As Canada expanded westward in the 19th and 20th centuries, the government signed treaties with the indigenous inhabitants (now known as First Nations) that granted large areas of land to the Canadians for settlement and, later, resource extraction.

“All over Canada, there are 11 treaties which different nations belong to,” says Lincoln Nanaquawetung, who trained with his guide dog in 2017. “I am Saulteaux, which is Treaty #4.” He belongs to the Fishing Lake First Nation #89.

About half of Canada’s Indigenous people live on reserves (land that was set aside for their use).

“I didn’t grow up on my reserve,” Nanaquawetung says. “I grew up in Edmonton, Alberta, and lived there until I was 10. We then moved to Saskatchewan.”

Although Saskatchewan had a large Indigenous population, Nanaquawetung recalls that they were still not fully accepted into society.

“I was very good in most sports,” he says, “but there was always a disconnect with the all-‘white’ teams I would play on. I couldn’t be myself.” It was only when he was older that Nanaquawetung found his own identity as a “proud Indigenous man.”

Striking out on his own

After finishing the 11th grade, Nanaquawetung went to work with his father, who had worked on oil and gas drilling rigs for more than 30 years.

(continued on page 6)
The holidays are upon us, with the new year just around the corner. I’d like to take this opportunity to reflect on the past year. I joined the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs in March. I looked forward to tackling the challenges posed by the board of directors as we take the Foundation and VetDogs to the next level as leaders in the assistance dog movement.

One of the most important things I’ve come to appreciate is the commitment of our donors, volunteers, and staff to our mission. It is a theme I refer to often because their support is central to what we do. And I’ve learned a lot about guide and service dogs in the past year, especially after I took my first blindfold walk. As I worked with the dog, it became obvious the very serious responsibility we take on: we train the dogs that guide our consumers safely from point A to point B. I was amazed at how fast the dog moved to ensure I was guided around obstacles so we did not have to stop. It was a remarkable experience.

We’ve moved forward to increase our transparency for our funders and donors. After receiving the GuideStar Gold Seal of Transparency in June, we recently achieved the Platinum Seal, GuideStar’s highest rating. Platinum means that in addition to showing our commitment to sharing our goals and strategies, we also share how we measure our progress and the results our efforts make on people’s lives.

In October and November, we underwent assessments by the International Guide Dog Federation and Assistance Dogs International. These assessments evaluate our operations to ensure we consistently follow the highest standards for the humane and ethical treatment of the dogs in our programs, maintain educational benchmarks for trainers and apprentices, and have procedures in place for consumers during the application and acceptance process. We look forward to the results.

In this issue of The Guideway, you’ll read about the Guide Dog Foundation’s successful Dogs on the Catwalk fundraiser, our second canine couture fashion show. You’ll also meet Radar, our latest puppy with a purpose thanks to our new partnership with the New York Islanders hockey team.

As we look forward to 2019, I wish you and those close to you a happy holiday season, and a healthy and prosperous new year. Thank you for your support.

John Miller
President & Chief Executive Officer
Strutting in Style: Another Catwalk Success!

Our first Dogs on the Catwalk canine couture fashion show in 2017 was such a hit that planning for the 2018 event began mere days later. We partnered once again with famed “master pet couturier” Anthony Rubio to highlight his designs, both canine and human, on October 11 at The Heritage Club at Bethpage (formerly Carlyle on the Green) at Bethpage State Park, home of the legendary Black PGA Golf Course.

More than 160 guests attended this year’s show, up from 113 last year, and we grossed over $100,000, nearly double last year’s revenue.

Sunny, our puppy with a purpose who appears on NBC’s TODAY, attended Dogs on the Catwalk with his puppy raiser and trainer, Olivia Poff, and he was joined by his sister and brother – Camden, who appears on WBAL-TV in Baltimore, with raiser Deana Stone; and Izzy, who appears on 11 Alive in Atlanta with Lauren Cobb.

In addition to our puppy “auction,” we added a new activity – a live auction of items donated especially for the event, including a signed New York Islanders jersey. This was especially appropriate because the Islanders are sponsoring their own puppy with a purpose, Radar, who is being raised by Long Islander Jimmy Tubbs.

An event this size doesn’t happen without the hard work and input from dedicated staff, volunteers, and supporters. Jan Goodman served on the Dogs on the Catwalk committee. “Everyone I brought was raving about it, and I already have two additional attendees for next year. I thought this was a wonderful night,” she says.

Guide Dog Foundation graduate Matthew Sherwood was our guest speaker. Sherwood works in Manhattan and commutes daily from Long Island. Thanks to his new guide dog, he says, “I don’t have to worry anymore. Areas where I used to have anxiety and fear on my commute are a breeze now. I just hold on to the harness and trust him.”


We’ve already started planning next year’s Dog on the Catwalk. Sign up at GuideDog.org for our email newsletter and stay informed about the latest news from the Guide Dog Foundation.
The Importance of Year-End Giving

According to the website Giving USA, Americans donated a record $410 billion to their favorite charities in 2017.

