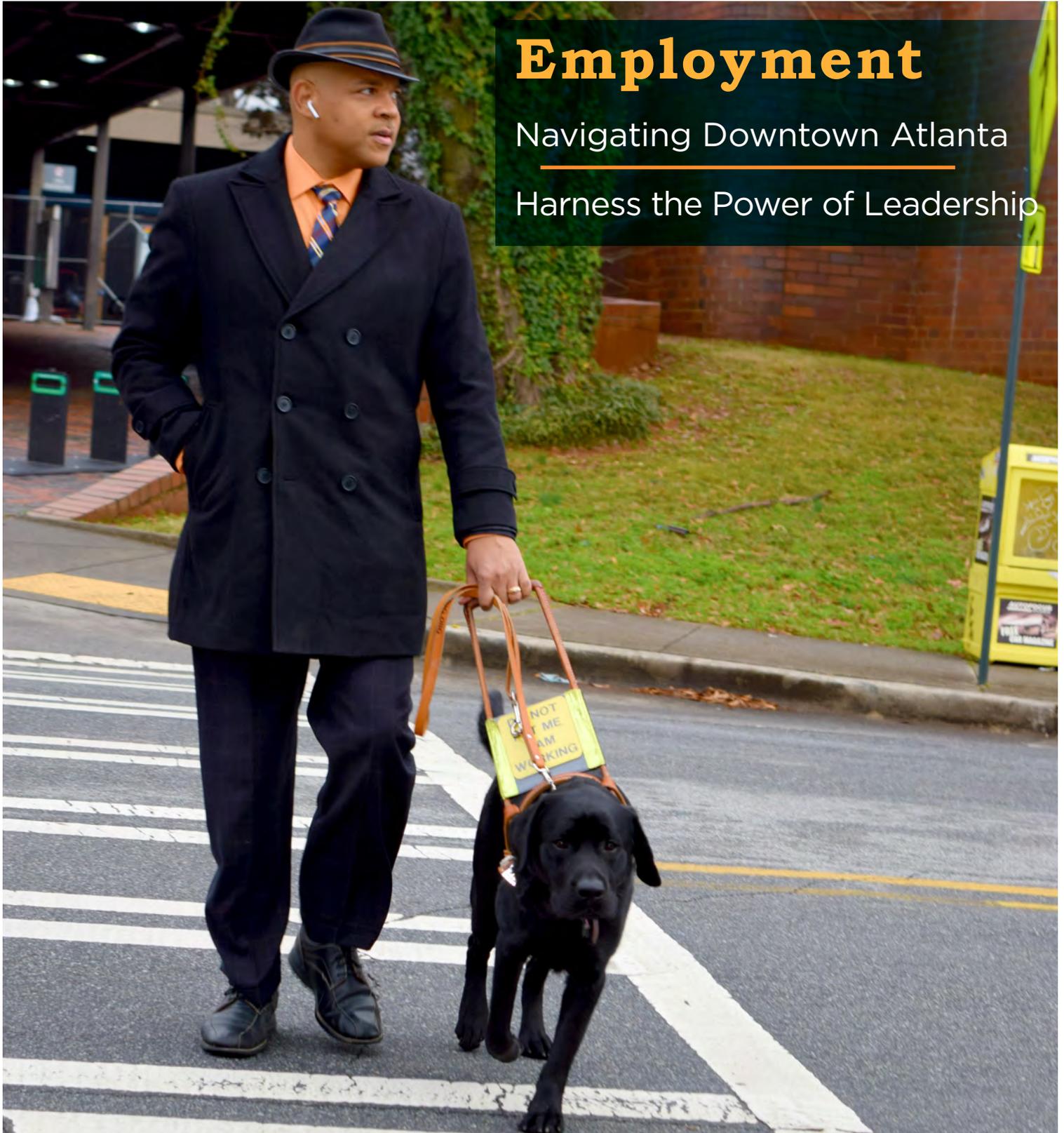




UPDATE

LEADERDOG.ORG | ISSUE 1 | 2019

LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND



Employment

Navigating Downtown Atlanta

Harness the Power of Leadership



Greetings,

Happy New Year! For many, a new year marks the time for resolutions and goal setting. These resolutions range from completing bucket list items, to reading certain books or committing to try new experiences. Some people have employment-based resolutions such as changing jobs or getting a new position. These can be challenging for anyone, but for a person who is visually impaired, they have the extra hurdle of HOW to get to work each day.

In the United States today, 1.3 million people are legally blind. Due in part to travel limitations, a startling 60% of working age adults who are blind are unemployed. This causes financial hardship and can lead to negative psychological effects.

That's where Leader Dog comes in. From summer experience camp to white cane training to matching people with a Leader Dog, we provide the tools and training to position people to join the workforce or advance their career.

