



UPDATE

LEADERDOG.ORG | ISSUE 1 | 2023

LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND



The Client Experience

The On-Campus Experience

New Volunteer Puppy Raiser Options



Greetings,

As we head into summer, the Leader Dogs for the Blind campus is abloom and bustling with activity. What a great time to express my appreciation for the unwavering support that you have provided to Leader Dog. The generosity and dedication of our donors, Lions, volunteers and community have allowed us to continue providing life-changing services to people who are blind or visually impaired, and we are truly grateful.

In this issue of Update we feature the on-campus experience our clients have when attending one of our programs. From the moment they

arrive, our clients are met with friendly staff and volunteers, accessible accommodations and some of the best food around. Our instructors work tirelessly to ensure that each client receives the highest quality training possible. Whether a client is here for a guide dog, orientation and mobility training or Teen Summer Camp, our goal is to make the LDB campus their home away from home.

By showcasing the incredible work that goes into providing an immersive and enriching experience for our clients, we hope you are inspired to tell others about our mission to empower people who are blind or visually impaired with lifelong skills for safe and independent daily travel.

Thank you for being a part of the Leader Dog community. It is because of people like you that we can change lives every day.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Daniels

Susan M. Daniels
President & CEO





As Joey Johnson prepared to travel to Leader Dog to get his first guide dog, he and his wife, Sidney, had a shared curiosity about the training process. Since Joey would have the experience alone, he decided to do a daily blog to keep Sidney in the loop. His blog quickly became popular among his family and friends.

His blogging experience opened Joey up to using social media more, which has proven to be a great way for him to keep up with new friendships made during Orientation and Mobility and Guide Dog training at LDB. “I’ve also developed relationships with LDB alumni who weren’t in training with me,” said Joey. “It’s opened a lot of doors for friendships because we share the common situation of being blind.”

The ability to build strong connections with other LDB clients ranks high on Joey’s list of why he is glad he found Leader Dog. “It might sound odd, but it’s encouraging to hear that other people are struggling. It makes you realize, ‘It isn’t just me.’ It’s good to know that I’m not alone,” Joey explained. “None of us are perfect and neither are our dogs, but I have people to talk to for advice and to get ideas on how to solve minor problems.”

After six months with Leader Dog Tucker, Joey had to admit that his dog really adores Sidney. “He’s very attached to me,” laughed Joey, “But I think she smells better.”

Joey’s blog inspired our main article, *The On-Campus Experience*, on pages 6–8. You can read his blog in its entirety at LeaderDog.org/blog/meeting-my-match-a-leader-dog-diary.



JOEY TRAINING WITH LEADER DOG TUCKER NEAR CAMPUS IN ROCHESTER LAST FALL.

