INSIDE:
Karate Kids
Ah, the dog days of summer are here again.

It was 85 years ago this summer that we moved from our original location in Nashville, Tennessee, to Whippany, New Jersey, where we would remain until 1965. Since then we’ve made the beautiful Washington Valley area of Morristown our home.

One of the reasons we left Nashville was because the summer heat and humidity was often too much for our dogs in training… not to mention the students and instructors! We do get hot summer days in New Jersey, but it’s usually only for a week or two.

We recently had a stretch of days that the meteorologists described as a “heat dome,” with temperatures in the 90s every day. But our dogs must be prepared to work in all kinds of weather, just like the Postal Service – “neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night!”

But we do keep in mind the health, comfort, and safety of our dogs. To beat the heat, we get outside as early as possible to avoid the mid-day sun. We use short routes with frequent breaks and of course, plenty of water. When it’s just unbearable, we’ll work inside…malls, department stores, and supermarkets – they all are great practice!

To keep the dogs’ feet safe from hot asphalt, we put them in booties – which we also use in winter to keep the ice and salt off the paws. Some people think they’re pretty cute… though sometimes the dogs disagree. They get used to them, though, and maybe – I think – grow to appreciate them.

And we train our students how to keep their dogs safe in any climate. After all, our graduates can’t just stay home because of the weather. At The Seeing Eye, enabling our graduates to travel when and where they need, and taking good care of our dogs are both key parts of our mission.

Thank you for your continued support of that mission. We couldn’t do it without you!

Sincerely,

James A. Kutsch, Jr., President & CEO, The Seeing Eye
Dear Seeing Eye:

I wish to thank you for the kindness in granting my scholarship through The Seeing Eye. Your generosity will aid in furthering my education at Boston University in Boston, Massachusetts.

I have been participating in The Seeing Eye Puppy Raiser Program since 2007, but The Seeing Eye and the puppies have been a major part of my life since birth. I have taken away many life lessons as well as dear friends from my experiences. I have a better understanding of not only responsibility but love and compassion. The values I have learned such as companionship, hard work, commitment, and service to others, will stay with me and continue to form me into the adult I am proud to become.

The Puppy Raiser scholarship that you have made available to me will aid in paying for my college education which I value as I intend to continuously broaden my mind. If I am to fully develop my talents and contribute to our society, a good education is key. Your scholarship will help in achieving my goals and pushing me to reach my fullest potential. Thank you.

Moira Dugan

Gary McDaniel  
Seeing Eye graduate

Dear Seeing Eye:

I cannot thank you enough for your generous scholarship toward the college of my choice, Bryn Mawr College in Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, where I am planning to study biomedical engineering.

Bryn Mawr College is an educational institution that believes in service, and my love of service all started, back in 8th grade, when I had the good fortune of working as a puppy raiser with The Seeing Eye. I will never forget the people I met, the values I learned, and sheer satisfaction of raising (over a period of five years) three beautiful dogs, all whom graduated to serve. What a privilege it’s been! I hope, long after college, to continue my involvement with The Seeing Eye.

Veronica S. Kelly

Samuel L. Turner
When he worked as a wholesale distributor, Paul Miller spent most of his time on the road driving from customer to customer. But when he started losing his vision at age 35 due to retinitis pigmentosa, he had to come up with a new idea.

“It started going very suddenly, and I couldn’t drive anymore,” said Paul, who lives in Zionsville, Pennsylvania. “I had to close my business and find something else. I loved martial arts, and I thought, well, if I open a martial arts school, people will come to me instead of me going to them. So I opened a martial arts school.”

About five years later, Paul had another idea: a daycare center. In his martial arts school.

“I thought, wouldn’t it be cool if kids had somewhere to go before and after school, where they could actually do something they liked, and learn something? All four of my children did martial arts and it proved to be exceptionally beneficial for them.”

Paul applied to the state to open a daycare center coupled with his existing martial arts school, for children ranging from infants to age 14. “They said, ‘You’re out of your mind!’” Paul said. “I said, ‘This is going to be awesome!’”

The center was approved and, five years later, Paul opened a second site. He now has five Eastern Pennsylvania locations, under the name Lehigh Valley Martial Arts. “We now service 1,000 families in the Lehigh Valley,” he said.

The infants, of course, do not do martial arts. “But we integrate the character values of martial arts into every class that we teach, whether it’s in daycare or in martial arts,” he said. Martial arts instruction begins at age 2 with the school’s “Little Ninjas” program.
Two years ago, Paul lost his remaining vision, and was having trouble getting around on his own. “Years ago, when I was a sales representative, I took a wrong turn in Morristown and wound up at The Seeing Eye,” he said. “I thought ‘wow, cool,’ but never in a million years thought that I’d ever have to go there. But when I started losing my independence, I thought… Seeing Eye dog! That would help.”

