“I always knew
I wanted a Seeing Eye® dog.
I wanted my *independence*.
and I knew if I got a Seeing Eye dog,
I would have it.

*And I do!*”

- Paralympic Gold Medalist Becca Myers

*We Are Proud To Share These Amazing Stories.*
My name is Jim Kutsch, and in 2006 I had the honor of being the first graduate of The Seeing Eye to be named its President and CEO. As a college student in 1970, I was matched with my first Seeing Eye dog, a German shepherd named Sheba. For almost every life milestone over the past 47 years, I have had a Seeing Eye dog at my side. The picture shows me with my arm around my current partner, a German shepherd named Vegas.

Since 1929, The Seeing Eye has been partnering people who are blind or visually impaired with dogs we have trained to guide them. Seeing Eye dogs are renowned the world over for their intelligence, loyalty, and gentleness. We have created more than 16,500 Seeing Eye partnerships, and each one is an amazing, inspiring, and unique story. We wanted to share a few of these stories with you, featuring recent graduates of The Seeing Eye.

Thanks to your generous support, The Seeing Eye is creating new amazing stories of partnerships every day.
John Farina of Albany, New York, returned to The Seeing Eye to be matched with his seventh Seeing Eye dog, a chocolate Labrador retriever named Dove. In the photo, John laughs as Dove licks his cheek.

John was going into his senior year of college when he was matched with his first, a German shepherd named Nicky.

“Each time you come back, there's improvement,” John said. “The dogs are better, the instruction is better, everything is better. The world is constantly changing and the organization is constantly adapting. I learn something new every time I come here.”

John teaches computers and technology to people who are blind or visually impaired. “Young people are amazing. You put technology in their hands and they are off and running. When I was in college, computers weren't available to the average person. It was science fiction. Now the phone in my pocket has more memory in it than my first desktop computer!”

John said Dove has a “happy cadence” in her gait. “She loves her work. She's so confident. When she's not working, she loves to stretch out and sunbathe.”
Catherine Getchell has played the trumpet since the age of 9, but it was just a coincidence that she was matched with a Seeing Eye dog named Miles.

Catherine is the Director of Disability Resources at Carnegie Mellon University. When she’s not at work, she plays the trumpet with the Pittsburgh-based East Winds Symphonic Band. To protect Miles’s ears from the music she's outfitted him with special doggy ear muffs! In the photo, Miles, a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross, is wearing the ear muffs as Catherine crouches next to him. They both look like they are laughing about it!

“Miles is excellent! He loves to work,” Catherine said. Recently they went hiking in Vermont. “He had the time of his life, guiding me up and down the mountains, negotiating huge roots, rocks, and logs. One log was about 18 inches around and came up to my belly button, but he cleared it no problem. His favorite thing is going to new places. I nicknamed him Mr. Adventure.”
Niko Carpenter, a software engineer, commutes about 80 minutes each way to his job in Chicago. His commute typically involves a bus, a train, and an eight-block walk. His first Seeing Eye dog, a black Labrador/golden retriever cross named Flair, made it a lot easier. Niko recently came back to The Seeing Eye to be matched with his second, a golden retriever named Wade. The photo shows Niko standing in front of a wooden gate on The Seeing Eye campus, with Wade sitting calmly on his left side.

“Wade is great at weaving in and out of crowds and getting around people, which is great for me because I don’t like to wait,” Niko said. “We went to Manhattan, and there were people everywhere, and he just did an amazing job getting us through. The first little opening and we’re off.”

Niko said that Wade loves to guide. “Wade loves to work. When he’s on duty, he is very well behaved, very calm, and very focused.

“But when it’s play-time, he’s rambunctious! He just loves to play, to fetch, and to wrestle. I had a Kong on top of my dresser and knocked it off with my elbow, and quickly learned he also loves to chase his Kong.”
"I always wanted a dog. When I first went blind, I met a man who was a guide dog user and he really inspired me," says Kyle Coon, who is a civilian employee with the Naval Air Warfare Center Training Systems Division. “I did some research and came across The Seeing Eye. I asked friends who had dogs from here and they all said there is no other place like it. They were right!”

