“Hi, everyone,” says the vivacious young woman as she sits on the floor of her bedroom, waving to her YouTube audience. “My name is Lauren.”

Almost immediately, a black Labrador Retriever walks in front of her, and she laughs delightedly. “And this is my guide dog Sheba.”

Lauren Berglund and Sheba have their own YouTube channel, and they’re back for another video, this time on how to pack for a trip when traveling with a guide dog.

Berglund maintains an active social media presence. In addition to YouTube, she’s also on Instagram and keeps a regular blog. These outlets serve as a way for her to share her life with a guide dog and the myriad of health issues that she deals with every day. Not, as she says, “for pity or so people treat me different. Instead I share for education and awareness.”

Berglund attends Iowa State University where she is studying child, adult, and family services. While she’s undecided on a future career path, she says, “I hope to work with children and families who are facing chronic illness or disability. My dream would be to help [them] learn how to advocate for their needs in the education and health care systems.”

Advocacy informs much of what Berglund does. In addition to her personal educational outreach on social media, she’s involved with the Alliance for Disability Awareness at Iowa State, a campus club with a twofold mission: to raise awareness about people with disabilities, and to support those students who have disabilities. When the school year starts in August, she’ll take over as president.

In an article for the Iowa State Daily, the college newspaper, Berglund said: “I was taught how to advocate, and so many people with disabilities, especially...”
The Guide Dog Foundation has always been proud of its standing with charity watchdogs such as Charity Navigator and the Better Business Bureau’s Wise Giving Alliance. Increasingly, donors are becoming more sophisticated and selective in their giving as more detailed and useful information about charities has become available.

GuideStar is an information provider, the world’s largest source of information on nonprofit organizations. In June, we upgraded our status at GuideStar from Silver to Gold, earning the GuideStar Gold Seal of Transparency.

Many charity rating organizations require a nonprofit to submit its financial information; the charity watchdog then performs analyses on this data. In addition to financial data, GuideStar requests information about goals, strategies, capabilities, and programs. This detailed information gives community members and potential donors the opportunity to explore organizations in depth and decide which charity to support.

Now that we’ve achieved Gold status, we’ve begun working to upgrade the Guide Dog Foundation to GuideStar’s highest level, Platinum.

You trust us to spend your donor dollars wisely, and we want to repay that trust by being as transparent as possible.

One of the Guide Dog Foundation’s most popular events is our annual Recognition Day. This was my first Volunteer Recognition Day, and I was impressed by the energy and passion I saw all around me. What I find unique about the Guide Dog Foundation’s Recognition Day is that it is all-inclusive – we believe it is important to show our appreciation for all our volunteers, no matter their role or where they’re located. Last year, more than 1600 volunteers contributed almost 3.5 million hours of their time across the country.

We have so many volunteer opportunities at the Foundation. (You can learn more at Volunteer.GuideDog.org.) Each one of these roles is filled by someone who has made the commitment of their time and energy to helping others.

You can visit our Facebook and Instagram pages to see photos from the day. We also livestreamed the Celebration Saturday ceremony, where we honored our newest guide dog graduates (the video is on Facebook).

Thank you for your support of the Guide Dog Foundation and people with disabilities.

John Miller
President & Chief Executive Officer
Each year, more than 400 puppies join the programs of the Guide Dog Foundation. Their ultimate goal? To become guide or service dogs for individuals across the country who have visual, hearing, emotional, or other physical disabilities. These special dogs provide enhanced mobility, a renewed sense of pride and self-reliance, and make ordinary moments extraordinary.

However, no great puppy ever became a great assistance dog without having an equally great name. And that’s where you come in. Beginning July 1, donors have the opportunity to give a puppy its special name for life. You can honor a loved one or beloved pet, or name the puppy after your business, organization, or school at a special discount.

From July 1 to September 4, 2018, donors can sponsor one puppy for a gift of $6,000; two for a gift of $11,000; or three for $15,000.