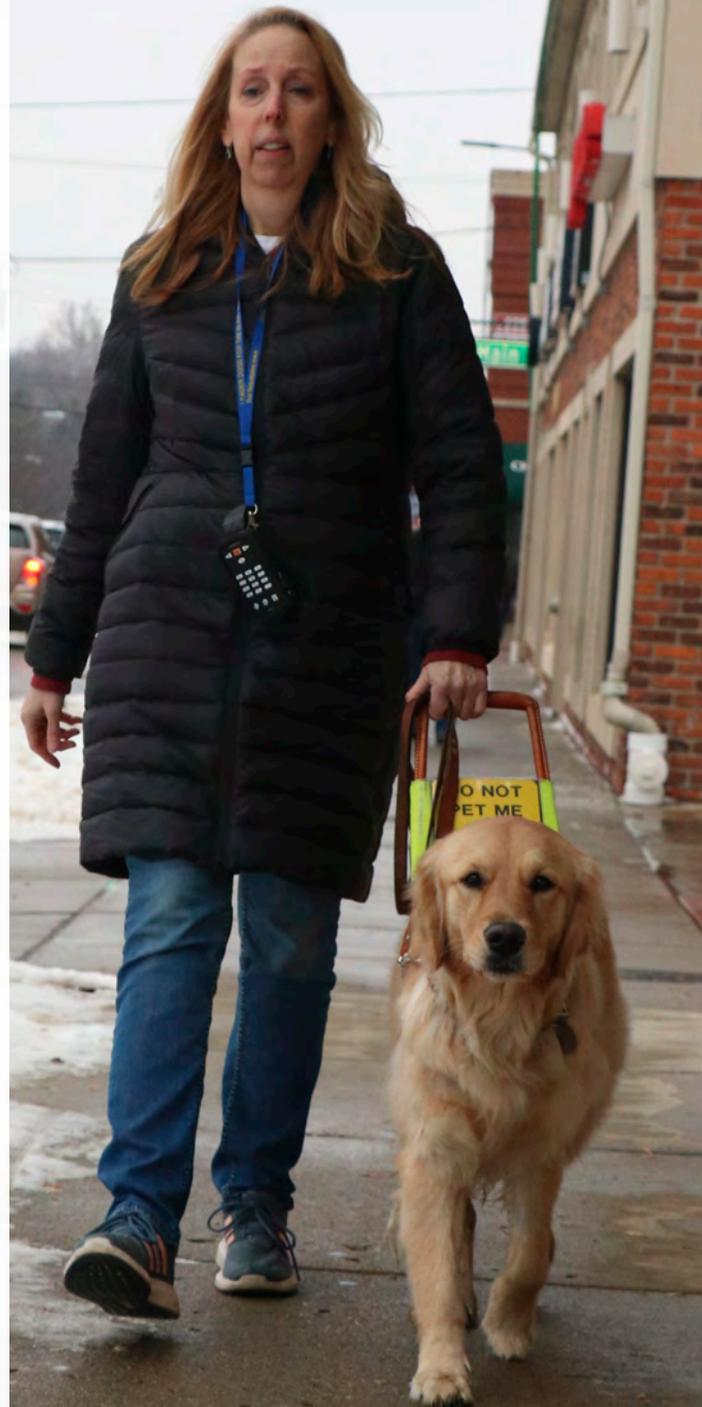
In this issue of Update, you'll learn more about how Leader Dog programs impact our clients' ability to obtain or maintain employment. Whether it is helping provide our clients with the confidence to go to school or improve their ability to use mass transit to get to a job interview, we provide individuals with the travel skills to get to work safely and independently every day.

It is because of you that we can change the lives of so many people who are blind or visually impaired and that we are able to continue to offer all our services free of charge.

Thank you for helping us make people unstoppable.

Susan M. Daniels

Susan M. Daniels
President & CEO



A Move to Greater Independence

Juanita Lillie



Unlike many of the teenagers who attend Summer Experience Camp, Juanita Lillie did not leave with plans to get a Leader Dog. “I was young,” says Juanita, “I didn’t want to have to ‘pick up’ after a dog.”

Over the following years, many people, including some LDB clients, told Juanita that her independence would be greater with a dog. “Everyone was telling me ‘you’re going to love it.’ But it is one of those things that you just don’t believe until you do it for yourself.”

And Juanita did it for herself in July 2017 when she was matched with LD Baylor, a male black Labrador retriever. “I always assumed I would have usable vision to help me navigate, but from 2013 to 2017 I noticed more vision loss. I lost the ability to read large print with assistive technology when I went to grad school.” Until this time Juanita trusted and traveled well with her cane, but she was now ready to ‘pick up’ after a dog.

