

# LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND

# Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2021-2022



**GUIDE  
DOG**



**ORIENTATION  
& MOBILITY**



**TEEN SUMMER  
CAMP**



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# CONTENTS

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4	Message from Susan Daniels
5	Vision, Mission and Values
6-7	Fiscal Year 2021-2022 Highlights
9	Program Numbers and Information
11	Financial Information
13	Board of Trustees
14	Board Committees



*Future Leader Dog Wonder practices sitting and staying on leash in front of a pumpkin wall mural.*



## Mission Moment

"I had 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

Kate and Krista met and became friends through an online Facebook group and eventually coordinated coming to LDB to get their O&M training together. Both 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) outside the Leader Dog administration building and Polk residence.*





## A Message from Susan Daniels

**G**reetings! This year Leader Dogs for the Blind continued to resume operations that had been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud to share that we were able to resume serving international clients and continued to pilot new programs to fully meet the needs of our expanding client base.

Like the dogs we train, our goal is to be a leader. This year we met that goal by piloting a new program, Youth Orientation & Mobility. Clients (16- and 17-year-olds) were accompanied by an adult supporter (parent, sibling or educator) for a week-long training at Leader Dog. The teens learned important skills to travel independently and safely with a white cane while the adult supporters networked and broadened their understanding of what their teens were experiencing. The program was a resounding success and will be an annual Leader Dog offering. We introduced Taking the Lead, a podcast that brings awareness to issues faced by people who are blind and highlights resources those individuals can access for assistance. We also celebrated previous innovations. In January 2002, Leader Dog became the first guide dog organization in the United States to offer Orientation & Mobility (O&M) training. In 2022 we celebrated 20 years of O&M and more than 1,000 clients served through this pioneering program.

We also welcomed back our 350+ on-campus volunteers whose presence on campus was sincerely missed and whose support is critical to our mission. We continued to engage our 420+ puppy raisers and breeding hosts as we resume all operations to return to pre-pandemic numbers of clients served and Leader Dogs matched with their partners.

As always, Leader Dog remains steadfast in our belief that every person deserves equal opportunity for travel and independence, which is why all our services are provided at no cost. Thank you for your support of Leader Dogs for the Blind, as together we work to make people unstoppable.

Sincerely,

*Susan M. Daniels*

Susan M. Daniels  
President & CEO





# VISION

Every person who is blind or visually impaired travels safely and independently.

# MISSION

To empower people who are blind or visually impaired with lifelong skills for safe and independent daily travel.

# VALUES

Do what is right

*We act with integrity in every situation.*

Show respect and compassion

*We show empathy and kindness to every person and every dog.*

Demonstrate passion for the work

*We do more than just our job, we believe in our mission.*

Deliver a superior experience

*We exceed expectations for every person in the Leader Dog community.*

Work as a team

*We partner to achieve goals and advance the mission.*

Seek innovation

*We keep an open mind; we learn; we share our ideas; we drive change.*

Practice safety

*We provide a safe and supportive environment for ourselves and others.*



*An apprentice guide dog mobility instructor follows closely behind a client during a training day in downtown Rochester, MI.*



*Guide dog clients Frances and Daniela exit the people mover during a training session in downtown Detroit, MI.*

# HIGHLIGHTS 2021-2022

## International Clients Return

With protocols in place and borders reopening, we were able to welcome international clients back to campus after a 20-month absence. Clients from Canada returned in October, 2021 with clients from Spain returning in May, 2022.

Everyone was thrilled to hear a variety of languages and accents on campus again.



## 20 Years of O&M

In the U.S., most O&M training is provided by state agencies that have vocational requirements for people to be eligible for services. This leaves seniors, stay-at-home parents and people who are planning to retire without assistance.

In January 2002, we became the first guide dog organization in the U.S. to offer O&M training. There are no vocational requirements so everyone can take that important first step toward regaining their travel independence.

More than 1,000 people ranging in age from 16 to 87 years old have participated in our O&M training.





## Taking the Lead Podcast

Leader Dog added another channel to share information about our free programs and services to potential clients and donors by launching a podcast, Taking the Lead, on January 6, 2022.

