INSIDE:
The Next Stage
Summer at The Seeing Eye is always an exciting time – we have a lot of college students, and even some high school students, here to get Seeing Eye® dogs and to learn how to care for and work with their new dogs. After all, summer is the best time for a student to take off three and a half weeks from school.

For the same reason, we also get teachers and professors in the summer months… and people from many other professions as well.

Can you keep working with a Seeing Eye dog even after you’ve retired? Of course! The graduate featured in this issue’s cover story, Lloyd Burlingame, didn’t get his first Seeing Eye dog until after he retired… and over the last 20 years he’s subsequently returned for two more dogs.

Age, as the saying goes, is just a number. A senior citizen who demonstrates the ability, the need, and the stamina to work with a Seeing Eye dog can apply for one.

When it comes to younger applicants, our minimum age is typically 16. We want to be sure the applicant demonstrates the responsibility and maturity to work with and care for a Seeing Eye dog. As many of you know, our dogs work because of the incomparable bond they share with their handlers. The dog takes care of his or her person, and the person takes care of her or his dog… feeding, grooming, and playing with the dog. It’s an incredible one-to-one relationship. Seeing Eye teams spend almost every waking moment together, building that relationship of trust.

I’ve been at both ends of the spectrum. I came here for my first dog, Sheba, as a 19-year-old college student, and trained with my eighth dog, Vegas, as a 62-year-old executive. Each came at a different stage of my life, and each was the perfect dog for me at that time.

As for our dogs, we want them to stop working when they’re still young and healthy enough to enjoy a long retirement… a goal I think most humans should keep in mind as well! For most dogs, that’s around age 10 – coincidentally in “dog years” right around the time most people retire as well. But just like people, some dogs work longer, and others prefer an early retirement. It’s up to each graduate. As I’ve heard many times from graduates, “my dog told me it was time.”

Thank you for your ongoing support of The Seeing Eye. Your generosity keeps us making matches, for young and old… for as long as people need Seeing Eye dogs.

Sincerely,

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

Life has been busy and eventful for quite some time now and I have been kept very busy with several opportunities that have come my way. I currently volunteer as the sound engineer for my church as well as conducting interviews for the National Core Indicators project. This is an effort to determine how effective the services and supports available to developmentally disabled persons are meeting their needs. I travel all over this county and the surrounding counties to conduct face-to-face conversations. I also do home theater configurations and upgrades as an independent consultant. In all cases, my Seeing Eye dog Aaron has proven to be a wonderful ambassador. He is still the happiest dog that God ever gave the breath of life to.

His work is excellent and leaves nothing more to be desired. He is healthy with a bounce in his step and I feel he has lots of miles left on those big fuzzy paws. He is enthusiastic about working and greets every morning with a simple uncluttered joy that gives me a renewed zest for life. Tell [my instructor] Brian he is still “The A-Train” and pulls with a will. He is a wonderful boy who continues to enhance my life in many ways. Thank you all again for all you do for me and those others for whom you have provided Seeing Eye dogs.

Your calling is one of the most worthy I have ever known. Each of my four Seeing Eye Dogs have left their own indelible mark on my heart and my life. I simply can’t imagine life without a fuzzy partner guiding my steps. Thank you all and may God bless each and every one of you.

Ken Hoegler
Seeing Eye graduate

Dear Seeing Eye:

We would like to thank you and your organization for blessing us and allowing our family to have Inca for 14 years.

Inca was born and bred by The Seeing Eye. We raised her for you when she was just a puppy. Shortly after we returned her to The Seeing Eye, it was determined that she had a medical condition that, though non-life threatening, understandably prevented you from being able to keep her in the program. By the time we were asked if we wanted to adopt her, we were already raising our second Seeing Eye puppy. But we were thrilled to take her back. Little did we appreciate at the time how immense a gain for us it would prove to be.

A beautiful black Lab with a great disposition, Inca was a wonderful playmate and companion to all of us. And she was so very smart. When one of our mothers was visiting from out-of-state and unexpectedly became bedridden, Inca instinctively stayed by the side of the bed to look after her and alert us when she tried to get out of bed on her own.

Inca and our 2-year-old grandson became close friends in a very short time. When Milo came bouncing into the house, Inca knew that extra dog treats were not far away.