When job hunting, Juanita counts Baylor as an asset because he boosts her confidence to interact and travel. She credits him for helping her connect with people because he is a great conversation starter. She likes that potential employers can see that she gets around easily on her own.

LDB CLIENT JUANITA LILLIE
AND LD BAYLOR—JULY 2017.



As a client specialist for the Social Security Administration, Juanita works with people who are retiring, require needs-based resources or have various disabilities. “I like the job because each day is different. Sometimes I deal with people over the phone, but other days it is totally face-to-face.”

Juanita likes to pique Baylor’s interest by challenging him with different routes when walking to work each day. “I can walk around the lake, or by the river, or through the cemetery. It’s good for obedience training because some areas have ducks, some geese and some people.” Though she loves the ability to just avoid obstacles with Baylor, she will explore a new route by herself with a cane to become more familiar with where benches, light posts and other obstacles are so she can direct Baylor where to go when they’re traveling together.

JUANITA (FAR LEFT) DURING
SUMMER EXPERIENCE CAMP
IN 2007.



LETTERS TO LEADER DOG



Sadona and I are doing well. She just “celebrated” her 6th birthday. Sadona’s work is great. We enjoy walking around our neighborhood and going places like church and shopping.

My mom wanted me to thank you for matching me with Sadona. She used to worry about me crossing crazy busy streets alone. She hasn’t worried (much) since she knows Sadona is by my side and won’t let me cross if it’s not safe.

Thank you again for matching me with such a smart and assertive worker who loves her work and enjoys playtime. She has boosted my confidence so much! Her silly antics keep me laughing. She is just the dog I need! Thank you Leader Dog!

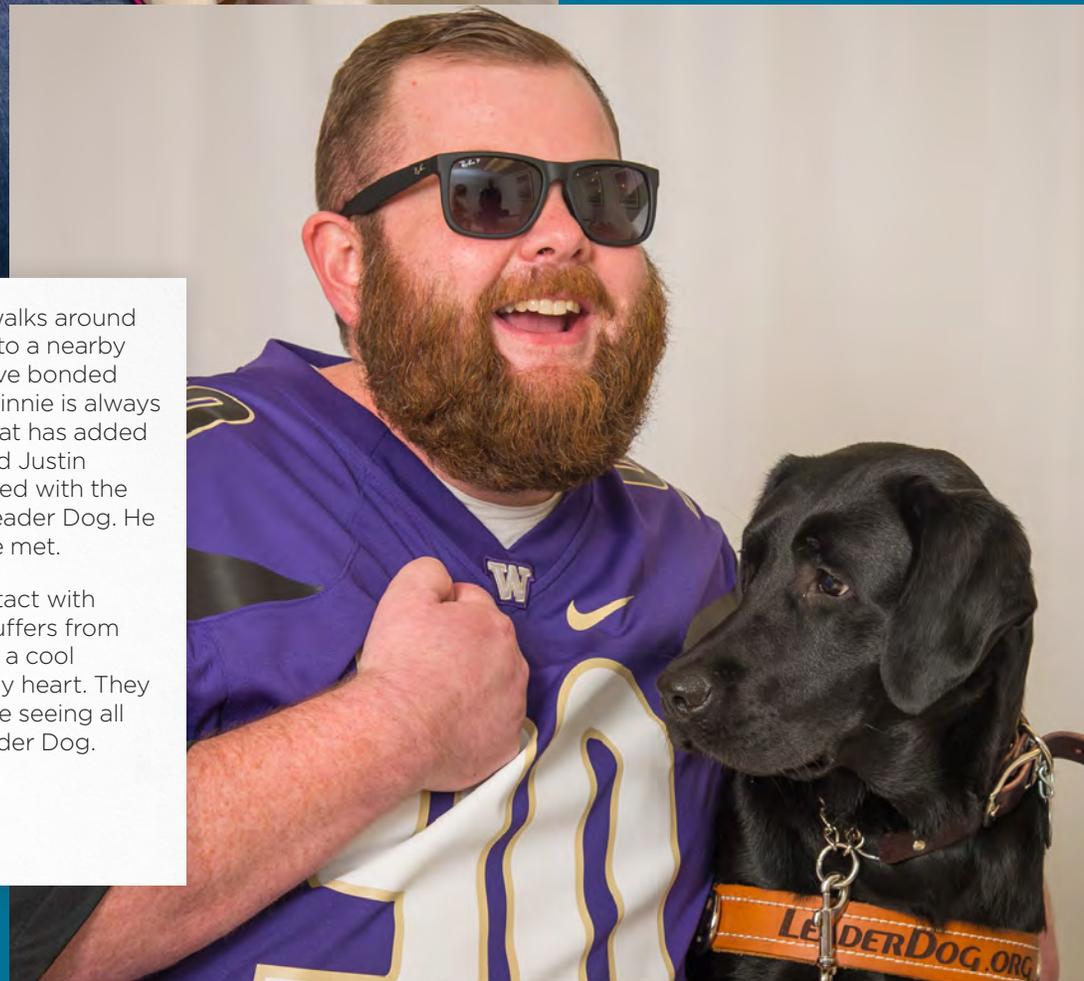
Terra Peterson

Justin and Winnie go for daily walks around the neighborhood and walk up to a nearby shopping center often. They have bonded immensely over the last year. Winnie is always at his side. She is a great dog that has added a lot of joy to our family. She and Justin are best friends! We are overjoyed with the experience that Justin had at Leader Dog. He still talks about all the people he met.