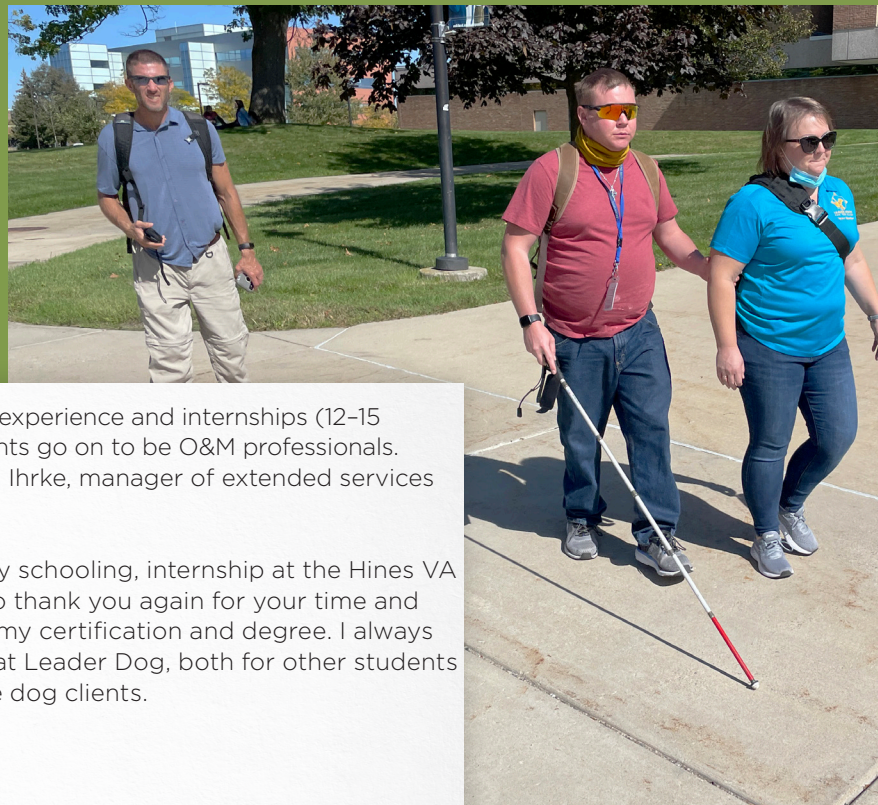
LETTERS TO LEADER DOG



Just a brief note of inadequate thanks for the world-expanding training kindly drilled into me by the O&M instructors, for the royal treatment bestowed on me by the staff, and the tranquility created by the presence of so many peaceful and well-mannered dogs during my stay at Leader Dog.

Despite my being ready to go home, you are never quite ready to leave there!

Kind regards,
Bill M



"Our team provides practicum (one-week pre-internship) experience and internships (12-15 weeks) several times per year. These graduate level students go on to be O&M professionals. Brent was here and worked with me and a client." ~ Erica Ihrke, manager of extended services

Hi Erica,

I just wanted to write and let you know that I finished my schooling, internship at the Hines VA and passed my ACVREP* exam last week. So, wanted to thank you again for your time and efforts in helping me during my practicum in achieving my certification and degree. I always share my great experiences with others about my time at Leader Dog, both for other students and professionals, and also for potential O&M and guide dog clients.

Thanks again,
Brent P

Certified Vision Rehabilitation Therapist & Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist

*Academy for Certification of Vision Rehabilitation & Education Professionals

Celebrating this sweet, beautiful, smart and amazing dog!! Risa turned two and we enjoyed the day celebrating with her in many ways. She may be a little spoiled but she deserves it! She's an amazing Leader Dog!

She is pictured here underneath a restaurant table with her bully stick between her two front paws. We went out to eat because our power has been out for days due to the wind storms. It didn't slow down our celebration at all.

Theresa T



It is hard to believe one year ago I was at Leader Dog and got my amazing Nugget. He is a golden retriever and he is the third one that I've had from Leader Dog. It is amazing how every time they have given me the perfect match!

I owe Leader Dog everything because they've given me my freedom! Thank you guys for everything you do! Thank you Nugget for everything you do for me and for being so amazing! We had an amazing class and I'll never forget everybody that was there.

Sean T
Feb 2023 FB post

The On-Campus Experience



You've probably seen quite a few pictures and stories of Leader Dog clients confidently navigating life with their white canes and guide dogs, but there's a lot that goes into those success stories! Though we have other models of our Guide Dog and Orientation and Mobility programs that take place in other locations, most of our clients start their journeys to travel independence right here on our campus. Here's a snapshot of some of the things clients experience during an on-campus program at Leader Dog.



Before Issue Day

Training for our guide dog clients starts before they meet their new Leader Dog. For the first two days they learn how to hold onto a harness while walking and how to properly give cues like "find the curb," with our guide dog mobility instructors (GDMI) "playing" guide dog. This process allows first-time guide dog users to learn how to follow their dog in harness and to learn the verbal cues and hand signals along with use of proper voice inflection when giving cues or praise. This is also a time where GDMI teach "clean handling," which is making sure the dogs are rewarded on the client's left side so the dog stays in position. Returning clients get to refresh correct handling techniques as they transition to a new dog. During this process, the GDMI are also assessing the client's pace and learning more about the client for dog matching purposes. Not having the actual dog in this process helps the learner to focus solely on the instruction given and not the dog.



Mealtime Socializing

Meeting and sharing experiences with other people who are visually impaired are important parts of the on-campus Leader Dog experience. Many people who attend our programs have never met another person who is blind. Stories fly back and forth across the dining tables as people share resources and hints on how they have accomplished the successes in their lives and worked through the challenges.



Learning About Dogs

Whether someone has had multiple Leader Dogs over the years or if they've never had a dog of any kind in their life, lessons on dog care are equally important and informative. Lessons cover everything from learning how to groom, brush teeth and apply flea prevention to choosing the correct dog treats and toys. There's even a session on "the dog's point of view" to help clients connect with their dog's emotions and behaviors as they bond and learn how to live together.