Our family is very grateful for the time we were able to spend with her. But we are, perhaps, most sad that Inca was not able to fulfill her primary mission in life. She would have made a great Seeing Eye dog.

Thank you and your staff for all the important and dedicated work that you do.

Elaine & Steven Katzman
‘I’m in my 80s, I’m nearly totally blind, and I’m having the best time of my life’

By his mid 40s, Lloyd Burlingame was a prominent set designer on Broadway and in opera, an accomplished artist, and the chair of the design department at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. He’d worked with legendary performers, from Broadway producer David Merrick to comedians Jonathan Winters and Carol Burnett to a 19-year-old ingénue named Barbra Streisand. But he also was going blind from Stargardt disease – an inherited form of macular degeneration.

“I was told I would lose most or all of my sight,” Lloyd said. “Of course it was a horrible blow. But I lucked out. I was already well established in my field. I was well known. I had stuff in museums. So I faked it.”

Lloyd said he was happy with his cane until an incident in the late 1990s.

“I was crossing a tricky intersection in Greenwich Village,” he said. “I was waiting to cross. Someone called out to me: ‘Hey buddy, you’re good to go!’ I hesitated, and he called out again: ‘Trust me! Go ahead!’ So I started across, and a cab just missed me. It came so close it hit my cane. And I heard him laughing at me. He thought it was just hilarious. And I thought, ‘Ooh. Trust me.’ I was so downhearted.”

A friend asked Lloyd if he’d considered getting a Seeing Eye dog. “I thought, incorrectly, that you had to be totally blind to get a Seeing Eye dog,” he said. “I still had a tiny sliver of peripheral vision.” But Lloyd contacted the school, and in 1998 he was matched with a yellow Labrador retriever named Hickory.

“I had lost trust completely in just about everybody,” Lloyd said. “And here I’m supposed to put my trust in a 2-year-old dog?”

Lloyd said he knew he’d made the right decision when Hickory demonstrated “intelligent disobedience” at a train platform. Seeing Eye dogs are trained not to obey a command that could put their owners or themselves in danger – such as walking off the platform if there’s no train there.
“The instructor said, ‘Walk toward the track.’ And I said, ‘You – you mean parallel to the track?’ ‘No. Go straight ahead. Walk to the track.’ And I said, rather feebly, ‘Hickory… forward?’ Talk about scary. Oh boy! But he didn’t move. The instructor said, ‘Say it like you mean it!’ And I said, ‘Hickory – forward.’ And he stood there like a statue. He didn’t move at all. And the instructor said, ‘Lloyd, really push it!’ And I said, ‘Hickory, forward!’ And he stayed. And wow. I knew it then. If I can’t trust people, who can I trust? The dog. You can trust the dog.”

In 2006, Hickory retired and Lloyd returned to be matched with a yellow Labrador/golden cross named Kemp. After Kemp retired in 2014, Lloyd came back for his third dog, a black Labrador/golden cross named Al.

“I’m in my 80s, I’m nearly totally blind, and I’m having the best time of my life. And a lot of that is because of the dogs,” Lloyd said. “This has been the great adventure of my life. And I certainly didn’t lead a dull life up to that point. I moved in some pretty great circles. But it pales in comparison to what I’ve done with these dogs.”

Lloyd’s interest in the stage began as a boy, when he saw The Mikado at the National Theatre in Washington, D.C. “The show was wonderful, but the scenery…! It changed every scene. I was fascinated.” He began building his own little sets in shoe boxes. That led to high school productions and summer stock theater, and eventually, the prestigious drama department at the Carnegie Institute of Technology (now part of Carnegie Mellon University). By 19, Lloyd was the set designer for the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C. But then the Army intervened. Lloyd was drafted and assigned to the Signal Corps Army Pictorial Service, which brought him to New York City. “We made training films,” Lloyd said. “Thrilling epics like Bed Check.” Lloyd fell in love with New York City, and of course, Broadway. He designed his first Broadway show at age 25, and became the go-to designer for legendary Broadway producer David Merrick.