Kyle, a resident of Orlando, Florida, recently returned to The Seeing Eye to be matched with his second Seeing Eye dog, a black Labrador retriever named Skye. The photo shows Kyle and Skye walking on the path that winds around the front lawn of The Seeing Eye’s campus.

“The biggest thing my Seeing Eye dog does for me is the smoothness and ease of travel,” said Kyle, who competes in Ironman Triathlons and is an avid mountain climber. “It’s a very natural flow. When I have my dog with me, I don’t have to be with another person to go where I want, whether it’s a hike in the woods or in New York City.”
Meredith Ballard came to The Seeing Eye to be matched with her first Seeing Eye dog, a yellow Labrador/golden cross named Colette. The picture shows Meredith striding confidently with Colette on the leisure path, which winds around the front lawn of The Seeing Eye campus.

Meredith's vision problems stem from albinism -- the lack of pigment in her eyes causes extreme light sensitivity as well as poor eyesight. Even with her glasses on, Meredith said, she has trouble recognizing faces, and she can’t see anything in direct sunlight. “It’s very tough for me because I grew up by the beach – and I love going to the beach!” she said.

Meredith is pursuing a law degree at the Norman Adrian Wiggins School of Law at Campbell University in Raleigh, North Carolina.

“As an attorney, it’s important to inspire confidence,” she said. “People look at me and they think I’m a fragile little person. But then they see this big animal by my side, so well behaved and under my control, and they’re like, ‘Whoa!’”
Deb Baker, a resident of Springfield, Ohio, is now matched with her seventh Seeing Eye dog, a female black Labrador retriever named Opera. Deb is retired after being a teacher for blind children.

Deb, who has cerebral palsy, credits her seven Seeing Eye dogs with keeping her on her feet. “I walk every day. I’ve been told that if I stop walking, I might never walk again,” she said. “I credit my mobility to my dogs.”

Deb uses a special harness with a longer, off-set handle so she doesn’t get too close to her dog. She uses a walking cane in her right hand, and holds the harness handle in her left, helping her maintain her balance. In the photo, Deb is sitting on a stuffed chair in the Dorothy Harrison Eustis Lounge at The Seeing Eye with Opera on her left side.

“Opera is a serious worker,” Deb says. “She loves to move. Even when she's not working, she loves to play. She loves to go after bouncing toys. She can't always catch it, but eventually she runs it down and brings it to me.”
Bob Fenton is legal counsel to the Office of the Chief, Calgary Police Service, and is a member of the CNIB National Board of Directors. A former Paralympic swimmer, he also serves as president of the Canadian Blind Sports Association and as an executive board member and adviser to the president of the International Blind Sports Federation. In 2012, Bob was honored with a Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal for his many years of volunteer service and achievement.

The photo shows Bob standing inside one of the student dormitory rooms at The Seeing Eye with his fifth Seeing Eye dog, a yellow Labrador retriever named Taryn.

Bob, who has been blind since birth, started to consider getting a guide dog when faced with new mobility challenges as a college student. He began researching the various guide dog schools and came to the conclusion that The Seeing Eye offered the best training… and the best dogs.

“The Seeing Eye was great and every time I come back it gets better,” he said. “The school is very good at making the best use of its finances to deliver the best service. I would not go anywhere else.”
Connie Bramble & Samson

Connie Bramble lives in Calumet, a village at the northern tip of Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. “It’s way up there,” Connie says. “It’s a peninsula on the peninsula. We’re surrounded by Lake Superior. Lots of woods, lots of snow. It’s a beautiful, beautiful area. But a very difficult place to negotiate as a blind person!”