The podcast takes a deep dive into the blindness community to bring awareness of issues faced by people who are blind and highlight resources both inside and outside of Leader Dog that they can access for assistance.

Co-hosted by a Leader Dog client and two Leader Dog team members, the podcast also includes inspiring stories from past Leader Dog clients.

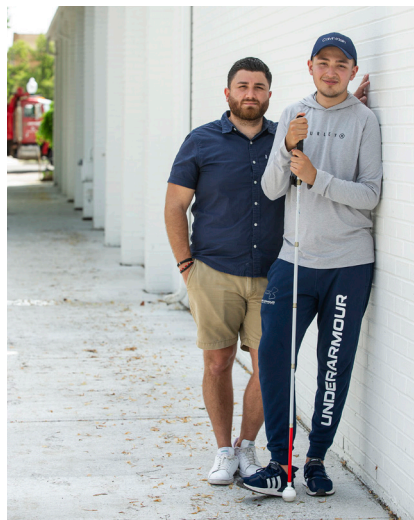


## New Youth Program

A new program was launched for 16- and 17-year-olds, Youth Orientation and Mobility (O&M). Clients were accompanied by an adult supporter (parent, sibling or educator) for the week-long training.

Our Certified O&M Specialists (COMS) provided one-on-one training to our young clients including safely crossing streets and navigating stores and buildings.

The adult supporters broadened their understanding of O&M and their teens' current skill level along with how to help their teen explore the next steps for independent travel when they return home.



## Highest Revenue in Three Areas

Estate giving was strong due to several intentional strategies to communicate with donors who have the capacity and affinity for our mission to make a legacy gift.

Our multi-channel approach to general giving achieved strong outcomes in direct mail and in the digital space through online ads, social media and email campaigns to reach a record high of \$2.4 million. This success was enhanced by the addition of 5,080 new and reactivated donors.

Through the thoughtful stewardship of foundation, fund and charitable trust partners, efficiencies were achieved to reach higher revenue goals in foundation giving.

# WHY I LOVE LEADER DOG REASON #411



“ I’ve had family members lose their vision with age, and I raise puppies in their memory. It’s not about the dog— but what the dog can do to change a life. ”

— BONNIE L, PUPPY RAISER



## PROGRAMS

### GUIDE DOG



**Guide Dog** training is a three-week residential training program matching hand-selected, highly trained dogs with people who are legally blind, or both deaf and blind.

### ORIENTATION & MOBILITY



**O&M** training is the only seven-day residential orientation and mobility program in the U.S., providing clients with cane skills to become safer, more independent travelers.

### TEEN SUMMER CAMP



**Teen Summer Camp** is a unique summer camp for 16- and 17-year-olds who are legally blind, combining fun outdoor activities and leadership training with an introduction to guide dogs.

### TOM TALKS



**T.O.M. TALKS** is a virtual workshop for clients ages 18 to 24 to learn about independent travel, professional readiness and networking.

## CLIENTS SERVED



- 5 DeafBlind
- 81 GPS\* devices issued



- 10 GPS\* devices issued



- 14 GPS\* devices issued



\*GPS Technology empowers clients to identify their current location and plan their own travel routes. Leader Dog is the only guide dog organization that provides GPS devices to clients free of charge.

