**Leader Dogs for the Blind**

**Update - Issue 1, July 2022**

**Celebrating 20 Years of O&M**

**Message from the President**

Greetings! As we enter the summer months, I am pleased to report that the Leader Dog campus is buzzing with activity once again!

After two years of restricting the number of people on our campus, we began welcoming back our on-campus volunteers at the beginning of 2022. More than 1,000 volunteers support the Leader Dog mission including more than 300 who donate their valuable time to support our operations on-site. These volunteers support our canine care operations, puppy and breeding areas, client services and much more. It has been a joy to welcome back all the wonderful individuals who support LDB on campus.

We have also been able to welcome more clients back to campus. I am excited to share that in May we welcomed our first guide dog training class for clients from Spain and are expecting a class from Mexico in September!

The support from Lions clubs, individuals, corporations and foundations is critical to Leader Dog's success because we provide all our services, including travel, 100% free of charge to our clients. Since we do not receive any insurance, federal or state funding, we are funded solely through philanthropic donations, so our ability to connect with our donors is important. While we connected virtually with all these groups throughout the pandemic, I am delighted to share that we welcomed our first Lions bus tour and corporate leadership training in May, with more visits planned in the very near future.

On behalf of the entire Leader Dog team, I wish you a safe, happy and healthy summer season. As always, thank you for everything you do in support of Leader Dog as we continue to work together to make people unstoppable.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Daniels

President & CEO

Photo: Sue Daniels sits on a bench outside the canine center in a bright-colored blazer, polka dot blouse and grey slacks. A Leader Dog in training wearing a harness sits next to her.

Photo: A woman with brunette hair smiles as she mops and several golden retriever puppies chase the mop. The woman is in a suite in the puppy area and is wearing a royal blue shirt and black pants.

Cover Photo: A collage of photos are shown with every person using their white cane. Some are walking up stairs, one is walking out of a coffee shop door, going around obstacles, etc. Cover photos photographed by Jerry Zolynsky of On Location photography and Cheryl Sacrates

**Client Spotlight**

**Training with a Friend – Krista Webb & Kate Hordichok**

This story, or should we say friendship, started when LDB Client Meagan Moore (O&M 2021) created the Facebook group “Moms with Ushers [Syndrome].” This group is where Krista Webb of Texas and Kate Hordichok of Oregon met, became friends and eventually came to LDB in 2022 to get their O&M training together.

"I wanted to know someone before coming to Leader Dog because I didn’t want to be alone in a new place. I’m always excited to meet somebody else who has Usher Syndrome like me, especially someone like Kate who is also a mom about my age.

We helped boost each other’s confidence during training and it was more fun and more relaxed." - Krista

"I was having a hard time accepting having to use a cane and knew I'd have a hard time leaving my family to train halfway across the country. It's easy to feel alone on this vision loss journey and it was comforting to know that Krista and I were in the exact same boat." - Kate

"One thing that I learned was to hold the cane away from my body while I’m waiting to cross a street so that drivers see it and it stands out more. Now, I’m the queen of showing off my cane. I’ve been doing it at a local intersection that is a nightmare where I do everything I can to keep myself and my kids safe when we cross." - Krista

"From day one, my instructor told me, 'Keep your chin up!' The obvious reason for this is to let your cane find the obstacles, not your eyes; but I also took it as a little bit of a pep talk, like, 'You got this!'

It’s not a good feeling to lose independence and confidence. I tell my kids they can do hard things, so it is mom’s turn to practice what I preach!" - Kate

Both Krista and Kate are happy using their white canes as their mobility tool of choice, though neither has ruled out returning to LDB in the future to train with a guide dog.

Photo: Two women stand side-by-side with their white canes vertical and one arm around each other. They are both wearing jeans, baseball caps, glasses and smiling. One has a magenta puffy jacket on and the other has a grey hoodie. Caption: Kate (left) and Krista (right) solidified their friendship while training at leader dog together.

**Letters to Leader Dog**

Leader Dog Spencer and I finally did our first independent route together that included street crossings and traffic. This route is one I have only done a few times, so I honestly expected to spend time problem-solving, but no. Spencer was perfect! He even worked through an unfamiliar parking lot and found the correct curb with no problems!

We had two traffic checks, one in which a car cut us off, and another that was more about Spencer exercising intelligent disobedience when a car that I didn't hear turned right as I asked him to cross the street. Oh, and the very best cherry on top? My brilliant boy absolutely knew where to turn once we got back to the office!

Again, first trip out. I am super proud of him!

Shanna S (Facebook post SEPT2021) from Nebraska

Photo: Shanna is pictured in jeans and a dark blouse walking down a sidewalk with a black lab in harness on her left side.