No longer able to paint and draw, Lloyd has turned his creativity in a new direction. He’s written A Blessing Well Disguised: A Blinded Artist’s Inner Journey Out of the Dark; Sets, Lights, and Lunacy, A Stage Designer’s Adventures on Broadway and in Opera; and Two Seeing Eye Dogs Take Manhattan... A Love Story. All three are available from Amazon and other booksellers, as well as in braille and audio from the National Library Service. He’s currently working on a novel.

Lloyd said Al has capably stepped into the role played by his predecessors. “I was training in New York City with my instructor, Lori. I said, ‘Let’s go to Times Square.’ Well, it was the 11th of November. Veterans Day. It was a zoo. It was beyond a zoo. There was construction everywhere. There were jackhammers and cranes and backhoes. All the kids are out of school. There are thousands of tourists. People everywhere. And in the middle of all this, here comes a parade down the street! And I said, ‘Ut oh.’ And Lori said, ‘Ut oh.’ Al was the only one who was up for it. He loved it! He zigged and he zagged and he took me through it all. He just aced it.”
In Fall 2005, Connie Hays was on the community service committee for Saint David’s School in Manhattan. Each year the school holds fundraisers for various organizations, and Connie suggested The Seeing Eye.

“Doing community service is very much part of what is important at Saint David’s, that is one of their mottos,” said Sally Connolly, who served on the committee with Connie. “The school is very involved with a lot of public service projects for kids. It’s all very hands-on, very community-oriented. The kids really run the project. The parents support them, but the kids do all the work. It’s a great program.”

Connie then became seriously ill, and was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her son, Henry, then in 4th grade, would keep her posted with updates on how preparations for the fundraiser, planned for February, were going.

Connie, a reporter for The New York Times, died Dec. 5, 2005, at the age of 44. But the fundraiser went ahead to great success... and has continued each year, raising tens of thousands of dollars for The Seeing Eye’s Pennies for Puppies® program during that time.

“It was a great, positive experience that came out of a tragedy,” Sally said. “It helped the whole class get through a very difficult time.”

Don MacGowan, who volunteers as the coordinator of the Pennies for Puppies program, said the 4th grade students come to The Seeing Eye every year to participate in our visit program. This year they came in April, and in May, Don and Seeing Eye graduate Kathy Murray and her Seeing Eye dog, a black Labrador/golden cross named Mac, visited the school.

That first year, the school raised money with a talent show as well as a bake sale. The bake sale continues, as well as a direct fundraiser where the students bring in spare change, Sally said.

Henry is now a senior at the University of North Carolina, majoring in business; Sally’s son Nicholas, who helped organize the 2006 fundraiser with Henry, is majoring in government at Hamilton College in New York.

“My mother loved the idea of putting puppies and little kids together,” Henry said. “It was a good way for me to focus on something good outside of everything else that was going on.”

If your school, youth group, or other organization would like to participate in our Pennies for Puppies program, call (973) 539-4425 ext. 1778 or email pennies@seeingeye.org.

Photos courtesy Saint David’s School.
puppy raisers

THIS AIRPORT IS GOING TO THE DOGS!

Seeing Eye puppies visit Newark Liberty International Airport

Although it is possible to teach an old dog new tricks, it’s always best to start when they’re young. Seeing Eye puppy raisers introduce puppies to all sorts of new situations and places – malls, movie theaters, stadiums, and even a trip to the airport.

For the past 25 years, puppy raisers from across the region visit Newark Liberty International Airport as part of a group activity, with the help of United Airlines and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey. This year’s trip, held in April, saw 175 puppies from clubs in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania parading through the terminal over two days in April.

Seeing Eye volunteers Janet Keeler and Carmella Passaro have been organizing the trips since the 1990s.

“It’s great for the puppies, but also for the public. People love it,” Janet said. “All of a sudden there’s this parade of puppies going past! There’s always a lot of smiles as the puppies go by.”

The puppies get quite the airport tour. First, they visit the Port Authority administration building, where they get a close look at a Port Authority emergency vehicle. Next, they board shuttle buses – which is in itself another great lesson for the future – and go to United Airlines’ Terminal C, where they practice navigating the concourse, ticketing, baggage claim areas, the AirTrain (an intra-airport monorail), security checkpoints, and the departure gates.

