as a Guide Dog.

Socialization Programs

As training progresses, individual dogs may require supervisor-directed specialized socialization programs to overcome any fear, distractive, or other type of reaction as needed.

CWTs continue to focus on kennel enrichment, relaxing time in community run, grooming and campus walks during the progressively more challenging stages of formal guide dog training.

Vet Meeting – Review of Health

Each dog's health history to date is reviewed by the staff vet. Viability for care by a client is assessed. Health release decisions *may* be made for individual cases on some dogs; however, most dogs have timelines for improvement or other medical procedures/testing prior to such a decision.

Phase 6 - Urban Challenges

Obedience and Distraction Training

Continues as in phase 5.

Advanced Guidework Training

Dogs work in both residential area without sidewalks and downtown urban areas with challenging environments

Focus on working the dogs at a pace and pull that is appropriate for a client.

Instructors commonly work each others' dogs to continue to develop and monitor consistent responses of each dog in various environments (formal, casual and during guidework).

NEW! Sidewalkless Technique Introduction

Dogs learn how to work in areas without sidewalks or reasonable shoulder on which to walk. The travel line is the left side of the street facing oncoming traffic. Dogs learn how to respond to intersecting streets and parked cars along their travel line.

NEW! Platform Edge Intro and Exposure Work

Dogs learn to avoid significant drop-offs that mimic subway and rail platform edges.

NEW! Light Rail, Subway systems

Dogs practice edge avoidance when train is absent, and boarding/riding on available trains.

Obstacle Course Progression

Continues as in phase 5.

Pre-Matches for Select Clients

Dogs are identified for applicants with special needs or requirements in a Guide Dog.

Socialization Programs

CWTs continue to focus on kennel enrichment and relaxing time away from guidework lessons (community run, grooming, play sessions, campus walks, dog massage, Reiki).

Leash relieving exposure on cement begins.

Phase 7 – Advanced Training

Obedience and Distraction Training

Continues as in phase 6. Dogs are handled by different instructors to teach them good responses are expected with new handlers.

Guidework Training

Advanced training includes work in both suburban and urban areas, and requires forward-looking decision-making (initiative).

These routes can consist of:

- ✓ City traffic patterns
- ✓ Difficult crossings
- ✓ Difficult clearance situation
- ✓ Areas with a challenging line
- ✓ Animal distractions
- ✓ Surface issues
- ✓ Curb approach challenges
- ✓ Pedestrian islands
- ✓ Crowded sidewalks
- ✓ Different pedestrian climate
- ✓ Additional city bus exposure
- ✓ Additional rapid transit ride exposure
- ✓ Additional and multiple escalators
- ✓ Rounded corners

Escalator Training Continues

Dogs now independently board, ride and exit.

Platform Training Continues

Avoidance of drop-off edges on pedestrian platforms of subway and rail systems.

Boarding and exiting trains.

Overhead Obstacle Clearance Training

Advanced overhead training occurs both on campus and in town, when available.

Socialization

Continue as in previous phases, as needed.

Leash relieving practice on cement surfaces continues. Dogs that are not comfortable do additional socialization, as needed.

Phase 8 – Final Testing, Finishing and Pre-Matching

Notable Accomplishments – Final Testing

Final Obedience Test

The instructor is under blindfold, and performs a series of obedience exercises with the dog, which includes an off-leash recall as well as a down stay with the instructor out of the dog's sight. Grades are given on a number scale (3 – 5).

Final Blindfold Test

Instructor works a route under blindfold on an urban street and sidewalk route of 40 to 50 minutes in a challenging work area. Dog performs sits and downs in harness at any point on route. Grades are given on a number scale (3 – 5).

Final Building Test

Instructor works a dog under blindfold through a mall setting. Each dog is tested on their overall caution and work on escalators, elevators, stairs and focus past food court areas. Grades are pass/fail.

Final Traffic Test

Instructor is under blindfold on a guidework route, and encounters several staged traffic checks that require the dog to demonstrate all types of traffic avoidance responses. Instructor is spotted by a teammate, but is not cued to the traffic situations in order to simulate client travel. Grades are pass/fail.