Daily Guide Dog Class Schedule

- 6:30AM park*, feed and water
- 7:30 breakfast
- 8:15 park time (optional)
- 8:30 depart for training session
- 11:00 return from training; park and water
- 12:00PM lunch
- 12:45 park time (optional)
- 1:00 depart for training session
- 4:00 return from training; park and water
- 4:15 Informational sessions (varies each day)
- 5:30 Dinner; water your dog after dinner
- 8:00 Park time
- 11:00 Quiet time

**"Park" is the term we use for a dog relieving itself*

Here Comes the Fun

The training process can be rather stressful at times, so built-in time for relaxation is important. Our residence staff and volunteers host fun nights playing "Family Feud" and other games to let loose and share a good laugh. The kitchen staff adds some variety with themed meals like fiesta dinner night, a pizza party with beer and wine, and a Michigan-themed meal ending with ice cream floats made with a local favorite - Faygo® root beer or orange pop (or "soda" for non-Michiganders).

(continued on page 8)





Touching Base with Instructors

Respecting that every person has their own goals and concerns, individual discussions between each client and their instructor are an important part of training success. Orientation and Mobility (O&M) clients work one-on-one with their certified O&M specialist, so personalized discussions are a daily occurrence. For guide dog clients, weekly “touch base” meetings are scheduled with their GDMI to discuss progress, successes and challenges, and to make sure the training environments and objectives are meeting each client’s needs. Plans can be made for optional travel practice when it’s dark outside, or in rural or big city environments.



Puppy Raiser Meet & Greet

Clients have the opportunity to meet the puppy raiser or raisers who were their Leader Dog’s family for the first year of life. Getting to meet these special people is an exciting event for everyone involved. The evening includes exchanging stories, sometimes sharing puppy pictures and getting to know the other people who have been an important part of their dog’s life. Not everyone gets to meet in person; some connect via Zoom or, in the case of inmate raisers, via mail.



Training On Campus

Not all training sessions require taking a bus to an off-campus location. Our residence facility has a large revolving door to learn how to move through this type of entrance with a cane or a dog, and we have elevators and stairs for additional practice when needed. Guide dog clients take their dogs to a vet appointment with LDB veterinarians to learn how their dog acts in this environment and familiarize themselves with routine procedures. We also have a practice course on our campus grounds with sidewalks and a “street crossing” where clients and their dogs can practice or just get some fresh-air exercise in a calm, contained environment.



Celebration Ceremony

On the last day of class, everyone is invited to a special luncheon celebrating everyone’s accomplishments and hard work. Clients, instructors and other LDB staff gather to share funny stories from training, express thanks to each other and prepare for heading home with their Leader Dog or white cane in hand.

Throughout their stay on Leader Dog’s campus, clients have daily opportunities to improve their skills, learn about new resources and build lasting friendships.

We thank all our clients for trusting us with their training needs, and we’re grateful to all our donors for supporting the important work that happens on (and off) campus every day.





Every dog born into our program has a unique set of characteristics that can impact its future success as a Leader Dog. These traits are referred to as the dog's phenotype (characteristics that are observable and measurable). Phenotypes can refer to both physical (coat color, eye color, head shape) and behavioral (level of distraction, fear, chase-proneness) traits.

The traditional method of selecting breeding dogs relied on choosing those with the most desirable traits. With the advancement of technology, today we can better analyze aspects of health, behavior and performance of each young dog and its relatives. Currently, the most accurate way to identify genetic potential of each young dog as a possible breeder is using Estimated Breeding Values (EBVs). The key to producing accurate EBVs is to begin the process with accurately measured phenotypes and accurately recorded pedigree relationships on all dogs in a population.

In our continual effort to breed and produce the best possible guide dog for our clients, we will begin utilizing the International Working Dog Registry (IWDR). The IWDR database includes a variety of helpful tools, such as test mating, data collaboration, and EBV calculations to help us identify which dogs are genetically most likely to produce puppies that meet our breeding objectives.



LED LIGHTS—A WIN-WIN SOLUTION

When some of our clients reported that the fluorescent lighting throughout campus was hard on their eyes, we sought the best replacement. We found a solution that not only helped our clients but provides ongoing cost savings.