Then the puppies and their raisers get to board an actual plane, filing down the jet bridge just as if they were about to take off. The puppies are taught where to sit – under the seats in front of them, where carry-on bags are typically stowed – and listen to “inflight announcements” over the public address system from a retired United Airlines pilot. Then they file off again.

“It’s great exposure for the puppies, and we are looking forward to doing it again next year,” Janet said.

Below: Hawke, a black Labrador retriever Seeing Eye puppy, poses in front of a Port Authority emergency vehicle.

Photo by Katie Letson / The Seeing Eye.

Above: A Seeing Eye puppy raiser and his black Labrador retriever puppy walk on the jet bridge as they board a plane.

Associated Press photo.

Right: A young golden retriever leads the way as Seeing Eye puppy raisers and their puppies board a plane at Newark Liberty International Airport. Associated Press photo.
SEEING EYE GRAD NAMED ‘PERSON OF THE YEAR’

BARBARA BLACK has been working in early childhood education for more than 45 years.

“I’ve had children whose parents I had in daycare many years ago,” Barbara said. “It’s fun for it to come full circle.”

In April, Barbara was honored by United Way of Hampshire County and the Daily Hampshire Gazette of Northampton, Massachusetts, as their 2017 “Person of the Year.”

Barbara is Associate Director of Student Services: Early Childhood for Northampton Public Schools. “I work with families, I work with teachers, I help people find services they need,” she said. “I also work with children with special needs and families of children with special needs, families who are immigrants, and basically, whoever needs a little help.”

Helping her provide that assistance is the black Labrador/golden cross named Lacey. (She tells her students that her dog is named Cutie Pie – or more formally, Miss Pie – so they don’t distract her by calling out her name while she’s working.) “My job takes me to four different elementary schools, and she is a great navigator there, as well as all over town,” Barbara said.

They were matched at The Seeing Eye in July 2013.

“I work in education, so the easiest time for me to go was in the summer,” she said. “The best thing about coming in the summer is there are lots of young people, in their teens and 20s. We’re all doing the same thing, learning how to use a Seeing Eye dog, but we all come at it from different perspectives.”

Barbara said Lacey is great around little kids. “She can stand in the middle of a group of six or eight preschoolers who are pawing and poking and tugging at her, and she’ll just stand there with her tail going. She gets a lot of kisses and hugs, and she loves it,” she said.

Barbara plans to retire in October, but says she will remain active in some capacity helping children.

“Now I have to figure out what I’m going to do when I grow up,” she joked. “I love my work and I have to figure out how I can keep involved, but not do it a million hours a week.”
Born in New Haven, Connecticut, Earl Carl lost his sight as a child due to glaucoma. After graduating with honors from the Connecticut School for the Blind, he applied to Fisk University… but was rejected. The university told Earl they would not accept a blind student. The first of many hurdles he would overcome, Earl convinced the school to admit him. Not only did Earl graduate with honors with a bachelor’s degree in sociology, but he felt it was an even greater accomplishment that a semester later, the school enrolled another student who was blind.

Earl’s next challenge was law school. Accepted by both Harvard and Yale, the Connecticut native chose the latter. While a student at Yale, Earl came to The Seeing Eye to be matched with Dundee, a German shepherd – the first of his six Seeing Eye dogs.

With Dundee at this side, Earl would go on to become the first blind black man to be admitted to the Connecticut Bar. Two months later, he would begin a career as a law professor at a new law school in Texas created specifically for black students.

In 1946, blacks were barred from attending law school in Texas under the state’s “separate but equal” doctrine. Faced with a court challenge – as there were no law schools for black students in Texas, whether separate or equal – the state established the Texas State University for Negroes, now known as Texas Southern University. Earl – at the time one of less than 1,000 black lawyers in the United States – was hired as one of its first law professors.

The U.S. Supreme Court would eventually strike down Texas’s “separate but equal” doctrine, with Thurgood Marshall representing the plaintiff. A year after that decision, the Houston-based university was renamed Texas Southern University, and later its law school would eventually be renamed the Thurgood Marshall School of Law.