NOTE: Dogs that receive passing grades are deemed “Class Ready Guides.” These dogs are fully qualified and ready to be issued to a client.

“Finishing” Routes

Dogs work on relaxing residential or country routes, sidewalkless areas, and less difficult/ more straightforward routes for confidence building before class. Obedience responses are maintained and practiced in a variety of areas with a variety of handlers.

Practice with Less Experienced Handlers

With either supervisory and/or instructor oversight, unfamiliar (and often novice) handlers (O&M seminar or lifestyle workshop participants, mock student instruction practice for apprentices, etc.) work dogs that are (or nearly) at Class Ready status. This serves two purposes: it gives the handler an opportunity to experience what it feels like to work a Guide Dog and it gives staff a chance to assess the dogs' abilities to successfully and reliably transfer to a new handler both from a work performance and manageability perspective.

NEW! Specialized Training

All dogs are introduced to hand and chair targeting. Instructors introduce pole targeting (for crosswalk buttons) on a few different routes.

If needed, select dogs may do custom work for identified clients (slower pace or fast pace, compromised balance -- client who travels with a support cane, toed-out gait, etc.)

Pre Class Physicals (AKA: PCPs)

All class ready dogs receive pre-class vet physicals, which includes a height measurement at the withers (ground to shoulders).

Final Class Preparations

Instructors size all dogs for new class collars, boots, head collars and harnesses. Pre-matches are done based on information gathered from home interview and pre-class phone call meeting.

Leash Relieving practice on cement surfaces

Continues as in previous phase, as needed.

Dormitory exposure

Dogs are walked through the dormitory building in preparation for their in-residence training.

Socialization

All specialized programs are complete for class ready dogs.

CWTs focus primarily on relaxing walks, kennel enrichment and play sessions for the dogs.

Class

By the time the dogs finish their final exams in Phase 8, blind and vision-impaired clients have already been scheduled to arrive for the next class. Instructors conduct pre-class phone meetings to begin the matching process between client and dog. Matches are finalized once students arrive at campus and class training has begun. To make the best matches possible, GDB has more dogs than clients. This means that there are always a handful of dogs remaining for placement in a future class. These dogs continue in training with the next group of instructors and dogs.

There are different class-training program options available to clients. GDB offers both a two and three week class for in-residence client training. The client chooses the best training program for them based on their needs and preferences. Clients begin class so that both two and three week students graduate on the same day.

On occasion, for either health or other compelling personal reasons, some clients do best with training in their own home area. In these instances, the client does not train at a GDB campus. This is called an in-home training. Most in-home training clients do not participate in a formal graduation ceremony, unless they live close to one of our campuses and are able to attend. For those clients unable to attend a ceremony, please refer to the "Graduation" portion of this packet for special arrangements afforded to raisers whose dogs are trained in-home.

Accepted applicants receive their instructional lectures *prior* to their class instruction. These lectures include the following topics:

- ✓ Creating a Safe Environment for Your Guide Dog
- ✓ Equipment
- ✓ Promoting Independence
- ✓ Transitioning to a Successor Guide (for returning students, also called 'retrains')
- ✓ Welcome and Dormitory Orientation
- ✓ Communicating with Your Guide Dog
- ✓ Managing Your Guide Dog, Obedience
- ✓ Guidework
- ✓ Class Feeding, Watering and Relieving
- ✓ Street Crossings
- ✓ Playing with Your Guide Dog
- ✓ Addressing Guidework Errors
- ✓ Orientation and Learning Routes
- ✓ Advanced Management
- ✓ Working in Buildings
- ✓ Total Barricades and Traffic Encounters
- ✓ Dog Encounters
- ✓ Leaving Your Guide Dog Alone
- ✓ The General Public
- ✓ Customizing Your Dog's Vocabulary
- ✓ Special Travel Conditions
- ✓ Working on Platforms
- ✓ Working without Sidewalks
- ✓ Transitioning from Our Campus to Your Home
- ✓ Care of Your Guide Dog
- ✓ Going on a Trip with Your Guide Dog
- ✓ Working Rounded Corners

GDB also has additional lectures that discuss graduate services; veterinary information – both care and veterinary financial assistance; alumni association and donation information.