We replaced all ceiling fixtures with LED lighting that lets us dim output strength and change the color of the lighting (white/yellow/pink) based on individual preference. By adding dimmer switches in all client rooms, everyone can now choose the lighting that best suits their personal needs.

Since LED lighting uses substantially less energy than fluorescent lighting, we anticipate a 15% energy savings since lighting is roughly one third of our utility costs. By combining these savings with an energy company rebate, we will recoup the cost of our investment in about three years. After that, it's all savings!



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



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

Robert I. and Jill D. Moore





Puppy raising is a great volunteer opportunity for people who love dogs and want to make a positive impact on the life of a person who is visually impaired. However, not everyone is able to devote 12-14 months to prepare a puppy for their formal Leader Dog training.

To open the opportunity up to more people, our puppy development team worked with current puppy raisers and puppy counselors to design alternative ways to participate in raising a Future Leader Dog that fit varied lifestyles. These new options allow people who periodically travel for work, juggle a busy home life or want to “try before fully jumping in” to be involved in raising a Future Leader Dog.

Puppy raising options now include:

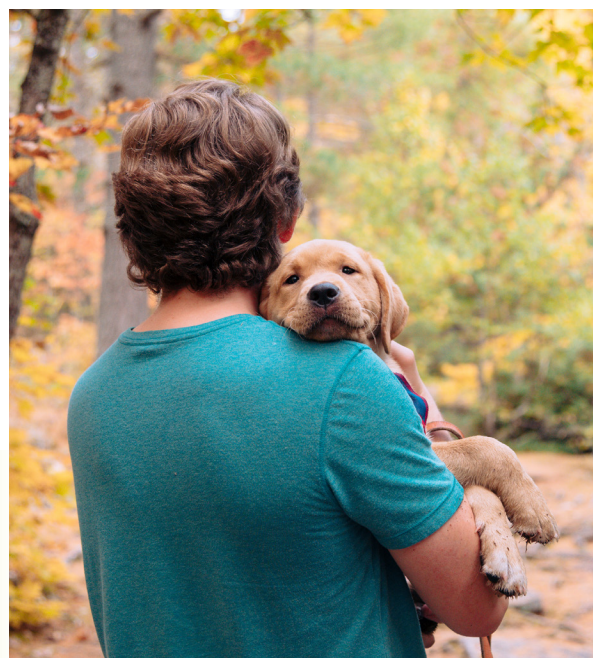
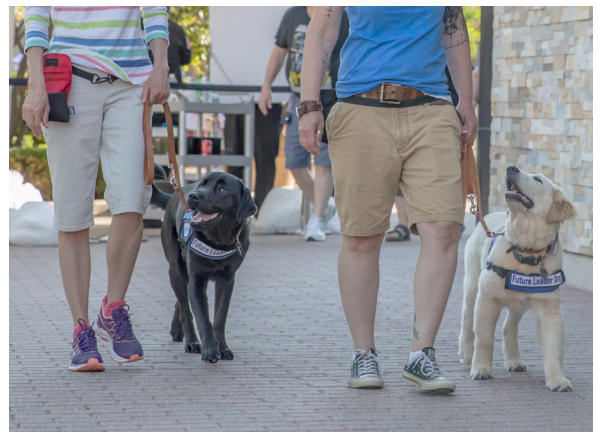
ONE HOUSEHOLD - The traditional way to puppy raise is perfect for families, active singles, retired couples and empty nesters.

CO-RAISING - This option allows people from two separate households to share duties throughout the puppy raising year. It's like having built-in backup.

PASS-ALONG - Two volunteers share raising in six-month increments. This is great for people dipping their toe into puppy raising and aren't ready to commit to a full year of training. The first six month option may suit individuals who are either more comfortable handling a smaller/younger dog or live in an apartment that has pet weight restrictions. Those preferring an older puppy that has some foundational behavior training may choose the last six months.

CORPORATE - Companies can support their employees in raising puppies individually or in teams of two or three. Watch employee engagement improve while gaining marketing, traditional media and social media opportunities.

CAMPUS PUPPIES - Select colleges and universities host a campus puppy club that supports students raising during their educational experience.



You can learn more about puppy raising or sign up for a free virtual orientation at LeaderDog.org (click on the Volunteer tab) or scan the QR code to the right.



