

Puppy Raiser's Speaker Kit



JUNE 2009

Dear Puppy Raiser:

We are glad you have agreed to speak to groups in your area about The Seeing Eye, your puppy, and the important part you play in helping blind people increase their independence, dignity, and self-confidence.

This Speaker's Kit will help you with your presentation. It includes:

1. A letter from the Puppy Placement Manager
2. Answers to Questions Most Frequently Asked
3. Fact sheet on puppy-raising
4. Facts about The Seeing Eye
5. Tips for Public Speaking

A good general format for your talk is to:

1. Thank the group for inviting you
2. Describe the puppy-raising program and how you care for your pup
3. Take questions from the audience

If you plan to demonstrate the commands you teach your puppy, you could do so in Step # 3. Be sure to tell the audience what the puppy-raising program means to you. First person experience makes a talk more personalized and more interesting.

Please let us know about your speaking engagements. We keep a record, and the list is impressive. We don't want to leave you out!

If you have any questions, or would like to receive literature to give to your audience, please call me (973) 539-4425 extension 1774 or the communications office at The Seeing Eye (973)539-4425

We appreciate your enthusiasm about your puppy and the puppy-raising program. Thank you for all you do to support the valuable work of The Seeing Eye.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Daly
Linda Feinne-Roth Manager
Puppy Development Department

Answers to Questions Most Frequently Asked

Volunteers in The Seeing Eye Puppy-Raising Project have a unique opportunity to make a positive contribution to society.

Since 1942, Seeing Eye puppy-raisers have helped blind men and women from across the United States and Canada to increase their independence, dignity, and self-confidence through the use of Seeing Eye dogs.

Puppy-raisers' early, hands-on attention gives the pups a firm foundation of love and security, enabling them to meet their special destiny as the eyes for blind people.

Puppy raising brings family members closer together in a common cause. It builds character in children, teaching them early in life to help others.

And it ultimately assists the hundreds of blind people each year who return to their families, friends, and jobs with competent, confident Seeing Eye dogs at their sides.

- The Seeing Eye Puppy-Raising Project began in 1942 in Morris County, New Jersey. About 35 puppies were placed in homes the first year.
- The program now is open to residents of New Jersey, and parts of Pennsylvania and Delaware and Maryland.
- Currently, an average of 650 to 675 individuals and families in four states are raising an average of 650 to 675 puppies.
- Most puppy-raisers are children between the ages of 9 and 19, or are retired adults.
- Regional coordinators stay in close contact with puppy-raiser families. They are available for assistance at all times.
- A puppy lives with a puppy-raiser for about 15 months, until its old enough to begin its formal training at the Seeing Eye.
- A puppy-raiser's job is to provide the love and gentle guidance that teaches the puppy to be comfortable and confident in the many types of social settings it will encounter as a working dog (for example in cars, stores, public transportation, and other public accommodations).
- Puppy-raisers teach the dogs simple commands. Later, Seeing Eye instructors teach the dog how to guide a blind person.
- Puppy-raisers attend regular club meetings that provide great socialization experience for pups *and* people.
- Someone needs to be home for most of the day to meet the puppy's needs.
- The Seeing Eye covers the cost of veterinary care and boarding. They also provide a quarterly allotment to defray the cost of food.
- The late Miss Evelyn Henderson holds the record for puppy raising: over 200 between 1951 and 1978. She also raised 15 foster children, each of whom was required to raise a pup. There were as many as a dozen puppies at one time in her home. In 1978, she received one of The Seeing Eye's highest honors, the Buddy Award in recognition of her work. The book *Mine for a Year* tells the story of one of her foster sons and his puppy.
- New puppy-raisers are always welcome. For information, call your county extension office or The Seeing Eye at (973) 539-4425
- Students receiving Seeing Eye dogs pay \$150 for a first dog, \$50 for a subsequent dog. This includes the cost of the dog and its initial equipment, training with the dog, room and board while at Morristown, round-trip transportation from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, and any follow-up services a graduate may need once he/she returns home. Fees are unchanged since 1929.
- The average working life of a Seeing Eye dog is 10 years. A retired dog may be kept as a pet, given to a friend or relative as a pet, or returned to The Seeing Eye, where it will be placed in an adoptive home.
- The Mission of The Seeing Eye is to enhance the independence, dignity, and self-confidence of blind people through the use of Seeing Eye dogs.

- It is a philanthropy supported by contributions, trusts and bequests, and receives no government aid.
- The Seeing Eye is located in Morristown, New Jersey. There is no other location. Only dogs trained at this school are properly called Seeing Eye dogs, which is a registered trademark name. The generic term for dogs that guide people who are blind is “dog guide”.
- There are 12 accredited schools in the United States. Schools are accredited by meeting standards of the International Guide Dog Foundation
- The Seeing Eye will send its newsletter, general information brochure, annual report, or other material free on request.