Earl would remain at the university for the next 38 years, retiring in 1986. “I have had offers to go elsewhere,” he was quoted in Focus on Justice: An Urban Perspective, a magazine published by Thurgood Marshall School of Law. “This is not a job to me. It has been my life. I would not go elsewhere, even to Harvard or Yale, because I have had the privilege of being a part of this school from the beginning.”

He received the “Professor of the Year” award many times in his career, twice served as the school’s acting dean, published several research papers, and the City of Houston proclaimed March 23, 1974, as “Earl L. Carl Day.” Focus on Justice estimated that he played a role, directly or indirectly, in the education of 20 percent of all minority lawyers in the country, including 75 percent of the minority lawyers in Texas.

In 1992, six years after his retirement, the Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy was created to encourage law students to tackle legal and social problems that affect traditionally urban and disenfranchised communities.

His last Seeing Eye dog, a German shepherd named Hector, retired in 1993, and three years later, Dr. Earl Carl died at the age of 77.
Say What?

Seeing Eye student rooms now equipped with Echo

The Seeing Eye tries to make students feel as comfortable as possible during their stay at the campus in Morristown, New Jersey. (First-time guide dog users spend three and a half weeks here; those who have had a Seeing Eye dog before are here for two and a half weeks.) That includes a private room with its own bathroom, telephone, Wi-Fi... and, the most recent addition, Echo, Amazon’s voice-controlled personal assistant usually called “Alexa.”

The Echo device works by voice recognition. Simply by asking a question out loud (“Alexa, what time is it?”) or giving a command (“Alexa, play some music”), the Echo can make the stay just a little bit more comfortable.

Seeing Eye President & CEO James A. Kutsch Jr., who also is a graduate of the school, bought an Echo for his home and quickly realized how useful it would be for people in class.

“You can set a timer. You can look something up on the Internet. You can get the news. You can order a pizza,” Jim said. “And it performs the same whether you’re sighted or not.”

The Echo devices were installed in The Seeing Eye’s dorm rooms as well as common areas such as student lounges and the gym.

Alan Conway, a student in the August 2017 class, said he’s found the Echo very useful, particularly when it comes to keeping up with the latest news from back home. Now a resident of Gatineau, Quebec, he said he’s even found a radio station from Regina so he can keep up with the Canadian Football League games from his native Saskatchewan.

By default, Echo responds to the name “Alexa,” although that can be changed... which will come in handy, as we’ve had several dogs over the year with that name. Our dogs are trained to obey all sorts of commands, but we’re still trying to teach them how to tell the time or order a pizza!

Amazon made a video about the Echo at The Seeing Eye, which you can view on our website at www.SeeingEye.org/echo.

New Trustees Elected

The Seeing Eye Board of Trustees has elected two new members: Susan Gnall, a senior vice president at Morgan Stanley, and Dr. Michael Mittelman, president of Salus University.

Susan, who has been a volunteer at The Seeing Eye for several years, is a Senior Vice President Wealth Management and co-founder of the Mamis/Gnall Group at Morgan Stanley, following a 15-year career at Merrill Lynch. Prior to becoming a financial adviser, she had run a family business, restructuring its financing and preparing it for a sale to a large competitor. She is a resident of Morristown, New Jersey, and holds a bachelor’s degree in economics from College of the Holy Cross and an MBA in finance from New York University.

Michael, the president of Salus University in Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, became a U.S. Navy optometrist following his graduation from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry in 1980 and retired as a Rear Admiral (Upper Half). Prior to joining Salus University, he had served as Deputy Surgeon General of the Navy. The native of Long Island, New York, earned a bachelor’s degree from Jacksonville University and a master’s degree in public health from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. He also graduated from the Naval War College non-resident program. He now lives in Pennsylvania.
The Seeing Eye thanks its corporate partners:

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Gear for Gibbs

Gibbs, a German shepherd, was born at The Seeing Eye, but becoming a Seeing Eye dog wasn’t his destiny. He changed careers and joined the Sussex County (N.J.) Sheriff’s Office as a drug-sniffing dog. Leslie Ruben, whose brother Ron was killed in the World Trade Center on 9/11, donated a bulletproof vest for Gibbs in Ron’s memory. The photo shows Gibbs, wearing the vest, and his handler, Corrections Officer Roger Skove, greeting Leslie and her daughter, Amy.