Depending on whether they are training in California or Oregon, clients begin training with their new Guide Dogs in residential areas of San Rafael or Gresham, respectively, and transition to routes in San Francisco or Portland. The new teams encounter many different situations together: public transportation (cars, city buses, subway systems, and ferries), heavy traffic, construction, escalators, areas with no sidewalks, etc.

GDB clients come from many different geographical areas and walks of life. Clients customize their training and do routes that are similar to their home areas. Our lecture titled "Special Travel Conditions" offers tips to help prepare clients and their new guides to travel in extreme climates (snow travel or hot temperatures).

Class instruction and graduation are a culmination of a lot of hard work by many people. From staff who breed these special dogs, to the volunteers who love and house the breeder dogs, to the volunteers that socialize the young puppies and work in other areas on campus, to the immense efforts and commitment of the puppy raising community, to the dedicated and talented training and graduate service staff, and to our generous donors... it takes an involved community to create and support, a Guide Dog team. All of these efforts provide the foundation to shape a wonderful dog into a highly trained Guide Dog and companion, and then pair that dog with a partner to become an effective team. This is the mission of Guide Dogs for the Blind.

Graduation

Raisers are invited to attend graduation and formally present the dogs they raised to the clients who received them. If raisers plan to fly to attend a graduation ceremony, GDB recommends purchasing refundable airfare, in case something happens to cause the dog to be career changed, passed back or taken out of class at the last moment.

On graduation day, raisers have an opportunity to meet and visit with the client and have pictures taken together before the ceremony (pictures are sent after graduation). Shortly before the ceremony begins, graduates sit on stage without their guides. Puppy raisers ceremonially present the dog on stage at the microphone. After the client speaks, the raiser has an opportunity to share a few words about their experience raising the dog. Raisers are sent a DVD of the graduation as a keepsake.

Occasionally, GDB has generous donors who sponsor a team at graduation. What this means is that they've donated at least \$15,000 to GDB towards the cost of training a person and their dog. Donors are invited to come to graduation and meet the team they have sponsored. Donor teams are chosen based on the area in which the graduate lives or their background, such as being a veteran or in a certain career field. If a donor attends graduation, they will also have photos taken with the team. Any raiser affiliated with a sponsored team may be asked to meet the donor at a reception. Puppy Raising staff notifies the raiser a few days in advance if the graduating team has been sponsored.

For in-home clients unable to attend a graduation, raisers may have the opportunity to visit their dog on campus before it leaves for training. The in-home instructor takes photos of the working team for the raiser's keepsake. Those raisers whose dogs have been matched with clients who receive in-home training are welcome to attend graduation. Their name, the dog's name and the client's name are mentioned during the program even though the team is not present. If the raiser chooses to attend graduation, he or she also has an opportunity to make a statement at the microphone when introduced. With their consent, a statement composed by the client may also be read at the same time. Also with the client's consent, a phone call can be arranged between raiser and graduate.

Dogs selected for GDB breeding stock are involved in a graduation at one of the San Rafael graduation ceremonies. Just like presenting a guide, raisers have the opportunity to present the breeder and make a statement at the microphone when introduced.

It is normal for both client and puppy raiser to be nervous upon greeting each other for the first time.