We’ve been able to keep in contact with the puppy raiser family, the Stauffers from PA, through Facebook. It’s such a cool relationship that really warms my heart. They are such a great family and I love seeing all the work they’ve done with Leader Dog.

Sincerely,

Amanda Mellis (Justin’s sister)



Hello! I just finished training at the Leader Dog campus and I am so grateful for your organization. I came to Leader Dog a broken person—I left an independent person again!

You have some of the best staff, instructors, puppy raisers and veterinarians I have ever encountered. I owe you... not just for the courage to go again without my sight, but for giving my life back to me with this beautiful dog Bailey. I will recommend you to all in need of Orientation & Mobility Training or a guide dog. I have no complaints. It was an eye-opening and beautiful experience. Who knows what me and Bailey will get into but I do know the adventures ahead will be awesome!

Thank you,
Jonelle Bray



I just returned from Leader Dog. After many years of being unable to go outside without assistance this was a life changer. I live in Las Vegas and the traffic here is really pedestrian unfriendly so I was petrified to leave [my place] alone.

I am proud to say since I have gotten home just three days ago I have been out more than the last six months. I went to the pharmacy last night in the dark alone to get my prescriptions that were ready. My fiancée was nervous but I wanted to do it alone as I have not done in at least eight years. I am 50 and my life is a LOT different than what it once was.

I plan on going back for a dog as soon as I can because every single person at Leader Dog was amazing, friendly, and totally caring of each and every client. Out of a 5-star rating in my book they get a 10. Everyone from the front desk, instructors, kitchen staff, and even the sales people in the store were totally amazing and truly care about every client that is there.

Christopher LaRue

Navigating in Downtown Atlanta



Eric Smith's voice is warm and soothing, his manner is friendly, and you can tell that he is truly listening to you. These traits serve him well as a certified mediator with the Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution. He handles basic, divorce, and domestic violence cases in both downtown Atlanta and the Fulton County courts.

Eric truly enjoys his career. "I mediate cases between disputing parties to reach a resolution," explains Eric. "I am the peace maker, the voice of reason, and at the end of the day I feel good because I help people to communicate."