Mark Guthrie

(pictured with his wife, Marna, at our 2023 Dinner in the Dark)



When Mark Guthrie agreed to be a volunteer non-trustee in 2012, we knew we hit the jackpot. With a plethora of experience including 25+ years (at that time) in the IT world and a proven record of promoting IT to support business growth, Mark's knowledge was wholly welcomed.

Mark's involvement on our Information Systems Committee includes seven years as a trustee and six as committee chair. His vast auto-

motive industry background with companies such as AM General, Delphi, ITT Automotive, and Volkswagen is rounded out with Six Sigma and ITIL certifications.

A graduate of Oakland University

(OU) in Auburn Hills, Michigan, Mark received his BS in Computer Science and MBA from the university. He has helped increase Leader Dog's collaborative relationship with the university through

efforts involving the School of Engineering and Computer Science (SECS) as well as the School of Business Administration (SBA). In 2022, he received OU's Distinguished Alumni Service Award, their highest alumni honor for volunteer leadership in service to the university.

Mark and his wife, Marna Nemon, attend many Leader Dog events including Dinner in the Dark and Bark & Brew and are huge promoters of Leader Dog's mission and clients. They express their wide range of interests through support of the arts, public radio and television, and OU's Kresge Library Affordable Education Materials initiative.

We thank Mark for his past, and future, years of service on our board of trustees.

"Marna and I are completely committed to supporting Leader Dog's mission, and we were honored nearly five years ago to provide a home for a breeding mom, Darla. She birthed two litters, and a female from her last litter Sept 8, 2020, is now a breeding mom herself, ensuring Darla (now retired and living comfortably) will leave a lasting legacy to help empower many others to live independently."



MISSION MOMENT

"It's totally amazing what these dogs can do. Her knowledge of when to stop, how to stop, how to guide me around things. I'm amazed at all of her qualities."

~Rochelle D and LD My Lady

Ortiz Family and Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)



Randy and Ruth Ortiz first learned of Leader Dogs for the Blind in the mid-90s. “We had family friends who were longtime Leader Dog puppy raisers. Our sons played baseball together and we regularly had Leader Dog puppies outside the dugout working on their socialization skills,” said Randy. “At that time we had no idea how the positive interactions with those Future Leader Dogs would pique our curiosity and spur us to learn more about the organization and its mission.”

Years later, Randy and Ruth visited the Leader Dog campus and had lunch with several clients. “After listening to the clients and learning how those amazing dogs changed their lives, Ruth and I knew we wanted to get involved and make an impact at Leader Dog,” Randy reflected. After their visit, Randy and Ruth decided to support Leader Dog in a meaningful way by giving a generous grant from their donor-advised fund (DAF).

DAF grants are a wonderful way to make a greater impact AND engage multiple generations in charitable giving decisions. “It was important to me that my entire family (including grandchildren) visit the Leader Dog campus, as they will likely be stewards of the ‘Ortiz Trust’ someday,” Randy said. “I wanted them to see for themselves that there is no higher calling than serving others.”

Randy and Ruth have made an indelible impact on the lives of our clients over the years through the grants they have given from their DAF.

Like Randy and Ruth (pictured kneeling—center right), you can designate a grant from your DAF today and make our clients UNSTOPPABLE!

If you would like to know how a grant from your DAF can change lives, please visit our website at leaderdog.planmygift.org/donor-advised-funds or contact our Director of Personal Giving, Missy Aupperle, at 248.218.6221.



“I wanted them to see for themselves, that there is no higher calling than serving others.” ~ Randy Ortiz



A donor-advised fund is like a charitable savings account that gives you the flexibility to decide how much and how often money is granted to Leader Dog. You can designate a grant immediately or use your fund as a tool for future gifts.



Every December, the Southfield Pavilion in Michigan transforms into a Potters Market for four days, hosting more than 8,000 clay lovers, 140 artists and 33,000 pieces of ceramic art. Many of the potters donate artwork to be sold in support of a chosen charity. In 2022, Leader Dogs for the Blind was the exclusive charity for this event, which generated \$5,000 in donations!

LDB Puppy Raiser Judy Kimpan led a contingent of raisers who attended the event sharing stories, training experiences and information on how to become a puppy raiser with the artists and attendees. They also shared how Leader Dog provides empowerment and independence to people who are blind or visually impaired.