Tips for a Relaxing and Enjoyable Graduation

- Address the graduate first (not the dog).
- If the client has not extended an arm, initiate a handshake with a gentle touch on the back of the client's right hand as a greeting.
- Clients may offer the leash to the raiser to visit with their dog for a few minutes. Be respectful of the team's important relationship, and hand the leash back within a few minutes.
- When visiting with the dog, stay gentle and calm to minimize the dog's excitement. The dog is working on this day. Expect and encourage him to behave as he would in a working situation involving a crowd.
- Indicate an open seat to the client, and ask him or her about their class experience.
- Feel free to share positive and/or humorous stories about the dog's puppyhood. Keep in mind that the student has only begun to develop their trust and confidence in their new guide. While sharing normal puppy "challenges" with the student is fine, try not to focus on any negative subjects about raising their dog.
- Inquire about the student's lifestyle, plans or hobbies/career. Keep in mind, the rare client may not want to share.
- Please do not offer any training advice, even if asked.
- The client will put the harness on the dog when it is time to take photos. Additional equipment may be used for general management purposes as well (head collar or specialized collar).
- There is no obligation to share personal information or communicate with the client into the future. Puppy raisers are sent the client's complete home address in the mail with the letter announcement informing them of the graduation. Please respect any privacy wishes that the client may express.

Graduation is truly a day to celebrate! All of the hard work that puppy raisers have invested in their dogs is realized. And yet, the team still has a lot of work to do. When they return home is when they truly begin developing a working relationship based on trust and love.

GDB provides support to its alumni for the duration of the team's working life. To develop and maintain the working relationship of the team, GDB schedules trips by Guide Dog Mobility Instructors throughout the year to conduct follow-up visits to clients' home areas to assist in any way needed. To support care of the Guide Dog, GDB encourages its clients to play an active role in the maintenance of their guides. Pet insurance is one such way clients can participate to help off-set healthcare costs. Additionally, the client is eligible for veterinary financial assistance (VFA) from GDB. This is an optional annual reimbursement opportunity that helps those clients that need financial support to maintain a healthy guide and companion.

Alumni often look back at graduation as the beginning of a new chapter in their life, one that could never have happened without the loving dedication and time of GDB's puppy raisers.

Career Change Dogs

GDB is fortunate to have a large community of dedicated raisers and leaders who work very hard to develop and return the best possible guide candidates. All raisers are commended for their efforts and accomplishments regardless of whether the dog they raise becomes a guide, breeder or career change dog. GDB is immensely proud of the love and dedication that all its volunteers – on-campus and off – who contribute so generously and effectively to help GDB develop the best Guide Dogs in the world.

To make it in a Guide Dog career, dogs must pass several criteria. Skill proficiency, temperamental and physical soundness, and overall health are held to a high standard. For example, a dog must be orthopedically sound, capable of walking for long distances, free from nagging allergies, and in good physical health. An effective guide must also exhibit a paradox of behaviors that can be extremely difficult to balance, or find in one dog. The dog must be sensitive yet brave, obedient yet independent, loving of the handler yet aloof from strangers when necessary. Seemingly minor issues for a pet dog (solicitous toward strangers, wanting to play with other dogs, relieving on walks) could preclude a dog from becoming a guide dog, resulting in career change.

GDB's canine population must be large enough to allow the Breeding Department to carefully screen and select the very best guide and breeder candidates. This is essential in order for GDB to provide the quality of guide that is needed in today's complex world.

All GDB dogs, regardless of status, enrich the lives of people with whom they come into contact. They are wonderful ambassadors for the program, and make friends throughout the world for themselves and for GDB. All become wonderful, loving pets either with the family that raised them, a close friend or relative of the raiser, or with an adoptive family who has been screened and carefully selected by GDB's Dog Placement Department. The hard work and love that raisers give to these puppies are the largest contributing factors in making career change dogs such great pets.

Who Receives Career Change Dogs?

Dogs Career Changed Prior to Formal Training (released in puppy home)

- The most recent raiser has the first option to receive the dog as a pet.
- If the most recent raiser does not wish to keep the dog personally, the previous raiser has the next choice to receive the dog personally.
- If the dog has had more than two raisers and neither of the previous two wish to keep the dog personally, other previous raisers are offered the dog in the reverse order that they raised. Example of a dog that's had four raisers: 4th raiser = 1st choice, 3rd raiser = 2nd choice, 2nd raiser = 3rd choice, 1st raiser = 4th choice.
- If no raiser wishes to keep the dog personally, raisers have the option of placing a career change dog only with a close family member or a close friend and in the order described above (see further guidelines for placing with a close friend or family member – below).
- GDB has the discretion to may make exceptions to the above placement guidelines Exceptions may be based on the following:
 - a. dog's temperament
 - b. dog's health
 - c. dog's compatibility with people and pets in the raiser or adopter home
 - d. dog's possible effect on a GDB puppy in the home
 - e. instances of abuse or neglect in the home
 - f. incidents of dogs running loose at the home
 - g. questions regarding the raiser's ability to effectively care and manage the dog
 - h. inadequate fencing or other housing needs
 - i. previous agreements between transfer homes, leaders, and advisors
 - j. other determinations by GDB in consideration for the well-being of the dog and/or the household