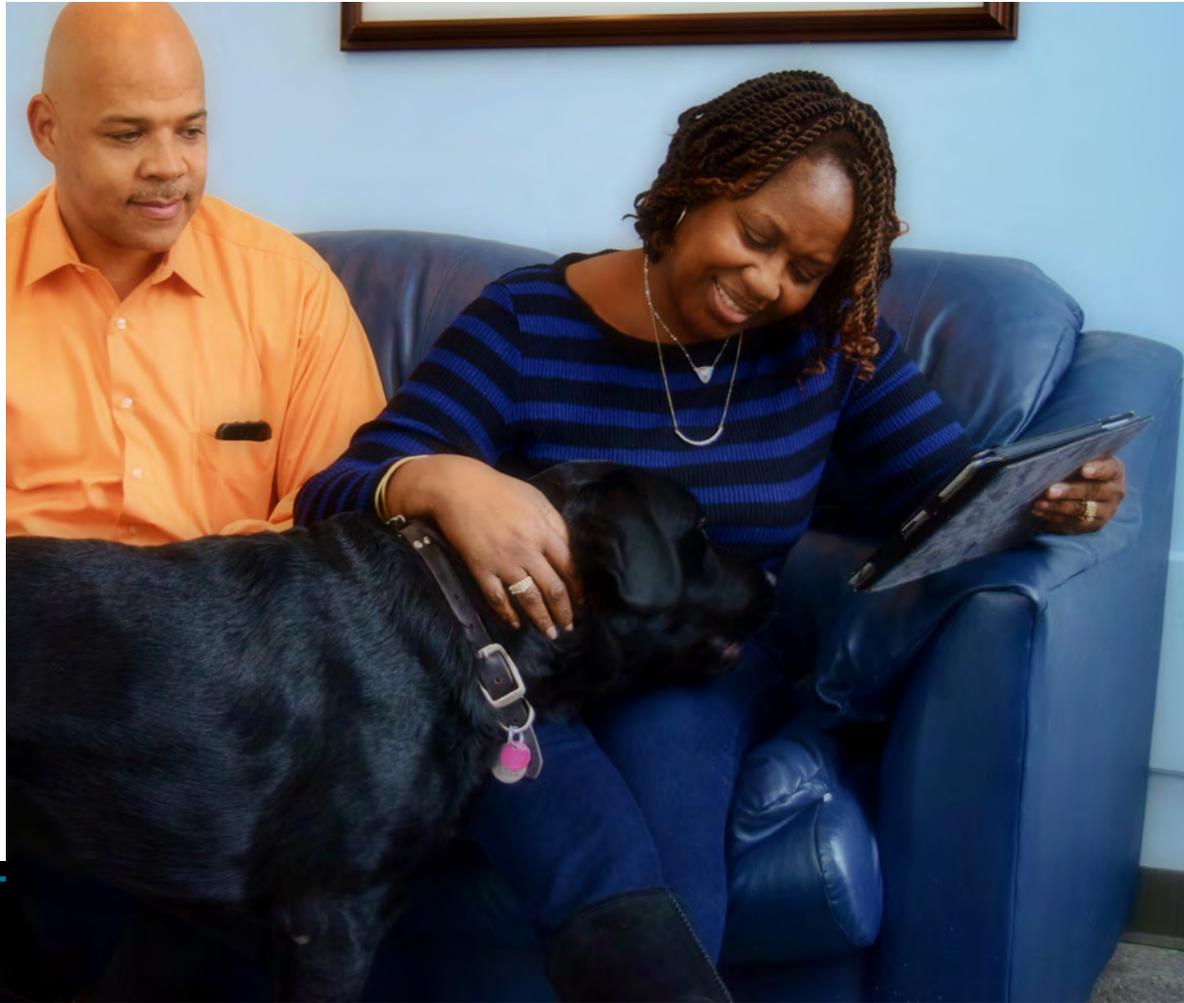
For eight years Eric commuted to his job in downtown Atlanta via the metro and he was proficient at getting around with a cane. He often commutes with his wife, who rides the train three stops farther than Eric. She enjoyed watching him navigate through the station until one day when she saw him going the wrong way to get to the stairs. And she couldn't get off the train to help. Both Eric and his wife had been aware that his vision was getting worse, but they didn't realize how much until that day. Now, they decided together, it was time to research how to get Eric a guide dog.

The ability to travel alone via the metro is crucial for Eric. He doesn't always commute with his wife because he mediates in several locations and at different times of the day. He is also required to take continuing education courses, which are often offered at night and in downtown Atlanta. Being able to turn to Leader Dog for training at this point of his life has allowed

(continued on page 8)

◀ LDB CLIENT ERIC SMITH
COMMUTES TO HIS JOB
VIA THE METRO TRAIN.

“THE BENEFIT OF HAVING [LD] EXCEL IS GETTING TO/FROM WORK. ONCE IN MEDIATION, EXCEL SITS BESIDE MY CHAIR AND GETS COMFORTABLE. HE KNOWS HE’S A BEAUTIFUL DOG AND HE REALIZES WHEN PEOPLE SAY HE IS BEAUTIFUL, LIKE, ‘YES, I AM.’”



“LEADER DOG TRAINING INCLUDES TRAVELING TO NEARBY CITIES ON BUSES. THIS HELPS ACCLIMATE THE DOGS TO PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION WHEN RETURNING HOME WITH THE CLIENT.” ~GDMI Jamie Togonal



Photo by Jerry Zolynsky of On Location Photography

Eric to maintain his career path and get to his appointments safely by himself.

Now, Leader Dog Excel helps Eric find elevators, doors and escalators in the dark train stations. “When I’m traveling alone I listen to the announcements and when my stop is the next station, I make a little sound and Excel gets up and stands in front of the doors and waits for them to open,” says Eric. “Then walking in downtown Atlanta, Excel won’t step out into the street when traffic is coming—it gives me a sense of safety. I also walk faster with Excel than with my cane. When I’m with him we’re really moving.”

Eric’s wife did as many spouses would do and followed Eric and Excel for two days in a row when they returned from Leader Dog. “My wife mentioned that she was comfortable when she saw

how Excel was watching out for me,” said Eric.

As many Leader Dog clients can attest, their dogs often affect the people around them. “Everyone I work with is really supportive of the whole process of having a guide dog. Soon after I got back from Leader Dog, a coworker passed away unexpectedly. Everyone was grieving and when I got to work that day I took Excel’s harness off and let my coworkers pet him for comfort.”

To thank Leader Dog and to help other people who are blind receive the services Leader Dog provides, Eric and his band, the Epitome Show Band, held a charity concert to benefit Leader Dog.

