"Having a Seeing Eye® dog is a very rewarding experience, and not only for the guide work. By having dogs, I learn about myself and how to handle tough situations, whether it’s interference from the public or recovering from a mistake."

- Carlos Taylor

We Are Proud To Share These Amazing Stories.
Every person who comes to The Seeing Eye has taken a different path, and leaves here ready to pursue whatever lies ahead with the help of a Seeing Eye dog.

My name is Jim Kutsch, and my path took me here in 1970, when I arrived as a college student and was matched with my first Seeing Eye dog, a German shepherd named Sheba. In 2006, I had the honor of being the first graduate of The Seeing Eye to be named its President and CEO. The picture shows me with my arm around my current partner, a German shepherd named Vegas.

Since 1929, The Seeing Eye has been matching 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 17,000 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.
Debby Phillips keeps busy – it’s a good thing she has a “stellar” performer who can keep up with her! Nova, her eighth Seeing Eye dog, “loves to go,” Debby says. “She’s perfect for me!” The photo shows Debby with her arm around Nova, a yellow Labrador retriever.

Debby performs in the choir at St. Charles Parish in Spokane, Washington – and also is a religious school classroom teacher, Bible study student, lecturer, and occasional cantor. She also is a member of the Lions Club, Catholic Daughters, and United Blind of Spokane, is a blood platelet donor and a cross-country skier, and is quite the bookworm!

Nova loves going to church, Debby says. “She loves it when we put the kneeler down. She puts her head on it and goes to sleep!”

With such a busy schedule, Debby says, Nova is the perfect partner for her. “She is really, really good at getting me where I need to go,” she says. “I couldn’t, and I wouldn’t, do all the things that I do without her. She gives me so much confidence. When I’m with Nova, there are two of us to figure things out. It really is a partnership.”
Preston Radtke of New Brunswick, New Jersey, is a web accessibility specialist and part-time lecturer for Rutgers University. The photo shows Preston with his first Seeing Eye dog, a black Labrador retriever named Burton.

“Burton and I regularly traverse all the campuses in the Rutgers system (New Brunswick, Camden, Newark, and Plainsboro) giving presentations, teaching classes, and working with students,” Preston said. “We just moved here from Chicago, where I had stayed the summer after college graduation. The move has been pretty smooth for the two of us… Burton seems to like his new-ish home!”

When not working, Preston says, he and Burton like to explore different towns in New Jersey as well as visits to Philadelphia and New York City. “With all these changes for both of us, I’m overjoyed that Burton’s disposition hasn’t changed. He’s still the overly enthusiastic and loyal dog he’s always been despite living in three radically different locales in the past five months.”
Eileen Alcala came to The Seeing Eye recently to be matched with her first Seeing Eye dog, a German shepherd named Izzy.

“You guys did a great job of pairing her with me. It is really kind of magical how perfect we are together,” Eileen said. “We are a great team!”

Eileen manages vending machines located in different federal buildings throughout Chicago. “I have to do a lot of traveling,” she said. “A big asset in having her is being able to take advantage of all the public transportation available in Chicago -- the 'L', the CTA buses, everything. She even knows just where to go for my bus stops. Being able to do that by myself has made a huge difference.”

When she's not working, Izzy loves to play with her favorite toy -- a stuffed squeaky squirrel. “I tell her to go get her baby and she comes right back with it,” she said.
According to Walter Goodie of Danbury, Connecticut, some things in life are predestined. Getting matched with Victor at The Seeing Eye was just one of those things.

Walter, now 67, lost his vision to glaucoma in his 50s. And in those early years of visual impairment, he refers to his life as that of a hermit. Well, he’s far from a hermit now, attributing his new, busy life to his extraordinary Seeing Eye dog and the phenomenal training both received at The Seeing Eye. The photo shows Walter, wearing a purple sweater, with his arm around Victor, a yellow Labrador retriever in harness.

But back to fate and faith! Walter, who has studied the Bible, explains that Victor was the 316th pup born at The Seeing Eye in 2016. For Walter, that number refers to the biblical verse, John 3:16, and means that “God gave him Victor.” Every day, he’s thankful for that gift. Walter, who served in the U.S. Marines, gives back by volunteering at the Veterans Administration and in his church.

Walter is so proud of Victor. He calls him a showstopper that wows people with his good looks and elegant bearing. “My guy is strong as a bull!”
This photo shows Seeing Eye graduate Marlow Koller with her third Seeing Eye dog, a golden retriever named Edgar.

Marlow, who lives in Peoria, Arizona, has traveled to Japan seven times to visit her son, who lives there with his family. In the past she made the trip with her previous Seeing Eye dogs, but her next visit will be Edgar’s first. She says she already knows he’s a terrific traveler. “He's very intelligent, has a great memory, and a willing heart to work.”

Marlow also is an advocate for audio description at live theater events. She’s helped theaters in Arizona get headphones so people who are blind or visually impaired can follow the on-stage action with the help of a narrator.
Meaghan Hargrave was a high school junior when she first came to The Seeing Eye. A very active teenager, she needed a spunky, hard-working partner. And her match with Hennessy, a handsome yellow Labrador retriever, fit the bill. The photo shows Meaghan with her arm around Hennessy, who is in harness.