Hi All,

I am very proud of my boy, Leader Dog Cash. Today we went to the supermarket and I have been working with him for some time on finding different items in the store. We started out finding the milk. Today I decided to put him to the test. Not only did he find the milk that I had asked him to find—he also found two more items that I had requested! The first item was bananas. I praised him and told him what a good boy he was and then I told him to find the yogurt. He went back to the counter where the dairy products are and found the cartons of yogurt. I was so proud of him. Again, I praised him and gave him a treat and told him what a good boy he was.

Cash is a very smart dog. They are all smart and they can all do what you want them to do. They think it's a game and they love the challenge. It's fun not only for them but for us too.

Peggy Y (Facebook post JAN2022) from Michigan

Photo: Peggy sits on the edge of a raised flower bed with a yellow lab in harness on her left side. Peggy is wearing a peach v-neck blouse and navy shorts.

Knowing that you requested I use my cane while traveling solo to Michigan, I reluctantly unearthed my cane in my home airport parking lot and proceeded to "use" it (after 2+ years at the bottom of my purse). From there, I entered your haven of cultural sensitivity and wonderful hospitality.

I went into my O&M Training with the understanding that I'd gain some practical, transferable skills for using the mobility cane in various environments. What I didn't expect is that there would also be an element of informal "counseling" integrated throughout my week. Conversations helped address some concerns and provided much mental reassurance. The knowledge gained was invaluable.

Again, I extend my great appreciation-thank you!

Kate H from Oregon

Photo: Kate stands on a brick-paved area just outside the building that houses our puppies at Leader Dog. Wearing a magenta-colored puffy jacket and jeans, Kate is standing and holding her white cane upside down as she changes the tip.

Dear Garret,

Thank you, I enjoyed our training sessions and learned a lot. My daughter said when she picked me up that I took off by myself to the car and she was so proud of me and she felt useless.

Please thank all the staff for me. I am glad to be home, but I miss all of you.

Affectionately,

Pat K from Indiana

Update: I am enjoying the independence I gained from the training and the use of my white cane. I sing your praises to everyone I meet!

Photo: Pat stands in a white long-sleeved shirt and jeans with her white cane. Directly next to her is Garret in jeans and a green Leader Dog hoodie. Both are smiling and standing in front of a white backdrop with green and blue Leader Dog logos.

**Celebrating 20 Years of Orientation & Mobility Training**

“Developing good orientation and mobility skills is the essential first step for someone who is blind. O&M skills allow people to get out of their home on their own, to re-join their community, to find and keep gainful employment or return to school to reach their educational goals.” – Erica Ihrke, LDB manager of extended services

In the United States, most O&M training is provided by government agencies and school systems. For adults, these agencies have vocational requirements designed for people to enter or return to the workforce. If the applicant does not plan on obtaining a job, they are ineligible for services. This leaves seniors, stay-at-home parents or people who are planning to retire without assistance.

So, 20 years ago, Leader Dog filled this gap. We began offering essential O&M training without a vocational requirement—allowing everyone to take that important first step toward regaining their self-confidence and independence. After all, a majority of a person’s life occurs outside of work.

In addition to being the first U.S. guide dog organization to offer O&M training, we created a new way to deliver services. Our unique curriculum offers a continuous week of in-depth training, versus the standard of short once-a-month sessions. This allows people to quickly learn to travel safely using a white cane. To date, Leader Dog has helped over 1,100 people ranging in age from 16 to 87 gain O&M skills and increase their independence.

The expert behind Leader Dog’s program is Rod Haneline (see page 14). “Back in the 90s when we realized that a lack of sufficient travel skills was the number one reason people were being denied guide dog training, I felt that we could fill the need,” said Rod. He oversaw the initial class of six clients the week of January 6, 2002. “From the first class until now,” said Rod, “We find that clients of all skill levels show notable improvement in all areas of travel after just one week.”

Many of our O&M clients return to train with a Leader Dog, while others enjoy using a cane and appreciate the ease of caring for it (just put it in the corner) when at home. “The cane lets people know that I’m blind. Now, if they wave at me and I don’t wave back, they know I’m not ignoring them; that I have a vision issue,” explained LDB Client David Kaylor. “When I’m walking down the dirt road where I live, I was always looking down to see where potholes were, so I wasn’t using the 5% vision that I have left to see what’s ahead of me. Now, I don’t have to worry about what’s at my feet because I find potholes with my cane.”

If you know anyone who could benefit from our free O&M Training, please refer them to our website at LeaderDog.org or have them call us at 888.777.5332.

Photo: A young man walks with a cane on the sidewalk of a college campus. He is wearing a black hoodie and shorts. Following closely is Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist Garret Waldie in a peach-colored t-shirt and grey slacks.