## VOLUNTEERS



**90**  
Breeding  
Stock Hosts



**330**  
Puppy  
Raisers



**381**  
On-Campus\*  
\* Includes 27 Board Trustees

# WHY I LOVE LEADER DOG REASON #579



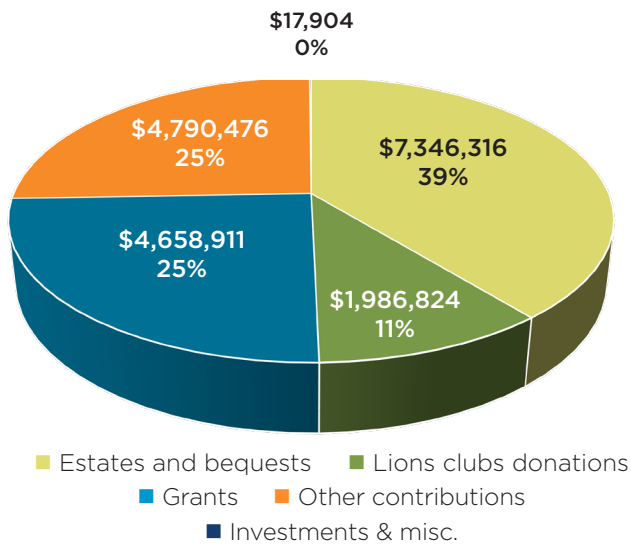
“ Being able to watch the journey of these dogs going from eager, naive puppies to mature, responsible guides is just such an incredible experience. It never gets old! ”

— JAMIE T, GUIDE DOG MOBILITY INSTRUCTOR

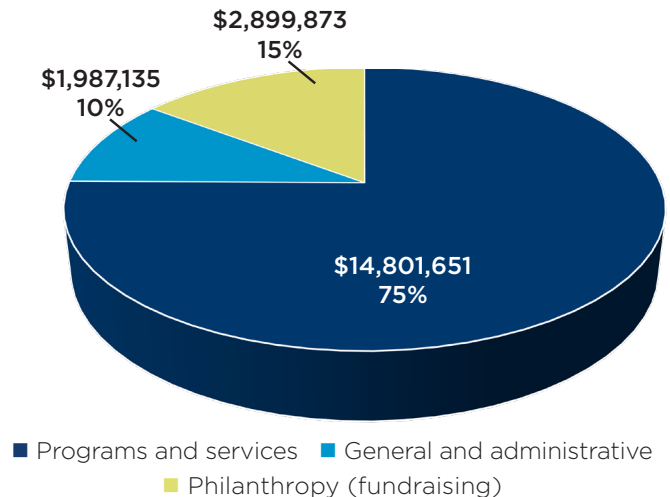


# THE NUMBERS

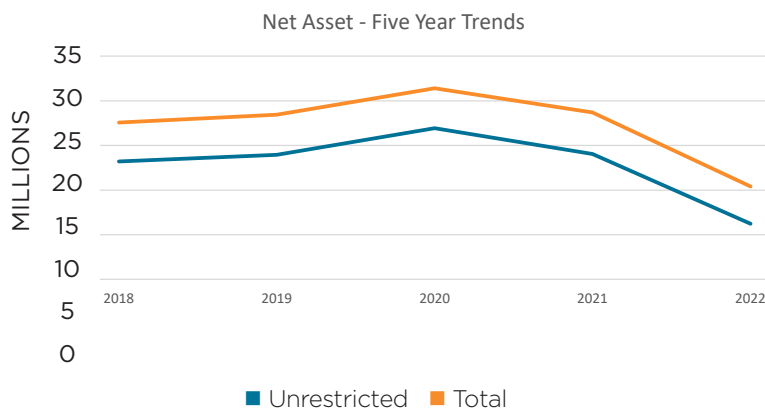
## Revenue



## Expenses



## Other



### LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND

#### Summarized Statement of Activities

For the year ended June 30, 2022

#### Revenue

Contributions	\$18,782,527
Investment & Other	17,904
<b>Total revenue</b>	<b>18,800,431</b>

#### Expenses

Programs & Services*	14,801,651
General & Administrative	1,987,135
Fundraising	2,899,873
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>19,688,659</b>

Change in net assets from operating activities (888,228)

Non-recurring adjustments to net assets\*\* (7,406,229)

**Total change in net assets (8,294,457)**

Net assets, beginning of year 28,693,281

**Net assets, end of year 20,398,824**

#### NOTES:

\* Programs and Services Expenses include gifts made by Leader Dogs for the Blind to the Leader Dogs for the Blind Foundation, a separately organized 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization whose exclusive mission is to support Leader Dogs for the Blind. These gifts primarily consist of large bequests.

