



UPDATE

LEADERDOG.ORG | ISSUE 2 | 2020 LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND



Executing Our Essential Mission

Becoming Unstoppable

RoundUp for Leader Dog



Greetings.

I am pleased to share that Leader Dog has fully resumed our training services since having to cancel classes due to the pandemic. In fact, we were the first U.S. guide dog organization to resume on-campus training. I am so proud of our organization and our team as our clients depend on us for their travel independence. For many of the people we serve, without the ability to get out of the house on their own, isolation will not end with the conclusion of the pandemic.

Undoubtedly your daily life looks different than it did seven months ago—wearing a mask in public, practicing social distancing, learning and working remotely. The same holds true for Leader Dogs for the Blind. We have made numerous operational updates in order to resume training while keeping the

health and wellbeing of our clients and team members central to everything we do. We have “masked up,” implemented daily health screenings and reduced class sizes. We have adapted our training equipment to allow for more distance between instructors and clients and have made many changes in our residence to allow for social distancing. In this issue of Update, you’ll find out more about how we were able to resume training so quickly and hear from clients who took part in our first classes on campus once training resumed.

On behalf of the entire Leader Dog team, thank you! As the need for our services is more critical than ever, so is the support of our community. You continue to amaze us with your support, words of encouragement, donations and offerings of assistance. We are so very grateful to all of you.

From our Leader Dog family to yours, I wish you continued health and happiness.

Susan M. Daniels

Susan M. Daniels
President & CEO

Photo on cover by Ashley Nunnally, GDMI at Leader Dog



Becoming Unstoppable

Dave Golder



For many of our orientation & mobility (O&M) clients, one of our certified O&M specialists put their first white cane into their hands. That was true for Dave Golder, who found that his need to travel independently outweighed his need to stay secluded during the pandemic.

How did you end up at Leader Dog for O&M Training?

"I applied to another guide dog organization for a dog and they told me I wasn't blind enough... period. Then when I called Leader Dog, I was amazed at the way they took care of me. I was told the process about how to get a dog and how to get O&M; heck, that I even needed O&M first because I had never thought about walking with a cane.

I'm glad though about getting a cane. It's helped me realize how non-sighted I am."