Photo: Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist Lynn Gautreaux walks down a gravel road close to a client. Lynn wears sunglasses, a blue polo shirt and dark slacks. The client wears a grey t-shirt and jeans. He’s holding his cane out front in a sweeping motion. A quote is on the photo that reads “When I went legally blind, the state sent me a cane and said, ‘There you go.’” – David Kaylor

Photo: Certified orientation and mobility specialist Tommy Strasz presses a button to signal crossing at street at an intersection on Main Street in Rochester. He is wearing sunglasses, a black shirt, blue hoodie and tan pants. A female client stands with her white cane at the detectable warning strip where the sidewalk meets the street. She’s wearing sunglasses, a blue sweatshirt, light tan pants and a black sun visor. Caption: O&M clients train in a variety of indoor and outdoor settings including college campuses, rural, busy cities and other locations, learning skills to travel safely and effectively.

**Orientation & Mobility**

**Meet our Certified Orientation & Mobility Specialists (COMS)**

**Erica Ihrke, COMS**

Erica worked part-time as a LDB resident assistant when she developed an interest in O&M prompting her to earn her master’s degree in O&M from Western Michigan University. She was promoted to manager of extended services in 2008 but still likes to work with clients. Erica loves when clients experience their “Ah-ha” moment that leads to them feeling empowered to travel independently. She enjoys working at LDB because the organization is progressive and always growing.

Photo: Erica Ihrke, Manager of Extended services sitting outside in front of the Canine Development Center. She is wearing a dark blue Leader Dog embroidered sweater over a white blouse.

**Kristy Plesscher, COMS**

Kristy has her master’s degree in O&M from Western Michigan University. After spending several years as an O&M specialist in Alabama and Ohio, she returned to Michigan in 2017 to join LDB. Kristy loves the spirit of teamwork and collaboration at Leader Dog. She especially enjoys the opportunity to connect with campers during Teen Summer Camp week.

Photo: A client wearing a white ball cap, black tee shirt and light colored shorts uses a cane while crossing the street. Kristy follows closely behind. She is wearing a blue Leader Dog polo shirt and blue capri pants.

**Tommy Strasz, COMS**

Tommy joined LDB as an intern working toward his master’s degree in O&M at Western Michigan University. He was drawn to Leader Dog's unique O&M training model and positive atmosphere. Tommy thrives on the creative approaches to O&M encouraged at LDB. He is particularly fond of taking O&M clients on hikes at nearby state parks.

Photo: A bearded Tommy smiles as he takes a selfie of himself seated next to two women who are also smiling. They appear to be sitting in blue stadium seats in an arena.

**Garret Waldie, COMS**

After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, Garret received his bachelor’s degree in exercise science from Saginaw Valley State University and then earned a master’s degree from Western Michigan University in O&M. He was drawn to LDB because of the extremely supportive O&M team, the opportunities for community outreach and the all-around positive energy.

Photo: Garret wearing a green t-shirt and grey shorts instructs a female client wearing a peach-colored shirt and dark grey pants as they down the side of a subdivision street. There is a stop sign and green grass in the behind them.

**Barry Stafford, COMS**

In June we welcomed Barry Stafford back full-time as a Certified O&M Specialist. Barry has been involved with LDB since 2007 in several capacities with our Teen Summer Camp and university students. Most recently, he was a blind rehabilitation specialist at Michael E. DeBakey VA Medical Center. We are excited to have his experience and positive attitude back on our team.

Photo: A man wearing a red shirt and ball cap is surrounded by three smiling young people. Two of them are holding canes.

Call out in a solid blue box at bottom: Why Western Michigan University (WMU)? Less than 20 universities in the U.S. offer O&M degrees or certificate programs. Once a year we partner with WMU to provide their students the opportunity to work side-by-side with our COMS and clients to enhance their learning experience.

**Corporate Partner**

**ProPlan: Fueling Leader Dogs for 20 Years**

"It takes a pretty remarkable dog to make my travels unremarkable, but that is exactly what my Leader Dog Wake does for me. It is incredible.” – LDB Client Calvin V.

Travel of any kind relies on fuel. Airliners burn jet fuel, automobiles consume gasoline (or battery-provided electric power for you early-adopters) and locomotives have transitioned from coal to diesel as their main source of propulsion.

Leader Dogs, for more than two decades, have received the energy necessary for their travels from Purina ProPlan dog food.

“We feed exclusively ProPlan products to our breeding moms and their puppies and to our dogs in training," said Dr. Dave Smith, LDB director of canine health. “It is available worldwide and consistently provides a palatable quality product which reflects in the excellent coat and body condition of our dogs.”

Nestlé Purina donates the essential nutrition via ProPlan to future Leader Dogs training on campus and to the puppies being raised in 11 prisons throughout the Midwest.

