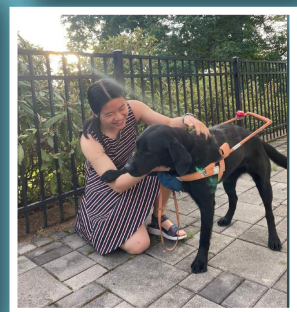
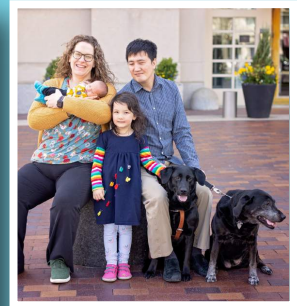
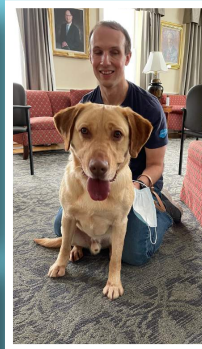
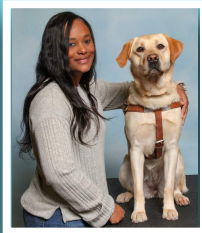


# PARTNERS

## TALES FROM THE SEEING EYE





*“My Seeing Eye<sup>®</sup> dog Ohana  
is so full of life.*

*She is so excited, so happy.  
She loves everyone and everything.  
But when that harness goes on,  
she is very much into her work.*

*She is super professional.  
I trust her, and she trusts me.  
Together, we can go anywhere.”*

*- Jordan Ortiz Lee, Seeing Eye graduate*

WE ARE PROUD TO SHARE THESE AMAZING STORIES.

## PEGGI HOWARD, PRESIDENT & CEO

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Hi, I'm Peggi Howard, President and CEO of The Seeing Eye. The photo shows me holding a young yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross puppy named Oak.

Since 1929, The Seeing Eye has been creating life-changing partnerships between people and dogs. Every month, we bring people who are blind or visually impaired from across the United States and Canada to our campus to learn how to work with and care for these amazing dogs.

I hope you will enjoy these stories about just a few of the remarkable people who have graduated from The Seeing Eye. Only the generous support from people like you makes it possible for us to fulfill our mission: To enhance the independence, dignity, and self-confidence of people who are blind through the use of Seeing Eye® dogs.





## MARLIN NAGTEGAAL & Champ



The photo shows Ontario resident Marlin Nagtegaal and his Seeing Eye dog, a German shepherd named Champ, walking past a record store in Stratford.

Marlin loves to stay busy and active. For 30 years he was a musical director at a church and taught at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. And for the past few years, his Seeing Eye dog, Champ, has been by his side to help him navigate his hectic life. Marlin's bond with Champ, a German shepherd, is undeniable. The twosome have been on many adventures including hiking and trips to downtown Stratford. But Champ's favorite place is the train station where the engineers give him hugs and treats.

"It was like love at first sight," Marlin says, describing his initial meeting with Champ at The Seeing Eye campus. "The door opened up and Champ jumped into the room and licked my hand non-stop." Even now, Champ greets Marlin each morning by pressing his forehead to Marlin's.

Since retiring a year and a half ago, Marlin has become an active board member of L'Arche, a non-profit organization benefiting people with intellectual disabilities. He has also spoken publicly about being visually impaired and hopes to book more speaking engagements in the future. But wherever life takes him, Champ is Marlin's perfect companion. "He's an unbelievable dog. He's changed my life completely."



## ADAM RODENBECK & *Griffey*



Indianapolis resident Adam Rodenbeck was paired with his first Seeing Eye dog in 2001. Since then, he has worked with two additional dogs, and he says each time he's learned something new about himself.

Adam especially enjoyed training with Seeing Eye instructors in New York City. "Weaving in and out of people and moving as fast as we do," Adam says. "That's freedom."

Adam's most recent companion is Griffey, a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross. The photo shows Adam on the floor of the Dorothy Harrison Eustis Lounge in the Main House at The Seeing Eye, with Griffey sitting in front of him.

Griffey accompanies Adam wherever he goes and is especially helpful when he travels to conferences for his employer, Salesforce, a technology company. As a software engineer, Adam has given presentations to large audiences, Griffey by his side on stage. This fall, Adam was one of 40,000 people to attend a tech conference in San Francisco, a challenge Griffey and Adam tackled with ease.

"Griffey was amazing," Adam says. "It was really great to walk around, and he was on it the whole time. The independence I have while walking with him gives me the confidence to be in the business world."



