

SEPTEMBER 2025

LEADING THE WAY

Leader Dogs for the Blind - Lions Newsletter



September is Guide Dog Month!

In September, we celebrate Guide Dog Month. **We take this opportunity to recognize the impact guide dogs have on our clients every day, and to celebrate all the lives that touch each guide dog even before they are matched with a client.**



A breeding host tickles the toes of a puppy less than 2 weeks old.

At Leader Dog, each Future Leader Dog is born in a host home. The volunteer breeding or whelping host supports the Leader Dog Mom through the first few weeks of puppy raising (no easy task for any mom!) and begin to expose the puppies in their care to new experiences. **These early experiences help puppies develop the sense of curiosity and confidence they need as guide dogs.** Around 7 weeks old, puppies spend 2 weeks on Leader's campus getting their initial vaccines and veterinary care. We recently published an article about the first 8 weeks of a Future Leader Dog's life in our volunteer magazine, Canine Chronicles. Email LionsSupport@leaderdog.org to receive a digital copy.

Beginning around 9 weeks old, Future Leader Dogs spend 12-14 months with volunteer puppy raisers. Some are raised by one individual, some spend 6 months in one home and 6 in another, some are raised in our Prison Puppy program, and some are raised by groups. **In this year, they learn to be great dogs and experience as many environments as possible to continue developing their curiosity and confidence.**

Lion Linda Lindeman-DeCarlo began raising puppies with Leader Dogs for the Blind about 22 years ago. Rusty, the 19th dog she raised, is working in Utah. [Read the story in St George News](#). She says, "A lot of people say, 'How are you going to give up this puppy?' ... We're not. We're not 'giving up'. **We're giving back. That's what it's all about, after all these years, the friendships I've developed.**" [Learn more about Puppy Raisers at LeaderDog.org.](#)



LEADER DOGS
FOR THE BLIND



Finally, Future Leader Dogs return to Leader's campus for 4-6 months of training with a guide dog mobility instructor (GDMI). **They learn how to guide, how to avoid obstacles, how to ignore distractions, when to disobey a command for safety, and all the skills they need to be a guide dog.** Their GDMI trains them on campus, but also in the community. They go to the mall, to downtown Detroit, and to rural roads. They spend time in department stores, malls, and on public transportation. **And when they aren't training, they enjoy enrichment activities, group play sessions, and sometimes work with the Lions team in their office.**

Sponsor a Hero, Be a Hero

This Guide Dog Month, show your support for Leader Dog by symbolically sponsoring one of the three puppies below. These puppies will be available for sponsorship through the 2025-26 fiscal year. For a donation of \$500, you'll receive photographs, a stuffed puppy, a profile, and an official certificate of your sponsored Future Leader Dog. Future Leader Dog TICA is being raised by a Lion in North Carolina. [Learn more about Symbolic Puppy Sponsorships at LeaderDog.org.](#) Scan the QR code to view the Symbolic Puppy Sponsorship webpage.



Harper
Michigan



Jackson
Michigan



TICA
North Carolina