In total, Nestlé Purina donates more than 56,000 pounds of ProPlan annually, and has given more than one million pounds of fuel to our dogs over the past 20+ years.

ProPlan helps ensure that our dogs receive the calories and nutrition they need while also maintaining an ideal Body Condition Score (BCS) of 4 or 5 on the Purina BCS Chart (out of a possible 9). For dogs at an unhealthy weight, Purina ProPlan Veterinary Diet OM or Weight Management food is given in combination with Forti-Flora to help the dogs' digestive tracts and return their BCS to an optimal state for service work. LDB also uses Forti-Flora to treat diarrhea in breeding dogs and their puppies, and for dogs who are recovering from surgery.

Because Leader Dog is 100% philanthropically funded, donations like those received from Nestlé Purina give our organization the fuel we need to continue helping people who are blind live unstoppable lives.

From the entire Leader Dog community, we thank Nestlé Purina for the incredibly generous, and essential, gift of ProPlan! Your efforts are changing lives

Photo: A yellow Labrador puppy sits next to a Purina ProPlan Active 27/17 bag. The puppy is wearing a blue Future Leader Dog bandana and sticking its tongue out. No caption.

Photo: A client walks across a bridge with a yellow Labrador/golden cross in harness at his left side. The client is wearing a grey and orange long-sleeved pull-over, tan pants, sunglasses and a grey winter beanie. No caption.

**Foundation Highlight**

**MDRT Foundation Shows Global Program Support**

A new relationship was formed in 2022 with the Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT) Foundation through Lion Robert Drake of the Birmingham Lions Club, who recommended our application to the MDRT Global Grants Program.

The Global Grants Program supports building stronger families and communities around the globe. This year, the MDRT Foundation will award more than $1.6 million in member-endorsed grants to over 300 charitable organizations worldwide.

Leader Dog used grant funds to deliver in-home services through our Guide Dog Training and Orientation and Mobility Training programs. To receive the grant, Leader Dog had to demonstrate that we are a non-sectarian nonprofit that is responsibly managed and employs an appropriate fiscal accounting procedure.

The MDRT Foundation was created in 1959 to provide MDRT members, like Lion Robert, the ability to give back to their communities. Since its inception, the foundation has donated more than $38 million in more than 72 countries throughout the world and in all 50 U.S. states. Funds are raised by MDRT members and industry partners. We thank MDRT for their partnership with us.

Photos: Top photo just shows the bottom half of a person in jeans and sneakers walking along a sidewalk with a white cane. The bottom photo is a yellow Labrador in harness walking on the left side of a person in white pants and a pink and white shirt in a park-like setting. It is also cropped to the lower half of the person. The MDRT Foundation logo is in between the two photos. It’s burgundy text with a shield underneath in grey with a white knight inside it with burgundy outline.

**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 248.650.7109 or lora.cabarios@LeaderDog.org.

NEW LEGACY SOCIETY MEMBERS:

Mel Partovich, Nancy Kolacz and James Kolacz

Photo: A young brunette-haired man wearing dark sunglasses, a grey jacket, jeans and a black backpack squats down facing a yellow lab in harness. A grassy background and sidewalk is faded out and the words “You are invited to join the Leader Dogs for the Blind Legacy Society” is written in gold and green ink in the upper left corner of the photo.

**Leader Dog Events**

**Bark & Brew Returns in 2022!**

Everyone was excited that Bark & Brew, presented by Chief Financial Credit Union, was back in person this year! Over 2,000 people in the mood for fun showed up for a day of music, great brews and dogs at Griffin Claw Brewing Company in Rochester Hills.

The day started with a 5K Race and 1-Mile Fun Run that drew over 450 participants. The two portions of the day combined to raise over $85,000 in support of Leader Dog's mission!

We hope you join us in June 2023 for more fun!

Photo: A man is holding a cell phone up in front of himself and four women as they pose for a group picture. They are all wearing race numbers on the front of their shirts. Caption: Even after running the 5K race, these friends mustered some great smiles for a group selfie!

Photo: A large group of people wearing matching blue shirts and race numbers pose arm in arm for a photo on a sunny day. Caption: Friends and families came together to support LDB and start their day in a healthy way.

Photo: Two women wearing sunglasses and race numbers run along a tree lined racecourse followed closely by two men who are also wearing race numbers and smiling as they run. Caption: Some runners crossed the finish line with determination while others just seemed happy to be there.

Photo: Three children use large red pumps in a race to blow up balloons that are attached to red stands. Behind them several people mill about in a parking lot that has red, blue and yellow inflatables. Caption: The kids enjoyed playing on inflatables, climbing a rock wall and trying to beat their siblings at inflating balloons.