In April 2015, Paul was matched with Rascal, a golden retriever. “I can’t tell you enough, as an instructor, how impressed I am with the instructors at The Seeing Eye,” Paul said. “The program they have at The Seeing Eye is extraordinary.”

Those first few lessons were scary, Paul said. “It was so easy to get turned around, to get nervous, to not know where you are,” he said. “You’re working with a live animal and you’re learning how to trust each other. He’s not used to me and I’m not used to him. But the instructors are so patient, and they’re right there to help you every step of the way.”

Rascal helps Paul outside of work, too. In addition to working long hours at the business, Paul also serves on his town’s Environmental Action Committee and the Mayor’s Downtown Committee, and is on the Board of Directors of the Main Street Program. Rascal also participated in Paul’s wedding to his wife, Susan… and went on their honeymoon to the Bahamas!

“Rascal is a very cultured dog,” Paul said. “Recently we were in New York City at Carnegie Hall, where my daughter was performing. He goes to field hockey games and concerts and graduations, board meetings and vacations… everywhere I need to go.”

And at work, Rascal is another big bonus. “The kids at the center love him,” Paul said. “He’s much more popular than I am. He’s such a sweet dog, and everybody loves him. Occasionally we’ll have a new child who has a fear of dogs. They meet Rascal, and he’s just so sweet and lovable.

“One lick and they’re giggling and they’re over it.

“But it’s also an important lesson for the children that when Rascal is working, they can’t pet him. They respect that. In fact it’s almost always the kids who are telling their parents: ‘You can’t pet him now, he’s working!’

Paul remains active with the business, training instructors in Kyokushinkai karate, kung fu, and tai chi. “A lot of them, I think, are convinced I can still see. Occasionally I can still see. I can’t. But just because I can’t see doesn’t mean I don’t know what they’re doing. If I put my hand on your shoulder, I can feel what you’re doing with your hand. Once I am able to touch an opponent, they’re in trouble.”

Paul said he gets a kick – sometimes literally – out of the “blind martial arts master” trope. “I had a new student who thought it would be fun to throw a punch at me,” he said. “I put him down immediately and said, ‘Whoa, grasshopper!’ He couldn’t believe it. He’s gone on to become one of my best students.”

When Rascal isn’t working, he loves to play with his Wubba, an octopus-shaped toy for tossing and tugging, and with pool noodles.

“Rascal, to me, is independence,” Paul said. “He is the freedom of being able to move about and not depend on other people to guide me. I feel like I’m actually living my life on my terms again.”
Kibbles and Sips

The Seeing Eye Raises $145,000 at The Dinner Party

By Michelle Barlak

A who’s who of the local dining scene came together to put on an exclusive dinner party event at The Seeing Eye. Held in June under a tent on the campus lawn, The Dinner Party raised approximately $145,000 to further the organization’s mission to breed, raise and train the world’s best guide dogs and to instruct people who are blind or visually impaired in their use and care.

The inaugural event was made possible thanks to the generous support of chefs from some of New Jersey’s finest restaurants, who donated their time and resources, as well as sponsors, including Purina Pro Plan. The event was hosted by NJTV contributor and long-time NJN News anchor Kent Manahan. More than 125 guests enjoyed an outdoor dining experience that began with a cocktail reception, followed by a six-course culinary experience with wine pairings for each course. Attendees were greeted on their way into the tent by Seeing Eye puppies and their Seeing Eye puppy raisers.

The chefs included David Felton of Ninety-Acres at Natirar in Peapack and Gladstone; Ryan DePersio of Fascino Restaurant in Montclair; Ariane Duarte of Ariane Kitchen and Bar in Verona; Michael Carrino of Pig & Prince in Montclair; Nina & Jonathan White of Bobolink Dairy in Milford; Erica Leahy of Jockey Hollow Bar and Kitchen in Morristown; and Andrea Lekberg of The Artist Baker in Morristown.

A “puptail” specialty cocktail was provided by Tito’s Handmade Vodka and fine wines were provided by VOS Selections, Iconic Wines, MFW Wine Co., Vine Street Imports, David Bowler Wine, Juan Prieto Wines, and Wilson Daniels. Coffee, espresso, and tea service were provided by Coffee Afficionado.

