



UPDATE

LEADERDOG.ORG | ISSUE 1 | 2022

LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND



Celebrating 20 Years of O&M

The People Behind O&M at Leader Dog

Where There is a Need... There is a Lion



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

LeaderDog.org
FOLLOW THE LEADER



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!

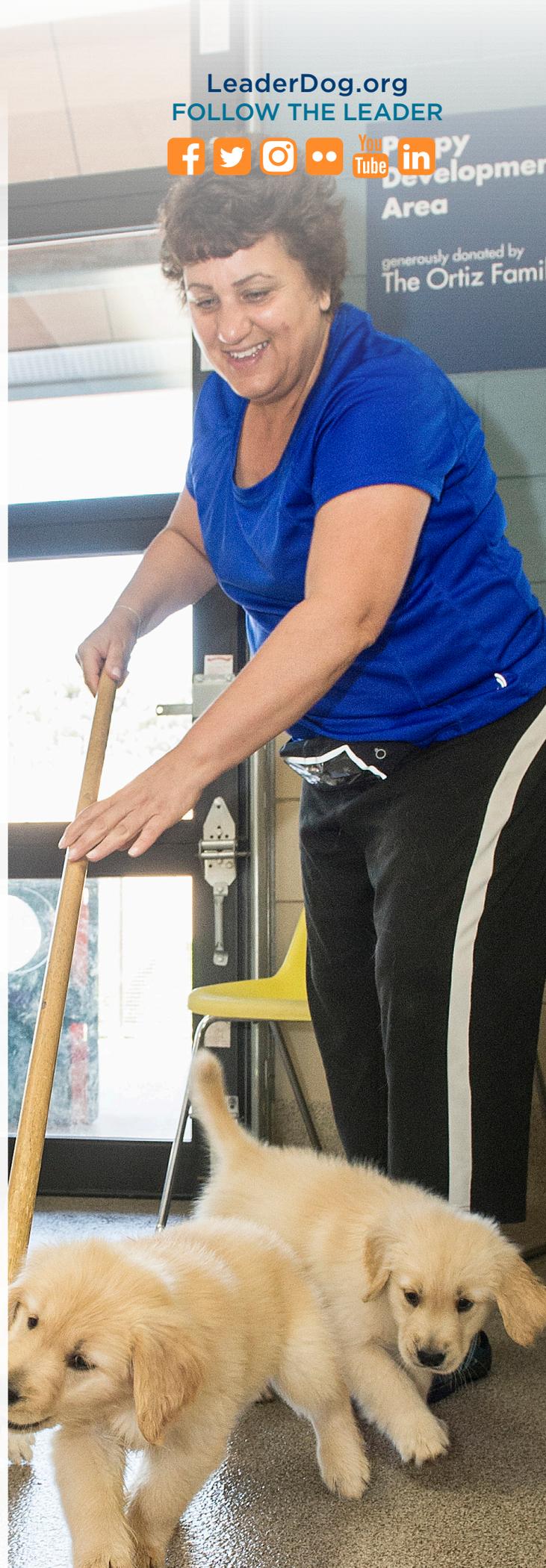
The support from Lions clubs, individuals, corporations and foundations is critical to Leader Dog's success because we provide all our services, including travel, 100% free of charge to our clients. Since we do not receive any insurance, federal or state funding, we are funded solely through philanthropic 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

Susan M. Daniels
President & CEO



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.

KRISTA

“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.”

KATE

“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.”

KRISTA

“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.”

KATE

“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!’

