In the months since the previous issue of *The Guideway* was published, almost everything we held certain has been challenged. Although this is a time of constant change, what has not changed is the way we are joined together as a community. At extraordinary moments like this, we are heartened by supporters of our guide and service dog community who remain steadfast advocates of our mission to help people with disabilities.

When it became apparent that the impact of COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, would be far more severe than had been originally anticipated, we took immediate action to protect the health and safety of our students, volunteers, staff, and dogs.

The students on the guide dog class then in session returned home just a day shy of their graduation, so while they missed Celebration Saturday, they were accompanied by their new guide dogs.

To reduce the number of staff that needed to be present on campus, our canine care, volunteer services, and training teams worked diligently to find temporary homes for the puppies and dogs in our kennels; in the span of a few days, we went from 260 dogs in the kennels to about 25.

The immense response and support of our volunteers was truly remarkable. Because we maintain a year-round team of temp home volunteers, we were able to reach out to both existing volunteers and new volunteers and arrange foster homes for these dogs.

Our guide and service dog instructors have been working with their dog teams from their homes on a rotating basis, ensuring that each dog’s skills are maintained (continued on page 2)
Ways to Give

Our waiting list has grown because we had to temporarily suspend classes to ensure the health and safety of our students, volunteers, and staff. People with disabilities can feel isolated at the best of times; having to wait even longer to reclaim their independence is difficult. There are many ways you can support the Guide Dog Foundation as we begin to prepare our return to normal operations. Please visit our website, GuideDog.org, to learn more. Click on “How to Help” and then “Ways to Give” in the top menu.

Text-to-Give

With this new program, you can text GUIDEDOG10 to 20222 to make a $10 gift or GUIDEDOG25 to 20222 to make a $25 gift. A one-time donation of $10 or $25 will be added to your mobile phone bill. No portion of any amount donated is held by participating wireless providers.

Set up a Recurring Gift

Your monthly donation helps us plan with greater confidence so that we can continue to provide guide dogs and training for people who are blind or visually impaired. There are many advantages to a recurring gift: (1) it’s easy & convenient; (2) your donation goes right to work; (3) you’re in charge; (4) your gift goes further. Visit Visionary.GuideDog.org to learn how to set up your recurring gift.

Planned Giving

Planned giving is your opportunity to protect your family, support causes you believe in, and leave a legacy that reflects what matters to you. For more information on our planned giving opportunities, please contact Jennifer Gisler, chief growth officer, at Jennifer.Gisler@GuideDog.org, for your own estate planning guide and to discuss your options.

Thank you for helping people who are blind or visually impaired live without boundaries!

A Message from our President & CEO

(continued from cover)

as they await the day when they will be partnered with an individual with disabilities.

When dogs return from volunteer temp homes or go out to new ones, we have strict procedures set in place to reduce contact between staff and volunteers. We also enforce physical distancing rules and the use of personal protective equipment.

Access to our headquarters was restricted, and we also instituted weekly hospital-grade cleaning for all buildings on campus.

In accordance with New York state stay-at-home mandates, staff who were able to work from home were required to do so and will continue to do so for the foreseeable future.

We suspended business travel except for emergencies, but increased our outreach to graduates. These “touchpoint” calls by instructors and field representatives allowed us to check on the status of each team and offer help if needed.

As the country begins to take steps to reopen the economy, our leadership team meets regularly to plan how we can best serve our applicants, who have been waiting patiently for their guide or service dog through this time. Our primary goal is to ensure that our applicants, staff, and volunteers remain healthy as we resume “normal” operations.

We recognize these are difficult times, but now, more than ever, your support is vital to us and the people we serve. The isolation and anxiety we have all felt can be magnified for a person with disabilities. We have included the many ways you can ensure that everyone on our growing waiting list can get the guide dog they need.

I have been incredibly impressed by the collective spirit and passion of our volunteers, donors, and staff in response to this crisis so that we may ensure the safety and well-being of our community.

Please stay healthy and safe!

With gratitude for your support,

John Miller
President & CEO
Matt Sherwood grew up in a small town in upstate New York. His family maintained gardens and kept farm animals, and with a hundred acres of land that was bordered by thousands of acres of state lands, it was a very “outside oriented life,” he says. “It wasn’t anything elaborate or fancy, but I loved it.”