Seeing Eye President & CEO Jim Kutsch opened the night with a moving video about The Seeing Eye mission. “We are especially grateful to the chefs for their generous donations of time and skill, to our sponsors for helping to cover the cost of this event, and to the volunteers who served on the committee that helped make this night possible,” Jim said. “And we are also very grateful to our generous guests for the vital role they played in our overall success. Our supporters’ belief in The Seeing Eye allows us to achieve our mission of providing the world’s best guide dogs to people who are blind and visually impaired.”

The program also included a live auction hosted by Bob Milligan and a Q&A with Seeing Eye graduate Trish Ebel, who attended with her Seeing Eye dog, Astro.

Watch SeeingEye.org for information about our next event!
W.C. Fields once quipped that you should never work with children or animals. But of course W.C. Fields never worked at The Seeing Eye! Both were in attendance as The Seeing Eye, through the Dollars for Dogs® program, participated in Take Your Child To Work Day activities at area businesses.

Seeing Eye puppy raisers went to three different UPS locations. In Wayne, the puppy raisers were greeted by about 55 children. “The children were very excited to see the puppies,” Puppy Raiser Jackie Sweigart said. “There were some very good questions from both the children and the adults. At the end, we spread out and let everyone pet the puppies.”

At Daiichi Sankyo in Parsippany, Dollars for Dogs volunteer Don MacGowan was joined by five puppy raisers. The pharmaceutical company made a financial contribution to The Seeing Eye and also donated many bags of dog food and boxes of treats along with toys and towels. “It was quite a haul that took a couple vehicles to deliver,” Don said.

MetLife in Florham Park also donated to The Seeing Eye. “The children and the puppies were outstandingly well behaved,” puppy raiser Sharon Kessel said.

And Bob Denby went to a Johnson & Johnson facility in Skillman, where there were so many children they had to be divided into two sessions. “We made a very positive impression,” Bob said. “I’m not sure who was more excited to see the puppies – the kids or the employees!”

And of course, The Seeing Eye also participated. The daughters and sons of Seeing Eye employees got to play with puppies, tour the AAHA-accredited Vincent A. Stabile Canine Health Center, and most memorably, take a blindfold walk with Seeing Eye dogs!
Jen Armbruster returns for her seventh Paralympics as the captain of the U.S. Women’s Goalball team. Goalball is a game designed for athletes who are blind or visually impaired. Players compete on a court roughly the size of a volleyball court, with goals at either end spanning the width of the court. The ball, about the size of a basketball, has bells inside so players can hear it. Attackers roll or bounce the ball toward the other team’s goal; defenders attempt to block shots by catching the ball or throwing themselves in front of it. The U.S. women are hoping for gold after winning the FEDC International Goalball Tournament in Spain earlier this summer. Jen, who was the U.S. flagbearer at the Beijing Paralympics opening ceremony in 2008, has won three medals in her six Paralympic games.

It will be the second games for Becca Meyers, a 22-year-old swimmer from Maryland. A rising senior at Franklin & Marshall – where she stars on the college’s swim team – Becca will race in three freestyle events (50 meters, 100 meters, and 400 meters), the 100 meter butterfly, and the 200 meter individual medley. In the U.S. Paralympic trials, Meyers won the 100m and 400m freestyle, the 100m butterfly, and the 200m individual medley, and finished third in the 50m freestyle. At the NCAA Division III championships, Becca placed 6th in the nation in the 1,650m freestyle and was named an All-American. She won the ESPY Award for Best Female Athlete with a Disability in 2015. At the 2012 games in London, Becca won the silver medal in the 200m individual relay and the bronze medal in the 100m freestyle; she also placed 5th in the 50m freestyle.

Jen was matched with a German shepherd named Simon, her fourth Seeing Eye dog, in December 2015; Becca was matched with her first Seeing Eye dog, a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross named Birdie, in August 2015.
news highlights

BIG PUPPY!

Seeing Eye Dog Named For Retiring Red Sox Slugger

Mary Manwaring, a Seeing Eye graduate and employee, wanted to do something to commemorate the upcoming retirement of baseball player David “Big Papi” Ortiz.

Mary, a lifelong fan of the Boston Red Sox, donated $5,000 to The Seeing Eye to name a puppy and selected the name Ortiz. The yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross was born in May and is the first Seeing Eye puppy to bear that name.

“You have been an inspiration, guide, and mentor to many players, and so it seemed fitting for me to name a Seeing Eye dog Ortiz in your honor,” Mary wrote in a letter to the player.

You can follow updates about Ortiz on The Seeing Eye’s Facebook page, www.Facebook.com/SeeingEye. For information about how you can name a puppy, go to www.SeeingEye.org/donate or call (973) 539-4425.