Frequently Asked Questions

Audiences frequently ask these questions about The Seeing Eye. The answers are designed to help you respond.

Q. How is The Seeing Eye supported?

A. The Seeing Eye is a philanthropy. It receives contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations. Because all administrative and fundraising expenses are covered by the endowment, every dollar of every donation goes to support the school's programs. Our endowment ensures that The Seeing Eye will endure into the future and that those who want Seeing Eye dogs always will be able to obtain them.

Q. How many students does The Seeing Eye train each year?

A. The school trains nearly 300 students a year. Many are returning to obtain their second, third, or fourth dogs. There are 12 annual classes of about 24 students each.

Q. How much does it cost a blind person to obtain a Seeing Eye dog?

A. A blind person is asked to assume an obligation of \$150 for his/her first visit, and \$50 for each visit thereafter. This fee, unchanged since the school was founded in 1929, represents dignity and self-respect to the student, and ownership of the dog. No one has ever been denied a Seeing Eye dog for lack of funds. This payment, sometimes made in monthly installments, covers a fraction of the actual total cost.

The cost to The Seeing Eye for every dog/owner partnership is about \$50,000. This includes breeding, puppy raising, and training one dog to be matched with a person. Also included is the student's round-trip transportation from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, room and board during the 20-to-27 day training period at the school, the dog, its initial equipment, the student's instruction with the dog, and any follow-up services the graduate may need once he/she returns home and for the life of the partnership.

Q. Can individuals, clubs, or organizations sponsor a Seeing Eye dog for a blind person?

A. No. As a philanthropy, The Seeing Eye provides dog guides to blind people who seek greater independence and mobility. Sponsoring a dog for someone robs that person of

independence by making him or her feel obligated or dependent on the sponsor. The Seeing Eye regards those who choose to come here with dignity and self-respect, and encourages independence. Therefore, all gifts support the entire program.

Q. What breeds of dogs are used?

A. The Seeing Eye breeds German Shepherds, Labrador Retrievers, Golden Retrievers, and crosses at its breeding station in Chester, NJ. Occasionally, Boxers are obtained by purchase or gift.

Q. Are only female dogs used?

A. Due to the success of our breeding program, we use both neutered male and female dogs. It is not its sex that determines a dog's suitability for guide work, but disposition, intelligence and good health.

Q. How long does it take to train a dog?

A. Training a Seeing Eye dog is a multi-step process. When the dog is about seven weeks old, it's placed in the home of a volunteer puppy raiser, where it's taught basic obedience and socialization, and given lots of love. After about 15 months, the dog returns to The Seeing Eye and begins a four-month course with a sighted instructor. When the dog passes this phase, it's matched with a blind person. Person and dog then train together under the supervision of the instructor. Someone coming to The Seeing Eye for the first time participates in a 27-day training session; someone returning for a second or subsequent dog participates in a 20-day session.

Q. What do Seeing Eye dogs eat?

A. While a dog is at The Seeing Eye, it is fed a high quality, commercial dry dog food. The key is to keep the dog on a consistent diet, avoiding all people foods. This helps maintain a healthy lifestyle for the dog, and deters it from begging or making a nuisance of itself around food.

Q. What is the average working life of a Seeing Eye dog? What happens to the dogs when they get old? What happens to the dogs when their owners die?

A. The average working life of a Seeing Eye dog is 10 years. However, many have lived and worked to the ages of 12, 13, and longer. A retired Seeing Eye dog may be kept as a pet, given to a friend or relative as a pet, or returned to The Seeing Eye, which will find it a suitable home. If the owner dies, the dog is sometimes

placed with a new owner. Sometimes it remains with the family, depending on its age and other factors.

Q. Do the dogs have any free time?

A. A dog keeps the same work schedule as its owner. At home, it's free to relax or play. Out of harness, it's like any other dog, and sometimes may even get into mischief. When the harness is put on it eagerly accepts it, becoming more serious and responsible.

Q. Can I train dogs for the Seeing Eye?

A. New volunteer puppy-raisers who live in New Jersey, parts of Pennsylvania, Delaware and Maryland are always welcome. Call The Seeing Eye or your county extension office for details.

Staff instructors are full-time employees. They have college degrees in education, psychology, or related fields, and have successfully completed The Seeing Eye three-year apprenticeship program. They relate equally well to dogs and people and are physically fit, since their job is physically demanding and involves working outdoors in all weather. Call the manager of human resources at The Seeing Eye for information.