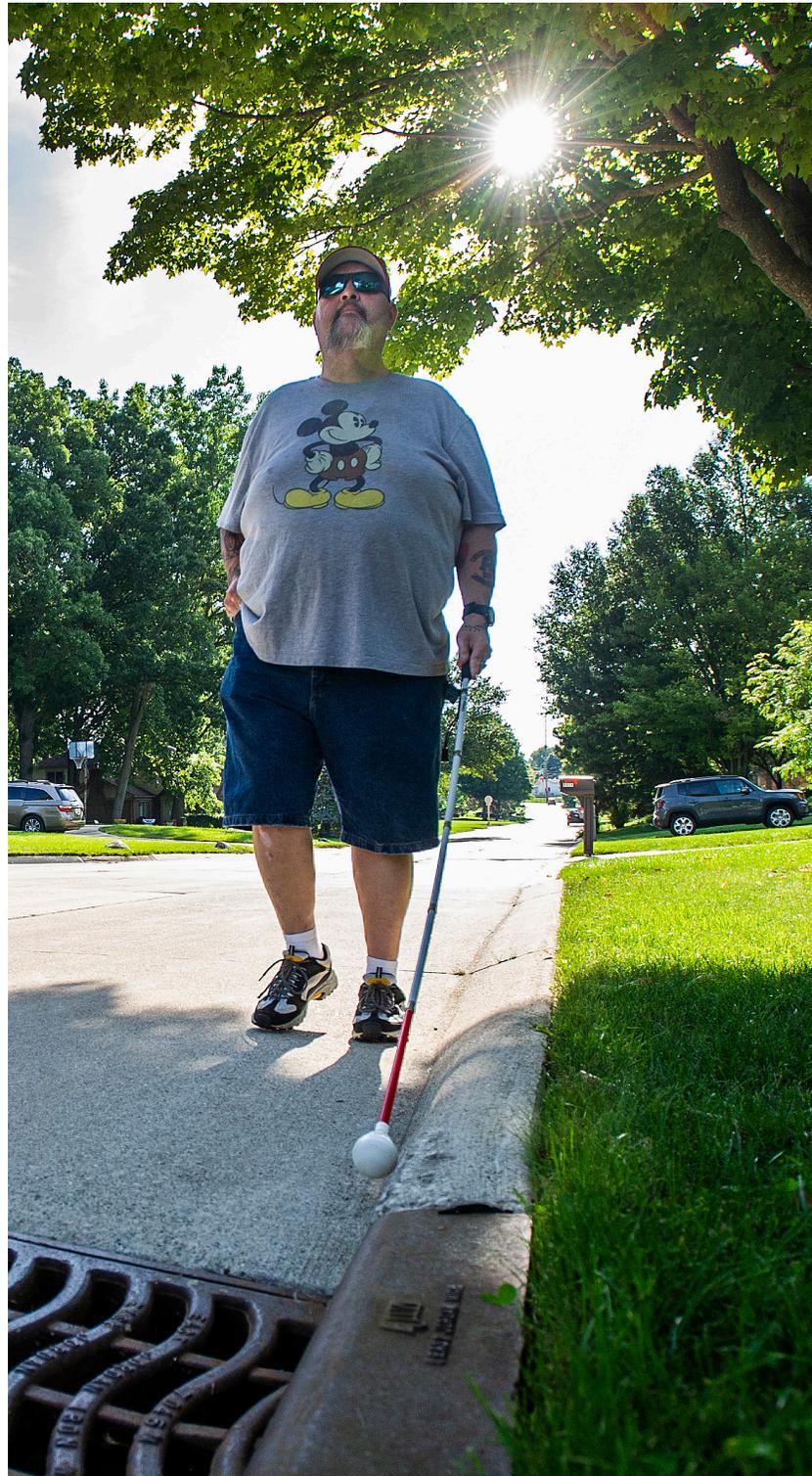
Out of everything you learned during training, is there one thing that sticks out as most important?

"Yes, that I'm unstoppable now, that I can go anywhere now and be confident. Last year I went to a Halloween parade and I was in a dark environment that was unfamiliar to me. My wife was helping our daughter with her children, so I was on my own and I was scared to