Dogs Released from the Training Program:

- For dogs that are considered to be manageable companions and possible K9 Buddy candidates, GDB assesses the dog *prior to* puppy raiser notification.
- For other dogs released from the program, the puppy raiser is notified and given the option to adopt. Raisers may forego receiving the dog in lieu of GDB assessing and strategically placing the dog with another service dog organization (hearing, service, D4D, etc.) or other line of work (Ambassador Dog, CHP, Search and Rescue, scent discrimination – cancer detection, etc.). If GDB thinks a particular dog has the potential for this type of placement, the puppy raiser is informed. GDB requires a release from the puppy raiser in these situations.
- For puppy raisers who wish to receive their career change dog, refer to the section above (dogs career changed prior to formal training) for the guidelines.

For Guide Dogs retired from Client's Home < 1 year in the field

- The most recent raiser has the first option to receive the dog as a pet.
- If this raiser declines to accept the dog personally, the client has the option to keep the dog or place the dog only with a close family member or a close friend.
- If both client and most recent raiser decline these options, the dog is placed by GDB using the same guidelines as when a dog is career changed in the puppy home or training program.

For Guide Dogs retired from Client's home > 1 year or more in the field

- The client has the option to retain the dog or place as he or she chooses.
- If the client declines this option, the dog is placed by GDB using the same guidelines as when a dog is career changed in the puppy home or training program.

Taking a Career Change Dog Back

How does a puppy raiser decide to keep a dog they raised?

Raisers have a great deal of attachment to the puppies that they loved, cared for, and trained, often watching them grow from cute, cuddly puppies into mature dogs. As a result of these heartfelt emotions, a raiser may feel obligated to take a career change dog back. GDB staff understands a raiser's feelings of love and responsibility to the puppy yet place no responsibility on raisers to keep a dog that they have raised. Unless a raiser is sure that they can provide a lifetime quality home for a dog, GDB prefers to place the dog through its Puppy Raising and Dog Placement Department (see next section).

Things to Consider Prior to taking a Career Change Back

- Is there a sense of obligation to take the dog back?
- The dog may be a larger size or have different behaviors than when it entered formal training.
- Is this the best possible home for this dog?
- Will the dog get enough stimulation (playtime, exercise)?
- Does the entire family agree on adoption?
- For youth raisers: Do the parents want the dog as well? Is the youth going to college soon or moving out of on their own? What are the plans for the dog if this is the case?
- Will the dog get along well with all family members: adults, small children and pets?
- If there are other dogs - a GDB puppy, other career change dogs, or pets – will each animal get sufficient individual love and care?
- Can the puppy raiser afford the food and veterinary care of a large-breed dog?
- Is the yard or dog run securely fenced and at least 5 feet in height?
- If the home has a pool, is it safely fenced?
- Will the dog have adequate shelter from both the rain and sun?
- Will the dog be inside the house (at least at night)?
- How much time will the dog be alone?
- If renting, does the landlord approve?

If any of the preceding questions cause doubts, it might be best for the previous raiser to consider the dog or let GDB place the dog.

Raisers Who Decide to Accept a Career Change Dog as a Pet

- GDB legally transfers the dog to the raiser after the "Agreement Confirming Gift of Dog" contract has been completed.
- Any transportation costs are paid by the raiser.
- With the exception of a small number of pre-approved cases, veterinary and all other expenses are the responsibility of the raiser.
- If the dog doesn't work out, notify and return the dog to GDB.
- If at any time in the dog's life it transfers to a new home, please complete and return to GDB a "Supplemental Dog Transfer Form."
- Raisers are not allowed to sell career change dogs.
- If concerns about a dog's behavior or health arise, please contact the GDB Dog Placement Department.