Q. What is the puppy-raising program?

A. In 1942, The Seeing Eye, in conjunction with 4-H clubs of New Jersey, established its puppy-raising program. Since then, 4-H children and their families have raised Seeing Eye puppies during the first year of the pups' lives. Due to the increased demand for puppy-raisers, the program is growing. When the puppies are about seven weeks old, they leave the breeding station to live with their families for about a year, until they are old enough to begin their formal training. There are equal amount of children and adults raising puppies for us. The responsibilities involved in raising a puppy are; providing affection, discipline, and exposure to the kinds of experiences it will encounter as a working dog.

Q. How does a dog know when to cross the street?

A. Dogs are color-blind and can't read traffic lights. The dog's owner learns to judge the movement of traffic by its sounds. At the appropriate time, he/she will command the dog to move forward. The dog will not carry out the command until it is safe to do so. This is called *intelligent disobedience*.

Q. How does a dog know where a blind person wants to go?

A. Blind people generally know their own communities and can direct their dogs wherever they want to with the simple commands *left, right, or forward*. In a new location, blind men and women, like sighted people, ask for directions and communicate them to the dog by using the proper command.

Q. What is the greatest difficulty dog guide users encounter?

A. Public interference. For anyone to take hold of a blind person's arm, or the dog's harness, or otherwise distract the dog or its owner is not only a shocking experience, but akin to grabbing the steering wheel of a moving car away from its driver. If you think a dog guide user needs assistance, calmly ask if he or she would like help. The person can accept or decline your offer.

Q. Will a dog defend a blind person who is in danger?

A. Seeing Eye dogs are dog guides, not guard dogs. The Seeing Eye breeds its dogs for good temperament, intelligence, stability, gentleness, and good health. However, given the special relationship that develops between the dog and master from many years of working and living together, we can't predict what the dog would do. Common sense says it probably would protect its master.

Q. Are there other dog guide schools?

A. In addition to the U.S., many foreign countries have dog guide schools. There are 12 in this country, but there is only one Seeing Eye, in Morristown, New Jersey. It has no branches. Only dogs obtained there are properly called Seeing Eye dogs. The generic term for dogs trained by other schools is dog guide.

Founded in 1929, The Seeing Eye is legally registered in the U.S. and Canada. The premier dog guide school in North America, it has matched nearly 15,000 Seeing Eye dogs with blind people from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Canada.

Q. Other than blindness, are there special qualifications to obtain a Seeing Eye dog?

A. A person must be at least 16 years old, in good general health, and have an active enough lifestyle to need a Seeing Eye dog.

Facts About The Seeing Eye

Since its founding in 1929, The Seeing Eye has matched about 14,700 specially-bred and trained dog guides with blind people throughout the United States and Canada.

About 1800 active graduates of The Seeing Eye lead productive, independent lives with Seeing Eye® dogs at their sides. They include students, teachers, lawyers, musicians, factory workers, x-ray technicians, clergy, computer programmers, social workers, psychologists, writers, homemakers and volunteers.

The Seeing Eye is the oldest dog guide school in America. It is a philanthropic organization whose primary purpose is to help blind adults achieve mobility through the use of properly trained dog guides.

In addition to breeding German shepherds, Labrador retrievers and golden retrievers, The Seeing Eye occasionally obtains boxers. The puppies are raised by volunteer families through The Seeing Eye Puppy Raising/4-H Program. Pups live with the families for about 16 to 18 months, and then return to The Seeing Eye to enter training. During that time, The Seeing Eye pays all veterinary costs plus a quarterly allowance toward food costs.

It takes about 16 weeks to train a dog. Instructors (who are sighted) train 10 at a time. They use a system of affectionate rewards and gentle corrections to teach each dog both obedience and intelligent disobedience - to disregard a command if it would lead to danger.

About 300 people each year come to the Morristown campus of The Seeing Eye to be matched with a dog guide. They live with their dogs in The Seeing Eye student residence for the 20 to 27 days it takes for them to learn to become a safe and effective working team.

Those in need of a Seeing Eye dog must be over 16 and in good health. The Seeing Eye does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, or economic status.

Students are asked to pay \$150 for their first visit to the Seeing Eye, and \$50 for each subsequent visit. This is applied toward the cost of the dog and its initial equipment, round-trip transportation from anywhere in the U.S. or Canada, and meals and lodging during the training period. The actual cost to breed, raise and train a dog and instruct a student in its use is about \$50,000 per person/dog team. The difference is made up through philanthropic gifts to The Seeing Eye. No one has ever been denied a Seeing Eye dog because of inability to pay.

The Seeing Eye was founded by Dorothy Harrison Eustis and Morris Frank, the first blind person to use a dog guide, in Nashville, Tennessee. It moved to Morris County, N.J. in 1931 and has been at its present Washington Valley Road location since 1965. There are no branches.