We greatly appreciate everyone involved in this event for supporting Leader Dog, our clients and our canines.

If you are planning a fundraiser for Leader Dog, contact Stephen Moran, special events manager, at stephen.moran@LeaderDog.org or 248.659.5046 for tips, ideas and assistance.



FOUNDATION HIGHLIGHT



The Leader Dog mission is forever better after 24 years of giving from the Milford, MI-based Hilda E. Bretzlaff Foundation. The decision to sunset (close) the foundation was not one that Trustees Gerry and Janelle Radtke, Susan (Radtke) Vogt and Kathy (Radtke) Lindbeck took lightly, “This has been our lives for 25 years,” Janelle said.

Hilda E. Bretzlaff and husband Herbert W. Bretzlaff loved the principles on which this country was founded. They believed that with access to education and opportunity, people had the potential to become anything. This belief aligned with Leader Dog’s commitment to making people who are blind or visually impaired unstoppable.

When Hilda passed in 1993, the Radtke family helped her vision come to fruition by supporting educational opportunities for students, internships and lecture series at colleges and universities. They also supported a select few organizations (like Leader Dog) whose mission reached all ages, supported the Bretzlaff vision and aligned with the experience of the trustees, especially Susan, who was a teacher of children with hearing impairments.

Grantmaking from the foundation has totaled nearly \$900,000 and supported a variety of LDB services beginning with an initial grant to “Trekker camp” in the 1990s and more recently to supporting DeafBlind Guide Dog training, Orientation and Mobility training and Prison Puppies. The partnership between the foundation and LDB has supported 17 years of summer campers and continues to have a ripple effect, supporting greater travel independence as those campers go out into the world.

For more information about how your foundation can support Leader Dog’s mission, please contact Kathryn Tuck, director of foundation giving, at kathryn.tuck@LeaderDog.org or 248.218.6431.



A Lifetime of Service to Leader Dog and Lions



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

August 29, 2023 marks 60 years that Lion Pauline Ulrey has traveled with a Leader Dog at her side. Her story is a great example of how a Leader Dog impacts not only the handler, but everyone who comes in contact with the handler.

The increased confidence and travel independence that Pauline experienced with her Leader Dogs influenced her decision to earn a master's degree in social work, then become a counselor for Indiana Blind and Rehab Services for nearly 25 years. Later, she traveled the U.S. and Canada representing Leader Dog at Lions conventions and industry conferences. As of 2022, Lion Pauline has been to all 50 states showing the positive impact that supporting Leader Dogs for the Blind has on people with visual impairments like her.

Pauline has helped many people through her volunteer work with the American Council of the Blind and Salvation Army. As a Lion, she is a Progressive Melvin Jones Fellow, past Indiana Lion of the Year and a Lions' Presidents Award recipient. Her willingness to share her story and raise awareness about the benefits of receiving mobility training at Leader Dog has helped to educate the public and dispel misconceptions about visual impairment.

Pauline's legacy of service and dedication to Leader Dog and to Lions is admirable. Her story is a testament to the transformative impact that the human-guide dog relationship can have on a person's life and the lives of those around them.

(TOP) PAULINE ON CAMPUS WITH HER FIRST LEADER DOG, DANNY, IN 1963. (BOTTOM) VISITING HER 50TH STATE, RHODE ISLAND, IN 2022 WITH LEADER DOG SATCH.



LOCAL AND GLOBAL KINDNESS MATTERS

Are you interested in learning about becoming a Lion? Lions are 1.4 million people guided by kindness to serve our communities and the world in times of need. Discover kindness in your community today. Go to lionsclubs.org to find out more or locate a club in your community.



LEADER DOGS FOR THE BLIND®

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

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BARK & BREW

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!
SATURDAY, JUNE 10, 2023

Kick off your summer with Bark & Brew and the Bark & Brew 5K, presented by Chief Financial Credit Union! Registration for the 5K (in person or virtual) and 1-mile run/walk is open now.

And join us for the Bark & Brew event, which is back at Rochester Mills Beer Co.! Enjoy brews, grilled fare, live music, a kids' zone with inflatables, games and more at this family-friendly event. You'll meet some of our adorable Future Leader Dogs, Leader Dogs in training and working Leader Dogs too!

For tickets or additional information, please visit LeaderDog.org/bark-and-brew or scan the QR code.