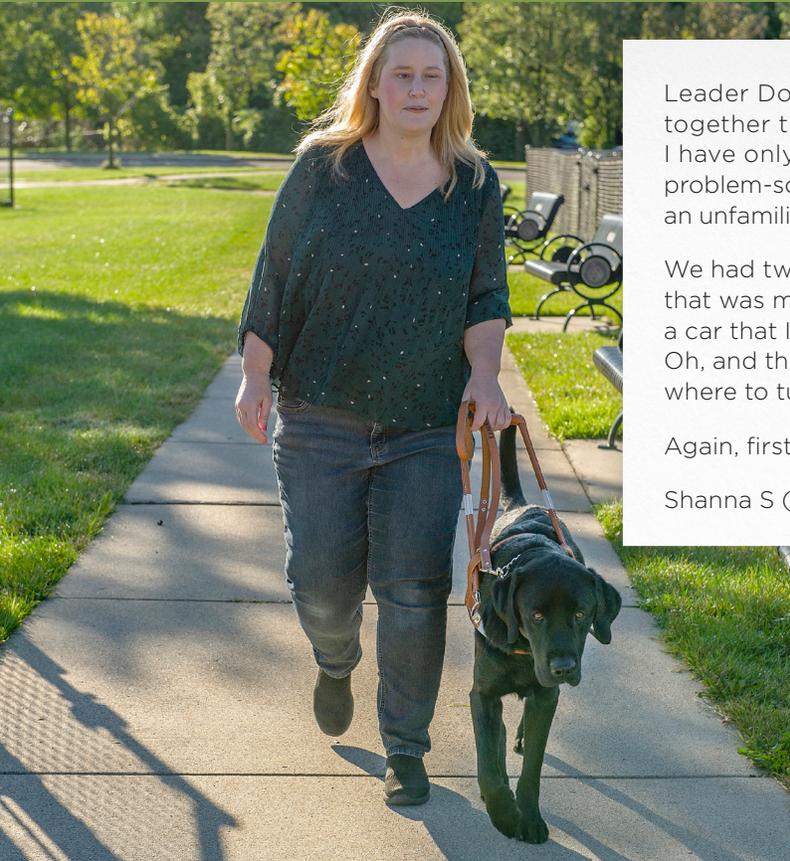
It’s not a good feeling to lose independence and confidence. I tell my kids they can do hard things, so it is mom’s turn to practice what I preach!”

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.



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!

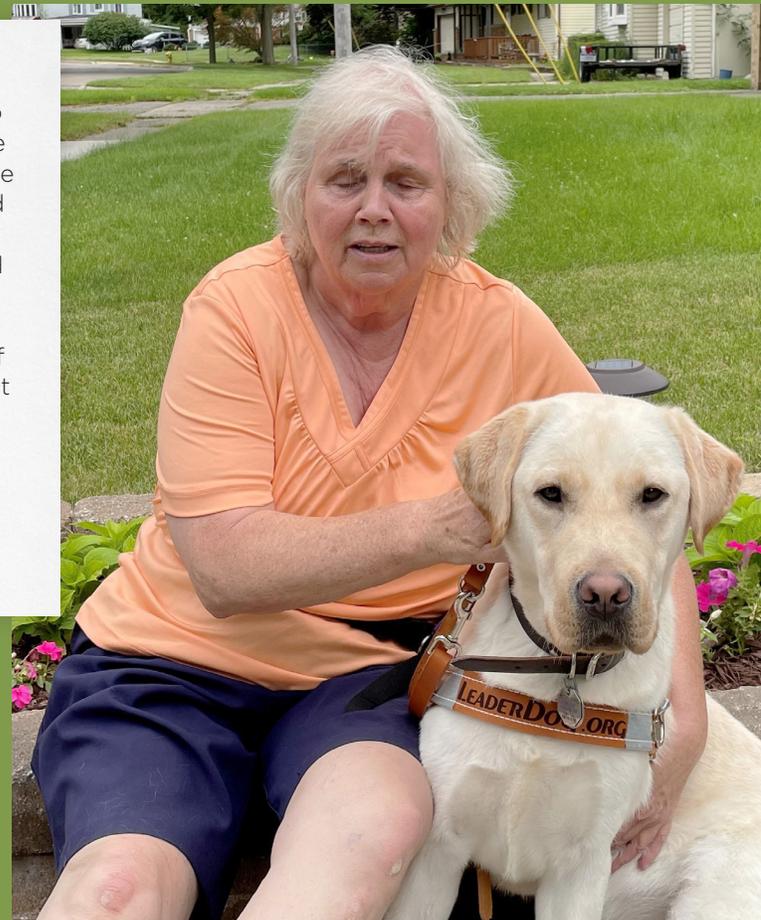
Shanna S (Facebook post SEPT2021) from Nebraska

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



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



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!