**Matt Sherwood**

Conquering Challenges

If he wasn’t working outdoors, Sherwood could be found on the playing field. “I loved sports growing up,” he says. “Football, track & field, basketball … I was just an athlete.”

Sherwood has always been driven to succeed. From an early age, he was interested in finance. “I was reading books on stocks and bonds at 10 years old,” he recalls. As he grew up, he became determined to conquer the world beyond his hometown.

Through his hard work and efforts, Sherwood was awarded an academic scholarship to Liberty University, where he also played Division I football. He briefly considered a career in professional sports. “I would have loved to play in the NFL,” he says. “But it’s just so competitive. I decided to be more realistic.”

He had never sacrificed his education for football, and while his teammates might have stayed in the back of the classroom, he made sure he was up front. “I was very dedicated to my education and focused on it,” he says; the discipline he had applied to football, he equally applied to his studies, and he maintained strong grades.

Sherwood received his bachelor’s degree in three years as part of the honors program, and then his MBA a year later. After graduation, he was ready to make his mark on Wall Street.

“Man plans, God laughs”

In 2008, Sherwood’s life was going to schedule: His career was taking off, and he had just started taking individual classes at Northcentral University to help him advance even faster. On the domestic front, he was engaged; he and his wife were married on Friday, August 8, 2008 (they later divorced, and he has subsequently remarried).

Five days later, he woke up to see a “dot in the mirror.” “When I tried to wipe the dot away, I noticed the dot was on my hand.” Anywhere he looked, there was a white dot in the center of his vision.

At the time, he says, he didn’t think anything of it and didn’t say anything because he was unsure of what it was. “I decided to focus on what I needed to do.”

Sherwood’s job trading international securities was stressful. In addition to a full day at the office, it often involved working in the middle of the night as he completed global transactions. He wondered if the dot was the result of stress and a terrible sleep schedule.

The next day, the dot had increased to the size of a quarter. “I was a little fearful of what could be happening,” he says, “but I just wanted to focus on what was happening workwise and not be distracted.” He drove to the Long Island Rail Road, went to his job in Manhattan, and continued working when he got home that night.

Friday – one week after he married – Sherwood woke up with his vision significantly obscured by the bright light. “I was 24 years old, getting started in my career. I didn’t know what else to do, so I went to work.” He got in his car and drove to the station. “I remember getting honked at because I had gone through a red light.” He felt as though his mobility was already impaired.

But at the office, he couldn’t see anything on his computer monitors. He closed out his open trading positions, called his [now ex-] wife, and arranged to see an ophthalmologist immediately. By 1 p.m., Sherwood recalls, “The eye doctor told me, ‘You are blind. This is your life. There’s nothing you can do about it.’”

Sherwood sought second opinions, but the answer remained the same. After this news, his mindset had to shift. With a new wife and baby on the way, he

(continued on page 6)
Lions Recognition Day

Unfortunately, this year we were not able to honor our Lions friends and supporters the way we usually do. Instead, we hosted “Live with Lauren,” a virtual event, with special guest Guide Dog Foundation graduate Lauren Berglund. Lauren shared her guide dog journey and held a Q&A session. Lauren trained with her second guide dog, Sami, in June 2019. Three months later, she joined the Foundation as the new consumer relations coordinator and moved from Iowa to New York.

Ginny Williams of the Oyster Bay Lions wrote us afterward: “Thank you so much for letting me know about the virtual meeting. I enjoyed it very much and loved hearing Lauren’s story.”

In the Time of Coronavirus...

The coronavirus pandemic has had an impact on our day-to-day operations, but as always, the staff of the Guide Dog Foundation has risen to the challenge to adapt how we operate and care for our dogs, our students, our volunteers, and our fellow staff members.

While most of our staff works remotely, members of our canine care staff must be on premises to provide care for our dogs. In accordance with current CDC guidelines, all on-campus staff wear masks when interacting within 6 feet of each other.

We’ve added plexiglass barriers to cubicles in our administrative center.

Within days of our decision to relocate as many dogs and puppies as possible to volunteer temporary homes, the kennels were empty.

Kennel supervisor Kim Marino oversees the breeding and development center kennel, so she often interacts with staff and volunteers & properly “masks up.”

Canine care associate, Genesis Arias, wears masks and gloves to clean the kennels in the breeding and development center.