death. Now with the cane, I'm going to go home and tackle that parade this year—if they have it."

Why did you come to LDB during the pandemic?

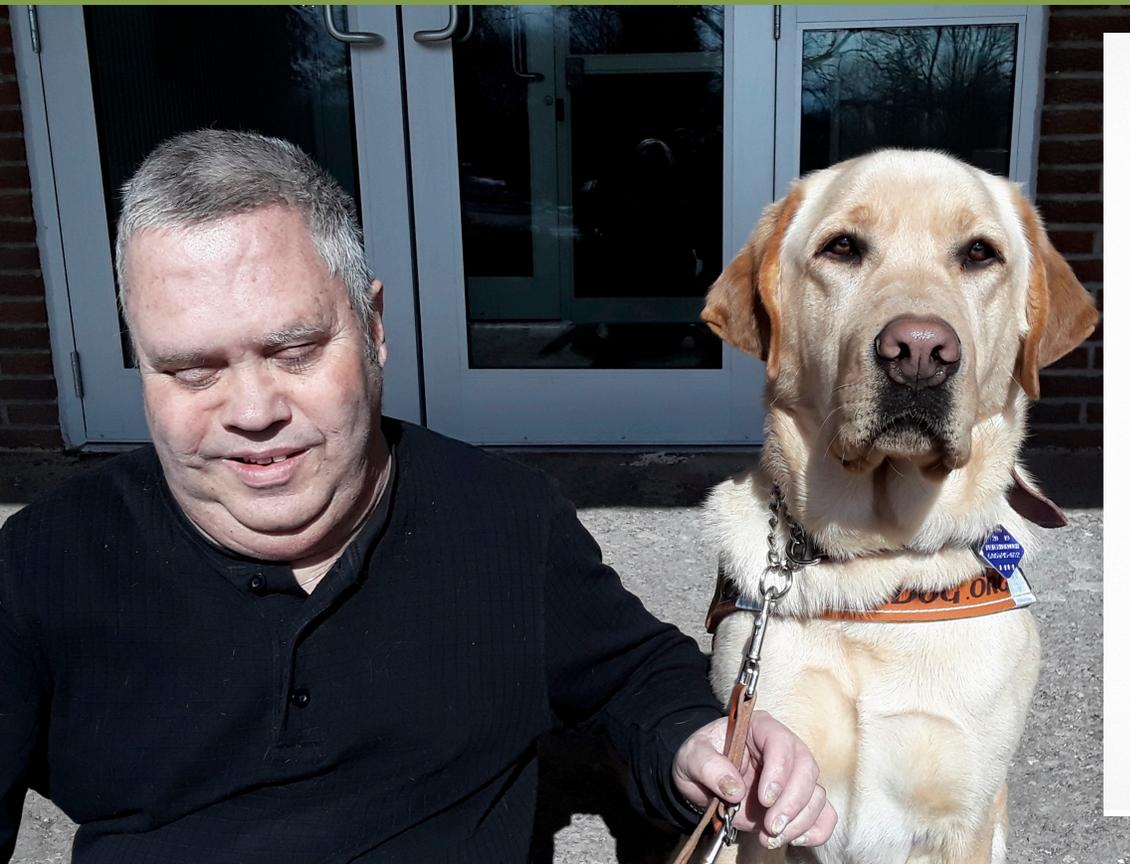
"The first class I was scheduled for was cancelled due to COVID, but I knew I wanted to get training the first chance possible. I felt comfortable being on campus because everyone took such great precautions to keep us safe."