## MEKEIO JACKSON & CoCo



Mekeio Jackson travels often as a director at SourceAmerica, a non-profit agency that creates employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

When a visually impaired co-worker touted the benefits of a Seeing Eye dog, Mekeio decided to take the leap. She came to The Seeing Eye and was matched with CoCo, a yellow Labrador retriever. And now, Mekeio is able to travel with more confidence and ease. “It’s nice to not have to be tethered to another person,” Mekeio says. “I can set my own speed and move independently.”

The photo shows Mekeio smiling with one arm around CoCo, who is in harness and sitting on a raised platform alongside Mekeio.

Traveling with CoCo is a unique experience, especially on airplanes. “Children love to see dogs on planes,” Mekeio says. “She travels very well and is very calm. People just love her. I use her as a foot warmer because she will lay right on my feet.”

CoCo and Mekeio aren’t just travel companions. They do just about everything together with CoCo always by Mekeio’s side. “My family likes to say we’re co-dependent,” Mekeio says with a laugh. “The bonding is unlike any other. She’s become part of the family. If I leave the room, she’s following. It’s something that can’t be expressed in words – it’s just a feeling.”





## COLLEEN WUNDERLICH & *Nora*



Soon after graduating with an MBA from the University of Chicago and beginning a new job in Downtown Chicago, Colleen Wunderlich found her daily commute to be a labyrinth of construction sites, traffic jams, and rushing pedestrians. After several mishaps including “getting knocked over in a train station,” she learned about the comfort and confidence that a Seeing Eye dog could provide. And choosing that made a huge difference in her life.

Nearly 25 years later, Colleen is now the Vice President of Partnership at The Chicago Lighthouse and working with her fourth Seeing Eye dog, a black Labrador/golden retriever cross named Nora. Colleen leads a busy and professionally satisfying life and Nora’s a major part of it. Nora is even a lifesaver who saved Colleen from being hit by a city bus!

The photo shows a smiling Colleen in business dress on a leisurely stroll on a tree-lined sidewalk in Chicago with Nora in professional mode leading the way.

Colleen says, “With Nora, every day is more of a happy adventure. When I want to go somewhere or attend an event, I see it as an adventure for Nora and me. We always have fun and meet people while we are out together. And when we get in a bind, we figure our way out together. Nora’s presence brings many people to me who I would otherwise miss the opportunity to meet.”

## BILL FROWINE & *Yogi*



Bill Frowine first came to The Seeing Eye as a teenager. He recently returned he matched with his fifth Seeing Eye dog, a yellow Labrador retriever named Yogi.

In the photo, Bill is laughing as Yogi, in harness, turns and licks his cheek!

Bill lives in Atlanta, Georgia, and recently returned from a 10-day vacation in Mexico with his family and, of course, Yogi. Bill works as a project manager in IT.

“Yogi is great in harness. He’s very much all business,” Bill said. “We have this one block in Atlanta that has telephone poles right down the middle of the sidewalk. And they aren’t even in a straight line. It’s like they designed it as an obstacle course. There’s a lot of weaving. It would be a challenge for any guide dog. Yogi just breezes down it.”





## JESSICA CALVO-VARELA & Jaime



The Seeing Eye has many graduates who are teachers, professors, and other academics, including Jessica Calvo-Varela, who teaches Spanish at two elementary schools in Glen Rock, New Jersey. The photo shows Jess inside an elementary school during “pajama day.” Jess is wearing plaid pajamas and her Seeing Eye dog, a female yellow Labrador retriever named Jaime, is wearing matching plaid pajamas!

When Jess came to The Seeing Eye for her first Seeing Eye dog, it was as a high school student; 10 years later, she returned for her second dog, as a high school teacher.

“We are always on the move because I don’t have my own classroom – I travel to all the classrooms. And of course Jaime goes with me! She does great and the kids absolutely love having her with us in class. They actually do really well with service dog etiquette, and I love that we get to educate them at a really young age about how to interact with a service dog.”





Alexis Roman came to The Seeing Eye to be matched with his first Seeing Eye dog, Chaz, a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross.

“Since getting Chaz, my life has changed for the better,” he said. “My independence got the boost I didn’t think I needed. I thought I was a great traveler before, but now I feel like I’m a hundred times better with my boy.”

Two years after getting matched with Chaz, Lexi joined the staff of The Seeing Eye as the senior assistant, front desk receptionist, and switchboard operator.