(right) Volunteer Doreen Zipf delivering cloth masks for our staff.

Staff veterinarian Dr. Kerrie Cavallo and kennel supervisor Janice Simonin perform an examination.

In the Time of Coronavirus...
While we continue to practice physical distancing, puppy Spirit got a chance to greet some of her friends from the safety of her puppy raiser’s car. There’s nothing like a puppy to brighten your day during these difficult times. Visit Puppy.GuideDog.org to learn how you can become a volunteer puppy raiser.

Puppy raiser Sherri Heller and puppy Hansen spread cheer outside her mother’s nursing home.
recalls thinking: “What can I do to still be productive? How can I still support my family?”

**Determination**

With the positive attitude and determination that had informed his entire life, Sherwood did not dwell on his “loss,” but focused on the challenges he could overcome. He used assistive technology to help him do his job, but he refused to go through visual rehabilitation therapy for a long time. “I used a white cane I bought off the internet but never learned how to use it properly.”

Although he had stopped taking classes before he lost his vision, Sherwood decided to continue his studies and earn his PhD in business administration. “I definitely had to learn in a different way,” he says, “and depend more on being an auditory rather than a visual learner.” He took advantage of whatever assistive technology was available and finished his dissertation in 2014.


He is a member of the faculty at The King’s College in New York and has been a guest lecturer at Columbia University.

**Slow steps**

About two years after losing his vision, Sherwood finally underwent orientation and mobility training and learned how to use a white safety cane to help him navigate his world.

“I was very mobile with the white cane.” However, he adds, it didn’t change that he would often run into things, which left him with injuries, sometimes severe. “I once lost a cane on Fifth Avenue [in New York City] to a bus,” he recalls. “Another time, I was walking down Madison Avenue and someone yelled, ‘Blind guy! You’re in the middle of the road!’”

It was time for a guide dog, even though he had concerns that a guide dog never gets “free time.” (As he discovered, guide dogs love to work. “Work is fun and play is fun.”)

Because he lived close to the Guide Dog Foundation, the Foundation was able to offer Sherwood the opportunity to go on a demo walk with a trainer and a future guide dog.

The first time he walked with his guide, “It blew me away,” he says. “I was nervous that a guide dog would slow me down because I walk fast.” It was just the opposite. “My guide dog navigates through crowds like a running back.” In fact, in areas that used to make him anxious, “It’s a breeze now. I hold onto the harness and trust him.” The two have been partners since April 2018.

**Perceptions**

For a long time, Sherwood was concerned about how other people would perceive him for being blind. “Now it’s part of my life. I don’t worry about their perception of my ability or being blind.” He takes pride in all he has accomplished and overcome.

Sherwood currently manages his own financial portfolio and offers consulting services, and he has developed a proprietary financial modeling tool for managing money.

While the lockdown has had an impact on his mobility, Sherwood makes sure that he and his guide, Chris, go for walks every day from his home to the train station. They practice commands and obedience. “I want him to stay sharp,” he says. “He has not lost any of his training.”

Chris is now very much part of Sherwood’s family. This past July, when Sherwood married his wife, Stephanie, Chris walked down the aisle with Sherwood’s daughter, Chiara, who was a bridesmaid. Chris also pulled double duty as Sherwood’s “best dog.”

Chris has made such a difference that Sherwood was happy to have a chance to give back. In March 2019, he accepted an invitation to join the Guide Dog Foundation’s board of directors and serves on the investment committee.

Sherwood chokes up when he talks about his guide dog. Thanks to Chris, he says, “I have eyes. They’re Chris’s eyes, but I have eyes again. It’s awesome. It’s changed my life.”
On a regular workday seven years ago, Carolyn Anders – who works for the Marriott Corporation – was intrigued when she noticed a fellow Marriott employee walking with a dog through corporate headquarters. As she later found out, the other employee was raising the puppy to become a guide dog for someone who was blind.

Carolyn Anders: It’s About the Lives You Change

Marriott has always been a strong proponent of giving back to the community and encourages employee volunteer efforts. It was during an employee appreciation event that Anders visited a table staffed by Guide Dog Foundation volunteers, and when she saw the two puppies with them, well, that was all it took for her to get hooked. “It sucked me right in, and I signed up right away,” she recalls.