As a philanthropy that receives no government aid of any kind, The Seeing Eye relies on contributions, trust income, bequests and endowment earnings. It welcomes public interest and will send its quarterly newsletter, *The Seeing Eye Guide*, in print, Braille, audiotape, or email on request.

Blind people may apply directly to The Seeing Eye, Inc., PO Box 375, Morristown, NJ 07963-0375, or call (973)539-4425. Preliminary information and application forms are sent on request.

The Seeing Eye ® is a registered trademark of dog guides of The Seeing Eye

Tips for Public Speaking

- **Do your homework**

- ✓ Know your audience. Is it a church group, garden club, business people, scouts, retirees?

Tailor your talk to their needs.

- ✓ Does the group set a time limit? Respect it, and remember to allow time for questions.

- ✓ The purpose of a speech is to educate, persuade or motivate. We're lucky that The Seeing Eye is of such broad interest to so many people, for so many reasons. Develop a simple outline as a guide. You may use 3X5 cards, jotting down a few key words on each to jog your memory. Keep sentences short and words simple. Keep your talk conversational. Speak clearly.

- **Give your talk**

- ✓ Thank the person who introduced you. Then, if you wish, open with an anecdote from your personal experience. It's a good ice-breaker and gets the audience's attention immediately. People relate well to stories about other people. And the whole point of your being there is to get and hold their attention and to have them take your message with them.

- ✓ Give a brief introduction and overview of your talk. *Example:* "I'm going to tell you about the program and let you ask questions." This is a variation on the technique, "Tell them what you're going to tell them; say it, and then tell them what you just told them." Repetition helps the audience retain the information. But don't keep saying the same phrases over and over; rework it using synonyms and different syntax.

- ✓ Have a strong ending. People will forget 40% of what you said by the end of the day. By the end of the week, they will have forgotten 90%. But they will remember the ending. They'll also remember stories of personal experience. Also, if you wish, thank them for having you.

- **Involve your audience**

- ✓ Keep answers to questions short.

- ✓ State your main point in headline form and give an illustration. *Example:* Someone may say, "It must be hard for puppy-raisers to return a dog after a year." You could answer, "It is, but the dog is going on to help a blind person increase his independence, dignity, and self-confidence. A puppy-raiser knows that his or her contribution is very important."

- ✓ If you are asked several questions at once, answer one at a time. Choose those that best tell your story.

- ✓ If you're unsure of an answer, take a few seconds to organize your thoughts, or say that you don't know, but will try to find out for them. Then follow through.

- ✓ If there's a lull in the question-and-answer period, discuss key points that have not yet been covered.

Example: The real cost of the program vs. what the students actually pay.

- **Look confident**

- ✓ Stand up straight. Keep your head up but don't look at the ceiling. Smile.

- ✓ Appear relaxed even though you may not feel it. Smiling relaxes you and your audience.

- ✓ Make eye contact, gazing at different people in the audience as you speak.

- ✓ Gesture to reinforce your words unless you feel uncomfortable doing so. If you don't know what to do with your hands and arms, keep them at your sides or behind your back. If there's a podium, you may rest your hands gently on the podium (but don't grip it for dear life).

- **Dress for success**

- ✓ Dress in business attire. You'll be a professional-looking representative of The Seeing Eye.

You'll also feel and look good.

We have many pamphlets, brochures and videos available to you as additional resources. It is very important that the people that do show an interest have contact information. Please let them know they can contact us by phone or our website www.seeingeye.org. Contact the Communications office two or three weeks before your speaking date, and we will make every effort to fill your request for materials to enhance your presentation. Please keep in mind that these materials are expensive. Please return any unused items or save them for your next presentation. The Seeing Eye will send its Guide magazine, general information brochure, annual report, application packet or other materials free upon request. Your audience also might enjoy the following materials:

The story of Bonnie, a Seeing Eye dog, an educational comic book.

If your talk is to a school, we will send a copy of A Day in the Life of a Seeing Eye Dog Trainer, a picture book, which you may present to the school library.

Press kit: you may contact your local newspaper, radio station or cable television station to report on your presentation. We are happy to supply them with press materials and answer their questions.

Responsible Pet Ownership flyers, offering information on preventing interference with dog guide teams.

Dollars for Dogs brochures, describing a fundraising program for schools, businesses, and other organizations.

The Science Behind The Seeing Eye, a booklet describing the latest in research and technology at the school.

From Puppy to Promise brochures, for presentations in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, or Delaware, detailing the puppy raising program.

We also offer a number of videos and DVDs through our free film service which can be ordered through our website. They cover topics including the history of The Seeing Eye, stories from graduates about their dog guide partnerships, and the how's and why's of puppy raising. A number of our publications and videos also are available in Spanish.

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