Photo: Three men wearing blue Bark & Brew tee shirts stand next to each other in a line. The two men on the end are standing next to their Future Leader Dogs. The man in the middle is holding his puppy. Caption: Several Future Leader Dogs took on the 1-Mile walk with their puppy raisers (well, one may have hitched a partial ride).

Photo: A group of five adults with two small children gather around a blue tablecloth covered table under a white tent. There are many people in the background. Some are seated at tables while others stand. Caption: This family-friendly event brought multiple generations of families to join in the fun.

Photo: A female GDMI wearing a blue Leader Dog polo holds the leash of a black lab as she leads a female blindfold walk participant along the edge of a parking lot. There is a red fire hydrant and yellow parking post behind them. Caption: V.I.P. ticket purchasers experienced a blindfold walk with a Leader Dog in training and a LDB guide dog mobility instructor.

Photo: A group of nine people with a dog pose in front of a city scape backdrop. Two children kneel in front of the group holding a sign that reads “I love Leader Dogs”. Caption: Presenting sponsor (every year since inception) Chief Financial Credit Union offered a fun video booth and prize wheel.

Photo: A group of seven people and dogs pose in front of two red and white balloon sculptures. Caption: And in Ohio… For the second year, LDB corporate partner Coastal Pet Products held their own Bark & Brew 5K in Alliance, Ohio raising over $13,300! For 2022, their fundraising partner was Aeonian Brewing Company. A long-term supporter of LDB, Coastal has donated over $190,000 since 2008.

**Board Member Focus – Marilyn Kelly**

Retirement means slowing down—unless you are Marilyn Kelly. For her it means joining boards, teaching law and rappelling down a 15-story building in support of Leader Dogs for the Blind.

Since 2014, Marilyn has put her legal expertise to work for LDB as a board member and as a member of the Governance Committee and Philanthropy Committee. She, along with her late husband Don, also raised a Leader Dog puppy, Scout, who became a working Leader Dog.

After receiving her law degree from Wayne State, Marilyn became a courtroom attorney, then a Michigan State Court of Appeals judge, then a Justice of the Michigan Supreme Court serving 16 years, two as Chief Justice.

With a high regard for equity and fairness, Marilyn was active in the Family Law Council; the Open Justice Commission, devoted to making justice available to all; and chaired the National Consortium for Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts. She is a member of the Michigan Women’s Hall of Fame.

Marilyn has served on many boards including the Detroit Institute of Technology and the Michigan State Board of Education. She currently teaches law at Wayne State University and is immediate past chair of their Board of Governors.

We thank Marilyn for her service as a valued member of our board and for her continued support of the Leader Dog mission.

“Leader Dogs for the Blind is a special place where at day's end those being served and those serving together experience a deep and positive sense of fulfillment.” - Marilyn

Photo: Marilyn is pictured in a magenta jacket, grey slacks and a blue helmet hanging off the side of a building in a harness with her thumbs up. Caption: Pictured just before she rappelled off a building during our Double Dog Dare event in 2019

**MISSION MOMENT**

“My first Leader Dog did a lot for my mental health and I wasn't expecting that. I was excited to see what the new dog was going to be—but wondered if he was going to be as good as my first dog—and he is. He's a wonderful dog.” - Greg I and LD Caius

Photo: Greg is pictured hugging LD Caius in harness. A white backdrop with blue and green Leader Dog logos is in the background. Greg is smiling. He has red hair and a beard, blue eyes and is wearing a light blue button-down shirt.

**Donor Highlight – O&M Client Suzie Perdue**

**LDB Client and Spouse Support**

As a business owner, Suzie Perdue led a full life of hard work, traveling and relaxing with friends and family. Then she began to lose her sight, and her independent lifestyle diminished right along with it.

So, Suzie turned to her state's department of vocational rehabilitation for help but was told their services were very limited. After privately paying for some O&M training, her doctor told her about Leader Dog. “I was excited to hear what they had to offer,” said Suzie, “because my independence has always been very important to me.”

Suzie’s LDB instructor, Tommy Strasz, says that she arrived eager to learn. “I recall how excited she was to go shopping and concentrate on using her remaining vision to look at things, even breakable items, instead of looking down to avoid obstacles.” Suzie returned home with newfound confidence and is back to traveling solo to appointments, on airplanes and to meet up with friends.

Suzie and her husband Kelly were surprised to learn Leader Dog is fully funded through philanthropy.

“Leader Dog provides such a valuable and irreplaceable service,” said Suzie. “We wanted to donate to repay for the training I received. We also wanted to help make sure that anyone who needs this specialized training could receive it and could focus on their skills and not the cost of the program.”

Since returning home, Suzie is taking advantage of her new O&M skills to travel freely to see and experience all the beautiful things she can.