Making a bold leap

Anders was 19 years old when she moved from Pittsburgh to Maryland for a job opportunity, even though it was against her parents’ wishes. “It didn’t turn out to be what I thought it was going to be,” she says, “but I was too proud to go back home, so I made it work.”

And for the past 40 years, Anders has called Maryland home, where she married and raised a family. She joined Marriott in 1980 as a purchasing manager and has been with the company ever since.

When the economy collapsed in 2008, Anders was laid off but eventually was hired back. “They brought me back because of my knowledge of the procurement process and everything entailed in it,” she says. She is now a senior business analyst in global procurement and design, working on projects both nationally and internationally. (At the time of this writing, she is currently furloughed because of the pandemic.)

Puppy raiser

Anders knew the decision to become a puppy raiser couldn’t be hers entirely; her family had to be on board. She brought up the subject when they were all out to dinner for her daughter’s birthday. She explained the process and recalls her daughter’s response: “Mom, you’re never going to be able to give it up.”

“And I said, ‘You know, I might, it might upset me, but I really want to do this. I need everybody’s buy-in.’”

In 2013, puppy Darrell joined the family for the next 12 months. Anders would take him on the Metro into Washington, DC, and to the office. He would join her in meetings, different Marriott functions, parades, college football games, anywhere that would make a good socialization experience.

But eventually the time came for him to return to the Foundation for his formal guide dog training, “I cried a lot,” she remembers. “It was very, very difficult for us to do.”

However, three months later, Darrell was released for minor behavioral issues, and Anders and her family adopted him. (Puppy raisers have the right of first refusal if a puppy is released from our programs.)

Darrell, she readily admits, “is the absolute love of my life, the apple of my eye.” Even though he was not destined to become a guide dog, he has become Anders’s “right-hand dog” to help her raise and train other puppies.

And over the years, there have been many. Melissa Harrington, puppy program representative for our Virginia–Washington, DC–Maryland area puppy raising group, asked Anders if she would become a group leader. Eventually, she became a volunteer area coordinator and began leading training classes for the Foundation’s college raisers from the University of Maryland.

She also does home visits and one-on-one visits to help puppy raisers with any issues they might be having with their dogs. Now in the time of COVID, these classes (continued on page 8)

Definitions

**Group leader:** Assists the area coordinators with new applicants, home visits, and administrative tasks. Learns how to lead classes of other volunteer puppy raisers to gain leadership experience. Often a “stepping stone” to area coordinator.

**Area coordinator:** Experienced volunteers who teach classes and help puppy raisers with all their questions. They oversee a larger group of puppy raisers.

**Puppy camper:** Puppy raisers with excellent handling skills who can work with a pup on particular issues while also caring for the dog for a short period of time.
Carolyn Anders
(continued from page 7)

and visits are being done virtually. “We’re trying our best to let them know we’re still here, and if they need help to let us know.”

Another big part of Anders’s current responsibilities is “puppy camping.” She has, by her estimation, camped about 40 dogs.

Puppy program representative Deana Stone, says: “Carolyn never bats an eye at taking a puppy to camp, including the more challenging puppies too. She’s done all that while working a corporate job at the same time. She’s introduced other now-puppy raisers to the organization too.”

Anders adds: “I love working with [the puppies] a lot. I really do.” And if she takes a pup to work with her, “it’s very calming for me. They just kind of sit under my desk and, you know, not much bothers me when I have a little puppy there.”

In 2017, Anders was the full-time raiser for puppy Tricia. Although Tricia didn’t make it as a guide dog, she did become a service dog for children with autism. (We have cooperative agreements with other service dog schools that may be able to use one of our dogs for their programs.)

Although the two pups she raised did not become assistance dogs, Anders has had the opportunity to see first-hand the impact puppy raisers have for individuals with disabilities.

On a training visit to the Foundation’s campus in Smithtown, “I happened to meet a few of the graduates and they came up to us with tears in their eyes, thanking us for what we did. It just reached my heart, and it sticks with me all the time.”

She concedes it’s never easy to give up a puppy you’re raising, but it’s the lives you change that matter. “I just feel really good about what I’m doing.”

Carolyn is also one of our volunteers who go on speaking engagements to educate the public about the missions of the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs. Here she speaks to a Girl Scout troop.