Dave has already applied and been accepted for Guide Dog Training and is looking forward to coming back to Leader Dog soon. "My family thinks it is great," said Dave. "I have a great support team—I am truly blessed."



DAVE TRAINS ON A RESIDENTIAL STREET NEAR LEADER DOG AS PART OF HIS O&M CLASS.

LETTERS TO LEADER DOG



I was born blind and in 1988 with the help of a local Lions club, I received my first Leader Dog and it changed my life. Soon, with my mobility instructor's help, Leader Dog Bo and I were going all over my hometown. We had challenges but we got through them together as a team. In 1998 I got my second Leader Dog, Jake. In 2008 came my third Leader Dog, Tad (he was in my wedding) and on March 11, 2019, I got current Leader Dog Casey. He is working out like the true pro he is, with a little ham thrown in.

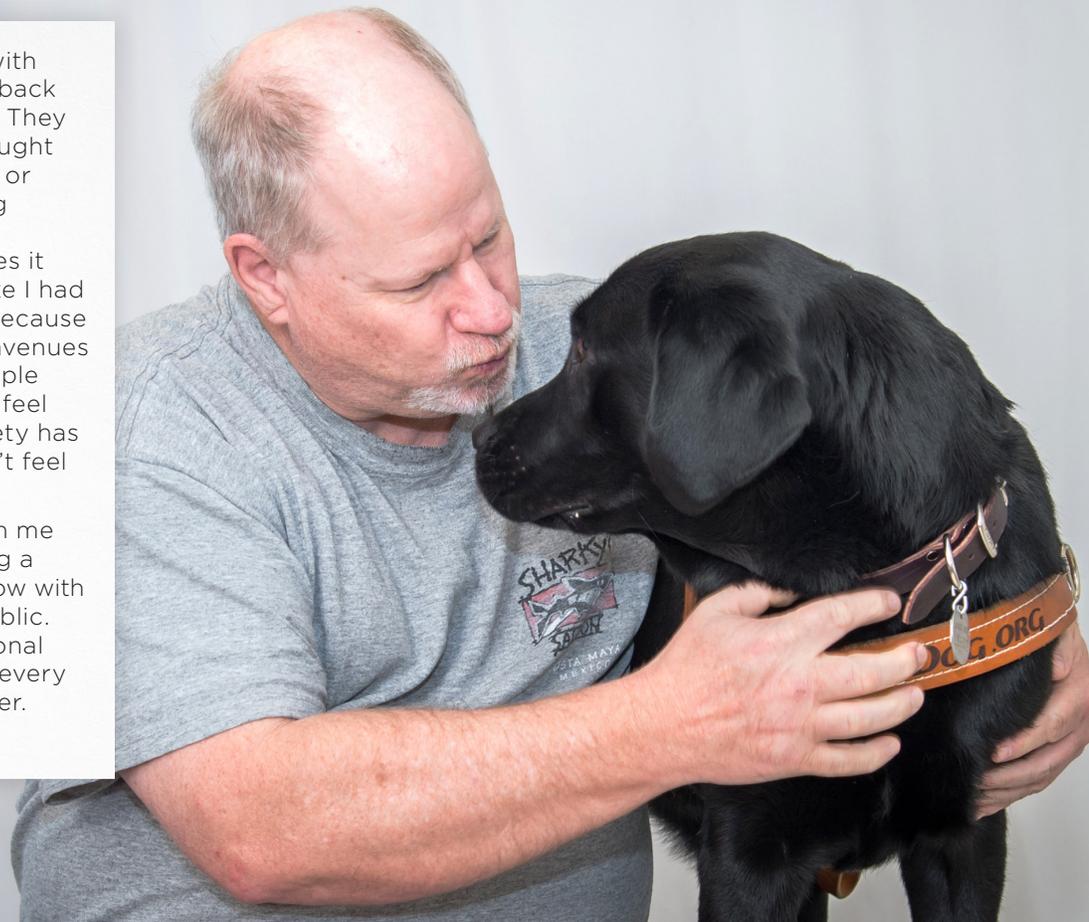
I wouldn't be where I am today if it were not for Leader Dogs for the Blind. They are a first-class organization and I am so proud to be a part of it.

John M

When people would see me with a cane at a store, they would back away and stay away from me. They were either scared of me, thought I would run into or hurt them, or thought I would do something around them that made them feel uncomfortable. Sometimes it bothered me so much I felt like I had a disease or something. But because of Leader Dog Glacier those avenues have opened up and now people ask me questions about her. I feel like I fit in now. I feel like society has finally accepted me and I don't feel like I have a disease anymore.

There was nothing wrong with me before I got Glacier but having a guide dog has softened the blow with how people observe me in public. To me, Glacier is like my personal ambassador and I thank God every day for Leader Dog and Glacier.

Tim C



To EVERYONE at Leader Dog,

WOW, I had a wonderful stay at Leader Dog! Everyone I came into contact with was so kind and helpful. I enjoyed every minute of it!

However, the BEST part was coming home with my new Leader Dog! She is GREAT! I know she will totally enrich my life. I could never thank you enough!

Keep up the EXCEPTIONAL service by making dreams come true for the blind and visually impaired.

Kris D and LD RedWing



When I think of my life before attending Leader Dog training, the words fear, confused and alone come to mind. I was extremely fearful of losing my independence. I was completely confused as to what my future may hold and how I would survive as a blind person. In addition, I felt very alone in a sighted world where even my closest friends and family members were clueless to what I was experiencing.

After attending Leader Dog, I found that I was no longer alone. I made friends and continue to stay in contact with other blind people who were experiencing the same concerns and fears.

The biggest and best thing that happened to me after attending Leader Dog was regaining my independence. With my best friend, Leader Dog Hanna, at my side I can go anywhere! We travel often. I can navigate difficult situations, travel through my hometown, and cruise through airports boarding flights to wherever I choose. No more fear, no more confusion and lots of independence is what I gained by attending Leader Dog.

Laura B

Executing our Essential Mission



Here's the dilemma. We were in the middle of a once-in-a-century pandemic and our mission is essential to the people we serve. People who, due to their visual impairment, may have been homebound before the pandemic, some for years.

This was the dilemma faced by all guide dog organizations around the world. But, by sticking to our values of “seek innovation” and “deliver a superior experience,” Leader Dog was the first guide dog organization in the U.S. to bring clients back to campus after being forced to pause operations in March 2020. We also resumed providing home visits to clients who didn't feel comfortable coming to campus.