\*\*Elite Detection K9 (EDK9) was formed as a long-term investment strategy to provide an alternative revenue source as financial support for the mission of LDB in addition to philanthropic revenue. Since the inception of EDK9 in 2018, there has been an ongoing review and assessment of operations and financial projections on a quarterly basis by the Leader Dog Board of Trustees. Based on these ongoing assessments, the senior management team and board made the decision in 2022 to seek alternative sources of funding for EDK9. As a result, LDB is exploring options related to the future of EDK9, including identifying a partner or partners able to fund EDK9. This course of action triggered certain accounting adjustments we have identified as non-recurring (i.e., outside the normal course of LDB operations).



# WHY I LOVE LEADER DOG REASON #417



“It’s wonderful being able to work with puppies from birth knowing that they will grow into life-changing Leader Dogs. I am so thankful to be part of this program!”

— EMMA JO H, BREEDING HOST



# CURRENT BOARD OF TRUSTEES *(as of 12.01.22)*

## Executive Officers

Susan Daniels, President & Chief Executive Officer  
Lorene Suidan, Vice President & Chief Operating Officer  
Jeff Lev, Vice President and Chief Financial Officer  
Melissa Weisse, Vice President & Chief Philanthropy Officer

## Officers

Kathryn Davis, Board Chair  
Steve Guarini, Immediate Past Chair  
Kim Gorman, Vice Chair  
Anne Arvia, Treasurer  
Mark Guthrie, Secretary

## Trustees

Arun Anand	Michele Honomichl
Jackie Buchanan	Justice Marilyn Kelly
Franklin Carmona, DVM	Thomas O'Masta
Honorable Stephanie Dawkins Davis	John Reed
Margaret Dimond, PhD	Avril Rinn
Paul Edwards, MD, FACS	Mary Smith
Jill Garvey	Daniel Spriet
Jill Gaus	Kurt Terrien
John Hebert	Marc Wisniewski
Diane Henderson	Douglas Wright, CPA
Brian Hock	

## Honorary Trustees

Celia Domalewski	Daniel Markey
Lon Grossman	James Platzer
Paul Hemeryck	Hendrik Schuur



# BOARD COMMITTEES

## **Assistive Technology, Accessibility and Advocacy Committee**

Oversees the organization's use and implementation of assistive technology, ensures adherence to Leader Dog's accessibility philosophy and makes recommendations to Leader Dog on matters relating to client advocacy.

## **Audit Committee**

Oversees the organization's annual external audit and its system of internal controls over financial reporting.

## **Business Development**

Researches and develops strategies to ensure the growth of Leader Dog in accordance with its goals and vision.

## **Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Accessibility Committee**

Ensures organizational commitment to inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility at the highest level and throughout the organization.

## **Ethics Committee**

Ensures that the Leader Dog mission is executed with the highest ethical standards and in alignment with organizational values and to review, interpret and monitor the organizational Code of Ethical Standards.

## **Executive Committee (Board Officers only)**

Conducts such business as is necessary or desirable during those periods when the Board of Trustees is not in session.

## **Finance Committee**

Oversees fiscal accountability and budgetary affairs.

## **Governance Committee**

Establishes and maintains a dynamic, diverse, engaged and knowledgeable Board of Trustees.

## **Mission Assurance & Quality Committee**

Oversees performance metrics, outcomes, quality, continuous improvement and strategic plan progress and ensures alignment with the mission statement of Leader Dogs for the Blind.

## **Philanthropy Committee**

Oversees development and fundraising activities, ensuring that the case for support is strong, current and based on the organization's mission and goals.

## **Information Systems Committee**

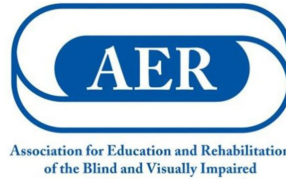
Serves as a strategic partner for the Leader Dog team, focusing on the alignment of core business and technology so that the organization remains in the mainstream of continually evolving technology and IT solutions.



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## Accreditations

International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF)  
Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER)



## Member

Assistance Dogs International (ADI)  
Council of US Dog Guide Schools (CUSDGS)  
American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)  
VisionServe Alliance  
Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER)

## Leader Dogs for the Blind

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## LeaderDog.org

FOLLOW THE LEADER      