Raiser Placement of a Career Change Dog

If a raiser decides to not personally keep the dog, they also have the option to place the dog. In these cases, the puppy raiser may only place the dog with a close friend or close family member. GDB has found that the placements of dogs by raisers with people whom they do not know extremely well are often not successful. If a raiser cannot keep a career change dog as their own or place the dog with a very trusted person, GDB will happily place the dog.

GDB takes great care, reinforced by years of experience, in the placement of career change dogs. GDB has two Dog Placement offices, one in California and one in Oregon, that are staffed by professionally trained people whose sole jobs are to screen, select, and educate prospective homes. GDB offers not only these preliminary services but also follow-up services to ensure that the dog is happy in the new home.

Prior to a Close Friend or Family Placement

Things for a Puppy Raiser to Consider about the Dog

- Does the dog have temperament, management, or behavior concerns that make him a challenging candidate for placement?
- If the dog has problems in the adopters' home, can the puppy raiser offer resources to help work through the problem?
- If this dog does not work out in his new home, is the puppy raiser willing to take him back or return him to GDB?
- Would this dog be better placed by GDB's experienced Dog Placement staff?

Things for the Puppy Raiser to Consider about the Prospective Home

- Are the prospective adopters receptive to and understand how to manage any potential negative behaviors and/or health problems?
- Does everyone in the home want the dog?
- Is the potential adopter making a decision on impulse or as a surprise gift for someone else? This is not a good way to make such an important decision.
- Will the dog get along well with all family members (adults, small children, pets/livestock)?
- Is anyone in the home allergic to dogs?
- What is the prospective adopter's motivation in wanting this dog as a pet?
- Are they interested in this dog because they really know and like him?
- Have they spent any substantial amount of time with the dog?
- Do they only want the dog because he is a "good deal?"
- Do they only want the dog as a favor?
- Do they only want the dog because he has come from Guide Dogs for the Blind?
- Do they understand that all dogs have dog behaviors, good and bad, even ones from GDB?
- Do they understand all the responsibilities involved in providing a lifetime, loving home?
- Are all their current pets well cared for, including grooming, housing, and vaccinations?
- Have they had dogs in the past? What became of these dogs?

These general dynamics can often best predict a dog's happiness in a new home. Refer to the article "Common Career Change Misconceptions" for additional information.

Once a raiser can confidently recommend a prospective close friend or family member, refer to the earlier section titled, "Things to Consider Prior to taking a Career Change Back". In addition to these considerations, is the close friend or family member able and willing to obtain and use a crate? Are they willing to take the dog through obedience classes or private training to better understand and manage the dog? Are they familiar with the grooming needs of this breed? Are they willing to provide flea control and heartworm preventative? And lastly, are they planning to move in the near future? If there are any concerns about the success of the proposed placement, please let GDB select a home instead.

Once Satisfied with a Particular Close Friend or Family Placement

- Introduce the dog to the adopters at their home.
- Make sure that no family members are intimidated by the dog,
- Make sure that all family members are gentle and kind, yet consistent.
- Make sure that there are no possible conflicts with other pets, inside and outside the home.
- Double check the yard for safety and security.

If all goes well...

- Any transportation costs to transport the dog to the new home are the puppy raiser or the adopters.
- With the exception of a small number of pre-approved cases, veterinary and all other expenses are the responsibility of the adopters.
- If questions arise in the new home, please ask the adopters to contact the GDB Dog Placement Department for a consultation.
- If it doesn't work out with the adopters, have them contact the puppy raiser or GDB directly to return the dog.

If a puppy raiser has any uncertainties about a potential new owner, please let GDB place the dog. The Dog Placement Department is available to place the dog from either campus in the event that the puppy raiser does not feel comfortable with their options.