When Leader Dog was cleared to resume serving clients on May 28, 2020 as part of the “Michigan Safe Start” plan, we were ready. We had been preparing for this moment for nearly three months. We sprang

into action coordinating the return of the more than 60 dogs that were “vacationing” in volunteer homes. Our client services team immediately began calling people who had been accepted for training and were within a 6-hour driving distance of our campus to ask if they were interested in attending training that would begin on July 12, 2020.

It was important that we communicated to clients all the safety protocols that would be in place upon their arrival. The safety protocols we had developed were in accordance with CDC, OSHA and state guidelines as well as those of our “Return to Work” taskforce comprised of Leader Dog team members. The taskforce reviewed suggestions and established the new rules of conduct, which included:



▲ EVEN A FACE MASK CAN'T HIDE THE SMILE OF O&M CLIENT KIM BUSBOOM.

- Daily health screenings for all people on campus
- Reduced class sizes and a reduced instructor-to-client ratios (instructors work with just two clients per class vs. the traditional four clients per class)
- Masks required at all times in common areas
- Social distancing in dining room or clients could request all meals in their room
- Masks and face shields for guide dog mobility instructors and O&M specialists
- More stringent cleaning guidelines
- Limited people on campus (no volunteers and many staff working from home)
- Reduced number of passengers per training vehicle



▲
CLIENT LEATRICE FULLERTON WAS HAPPY TO GET BACK TO WORK WITH LEADER DOG BREWER BY HER SIDE AFTER TAKING GUIDE DOG TRAINING IN JULY.

In addition to these safety protocols, we implemented tools to support social distancing during training. With instructors wearing masks, it is tough for clients to hear instruction clearly, so instructors are now equipped with a personal microphone to support clear communication. Additionally, the team was outfitted with new equipment, allowing team members and clients to travel together while maintaining a distance of six feet.

One client who attended our first on-campus Guide Dog Training was Leatrice Fullerton. A social worker who trains people with various disabilities, it was important to her to improve her ability to travel independently to and from work; as a mother of two, she needs to be able to keep up with multiple busy schedules. “When I got the call that I was accepted and could attend training in July, I was a little apprehensive,” said Leatrice. “My need for a guide dog was great and I really wanted to do this for myself, but the timing with COVID wasn’t good. But, after it was explained to me that there were going to be less people in the building and many safety protocols were put in place, I felt reassured.”

O&M Client Leslie Hamric (mission moment photo - page 12) echoed Leatrice’s feelings and added, “The staff was very kind when we needed reminding to bring our masks and hand sanitizer with us. I felt very comfortable the week I was at Leader Dog.”

(continued on page 8)

ESSENTIAL MISSION *(cont.)*



While things are not totally back to “normal” (we are still operating without the 350+ on-campus volunteers who support our daily operations in order to limit exposure), we are proud to fully resume the delivery of our essential mission, and thankful to our team for all of their hard work and determination to make it possible.



GUIDE DOG MOBILITY INSTRUCTOR ASHLEY NUNNELLY USING A PERSONAL MICROPHONE SYSTEM TO PROJECT HER VOICE TO CLIENTS.



ON A BUS THAT WOULD NORMALLY HOLD 12 CLIENTS, TWO CLIENTS AND THEIR LEADER DOGS SOCIAL DISTANCE AT OPPOSITE ENDS OF THE VEHICLE.

Keeping Your Eyes Healthy— *Families and Genetics*

PRESENTED BY **Midwest**
EYE CONSULTANTS

Families share a lot—inside jokes, traditions, recipes, memories and DNA. The latter can be a wild card when it comes to your eye health.

GENETICS CAN PLAY A PART IN EYE DISEASES

Genetics can determine whether we suffer from common vision problems or more acute conditions that can cause blindness. In other words, if certain eye diseases are familial, you're at higher risk of developing the disease. For example, having a family member with glaucoma makes you up to nine times more likely to develop the condition. Glaucoma can cause blindness if left untreated, so it's important to know your family history and share that information with your eye doctor.

But don't let this scare you. Even if there's a history of eye disease in your family, you can take control of your eye health. For one, get regular eye exams so your doctor can monitor your eyes for any signs or symptoms of a disorder (some are slower moving than others).