The report *Giving USA 2018: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2017* indicates that giving by individuals, which accounts for 70 percent of charitable donations, rose by 5.2 percent, to about $287 billion.

Foundation giving grew by 6 percent, while donations from bequests increased 2.3 percent. Corporations also stepped up their charitable giving, rising by 8 percent.

Individual donors, planned legacy gifts, and family foundations and trusts provide the majority of our support – nearly 95 percent of our revenue.

Many charities receive 50 percent of their total yearly contributions in the last quarter of a calendar year and of that number, 40 percent in December alone.

If you are contemplating making a year-end gift to the Guide Dog Foundation by donating cash, stock, or securities to gain the full 2018 tax advantage of your donation, here are some helpful tips to follow: In most cases a charitable gift is deemed completed when control over the asset has been transmitted from the donor to the charity. For gifts of cash and securities this means different things, depending on how the gift is transferred.

If you are making a contribution by credit card through our websites or over the phone, and your donation is charged to your card before December 31, it will count for 2018. This is true even if your credit card bill isn’t due until January 2019.

If you are sending a gift by mail, the donation is effective on the date mailed as indicated by the postmark. If the envelope is postmarked by December 31, the gift is credited to 2018 even if we physically receive it in 2019. The postmark is the key to your deduction, not the date on the check.

If you are concerned that a gift being sent through the mail will not be received on time to use as a deduction on your tax return, you may physically bring the donation to our offices in Smithtown, New York. The day the gift is received at the charity is the effective date of that donation.

Many individuals choose to donate securities and stocks at the end of the year, and many of these gifts are electronically transferred to the charity directly from the donor’s broker.

In the case of electronic transfers, the gift becomes effective the date the funds are reflected on the charity’s bank or brokerage account, not the date you instructed your bank or broker to make the transaction.

Electronic transfers can be greatly affected by volume. The closer we get to December 31, the longer it might take to move your gift from one account to another (potentially several days). You can avoid any delay by giving yourself sufficient time to make a gift of stock or securities.

Given the far-ranging changes to the tax code that occurred in 2018, please contact your tax advisor for specific information on the tax benefits of donating cash, stocks, or securities.

For more information about ways you can support the Guide Dog Foundation, please contact Katherine Fritz, director of development, at 631-930-9057; Katherine@GuideDog.org.
Meet the newest recruit for the New York Islanders: Radar! Named for famed Islanders coach Al Arbour, who led the team to four Stanley Cup wins in the early 1980s, Radar is our latest puppy with a purpose. The yellow Labrador Retriever is being raised by Long Islander Jimmy Tubbs, so if you’re a local, look for Radar and Jimmy at Islander home games at Nassau Coliseum and Barclays Center.

The New York Islanders have teamed with the Guide Dog Foundation on the 2019 Pucks & Paws calendar. Proceeds from the sale of the calendar will benefit the Guide Dog Foundation. (Last year, the team supported America’s VetDogs.) To learn how you can get your own Pucks and Paws 2019 calendar, go to Islanders.GuideDog.org.

Photos by Rebecca Eden

It’s Sunny at the Met

Future guide dog Sunny – the TODAY puppy with a purpose – and his puppy raiser and trainer Olivia Poff got a taste of adventure when they visited the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Working with the museum’s access team, they demonstrated how the museum welcomes visitors with disabilities and their service dogs.

Photos by Allison Storck
Lincoln Nanaquawetung
(continued from cover)

“I saw my first paycheck and decided not to go back to school,” he says. “I worked rigs because it paid really good money, and I didn’t need an education.

“I fit the prototypical rig-hand mold. I was good at it, enjoyed the party lifestyle, and didn’t mind being away from my wife and daughter for long periods of time.”

By the time he was 26 years old, Nanaquawetung had been working rigs for almost nine years, mostly in northern British Columbia and northern Alberta. However, in the summer of 2001, he was with Sauer Drilling Company in Wyoming.

About three or four months later, his life took an unexpected turn. As he went about his day’s work, he suddenly realized he couldn’t see the bottom of the pit he was drilling; in fact, he had vision in one eye only.

Nanaquawetung was diagnosed with neuromyelitis optica, a neurological disease that attacks the optic nerves. Within three years, he had lost all vision in his right eye and had only partial vision from the top of his left. But well before then, he had isolated himself: he stopped working, he gave up driving, and the medications he was taking to stabilize his vision wreaked havoc on his body.

“I went through the whole grief and loss process for four, almost five years,” he says.

However, as his body responded to treatment, Nanaquawetung began to find his current situation intolerable. “I did some minor grief counseling and different support groups, but that wasn’t the real catalyst” for change.

Although he had had some contact with the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), “I never engaged in their efforts to help me. I was just not in that place yet,” he says.

Ultimately, though, it was an individual from the CNIB who helped him reach “that place.” The two had met at a two-week workshop whose goal was to get people with vision loss back in the workforce.