We’re on a mission to make sure all our puppies start their journey with their right paw forward by leaving our nursery with a moniker fit for the life-changing work they’ll do.

Name your puppy today and change a life tomorrow!

If you have any questions or would like further information about this special promotion, visit PupPromo.GuideDog.org or contact Donna DeSivo at 631-930-9037; Donna@GuideDog.org.

Heritage Society – Planned Giving

The Guide Dog Foundation’s Heritage Society was created to recognize and thank donors who have chosen to remember the Foundation in their wills and bequests. With thoughtful gift and estate planning, donors can maximize their charitable giving while reducing income taxes, capital gains, and/or estate taxes.

When donors become members of the Heritage Society, they have the satisfaction of knowing that their gift will benefit many generations of guide and/or service dog users. Their names will be recognized in our Heritage Society membership list, and they will receive all our publications.

To learn more about planned giving, visit PlannedGiving.GuideDog.org or call Katherine Fritz, director of development, at 631-930-9057.

Text to Give

The Guide Dog Foundation has a text-to-give program, in which donors can make gifts to support the Foundation via their mobile phones.

How to Make a Text Gift

1. Text @GuideDog to 52014. A reply text will ask for the amount.
2. Click the link to set up your text giving account. We’ll remember your number for future gifts.
3. Manage your giving easily with text commands. (Text “support” for a full list.)
Recognition Day

Recognition Day is our annual celebration to honor our volunteers and supporters. It is thanks to their commitment that we can provide guide and service dogs for people who are blind or have low vision, or who have disabilities other than blindness.

Once again, the June guide dog class graduated on the same day. Lions, Knights of Columbus, and volunteers had another opportunity to see the impact their hard work and dedication make. With their new guide dogs, our graduates returned home to start new lives without boundaries.

The Knights of Columbus #3476 Memorare Council has supported the Guide Dog Foundation for many years. Grand Knight Larry Goggin (second from right) presents a check to John Miller, the Foundation’s new president and CEO (far right). Also on hand (left to right) are Frank Vereline, co-chair of the guide dog committee; Olivia Poff and Sunny; and Christine Goggin, past president of the Columbiettes Memorare Council.

Knights of Columbus

Lions

This year, about 90 Lions and 20 Leos visited our campus for Lions Recognition Day.

(Above) Checking in at the registration desk before the start of Lions Recognition Day.

Leo Clubs are the youth program of Lions International, where people between the ages of 12 and 30 learn personal and professional development by helping their local communities. Below, Leos and their advisers from Hampton Bays and Bellmore.

Volunteers

Almost 400 volunteers and their families joined us for annual Recognition Day. Nationwide, we have more than 1600 volunteers.

(Left) Volunteers at the registration table.

Sand art is always a popular activity for the kids.

Dog CPR was a popular new activity this year.

Want to get in on the action next year? There’s no shortage of volunteer opportunities. To find the right one for you, visit Volunteer.GuideDog.org.
George H.W. Bush Gets a Service Dog

America’s VetDogs, the sister organization to the Guide Dog Foundation, made a high-level placement in June as yellow Labrador Retriever Sully was placed with George H.W. Bush, 41st president of the United States.

We worked closely with the former president’s team to determine the service dog skills that would be most beneficial to him. America’s VetDogs was recommended to the Bush family through our relationship with Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, Maryland.

We are proud to answer our country’s call. This placement exemplifies the pride, quality, and reputation of both the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs. We are grateful to our staff, donors, volunteers, and other supporters for their commitment to our mission.

Please follow President Bush on Twitter (@GeorgeHWBush) and Sully on Instagram (@sullyhwbush) for regular updates as they learn to work together as a team.

Kings Park Superthon

In April, the National Honor Society at Kings Park High School hosted Superthon, its annual fundraiser to support local charities. John Brennan (far left) is not only a veteran and Guide Dog Foundation graduate, he’s an alumnus of Kings Park High School. JB shared his experiences as a student at the school and explained how his guide dogs have changed his life. The honor society has sponsored several puppies over the years, and we thank them for their commitment to helping those who are visually impaired.