“When Chaz isn’t working, he’s a big goofball,” Lexi said. “He runs all over the house, scattering his toys all over the place. At night or when we get home from work, he cuddles up next to me. He makes my life that much better and the smiles and laughter are endless.”



## CHI KIM & Nina



Musician. Inventor. Professor. It's hard to describe Chi Kim or his profession in just one word. He's all of the above... as well as a husband, father, and Seeing Eye graduate.

Chi is an Associate Professor at Berklee College of Music in Boston, and Nina, a black Labrador/golden retriever cross, is Chi's second Seeing Eye dog. He was matched with Nina after the retirement of his first Seeing Eye dog, Paige, also a cross.

Paige is still part of the family, as shown in the photo that depicts the happy Kim family seated outdoors, with Chi; his wife, Tiffany, with 5-month-old, Sky; 5-year-old, Sunny; and poised beside Chi, the youthfully alert Nina and elder stateswoman Paige.

While each Seeing Eye dog has given Chi the independence and confidence he needed to pursue his very busy life, they have very different personalities. Paige was high-spirited – Chi laughingly refers to her as “Rampaige” – and gave Chi the self-assurance to travel on business to 10 countries. Nina is a more reserved professional, but playful at home with the kids. Which makes her a perfect fit.

“I usually see problems as challenges to solve, not struggles to endure,” Chi said.





## SYLVIA NEMMERS & Cutter



Dr. Sylvia Nemmers is the Department Chair for Environmental Science at American Military University/American Public University in Charles Town, West Virginia. One of her roles is orientating new students to the school. The photo shows Sylvia sitting on a colorful carpet with Cutter, a black Labrador retriever.

“I’m always proud of him and so proud that he and I are able to really shine with diversity and inclusion. He makes everything go so much smoother,” she said of Cutter, her first Seeing Eye dog.

Sylvia’s job often requires her to travel, including internationally. “I hated traveling for work,” she said. “I hated going to conferences, conventions, graduations, airports – I suffered through them. Now, if it’s the right airport and I know it well enough, I don’t even need assistance anymore. I can work my way through it if it’s one that I know. It’s so liberating, instead of sitting and waiting and being asked if I need a wheelchair. I enjoy the process of travel now.”

Sylvia said she can sense Cutter is slowing down and may retire soon, and Sylvia will return to The Seeing Eye to be matched with her second dog.

“I can appreciate how much these puppy raisers go through giving them back. I am prepared, I knew this would happen, but once it begins to happen it’s super hard,” Sylvia said. “A big thank you to all of the people along the way who are willing to let go so they can go on to do what they need to do, like I do now so he can relax and retire.”



## EMILY CHAO & Junebug



Emily Chao is an environmental education student at Cal Poly Humboldt, and a recent first-time graduate of The Seeing Eye! The photo shows Emily, wearing a striped sleeveless dress, smiling as she hugs Junebug, a black Labrador/golden retriever cross. Junebug has her paw on one of Emily's arms – hugging her as well!

“People think that Junebug’s name is so adorable,” Emily said. “At school, she guides me through the hills and stairs of the campus, and guides me to my classes. When Junebug is not working, she loves to play fetch, and we love to cuddle on the floor together.”

Junebug’s help to Emily goes beyond guiding. “When I was in training with Junebug at The Seeing Eye, my best friend unexpectedly passed away. I was devastated by the news. Junebug was there to grieve with me. After my friend died, I would have been a person with no confidence. With Junebug in my life, she gave me the confidence to keep going.”





Susan Shevlin of Charlotte, North Carolina, first came to The Seeing Eye in 1967 to be matched with a Seeing Eye dog. She is now working with her seventh, a yellow Labrador retriever named Goldy.

“I call her my Golden Girl. I have never had a more gentle, obedient dog than Goldy. She is just the sweetest thing,” Susan said.

The photo shows Susan with one arm around Goldy as Goldy licks her cheek.

Susan worked for many years as a therapist and life coach. “I’m now retired,” she says, “although I can’t stop giving advice.”

A grandmother of three, Susan visited her grandchildren this summer, and of course Goldy came too.

Susan went to Colorado to visit her grandson, and took a train to Virginia to visit her two granddaughters. “People said to me, as we got up, they had no idea there was a dog on the train,” she said. “The conductor said, ‘I have been doing this for 15 years, and I have never seen a better behaved dog.’”





## 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<sup>®</sup> 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 by visiting [www.SeeingEye.org/SupportUs](http://www.SeeingEye.org/SupportUs) or by calling (800) 539-4425.

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