“Our stories were very similar. We both had vision for most of our lives, then suddenly began to lose it. We both dealt with it in the same unconstructive way,” Nanaquawetung says. “He also made me realize living with vision loss is not a life sentence.”

Nanaquawetung now embraced the opportunities offered by CNIB. “I learned how to read books, how to use a computer, and how using a computer can be your lifeline to school, working, and just everyday life,” he says. “I was introduced to many people at CNIB who were blind or partially sighted, and they had an education and good jobs.”

Assistive technology helped him while he attended NorQuest College in Edmonton, Alberta, studying to obtain his degree in social work. After finishing the two-year program at NorQuest, he attended the University of Calgary and earned his bachelor’s degree in social work in 2014.

From driller to social worker

“Working rigs is a very masculine job,” Nanaquawetung says. It’s a far different environment from social work, but his experience with that world has helped guide his career path.

“As I grew and became immersed in my social work curriculum, I realized the scope of social work is so broad,” he says.

“When I finished school, I didn’t know my strengths as a social worker yet and how best I could help people,” he adds. “I now know I work best with families and men, primarily facilitating groups.” He works for one agency that provides programs and services for parents and children, while also working for another that offers group therapy to male perpetrators of family violence.

He credits his success with his groups to the fact that he is Indigenous, male, and has a disability; these are rare qualities in his profession.

Time for a guide dog

For many years, Nanaquawetung was a confident cane user. Although he had about eight percent vision in his left eye (and none in his right), he could make out shapes and objects, and he felt comfortable with the cane. However, in November 2016, his vision loss accelerated, leaving him able to perceive changes in light only.

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Workplace giving programs are a cost-effective way for the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs to raise funds to support their missions.

**Workplace Giving**

You specify the amount you want to donate and your payroll department takes care of the rest. The money comes out of your paycheck before taxes, so you still receive the tax benefits of charitable giving (your payroll department will give you a tax receipt for your records).

Depending on your company, you may also have the chance to influence how your company accomplishes its philanthropic efforts.

Many firms also offer matching gifts or other workplace giving programs. If your employer provides matching funds, we receive an added donation thanks to your participation.

**Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)**

The CFC is the world’s largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign. This year, it runs from September 1, 2018, to January 15, 2019. All federal civilian, postal, and military employees can use the CFC to make direct contributions to the Guide Dog Foundation or America’s VetDogs.

When you sign up for the CFC, your donation is automatically deducted from your paycheck via payroll deductions. Your contributions are tax deductible and tracked during the year, so you will have accurate records at tax time.

Be sure to check our websites and Facebook pages for reminders on how you can participate in the CFC if you work for the federal government.

**State and local campaigns**

The Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs also participate in similar campaigns for state and local government employees, including United Way campaigns.

If you are uncertain how to name us as your preference for your donation, or if you’d like to establish a workplace giving campaign in your office, please call us at 631-930-9050 (or 866-282-8045).

The Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs rely on your generosity to help us change the lives of people with disabilities.

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Lincoln Nanaquawetung

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“I really struggled,” he says. “I was getting turned around, unknowingly walking on the streets instead of the sidewalk, and I was compromising my safety.”

This new vision loss required another transition period, so he returned for more orientation and mobility training. The additional training helped him navigate with his cane, but he still didn’t feel safe.

His O&M instructor recommended he get a guide dog. After discussing it with his wife, and with her support, Nanaquawetung began his research.

There are about five guide and assistance dog schools in Canada, but they all had extremely long waiting lists, so he expanded his search to the United States.

He narrowed it down to two schools. He liked the Guide Dog Foundation’s 2:1 student/instructor ratio, the two-week training class, how the Foundation raises and train its dogs. “It sounded like it would be a good fit,” Nanaquawetung says. “I submitted my application and got the ball rolling.”

He was invited to the December 2017 class. From the start, he says, “The training was intense.”

There were times he needed to “step back” and take a break, but, he adds, “My instructor sensed when I was getting overwhelmed and understood how I learn, so she was able to adjust her teaching style.”

What impressed Nanaquawetung the most was that “everyone I encountered at GDF had a passion for working with dogs. In my opinion, that passion is impressive and speaks to everyone’s commitment to providing a great service to those wanting a guide dog.”

A life changed

Nanaquawetung enjoys social work because “every now and then, you help someone and make a difference in their life. It doesn’t happen often but when it does, and you know it, it’s something that makes your heart smile.”

But that’s not the only thing that makes his heart smile: so does his new independence with his guide dog. “I feel much more confident in where I am going and how I get there,” he says. “Her companionship is unbelievable. She has made a great addition to our family, and my wife, daughter, and I absolutely adore her.”

Lincoln and his dog take a stroll around his neighborhood

Photo courtesy Lincoln Nanaquawetung

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Guideway is the official newsletter of the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind, Inc. William Krol, editor. It is available in print, on audio, and on our website. We welcome letters, articles, or photographs, but reserve the right to refuse any material.

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