Strike a Pose!

Recently, the Guide Dog Foundation gave its iconic yellow puppy vest a fashion make-over. We worked with Ruffwear, manufacturer of outdoor canine gear, to design a more modern and functional puppy coat. Foundation puppies will be stylin’ now as they experience the world around them thanks to their volunteer puppy raisers.

The new vest is made of waterproof material that will handle wear and tear with ease. The streamlined design, complete with the logos of the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs, is quick and easy to put on using side-release buckles, and it will better fit and adjust to a growing pup’s body. Reflective accent panels along the sides and in the chest martingale enhance visibility on all sides.

To see our pups in their new jackets, follow the hashtag #GDFRuffwear on our social media pages.

It’s Sunny All the Time

When he’s not learning new tasks, Sunny is cavorting with celebrities from all over the country. He got to meet Chris Pratt and Bryce Dallas Howard, stars of the movie Jurassic World: Fallen Kingdom, who were visiting the set of TODAY to talk about the newest installment of the Jurassic Park series. He even dressed for the part!

Dog Treats
blind students, are not really taught that. My hope is [that] I can make it easier for the people that come behind me, but hopefully also teach others how to advocate for themselves because I think it’s one of the most important skills anyone can have.”

Navigating her way

Berglund was born with a rare genetic condition called oculocutaneous albinism, which affects 1 in 20,000 people worldwide and cuts across ethnic groups and geographical regions. The condition causes a lack of pigmentation in her skin, hair, and eyes, but Berglund says she has developed some pigmentation as she’s gotten older.

Often, individuals with albinism experience visual impairments to some degree. In Berglund’s case, this has meant that she has been legally blind for her entire life.

She began orientation and mobility training early and used a white cane and different techniques to help her get around.

“Growing up was full of triumphs and struggles,” she recalls. “At a young age I had to learn how to navigate my environment in my own way and at my own pace. My parents quickly learned that they couldn’t move the furniture around in our home because I had a mental map of where things were.”

Life with a guide dog

Although she was comfortable using a cane, Berglund wanted to travel more confidently. “I chose to get a guide dog,” she says, “because of the added freedom and independence they can grant. I knew that having a guide dog would give me greater confidence when navigating large crowds and busy cities.”

And, she laughs, “I’ll admit, having a constant furry companion was definitely a plus.”

Berglund did her due diligence before she applied for her first guide dog. Part of the reason she picked the Guide Dog Foundation she says, is that “I loved that [GDF] has smaller class sizes, allowing for more one-on-one work with the trainer.”

To the graduating high school senior, it was also important “to attend a school that was able to fit me in during the summer between my senior year of high school and freshman year of college.”

And she knew firsthand the quality of the Foundation’s dogs: “I met someone who had a guide dog from [GDF] and was able to see how well the dog was trained.”

Berglund was teamed with her guide dog during class in June 2015. “Sheba and I are a perfect match!” she enthuses.

The black Lab was raised by a college student at the University of George in Athens. (There are about 250 volunteer puppy raisers at UGA, working with 100 pups at any one time.) To future college freshman Berglund, “This was a perfect start for her.”

The first day guide dog students arrive on campus, they learn how to navigate the grounds and through the student residence.

After lunch on the second day, it’s time for them to meet their new companions, a joyful occasion we call “Dog Day.” Student and dog spend some special time alone after they meet each other, but the real work soon begins.

“Training was admittedly very stressful,” Berglund recalls. “There was so much to learn, from foot work to commands to interacting with the public. My trainer was beyond supportive but also tough when needed so that Sheba and I could be our very best.”

During the first week of training, all guide dog students follow the same basic curriculum as they learn to work together with their dogs. The second week of training builds on the first week’s basics.