Second, don't forget about the importance of a balanced diet to boost eye health. Fruits and vegetables, especially dark, leafy greens are packed with nutrients. Also, protect your eyes year-round and make sure to get plenty of rest. Poor quality or not

enough sleep can result in dark circles, eye spasms, dry eyes and even glaucoma in the most extreme cases. Adequate sleep gives your eyes the chance to rest, heal and replenish so they can stay healthy.

Other lifestyle factors like screen time can have an impact, too. If you spend a lot of time in front of devices, be sure to give your eyes a rest periodically to reduce strain. Try the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look about 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

VISIT YOUR EYE DOCTOR REGULARLY

If you have any family history of eye conditions or diseases, don't delay your visit to the eye doctor. He or she may recommend a comprehensive dilated eye exam—a painless procedure that allows them to examine your eyes for any signs of problems. From here, they may recommend regular eye exams to follow the condition's progression.

Your family history matters when it comes to eye health, yet many are unaware of their genetic risk factors. That's why it's important for you to take a proactive approach to your eye care. Learn your family history and share that with your Midwest Eye Consultants eye doctor. Enjoy piece of mind—schedule a comprehensive eye exam today at: <https://www.midwesteyeconsultants.com/make-an-appointment/>



TAKE Care
of your
EYES!

Chief Financial—A True Corporate Neighbor

SPONSORED BY **CHIEF FINANCIAL CREDIT UNION**
...more than money

At the official Chief Financial Rochester branch ribbon cutting in 2015, Tom Dluzen, president and CEO, presented Leader Dog with a \$10,000 check (pictured right) and a promise that Chief would be a true corporate neighbor. The Chief Financial Community Crew continues to fulfill that promise and has contributed more than \$250,000 to Leader Dogs for the Blind since!



The passion to help their communities has been part of the Chief Financial Credit Union culture since it was established in Pontiac, Michigan in 1941 to serve Pontiac Motors Employees. The organization has come a long way from its humble beginnings in a toolbox on the shop floor, but it has never strayed from the original purpose: People Helping People.

Chief Financial Credit Union is committed to its mission of empowering financial success and inspiring creative philanthropy. They do this through financial solutions like Kasasa Cash Rewards Checking that rewards members with 5% APY* (125 times the national average) and the Leader Dog Visa that offers 0% interest for the first six billing periods and automatic donations to Leader Dog with every purchase through the Share the Rewards program.

Chief Financial Credit Union allows you to support Leader Dog and earn amazing rewards—start today!

Kasasa Cash® Rewards Checking: www.chiefonline.com/FIVE
Leader Dog Visa: www.chiefonline.com/LEAD



*APY=Annual Percentage Yield. Chief Financial Credit Union is Federally Insured by the NCUA and is an Equal Housing Lender.

ROUNDUP FOR LEADER DOG - IT'S EASY



We are proud to announce that we have partnered with the RoundUp App to make supporting Leader's Dog mission an easy part of your everyday life.

Using the RoundUp App supports Leader Dog by rounding up your debit and/or credit transactions to the nearest dollar amount. So, a purchase of \$4.75 rounds to \$5.00 with 25 cents going to LDB! There is no pre-set donation amounts—you choose the minimum and/or maximum donation that fits your budget.

Signing up is easy! You can download RoundUp from the App Store or Google Play. You can also go online to <https://roundup.app/p/leaderdog> if you're not an app user.

Together we can RoundUp and make a difference in so many lives!



How One Gift Started a Partnership



Not everyone who establishes a legacy with Leader Dog does so intentionally. Often, they build respect and admiration for our mission over time. The origin story for the Hilda E. Bretzlaff Foundation began 22 years ago with a conversation with then Chief Operating Officer Rod Haneline.

The foundation was established in 1993 after Mrs. Hilda E. Bretzlaff passed. She was preceded in death by her husband, Herbert W. Bretzlaff, Sr., a

self-starting automotive sales engineer who found success with several auto component patents and a prominent role during the infancy of the auto industry. Together, the Bretzlaffs prioritized high moral education in the United States and England. They hoped to establish support for recipients with demonstrated financial need who would then contribute to the improvement of society.