Since the quality of the dog's life depends on this placement, take time and don't take chances!

GDB thanks all puppy raisers for their love and efforts spent raising a puppy for Guide Dogs for the Blind.

GDB also thanks raisers for helping GDB find a permanent, happy home for each program dog.

Please help us fulfill our responsibilities by letting GDB Dog Placement staff find homes for any dog in need of a home.

GDB gladly accepts any dog that is returned at any stage of the dog's life.

GDB is greatly indebted to all its dogs - guides, breeders, K9 buddy and career change – that have contributed to our mission.

GDB has a lifelong responsibility to them all.

Please help us fulfill our responsibility by returning any program dog that is in need of a home.

GDB Dog Placement Department

The GDB Puppy Raising and Dog Placement Department individually screens and selects a home for the dog. GDB receives hundreds of inquiries each year from people interested in receiving a career change dog.

- Potential homes are screened to determine their suitability to adopt a career change dog, including a home visit/fence check.
- Potential adopters must come to GDB to meet the available dogs.
- Individual dogs are matched to individual homes.
- Dog Placement staff personally interview and introduce dogs to their potential adopters.
- GDB charges an adoption fee of \$500.
- GDB provides follow-up information: books, videos, audio tapes, booklets, and training references.
- GDB welcomes back any dog that is not compatible with the new home.

It is difficult for raisers when they or a close family member are not able to provide a home for a career change dog. When this happens, the dog's placement becomes the responsibility of GDB's Dog Placement Department. GDB exercises a great amount of time, effort, and love into each adoption.

Members of the public express interest in adopting a GDB career change dog by filling out and submitting a Career Change Application. Adoption is only open to those living in the following states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah and Washington. After careful review, only those individuals who qualify are kept on file. Acceptable applications are entered into GDB's computer database.

GDB Dog Placement (DP) has a lot of information on each dog: The puppy history (project records and CFR report, if applicable); training and health information; and release reason. If relevant, CWTs or GDMLs are consulted for their first-hand knowledge of the dog as well. All of this information gives GDB a basic profile of the type of home and handler (retired couple, family with young children, a home with or without other pets, an experienced dog person, etc.) that would match best with a particular dog.

By searching the available applications in the database, GDB develops a list of potential matches. Then, considering the dog's strengths and weaknesses, DP staff spends hours reviewing the applications and talking on the phone with several potential adopters to find a home that seems best suited for a particular dog. Once GDB feels there is a possible match, the potential adopter is notified of an available dog. The dog is described in detail, both the positives and negatives. It is very important that GDB is straightforward about the dog. GDB's success depends on giving full disclosure on a dog to avoid "surprises" in the adoptive home.

If the potential adopter is still interested, the individual and/or family are required to meet the dog on campus. During this 1-2 hour visit and "showing" of the dog, DP staff discusses dog behavior, demonstrates training techniques / tools, and discusses the need to set limits as well as praise the dog. GDB encourages the whole family to come, especially if there are young children or other pet dogs in the household.

Not all meetings end in success. Sometimes the adopter is just not a match for the dog, and the process begins again.

It takes time to find the right match. It is never the case of just assigning a dog to the next applicant on the list. As dogs wait for new homes, most adjust well to kennel-life, continue to mature and learn from their assigned CWT who continues to groom, train, and exercise them.

When it appears that there might be a likely match between adopter and dog, a mandatory fence check is done prior to placement. This check provides GDB with an opportunity to observe the home environment. Fence checks are done by GDB staff, leaders or volunteers.

GDB's primary goal in placing a dog is with a family or person who will provide a lifetime of love, care, and companionship. Since these dogs were raised to enjoy active involvement with their people, GDB

encourages applications from those who want dogs for agility, obedience, tracking, pet facilitated therapy, or other disciplines and hobbies.

GDB thanks all puppy raisers for their time, love, and care that they put into raising a puppy. Even though all dogs cannot become guides, breeders, or buddy dogs, GDB recognizes that each dog is truly a unique and valued individual, and works very hard to find loving and responsible homes for all dogs.