Thank you for returning Dawn Rudolph to her “on the go” lifestyle with Leader Dog Lady by her side.

Make an online donation today to help make more people unstoppable!

[DONATE NOW](#)



Keeping Your Eyes Healthy— *Age-related Macular Degeneration*

PRESENTED BY **Midwest**
EYE CONSULTANTS

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) comes in two forms, “wet” and “dry.” Both forms affect the light-sensitive cells in the macula responsible for central vision and detailed vision. Dry AMD is most common and develops gradually as the cells in the macula begin to deteriorate. Wet AMD advances more rapidly. As AMD progresses, blind or blurry spots can appear in the center of your vision, making it difficult to read, drive or recognize faces. These spots can get bigger as the disease progresses and may eventually severely impair your vision. If you notice any symptoms, see your optometrist for an eye exam as soon as possible.

Some risk factors for AMD like race, gender and family history are out of your control; however, there are several risk factors you can control such as diet, weight, sun exposure and exercise. If you

are diagnosed with AMD, you can decrease the chances of losing your vision by controlling your weight, eating a rainbow of fruit and vegetables (especially dark green leafy vegetables like kale and spinach), eating fatty fish such as salmon and tuna, quitting smoking, exercising, limiting sun exposure, wearing a hat and sunglasses while outside, and controlling your blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

While there is no cure, people rarely become totally blind from AMD. Annual eye exams can diagnose AMD early and allow you more time to treat the disease and slow its onset. Treatment may include ocular vitamins, laser treatments and vision aids. Your optometrist will be able to determine the best treatment plan for you.

For more information visit: midwesteyeconsultants.com/how-to/age-related-macular-degeneration.

TAKE *Care*
of your
EYES!



A Unique Leadership Workshop

The human resources industry has two problems. First, they need to develop their workforce into leaders who are good communicators. But the second problem complicates this, because people do not retain the information presented during most employee development courses.

It is from acknowledgement of these two problems that Harness the Power of Leadership (HPL) was developed. HPL utilizes the 80 years of experience that Leader Dog has in making people into leaders and creating some of the world's strongest teams. These teams, more than 15,000 of them, have left Leader Dog prepared to travel independently and confidently throughout the U.S. and 18 countries.

HPL is taught by Leader Dog clients who have achieved incredible success both professionally and in their partnership with their Leader Dogs. HPL shows people in the working community how to be more effective leaders and communicators.

During the day-long workshop, participants learn the story of leadership. They experience two blindfold walks with Leader Dog canine ambassadors and engage in various other activities to practice the lessons learned and make memories that will last a lifetime. At the day's conclusion, they are challenged to move forward with their lives, utilizing the methods they were taught throughout the workshop.

Large multinational conglomerates have participated and realized the benefits of HPL, as have small businesses, government organizations, universities and other nonprofits. Individuals have also enrolled in the workshop via the American Society of Employers (aseonline.com).

If you are interested in learning more about Leader Dog's HPL workshop, please contact David Bann, corporate engagement manager, at 248.218.6318.



“HPL PROVIDES REAL WORLD LEADERSHIP SKILLS THROUGH THE EXPERIENCES OF THE TRAINING AND USE OF GUIDE DOGS. MY EXPERIENCE IN THIS WORKSHOP RANKS RIGHT UP THERE WITH THE BEST LEADERSHIP TRAINING WORKSHOPS I HAVE EVER TAKEN. THANK YOU LEADER DOG!”

Phil Bertolini, Chief Information Officer
Deputy County Executive - Oakland County, Michigan

Online Gift Shop

March - Free Shipping!

Just for Update readers! During the month of March, get free shipping on all orders from our online gift shop. That means baseball caps, shirts, plush puppies and much more. Enter code MARCH at checkout to receive your free shipping. *NOTE: Only one discount can be entered per order.*

LeaderDog.org/shop



\$32.99



\$25.00



\$22.00



\$10.99



\$13.99



MISSION MOMENT

"I think he will keep me a bit more grounded. I feel like a confident traveler, but I'll feel even more confident with the dog. I'll be going to college and with the cane, people tend to avoid you, where with a dog, they approach you."

Rilee Sloan and his first Leader Dog, Franklin



Steve Guarini, CPA

(pictured [right] with John Hebert at the canine center groundbreaking)



Steve Guarini was involved with Leader Dogs for the Blind for many years prior to joining our board. In fact, he was already very knowledgeable about Leader Dog finances

from his experience as a partner on the Leader Dog audit while working for Rehmann.

After leaving Rehmann, Steve joined the LDB board in 2010. He served as chair of the Audit Committee for four years (who better than a former auditor?) and was then elected board

treasurer. As treasurer, he also chaired our Finance Committee. Currently, Steve is the LDB board vice chair and will be nominated to serve a two-year term as board chair in November.