Call out box: Did you know that most state agencies have vocational requirements for people who need O&M services? This means stay-at-home parents, retirees and older people often don’t quality for services. Leader Dog meets the need for people unable to find O&M services elsewhere. We know everyone deserves a chance to live their best life.

Call out box: If you would like information on how to make your own gift to help us make more lives unstoppable, please visit our website at LeaderDog.planmygift.org or contact Lora Cabarios at 248.650.7109 or Lora.Cabarios@leaderdog.org.

Photo: A man with a tan baseball cap wears white button-down shirt and brown slacks stands on a boat with his arm around a woman with a button-down blue plaid shirt, black pants and sunglasses. Both are smiling and a cruise ship and snow-covered mountains are in the background. Caption: O&M Client Suzie with spouse Kelly

**Fight Fleas and Ticks with Tevra Brands**

As the official flea and tick sponsor of Leader Dogs for the Blind, Tevra Brands reminds you that warm weather is back bringing summer pests, fleas, ticks and mosquitoes with it!

Vetality® Avantect®II Flea and Tick Prevention for Dogs is a vet-quality flea and tick solution used by Leader Dog clients and pet parents throughout the United States. This formula contains the same active ingredients found in K9 Advantix II for Dogs, but costs much less! Avantect II kills bugs on contact, which means fleas don’t need to bite your dog to die. This is especially important for working dogs!

Tevra Brands believes in offering innovative, high quality, affordable products that will keep your pet happy and healthy! As a member of the Leader Dog community, you’re entitled to a 25% discount at tevrapet.com! Just enter the code leader25 at checkout.

If you have questions about Tevra Brands products or if you have accessibility issues with their website, please call them at 844.276.3290.

Logo: The Tevra Brands logo is shown which is in grey with three arcs of orange, yellow and blue dots above the wording.

Photo: A chocolate Labrador stands on a stainless-steel exam table while Veterinarian Doctor Smith applies the Tevra flea/tick product between the dog’s shoulder blades. A box of the product is displayed on the table in front of the dog.

Photo: A yellow Labrador wearing a leather harness lays in front of a white backdrop with blue Leader Dogs for the Blind logos and the puppy raiser icon which is a solid orange circle with a white puppy in the middle. Several Tevra product boxes are shown on the right of the dog and several bags of Tevra treats are pictured to the left of the dog. Caption: Article submitted by Tevra Brands

**The People Behind O&M At Leader Dog**

Though Leader Dog’s first official O&M class was held in 2002, the program got its start in the 1990s when Rod Haneline (pictured top right with a recent client), a 12-year guide dog mobility instructor, became director of client services and earned his master’s degree in Blind Rehabilitation/Orientation & Mobility. Rod used his experience to design Leader Dog’s O&M training curriculum and even taught the first class himself.

In the years that followed, Rod designed seminars for both practicing professionals and university students in the field of O&M and championed LDBs internship program for graduate students in blind rehabilitation/O&M. Through the years Rod received multiple awards for his work and was inducted into the Outstanding Alumni Academy at Western Michigan University for his work in the blind rehabilitation field.

But no one accomplishes this much alone, and Rod gives much credit to Erica Ihrke, manager of extended services. “Erica really deserves the credit for the growth of the O&M program and the services we provide,” said Rod, “She has built a team of professionals that has been recognized by the industry as leaders in fast-track O&M and GPS. She is the catalyst that keeps Leader Dog on the world stage as a forward thinking and progressive organization in the industry.”

Rod, Erica (pictured right leading a group of campers) and all our certified orientation and mobility specialists have accomplished so much over the past two decades for our clients. Leader Dog is lucky to have all of them as a part of our team.

Photo: Rod stops to pose arm in arm with a female client in the residence hallway.

Photo: Erica leads a group of campers along a grassy tree lined path on a sunny day.

**Lions Club Connection**

**Where There is a Need… There is a Lion**

**In Every Leader Dog Lies the Heart of a Lion—A Leader Dog partner since 1939.**

Since day one, Lions have been our dedicated partners in service. The Lions’ network of volunteers fundraise and lend their leadership and volunteerism to our mission.

A great example of how the Lions’ network works began when Lorie P, who grew up near Leader Dog, told a friend, Allan P, about our services. Lorie was helping Allan complete his Orientation & Mobility Training application when they were stumped by one requirement—submitting a video of Allan walking solo in his local area. Because Lorie now lives in Arizona and Allan lives in Arkansas, she couldn’t record the video.

Then Allan remembered how his father had been a Lion and he knew how Lions support Leader Dog. The pair thought that a Lions club near Allan might be able to help. So, Lorie called us with their idea, and we put her in touch with the Paragould Lions in Arkansas. Without hesitation, one of their members agreed to film Allan so he could complete his application!