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.”

“When I went legally blind, the state sent me a cane and said, ‘There you go.’” – David Kaylor





◀ 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. ▲

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.



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.



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.



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.



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.



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.

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.

ProPlan: Fueling Leader Dogs for 20 Years

CORPORATE PARTNER

"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."

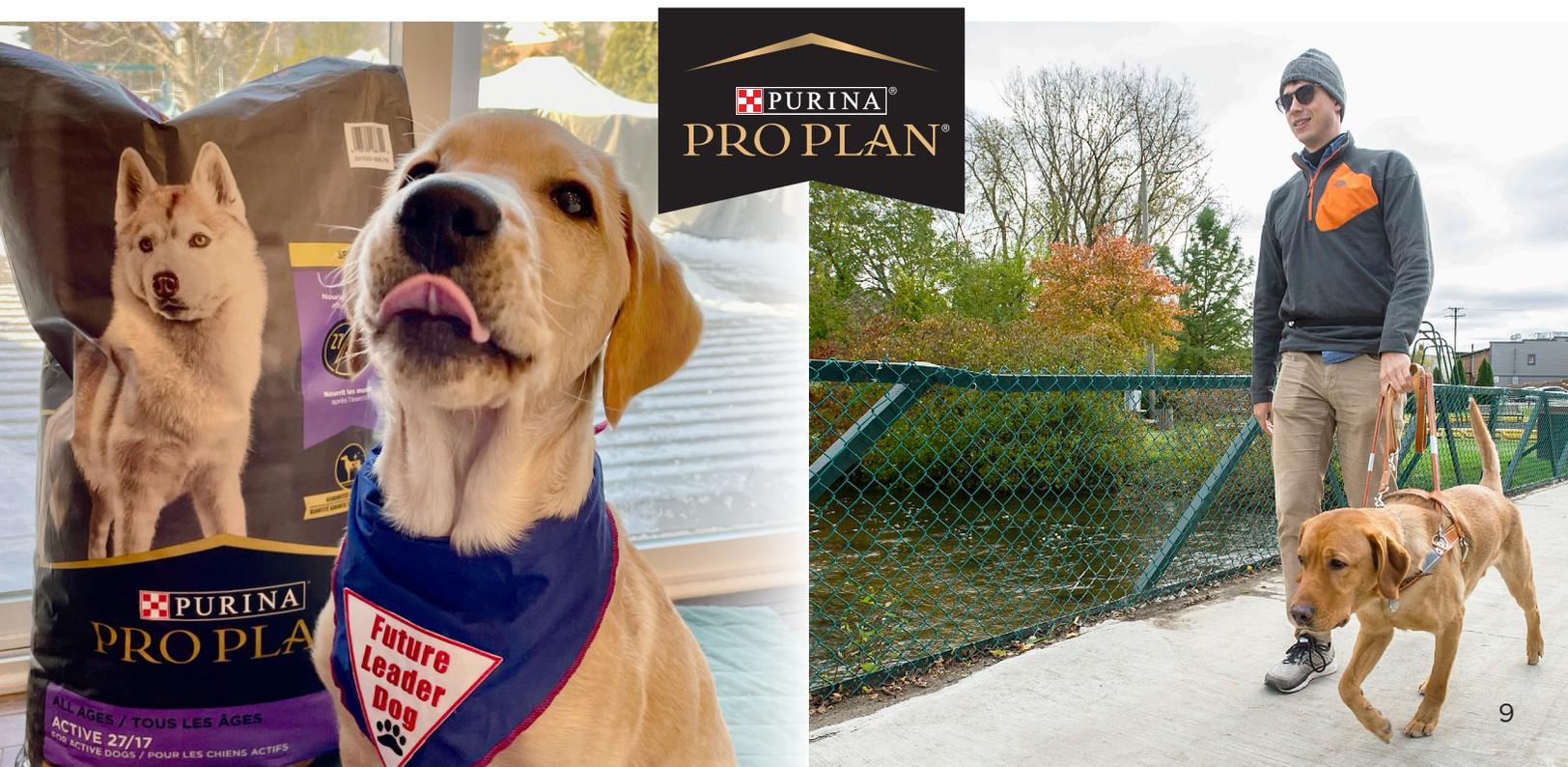
Nestlé Purina donates the essential nutrition via ProPlan to future Leader Dogs training on campus and to the puppies being raised in 11 prisons throughout the Midwest.