Although Leader Dog was not a traditional institution of higher education, the foundation's trustees found great value in our orientation and mobility (O&M) program. They saw it as an economic and social gateway for people to join or rejoin the workforce, an essential component of the work they do in Mrs. Bretzlaff's name.

Since that first conversation, the foundation supported multiple LDB programs including O&M Training, Deaf-Blind Guide Dog Training and Summer Experience Camp with its giving totaling more than \$700,000. The foundation plans to sunset having achieved a legacy of funding the next generation of leaders. For us, the foundation has created opportunity for our clients to live engaged, contributive and independent lives.

If your foundation, trust or fund would like to learn more about how Leader Dog's mission complements the work you're already doing, please contact our director of foundation giving, Kathryn Tuck, at ktuck@leaderdog.org.



▲ TRUSTEES SUSAN VOGT AND GERRY RADTKE

SIMPLE WAYS TO MAKE A BIG IMPACT



Leaving a donation to Leader Dogs for the Blind in your will or trust is a very simple but impactful way to support the work we do and ensure our future. Another way to make a lasting difference is to designate Leader Dog as a beneficiary of your retirement plan, IRA, life insurance or donor-advised fund.

To find out more about donating these types of assets or joining our Legacy Society, please contact Lora Cabarios, director of personal and planned giving at lora.cabarios@LeaderDog.org or 248.650.7109.



Dr. Paul Edwards, MD, FACS

(pictured with Sue Daniels at the 2018 Dinner in the Dark event)



When Dr. Paul Edwards walks into a room, his natural warmth draws people to him. But it's his kind voice and vast knowledge of ophthalmology that keep people listening.

Dr. Edwards has served on our board from 2006–2018 and from 2019–present (the by-laws require a one-year sabbatical after a term limit). He is also a multi-year member of the board philanthropy committee. As the Chair of the Department of Ophthalmology at Henry Ford Hospital in Detroit, Dr. Edwards oversees one of the busiest ophthalmology departments in the midwest. He is involved

with many professional organizations including the Ophthalmology Advisory Council of the American College of Surgeons, the Council of the American Academy of Ophthalmology and the Michigan

Society of Eye Physicians and Surgeons. However, he makes the time to introduce new donors to Leader Dog by bringing friends and colleagues to our signature events—Bark & Brew and Dinner in the Dark.

Our Board of Trustees has truly benefitted from Dr. Edwards' experience as a retinal specialist and his strong support of the Leader Dog mission.



"I support Leader Dog because of the valuable service they provide to people who are blind or severely vision impaired. I fell in love with the organization during my first visit. The organization is well run and has great staff who are committed to the mission. The board and staff continue to guide the organization in providing clients with well-trained dogs that help them to be mobile and be productive members of our society. I hope to continue working with Leader Dog for years to come."



MISSION MOMENT

"This program is beyond amazing! I feel like a new person with my cane. Everything was a grand success! I would highly recommend this program to anyone."

*~Leslie H
Orientation & Mobility Client*

The Giampetroni Family

A Part of the LDB Community Since 1961



Louis Giampetroni was a reporter for the Flint Journal when he first visited our campus to write an article for the paper about Leader Dog. During his visit, Louis completed a blindfold walk with a Leader Dog named Fritz in downtown Rochester. In his article he described in detail what it was like to stand at the edge of the curb, listening to traffic and deciding when to give the command to the large German shepherd to cross the street.

The final sentence of the article was “I’ll never forget my experience at Leader Dogs for the Blind.” After almost 60 years, his children haven’t forgotten either. Louis’s daughter Angela recently wrote to us, “The entire experience had

a tremendous impact on our father, as he realized that even though his eyesight was poor, it could be corrected by lenses (quite thick ones!). Those who are blind are not that fortunate.”

Recently, Louis’ children Angela, Tom, Mike and Dan made a \$500 donation to symbolically sponsor Future Leader Dog Ben in Louis’ memory. This wonderful gift will make a real impact for the clients we serve.

Leader Dog relies 100% on generous donations like this one. We are honored to receive such a meaningful gift from the Giampetroni family and from so many others like them. You make our work possible! Thank you.