Lions use their connections to spread information about our programs to small towns and big cities across the U.S. and Canada. They help make our mission a reality.

Together we serve.

Photo: A blue infographic of a person walking with a cane is pictured on the right side of the article.

**O&M Professional Seminar**

The United States has thousands of dedicated O&M instructors who are experts at teaching people how to travel with a white cane; however, many are not as familiar with guide dog travel. Leader Dog fills this void by offering a seminar for industry professionals to learn the unique aspects of working with a guide dog and how to help their clients prepare to train with a guide dog.

The seminar is hands-on including experiencing a blindfold walk with a Leader Dog (safely alongside a LDB guide dog mobility instructor). Attendees also learn specialized O&M techniques and how a personal GPS can increase their client’s range of travel and independence in new environments.

Training environments include a university campus because the setting has unique features like curving sidewalks, multiple intersecting walkways and large open spaces that can be hard for a person who is blind to navigate.

“I enjoyed walking with a dog under blindfold. I’ve spent time under blindfold learning cane travel, now I can describe the differences to my students. Experiencing it is just a higher level of being able to tell them.” – Erin from Michigan

“I have some clients who are interested in guide dogs. I’ve been piecing the information together and this helps me complete what I need to know. I also have a client with a Leader Dog and will be able to help more if there are any travel issues.” – Pat from Michigan

Photo: GDMI Apprentice David Linares is shown walking down a curved path with grass on both sides. David has a white cane in his right hand and holds the harness handle of a black Labrador in his left hand. A few people walk next to and behind him. Further back on the curved path another GDMI Apprentice is shown with another black lab and white cane with people following her too.

**Taking the Lead Podcast**

TUNE in to TAKING THE LEAD every Thursday. Our podcast welcomes guests from the blindness community who share stories, experiences and so much more! You can find Taking the Lead wherever you stream podcasts or on our website at **LeaderDog.org/taking-the-lead**.

Photo: The three podcast co-hosts are shown—Client Timothy Cunieo on the left in his home wearing a blue Leader Dog polo and headphones at his laptop; Christina Hepner is in the center in studio with Leslie Hoskins on the far right. Both Christina and Leslie are at microphones with headphone looking towards each other. A person is in the room behind a glass window with a sign lit up reading “on air.”

Logo: The Taking the Lead logo is shown in black. Three outlined characters are shown along the top. A golden retriever, a German shepherd and a Labrador retriever—all of which are wearing headphones. Taking the Lead is written in all caps below the three dogs with the “the” vertical to the left of “lead.” A cane is under everything horizontally, like an underline.

Leader Dogs for the Blind

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**Harness & Leash**

**Edition 40**

**Message from David Locklin, Chief Program Officer**

I am happy to announce that it is sunny and warm at our campus in Michigan! We’ve welcomed a variety of clients over the past few months - guide dog clients, O&M clients, teen summer campers, youth O&M clients (more on youth O&M later in this publication) and O&M professionals have enjoyed our nice weather.

As you enjoy your summer, remember these tips to keep your Leader Dog safe:

• Keep your dog hydrated.

• Consider the time of day you work your dog.

• Keep your dog out of direct sunlight as much as possible.

• Be aware of hot asphalt and sand that can burn foot pads.

• Look out for poisonous plants. A useful resource is https://www.aspca.org/pet-care/animal-poison-control/dogs-plant-list.

As always, if you have questions or concerns, contact client services at 888-777-5332 extension 1 or via email at clientservices@leaderdog.org.

**New Michigan Law Aids Our Future Leader Dogs**

This past May, a new law was passed in Michigan allowing handlers to bring service dogs in training into public spaces. This means LDB puppy raisers can now take the Future Leader Dogs they are raising into all public facilities. Until now, puppy raisers would have to ask each establishment for approval before bringing their puppy into the business.

The law requires that dogs in training be on a leash or in a harness. Businesses are only allowed to ask that a dog in training be removed from the facility if it is out of control or not housebroken.

This law was great news to our hundreds of puppy raisers throughout Michigan.

**Uber and Lyft Contact Information**

Have you ever had an Uber or Lyft ride cancelled after the driver learned you travel with a Leader Dog? If so, you are not alone.

In a 2016 nationwide class-action settlement between the National Federation of the Blind and Uber, Uber was required to inform its drivers that they cannot discriminate based on the rider having a service animal. Uber also said it would fire a driver who had more than one discrimination violation.

Uber’s Community Guidelines state that it is against state and federal law for drivers to deny a ride to someone with a service animal without exception—including documented allergies, religious reasons or a fear of dogs.

Lyft drivers are also required to accommodate people traveling with service animals, again with no exceptions. Company policy dictates that Lyft drivers could face permanent deactivation if wrongful denial of service is proven.