Connie first came to The Seeing Eye in 2009 to be matched with Jamacha, a male golden retriever; she recently returned to be matched with her second Seeing Eye dog, a black Labrador retriever named Samson. The photo shows Connie sitting with Samson on The Path to Independence, where bricks are engraved with messages. Connie is reaching out to touch the brick installed in memory of Jamacha. The message on the brick reads: Jamacha, My Boy & My Brain.

Connie said that Samson is a perfect match for her. “His puppy raisers were phenomenal people because he is a phenomenal dog,” she said. “Having a dog by my side just fills me with confidence. When I’m with him, I just feel secure. I can stop, and put my hand on his head, and take a breath, and say, ‘good boy.’ And then we’re off!”
“Everyone at The Seeing Eye -- from the nurses to the instructors to the food service people -- everyone you meet here is so warm and genuine,” said Judy Peltier, who is now matched with her second Seeing Eye dog, a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross named Janet.

Judy, who lives in Illinois near the border with Wisconsin, said she’s a nature lover who enjoys spending lots of time outdoors, and she loved walking on the leisure path that winds around The Seeing Eye's lawn. In the photo, Judy is sitting on a bench located in a shady spot along the leisure path, with Janet sitting in front of her.

“It's so relaxing to be just alone with your dog on this quiet campus,” she said. “Just you and your dog and the great outdoors!”

But Janet also is great in the city, Judy said. “We went to New York City, and there you get everything, every obstacle imaginable -- cars, large buses, trucks, street musicians, bicycles, costumed characters amongst the pedestrians -- and she got me through all of it like a knife through warm butter.”
Chris Wallace of Savannah, Georgia, recently graduated from The Seeing Eye with his first Seeing Eye dog, a German shepherd named Nico. The photo shows Chris on one knee alongside Nico in front of a split rail wooden fence.

“Nico looks for me and follows me everywhere. If I step out of the house and leave him inside, he worries about me and wonders where I am,” Chris said. “Nico is wonderful. We have formed a bond that is just amazing. He is a wonderful working dog and a great playmate.”

Chris was a fitness trainer and his wife a stay-at-home mom for their three children. When Chris lost his sight due to retinitis pigmentosa, they switched roles. “Now she has the paying job and I’m the domestic engineer,” he says. “I do whatever needs to be done: the laundry, the grocery shopping, helping the kids with the homework. The best advice I can give you is to put away the groceries yourself -- that way you know where everything is! But I’m fortunate that my wife and kids help me a lot.

“Once I’m done with everything around the house and the kids are off to school, I walk to the gym, which is 21 blocks from home with a lot of street crossings. Nico has learned and navigated his new routine above and beyond my wildest dreams.”
Dr. Britt Raubenheimer is a senior scientist in applied ocean physics and engineering at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts. She studies the effect of tides, waves, winds, hurricanes, and rip currents on dunes and beaches.

“It’s safe to say I spend a lot of time at the beach,” Britt laughed.

Britt went blind quite suddenly in 2003 due to optic nerve atrophy. She came to The Seeing Eye in 2005 to be matched with a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross named Whit; she recently returned to be matched with a yellow Labrador retriever aptly named Hugger.

In the photo, Britt is sitting on a bench in a gazebo on the campus of The Seeing Eye with Hugger sitting at her side.

Britt estimates she travels about 100,000 miles a year. “I don't think I could do that without a Seeing Eye dog,” she said. “When I'm working, I don't want to have to rely on a colleague to go from place to place, whether it's in the office or at a conference or in the water. With Hugger, I can do that on my own.”
**Inspiring Stories**

The difference The Seeing Eye makes in the lives of people who are blind is best explained by the graduates of our program – people whose lives are enhanced by their daily experiences with their dogs.

The Seeing Eye is the world’s oldest guide dog school. We breed, raise, and train the world-famous Seeing Eye® dogs, and every month bring blind men and women from across the United States and Canada to our campus in Morristown, New Jersey, to learn how to care for and work with these amazing dogs. We are a charitable organization supported solely by donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations. Please help us put “miracles in motion” by visiting www.SeeingEye.org/SupportUs or by calling (800) 539-4425.