Back home in Calgary, Alberta, Hennessy helped Meaghan complete her studies. Now he accompanies her to work and keeps tabs on her sport-centered life. You see Meaghan is an avid Goalball player. The game, developed for World War II vets who were visually impaired, is played on a volleyball court using a large ball embedded with bells and studded with holes. Three team players on each side attempt to get the ball into the opponents’ goal using sound and touch to guide them.

You can hear the thrill in her voice as Meaghan continues to explain the sport. "It's a real high-intensity game," she says. Players dive to the floor in order to block that heavyweight ball from getting in the goal is “truly tough on the body.” And at home, Hennessy loves playing ball too – they truly are a perfect match!
With so many interests and responsibilities, Ken Hoegler of Cleveland, Ohio, and his “fuzzy boy” Artie are always on the go.

Artie, a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross, is Ken’s fifth Seeing Eye dog. The photo shows Ken being guided by Artie on a sidewalk along a chain-link fence. When in harness, he’s all business; but off duty, Artie is all about playing. “Given the chance, he would chase lacrosse balls all day long,” Ken says.

Ken is now retired after working many years in the insurance and financial industries. He now devotes his time (and exceptional auditory skills) as an audio engineer for his church and installing home theater systems. He’s also an interviewer for an Ohio State University project measuring how development disability agencies serve their clients.

Ken is quick to point out that his Seeing Eye dogs have given him the wherewithal to do all of these activities. In fact, his only regret is not acquiring one earlier in his life. Now Ken doesn’t let a day go by without thanking his Seeing Eye pup for his loyalty and hard work. “It’s their paycheck,” he says.
Scott Leason, a U.S. Navy veteran, was working the overnight shift at a convenience store on July 4, 1993, when two men robbed the store. As they fled, one shot Scott in the head. Scott survived, but the bullet destroyed both his eyes.

Three years later, Scott came to The Seeing Eye to be matched with his first Seeing Eye dog. Today he's working with his third, a chocolate Labrador retriever named Snickers. He now sports a tattoo showing Snickers' head with the words “The Seeing Eye” above it and “In Dog We Trust” below.

Scott, a surfer since the age of 10, returned to the sport he loves, and much more. He now participates in Ironman challenges as well as surfing, waterskiing, and waterboarding competitions. The photo, by Robert Beck for The Players' Tribune website, shows Scott sitting on a surfboard with Snickers sitting on the sand in front of him. Scott is wearing a USA Surf Team hat and T-shirt, and is holding an American flag.

“I have to fly all over, and Snickers helps me get on that plane and helps me get to where I need to be,” said Scott, a resident of San Diego. “He's awesome.”
This photo shows Murielle Arseneau of Ottawa, Ontario, with her Seeing Eye dog, a black Labrador retriever named Blaze. The photo shows Murielle and Blaze in front of a wooden desk covered with signatures... and one large paw print!

“I have been working at the Parliament of Canada for the House of Commons for the last 29 years,” she said. “In January, the House of Commons Chambers will close for a major renovation project, and new desks will be built. To commemorate this, it was decided that one of the desks be signed by every employee that works for the House of Commons.”

“When I signed the desk, it was suggested that Blaze's paw be added as well. They found non-toxic ink and as you can see from the picture his paw was put on the desk. His name also is written below his paw print. This desk will be in the Chambers, then it will go to the curator and be put in the Parliament history. How cool is that, Blaze’s paw print will be part of Parliament's history!”
Dr. Rick Ely of Florence, Massachusetts, is a teacher of children who are blind or visually impaired; he also works with adults who are visually impaired with the aim of increasing rehabilitation options in Western Massachusetts. The photo shows him with his first Seeing Eye dog, a German shepherd named General.

“A lot of our work is in a public school,” Rick said. “He has become The Seeing Eye star! As we maneuver the crowded hallways, it seems that all the kids know his name and speak to him. He has learned most of our common routes and once started, he gets all the twists and turns. He is so laid back that some kids assume he must be old and in need of lots of sleep.”

But when the harness is off, Rick says, General is like “Clark Kent when he removes his business suit.”

“He becomes Superpup! He loves chasing a large ball or his frisbee in our back yard. There is no sleeping there!”
Janice Jeang, a sociology professor at the University of Texas in Austin, shares her home with a pet dog, two cats, and Wembly, her fourth Seeing Eye dog. For the five of them, “It's a total love-fest.”

As for Wembly, a Labrador/golden retriever cross, he's a solid, stoic boy with a surprising alter ego. When in harness, he's all work; at home, he's all play and “the world's goofiest dog.” His favorite toy is a fluffy rabbit, which he carries around non-stop. And when he's misplaced it, one of Janice's nice soft shoes will do.

Janice spent the first 15 years of her life abroad, mostly in China, where she developed her interest in sociology. At that time, she had her sight, which offers an added dimension to her present research. Janice became visually impaired at the age of 16, and received Frankie, her first Seeing Eye dog, when she went off to college. During one semester, Janice teamed up with Frankie and joined Americorps, the domestic counterpart of the Peace Corps.

Like Wembly, Janice enjoys her downtime and seems like she has energy to burn. She loves the movies, music, and long walks in the park with you-know-who.
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 our 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.