PHOTO OF LOUIS THAT APPEARED IN THE FLINT JOURNAL.



THE GIAMPETRONI FAMILY



TO SYMBOLICALLY SPONSOR A FUTURE LEADER DOG, GO TO LEADERDOG.ORG, CLICK ON THE “WAYS TO GIVE” TAB THEN THE “SPONSOR A PUPPY” LINK.



Leader Dogs for the Blind's core values include doing what is right and showing respect and compassion to each and every person as the foundation of the organization's overall mission and service provision. This includes our clients, team members, volunteers, donors, Lions and the community. Leader Dog does not discriminate against race, color, national origin, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or gender identification.

The events beginning in May 2020 that spurred nationwide protests caused us to pause and further evaluate if we have been actively promoting diversity within Leader Dogs for the Blind. We have decided that we can do more. We are working together as an organization and as a community to proactively impact positive social change.

We are committed to making deliberate and concerted efforts to advance diversity, equity and inclusion within our own organization and throughout the communities we touch. This commitment is for today, tomorrow and every day that we provide our lifechanging services to people who are blind or visually impaired.

Our plan includes four strategic goals:

1. Enhance and strengthen a diverse and inclusive environment within Leader Dog constituencies.
2. Advance a culture of diversity and inclusion within the Leader Dog governance structure.
3. Advance a workplace culture supporting team member engagement in diversity and inclusion initiatives.
4. Amplify the voices of diverse constituent groups across all Leader Dog communication and philanthropic platforms.





IN EVERY LEADER DOG LIES THE HEART OF A LION—A Leader Dog partner since 1939.

As we were unable to hold any on campus activities, or travel to events and meetings, the Lions team at Leader Dog went virtual. Events like Summer Visits, club and cabinet presentations have gone online. In one day, our team “visited” cabinet meetings in Arizona and Pennsylvania while never leaving Michigan! If your club or district would like a virtual meet-up, let the Lions team know. From client interviews to the Lifecycle of a Leader Dog or a “tour” of the campus, we can be creative with any topic or guest speaker.

If you have any questions about what’s happening at Leader Dog or to schedule a virtual event, contact Lion Beth Slade, director of philanthropy for Lions engagement at Beth.Slade@leaderdog.org. Together we serve!



Venice, FL Lions club meeting (hat night)

NYLABONE



At Nylabone, we cherish the joy dogs give us and believe every puppy deserves a loving home. We also understand that dogs love to chew and it’s their natural way to cope with issues such as stress, separation anxiety and boredom. That’s why it is our mission to promote healthy, non-destructive behavior so dogs can safely satisfy their innate urge to chew—and avoid destroying other belongings.

Nylabone Cares donates high-quality, durable chew toys to shelter dogs, service animals training to be lifesaving companions, and other canines preparing for a new life and family. In addition, we are committed to educating pet parents on why dogs chew and how to establish and maintain healthy chewing habits—which is especially important for dogs adjusting to new homes.

Whether our chew toys are comforting hard-working service animals, entertaining shelter dogs as they wait to be adopted or easing a pup’s anxiety as they transition to a new environment, Nylabone is dedicated to helping our furry friends find and stay in their forever homes!

Our chew toy donations comfort and entertain guide dogs in training through the Leader Dogs for the Blind program. When these puppies are not preparing to assist people who are blind, visually impaired or Deaf-Blind, they enjoy our chew toys during playtime while they strengthen their bond with their handler.

To see more about how #NylaboneCares go to nylabone.com/about-us/nylabone-cares.





LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND

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SPONSOR A PUPPY

These six puppies have big futures. Right now, each one is living with a volunteer puppy raiser, building the foundation for the work they were born to do as guides. Your symbolic puppy sponsorship makes a difference not only for the puppies who will grow up to become heroes to their partners, but also for the partners whose lives will be changed by these dogs.

Visit LeaderDog.org/sponsor-a-puppy/ to sponsor a dog or learn more!



Sakari
Michigan



Benton
Tennessee



Thea
Wisconsin



Sequoia
Michigan



Papi
Michigan



Harper
Maryland