If you are denied service because of your Leader Dog, Uber and Lyft both have ways to report the incident.

For Uber, go to “I Want to Report a Service Animal Issue” found on the trip details screen or the account menu button on the Uber Rider App. You can also file a report at Uber.com – Click “Help” then scroll down to “Accessibility” and choose “I want to report a trip denial due to my service animal.”

For Lyft, the easiest way to report an incident is to call the Service Animal Hotline at 1-844-554-1297. You can also go to Lyft.com - Click on “Rider,” then click on “Help,” then search for “service animal policy,” choose the first option in the search results, then scroll to the bottom of the page to find the “Contact Us” button which will bring up the Service Animal Complaint Form.

**Purina Pro Plan Update**

Purina Pro Plan has recently updated their formulas. Because of the COVID-19 work restrictions and the formula change over, Pro Plan Sport 26/16 is very hard to find. The new formula that is comparable to Sport 26/16 is Active 27/17 which has 10% more calories, so slightly reduce the amount of food you are feeding your dog. If you cannot find either, then Purina One chicken and rice products are acceptable substitutes.

Here is some additional advice from our veterinarians:

1. A good substitute is Purina One or Beneful.

2. Avoid “grain free” food.

3. If you can’t find a Purina product, choose a chicken and rice formula from another company.

If you must feed something other than Purina, make the change gradually over a period of at least three days following the guidelines below:

1. On day one, feed 2/3 current food and 1/3 new food.

2. On day two, feed 1/2 current food and 1/2 new food.

3. On day three, feed 1/3 current food and 2/3 new food.

4. On day four, feed 100% new food.

There may be a change in your dog's stool, but this should not last longer than 48 hours.

**Taking the Lead Podcast**

If you haven’t listened to our Taking the Lead Podcast yet, now is the time to start! The co-hosting team of LDB Client Timothy Cuneio, LDB Outreach Manager Leslie Hoskins and LDB Digital Marketing Manager Christina Hepner release a new episode every Thursday. The trio welcome guests for most episodes, so you’ll hear stories from clients, LDB staff and LDB volunteers. You can find the podcast on Leader Dog’s website at leaderdog.org/taking-the-lead or wherever you stream podcasts including Apple Podcasts, Google Podcasts and Spotify.

**O&M Corner – Youth O&M Pilot**

In June, we welcomed three teenagers to our pilot class for a new O&M program for young teens to improve their cane skills. An adult family member accompanied each teen to learn how to best support them when they returned home from training. “The week was just invaluable,” said Lexie, one teen’s mother, “I’m seeing how much she has grown in her travel since the last time I was able to observe her doing a lesson several years ago. I’m learning what I need to do now to support her to continue learning, things like taking her to an intersection to listen to traffic to develop the listening skills to know what traffic is doing and when to safely cross.”

Leader Dog’s team is now reviewing the pilot program to decide if it will become a regular offering and what ages are most appropriate for this type of program.

**Summer Grooming Tip**

While it may seem logical to shave a heavily coated dog in the summer to provide relief from hot weather, their coats are more effective at keeping them cool when left at their natural length. Please consult with your veterinarian before having your dog’s coat trimmed in any significant way.

**Alumni Hour**

Alumni Hour has moved to a quarterly schedule. So, make sure to join us on **Wednesday, August 3 at 3:00 p.m.** for our next Alumni Hour to share and learn new information from other alumni and LDB team members.

To join by cell phone, dial 1-646-558-8656 then enter meeting ID 95644865327 and passcode 061366 when prompted.

If you are calling long-distance on your home phone, use a phone number below for the location nearest you and enter meeting ID 95644865327 and passcode 061366 when prompted.

Chicago 312-626-6799

Houston 346-248-7799

New York 646-558-8656

San Jose 669-900-9128

Tacoma 253-215-8782

Washington DC 301-715-8592

To join online, enter the following link into your browser: https://leaderdog-org.zoom.us/j/95644864327?  
pwd=bkdON0s5TzZ2TVlhbnZEUFN0elFvdz09

**Alumni Facebook Group**

If you have not already joined the LDB Alumni Facebook group, do it today! It is a great place to make connections and share resources. Go to Facebook and search “Leader Dogs for the Blind Alumni.”

**Get 15% Off Everyday**

All clients receive 15% off at our online gift shop. Enter code “15OFF” at checkout to claim your discount. If you have questions or issues with the gift shop website, contact Kim Thomas, gift shop coordinator, at 888-777-5332.

**Contact Us by Phone, Email or Text**

Your first point of contact for assistance is always the client services department. You can reach them by calling

888-777-5332 or email them at clientservices@leaderdog.org.

**Questions, Comments or Suggestions**

Please send comments to UpdateEditor@leaderdog.org or call 888-777-5332 ext. 1158.