Steve was instrumental in helping to structure the LDB Foundation. He can often be found at events like Bark & Brew and Dinner in the Dark. In

addition, he has helped recruit other committee and board members.

With over 30 years as a CPA, currently as a partner at Cohen & Co., Steve brings strong financial leadership skills and knowledge to Leader Dog. His experience includes service organization and internal controls, change management, and operational and process improvement. He is a graduate of the University of Michigan - Dearborn with honors.

We feel extremely lucky to have him as a committed member of our board.

"When I became a board member I already knew that LDB was a well-run organization, but I had never heard firsthand about the impact LDB made on the lives of our clients. Then Judge Teranes [a client and board member] spoke at a meeting about how he took a bus every day with his Leader Dog to attend law school. Since then I've heard other stories from clients about how they live full and productive lives because of the work that we do. It's incredibly humbling and that's why I'm committed to the organization."



LEGACY SOCIETY

Creating a provision for Leader Dogs for the Blind in your estate plans is a true partnership.

This prestigious society was established to recognize donors who have included Leader Dog in their financial or estate plans.

Please contact Lora Cabarios, director of national personal giving, at 248.650.7109 to learn more about the Legacy Society.

NEW LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS

Louis & Carmen Cronmiller

Ronald M. DeGuire

JoAnn M. Eaton

Victoria Sedlak

Alice Ann Trockle



You are invited to join the
LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND
LEGACY SOCIETY

Staying on Course with GPS



Fourteen years ago, our team knew that technology had to be a focus when considering the state of future services. The availability of accessible computer software opened many educational and career opportunities for people who are blind. We wanted that same benefit for our client's ability to travel independently to school or work every day.

In retrospect, we didn't fully understand what we were getting into when we purchased our first HumanWare Trekker Pro GPS. Several staff members taught themselves to use the equipment, then we brought one "very techie" young client in for training. As often happens with teenagers and technology, our client quickly learned the functions of the device and ended up showing us things we hadn't discovered yet. The experience confirmed for us that we were on to something.

In 2005, we became the first guide dog organization to offer GPS training to clients. We soon began training certified orientation & mobility specialists how to use and teach GPS, and we launched a summer camp for teenagers that included GPS programming.

HumanWare recognized us as GPS training experts and solicited our feedback regarding features on their next device, the Trekker Breeze. We piloted the Breeze with clients to determine if it was easy to learn and use. It was a success! Another major benefit was the lower cost of the device, allowing us to provide them free to clients for the first time. At this point we incorporated GPS training into our guide dog program for clients from the U.S. and Canada so that we could help more people expand their travel environment.

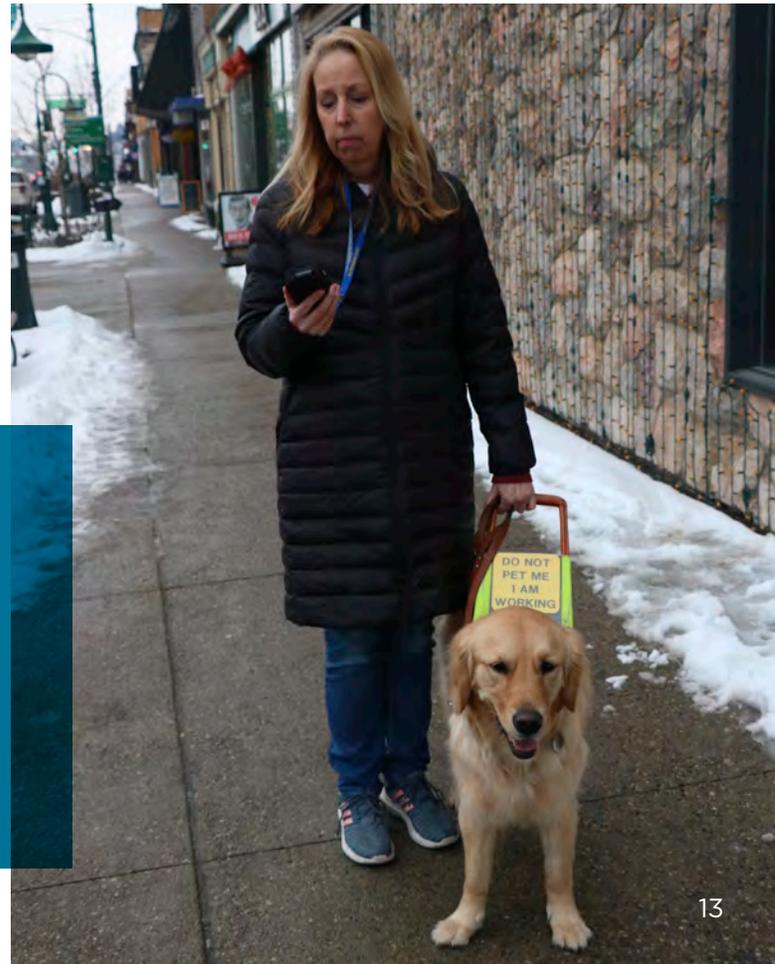
90% or more of our clients reported that GPS was helpful in:

- Establishing, maintaining or re-establishing orientation
- Planning a travel route in an unfamiliar area
- Knowing when they reached their destination
- Finding businesses along unfamiliar routes
- Being a more capable and confident traveler

70% of users reported increased travel in or outside their neighborhood, in turn increasing their access to additional school and work opportunities.

In March 2019, we will begin providing HumanWare's Victor Reader Trek to clients. This device combines GPS with a talking book player and allows us to upload entire country maps. The access to large geographic maps is especially useful for people who travel for work and may need to find hotels, restaurants and meeting locations in unfamiliar cities.

We are proud to have been the first guide dog organization in the U.S. to include GPS in our programming. To date, we have issued more than 1,600 GPS devices to clients.



General Dynamics Land Systems (GDLS)



The partnership between General Dynamics Land Systems (GDLS) and Leader Dog all started with a tour in 2016. Next, a number of GDLS employees volunteered at our first-ever Bark & Brew, where they worked tirelessly to help our events team execute the event.

Their support doesn't just include volunteering, General Dynamics Employee Association also plans a classic car show each summer with all the proceeds coming to Leader Dog. Since 2016, the Association has donated over \$12,000 to further the Leader Dog mission.

BARK & BREW IS ONE OF LEADER DOG'S ANNUAL FUNDRAISING EVENTS. JOIN US ON JUNE 1 FROM 1-10PM FOR THIS FANTASTIC EVENT WITH LEADER DOGS, MUSIC, GOOD FOOD, BREWS AND MORE!



Wayne Weber, GDLS vice president of community activities, spearheads the fundraising efforts with the General Dynamics Employee Association. Wayne enjoys giving back to Leader Dog because he personally believes in the good that Leader Dog does in the community. In his eyes, volunteering his time and coordinating the fundraising efforts is a small way to give back to an organization that gives so much.

"The General Dynamics Employee Association members are always willing to step up and help as best we can whenever possible." says Wayne. "Leader Dog's staff and puppy raisers have always been extremely welcoming, courteous, knowledgeable and always appreciative. That makes it worth coming back to help out—and who doesn't LOVE the PUPPIES?!"

If your company is interested in volunteer or fundraising opportunities to help Leader Dog advance our mission, please contact Maureen Smith, special events manager, at msmith@leaderdog.org or 248.659.5046.



Finally Getting Things in Order



DONOR HIGHLIGHT

BRUCE AND SANDY RODWAN

“I can clearly remember the time during my first semester of law school when a professor firmly stated, ‘You have to have a will,’” says Bruce Rodwan. His wife Sandy, an actuary, admits, “It took us decades to get our own plans in order.”

Although financial planning was a part of both their careers, Bruce and Sandy were just like the many people who put off estate planning. Their reasons were much the same too: they had not decided on what they wanted and felt a will was “just so final.”

Eventually, through their great love of dogs and time spent watching our guide dog mobility

instructors work in the community, they began donating to Leader Dog. Recently they had the opportunity to tour our campus, meet some future Leader Dogs and take a blindfold walk with a dog in training. “The experience was fabulous,” says Sandy.

After learning more about the Leader Dog mission and meeting some staff, volunteers and dogs, Bruce and Sandy decided on what they wanted their legacy to be and finally decided to draft their will. A will which included leaving a bequest to Leader Dogs for the Blind.

Bruce and Sandy are excited that their love for animals and desire to help people will carry on for years to come through their legacy gift to Leader Dog.

For more information about leaving Leader Dog in your will or as a beneficiary of your IRA or life insurance, please contact Lora Cabarios, director of national personal giving, at 248.650.7109.





LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND

1039 S. Rochester Road
Rochester Hills, MI 48307-3115
Toll Free 888.777.5332
Phone 248.651.9011
LeaderDog.org

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DINNER IN THE DARK

Please **JOIN US** on **Friday, March 8, 2019** for a fundraiser like no other! Dine under blindfold at our 2nd annual Dinner in the Dark at MGM Grand Detroit (in the Grand Ballroom).

Ticket Prices:

- \$125 SUPPORTER TICKET (dinner only)
- \$225 VIP

VIP Ticket includes: Two drink tickets, passed hors d'oeuvres, blindfold walk with a Leader Dog in training and photo

Dress: Snappy casual

For tickets or additional information, please visit leaderdog.org/dinner-in-the-dark.