“Our training was individualized to our lives back home and the environments we would navigate,” Berglund says. “We worked on country walks in places with no sidewalks to the insanely busy sidewalks of Flushing, Queens. It was an emotional, exhausting roller coaster that I would do all over again for another dog like Sheba.”

What difference has having a guide dog made in her life?

“The answer is so difficult for me to put into words,” she says. “It’s extraordinary. Crowded environments and large busy street crossings have gone from daunt-
The boards of directors for the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs determine the overall governing policies and strategic directions of the organizations, while the staff carries out the day-to-day operations. Our board members have backgrounds that cover the gamut of professions and industries. We are fortunate that such people are dedicated to serving individuals with disabilities. We are proud to welcome four new members to the boards of the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs, and we look forward to their contributions to the success of our missions.

New Board Members

Walter (Jay) Buckley
Walter Buckley is a managing director and senior corporate banker who was responsible for developing and managing core client relationships for the various financial institutions he worked for during the span of his career. “I’m excited to offer my services to these two organizations,” says Buckley. “They each give so much back to the community and to those with disabilities.”

Kristen Chambers
Kristen Chambers is the managing director and global head of media relations at J.P. Morgan Asset Management. She leads a team of public relations professionals in the United States, Asia, Europe, the Middle East, and Africa who are responsible for generating investment coverage across asset classes, supplying daily views from market strategists and investors worldwide, and providing J.P. Morgan’s view on industry-related issues and topics. “I look forward to helping the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs with the work and investment required to maximize the reach and impact of their programs,” she says.

Michael Fischer, O.D., F.A.A.O.
Michael Fischer is the chief of the optometry service at the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center at Northport in Northport, NY. He also served as a member of the Medical Advisory Committee to the New York State Commission for the Blind and currently serves on the program committee of the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs. “It’s an honor for me to join the boards of the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs. Having provided care for both the visually impaired population and the veteran population during my career, I appreciate the positive impact that both guide dogs and service dogs can make in people’s lives,” he says.

Kevin Lynch
Kevin Lynch is the president and chief executive officer of National Industries for the Blind (NIB) in Alexandria, VA, the nation’s largest employment resource for people who are blind. Since joining NIB in 1994, Lynch has served in a number of leadership roles, working with NIB’s network of associated nonprofit agencies to expand opportunities for meaningful employment and economic independence for people who are blind. “The Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs provide such an important service in helping people who are blind or have disabilities live more independent lives,” says Lynch. “It’s a privilege to join the boards of directors and contribute to the organizations’ future success.”

Lauren (continued from page 6)

ing tasks to welcome adventures. I no longer dread having to move through large crowds and instead know that Sheba will guide me through beautifully.”

   Berglund and Sheba have been together for three years. As her junior year of college came to a close, Berglund wrote on the Facebook group for Guide Dog Foundation graduates: “And just like that I’ve completed another semester at Iowa State. While my plans for this summer are still uncertain, this pretty girl remains by my side through everything.”

   Every day, she says, “I take on the world with my crazy, loving, sassy, caring, black Labrador guide dog.”
Top 5 Reasons to Become a Guide Dog Visionary

1. It’s easy. Go to Visionary.GuideDog.org. Click on the “Donate” button. Put in your gift amount, choose a time frame from the drop-down menu, and click on the “Give Now” button. On the next screen, put in your billing information and confirm your amount.

2. Your gift makes a difference right away. Your initial gift is processed the day you sign up and your monthly pledge is automatically billed to your credit card on the same day each month.

3. You’re in charge. As a Guide Dog Visionary, you can change your monthly giving at any time by calling our Guide Dog Foundation Visionary Support Team at 866-838-3647 or by sending an email to Info@GuideDog.org.

4. Your gifts go much further. With monthly giving, we have fewer administrative costs, which means more of your gift goes directly to training the dogs and supporting people who are blind or visually impaired.

5. It’s convenient. You’ll receive an annual statement to assist in your tax preparation.

Visionary.GuideDog.org