Seeing Eye Stars at IGDF

Employees attend international conference in Croatia

The International Guide Dog Federation, the body that accredits guide dog organizations across the globe, held its 2016 IGDF Seminar in Hvar, Croatia, in May.

Several Seeing Eye employees made presentations at the seminar. Lukas Franck, Senior Consultant for Special Projects in the Instruction & Training Department, co-presented a history of the guide dog movement; Peggy Gibbon, Director of Canine Development, and David Johnson, Director of Instruction & Training, delivered a presentation on traffic training; and Pauline Alexander, Manager of Admissions & Graduate Services, was on a panel discussion about guide dog admissions programs. Also in attendance were Dr. Dolores Holle, The Seeing Eye’s Attending Veterinarian and Director of Canine Medicine & Surgery; Dr. Emily Waide, the Jane H. Booker Chair in Canine Genetics; and Seeing Eye Instructor Drew Gibbon. All staff members participated in workshops and plenary sessions.

“Our staff’s participation in the seminar shows The Seeing Eye continues to be the world leader in the guide dog movement,” said Seeing Eye President & CEO Dr. James A. Kutsch, Jr., who also attended the seminar and just ended his two-year term as chair of the organization.
The Seeing Eye Geneticist Honored

The Best Puppies Become The Best Seeing Eye Dogs!

Dr. Eldin Leighton, who retired last year after serving as The Seeing Eye’s geneticist for nearly 40 years, was honored this summer with the Ethel Bender Award by the Guide Dog Users, Inc., a consumer-driven organization of guide dog handlers affiliated with the American Council of the Blind.

The Ethel Bender Award is presented to a sighted person who has made a significant contribution to the guide dog community. Eldin, who retired in December 2015 as The Seeing Eye’s Jane H. Booker Chair in Canine Genetics, first joined The Seeing Eye in 1977. He was the first degreed geneticist employed by a guide dog school anywhere in the world.

“Dr. Leighton’s contributions to the guide dog movement are impossible to overstate,” said Dr. Emily Waide, who now serves as the Booker Chair. “They go far beyond The Seeing Eye and will echo onward for generations of guide dogs.”

Eldin pioneered the use of estimated breeding values (EBVs) in guide dogs. EBVs had been used in the breeding of livestock, but Eldin was the first to employ it for working dogs. He shared much of his research and techniques with other guide dog schools, improving the overall genetic quality of working dog breeds, and was a frequent speaker at international conferences and at universities on the topic of genetics. He served as a mentor to breeding managers from dog organizations all over the world, promoted exchange programs with other schools to promote healthy breeding pools, and created the International Working Dog Registry to allow schools to exchange information. He also authored or co-authored numerous research articles in scholarly publications.

In 1980, Eldin designed a breeding plan to genetically improve the health and trainability of dogs born at The Seeing Eye. In the 1970s, more than 30 percent of German shepherds born at The Seeing Eye showed signs of hip dysplasia before their second birthday; today, fewer than 2 percent do.
Jay Stiteley, an indefatigable advocate for people with disabilities, died July 24 at the age of 61.

Jay was a graduate of The Seeing Eye and also a former employee, serving as a field representative from 1994 to 2000 and from 2003 to 2009. As a field representative, Jay would travel across the United States and Canada, visiting schools, conferences, conventions, and other groups to talk about the benefits of working with a Seeing Eye dog.

“He was a wonderful ambassador for the organization with his affable nature, enormous enthusiasm, and zeal,” said Randy Ivens, The Seeing Eye’s Director of Human Resources. “And he was so well-liked by employees. As a co-worker, when Jay greeted you during the day, it was special.”

Since 2014, Jay worked for the City of Houston as its primary advocate for the disability community. In this capacity he ensured the delivery of essential services to city residents who are disabled. He previously was National Technology Program Director for the American Foundation for the Blind in Chicago; Dean of Students with the Tennessee School for the Blind in Nashville; and Director of Rehabilitation Services with World Services for the Blind in Little Rock. He also served on the Federal Communications Commission Consumer Advisory Committee, Verizon’s Customer Advisory Board, and Delta’s Advisory Board for Disabilities.

Jay was matched with his first Seeing Eye dog, a German shepherd named Kurt, in 1971; he returned to The Seeing Eye in 2015 to be matched with his seventh, a yellow Labrador retriever named Nelson.

Before his passing, Jay asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to The Seeing Eye.
Puppy of the Month!

Celebrate The Seeing Eye every month with this beautiful wall calendar featuring pictures of Seeing Eye puppies… taken by Seeing Eye puppy raisers!

To order your 2017 calendar, go to www.SeeingEye.org/Calendar.