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.





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.



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
James Kolacz



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!



Even after running the 5K race, these friends mustered some great smiles for a group selfie!



Friends and families came together to support LDB and start their day in a healthy way.



Some runners crossed the finish line with determination while others just seemed happy to be there.



The kids enjoyed playing on inflatables, climbing a rock wall and trying to beat their siblings at inflating balloons.



Several Future Leader Dogs took on the 1-Mile walk with their puppy raisers (well, one may have hitched a partial ride).



This family-friendly event brought multiple generations of family's to join in the fun.



V.I.P. ticket purchasers experienced a blindfold walk with a Leader Dog in training and a LDB guide dog mobility instructor.



Presenting sponsor (every year since inception) Chief Financial Credit Union offered a fun video booth and prize wheel.



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.

WE HOPE YOU JOIN US IN JUNE 2023 FOR MORE FUN!

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

Marilyn Kelly

(pictured just before she rappelled off a building during our Double Dog Dare event in 2019)



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.

"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."

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



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



O&M Client Suzie Perdue

LDB Client and Spouse Support



DONOR HIGHLIGHT

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.



O&M CLIENT SUZIE WITH SPOUSE KELLY

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 qualify 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.

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.

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 tevrpet.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.



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.



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.



O&M PROFESSIONAL SEMINAR

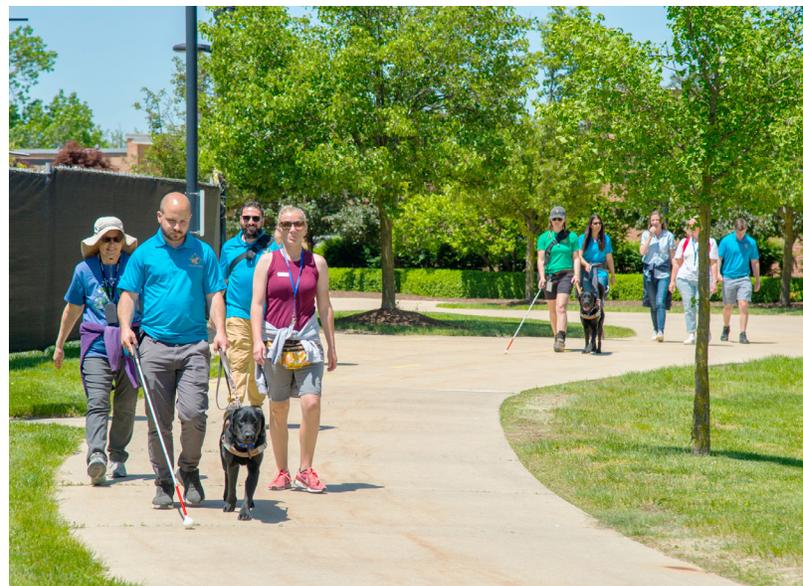
The United States has thousands of dedicated O&M instructors who are experts at teaching people how to travel with a white cane; however, many are not as familiar with guide dog travel. Leader Dog fills this void by offering a seminar for industry professionals to learn the unique aspects of working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





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FOR THE BLIND®

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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.

