



Guide Dogs for the Blind

HIGHLANDS RANCH
PUPPY RAISERS

Thank you for your interest in Guide Dogs for the Blind – Highlands Ranch, CO Puppy Raisers. We hope this document will help answer any questions you have. Please feel free to contact one of our club leaders if you have more questions.

About us:

We are a Guide Dogs for the Blind volunteer puppy raising club located in Highlands Ranch, CO. Guide Dogs for the Blind (GDB) is a nonprofit, charitable organization that was established in 1942 to provide a safe means of mobility for people who are blind and visually impaired. GDB is the largest guide dog school in the country, and continues its dedication to quality student training services and extensive follow-up

support for graduates. GDB receives no government funds. Services are provided to students from the United States and Canada at no cost to them.

Volunteer puppy raisers receive a guide dog puppy at approximately 8 weeks old, and the pup will return to one of GDB's campuses for formal training between 15 and 17 months old. We are responsible for teaching the puppies good manners and providing them with comprehensive socialization experiences. Puppy raisers can have other pets in their home and if you are not able to commit to raising a puppy full time, there are still other ways to get involved with our local puppy club, such as puppy sitting. And, GDB's puppy raising program complements many FFA, 4H, home schooling, high school, and college programs.

Club Activities:

We have regular puppy club activities twice a month. In addition, raisers with puppies under 5 months old attend weekly training meetings with their puppy. No previous experience is necessary to be a puppy sitter or puppy raiser. We provide training and support at our monthly puppy club activities.

Our regular puppy club meetings are held the 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month. Our exact location varies, so please contact us for the details about our next meeting.

You can find more information, including an up-to-date calendar of club activities, on our website www.HighlandsRanchPuppies.com.

We also have a Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/groups/hrpuppyraisers>.

You can also find more information at Guide Dogs for the Blind, guidedogs.com.

A volunteer is required to attend club activities to really get a feel for whether this is a project they can commit to or not. It's a fun project! It's also a lot of work. When a volunteer has attended several club activities, they may request a volunteer application from their club leader. Once the completed application is received, the leader will schedule a home visit/fence check. The volunteer needs to demonstrate a minimum level of puppy handling skills, including appropriate use of cues, proper training techniques, appropriate use of equipment, etc, and complete a couple puppy sits of program puppies. Then they may be approved to be a puppy sitter or raise a puppy. It generally takes about 3 months to build the skills you will need to raise or sit a puppy.

Many students wish to claim service hours for their time working with a puppy. This is certainly a great service project, and we are happy to confirm service hours for school credit. Raising or sitting a Guide Dog puppy is a big task and requires support from the entire family. Minors must be accompanied by a parent to club activities.

Financial Responsibility:

Guide Dogs for the Blind provides puppy raisers with supplies such as leashes, puppy jackets, collars, and approved veterinary care. They also provide for transportation from the whelping kennel to the puppy raising home, and from the puppy raising home back to campus for formal training. The raiser is responsible for any additional expenses such as dog food, toys, and equipment.

Leaders:

Our club leaders are:

Darlene White
(303) 525-2306

HighlandsRanchPuppies@gmail.com

Maddie White
(303) 995-3295

HighlandsRanchPuppies@gmail.com

Guide Dogs for the Blind:

You can find more information about Guide Dogs for the Blind on their website:

Website: guidedogs.com

National Headquarters
P.O. Box 151200
San Rafael, CA 94915-1200
(800) 295-4050

California Campus
350 Los Ranchitos Road
San Rafael, CA 94903
(415) 499-4000

Oregon Campus
32901 SE Kelso Road
Boring, OR 97009
(503) 668-2100

Puppy Raising FAQ

Interested in more information? Here are some links you may find helpful:

[Meet Guide Dogs for the Blind](#)

[Puppy Raising](#)

Q: What is required of me before I become a puppy raiser or puppy sitter?

A: Before being selected as a puppy raiser, people attend puppy club activities in order to learn some of GDB's puppy development and training techniques, as well as experience opportunities to handle puppies. Our requirements for puppy sitters are the same as puppy raisers since our sitters need to know the same training techniques for sitting our puppies.

Q: How soon can I get a puppy after applying?

A: It takes approximately three months of attending puppy club activities to learn about the program before being ready to raise a puppy. We will tell you when you are ready!

Q: How often do puppy clubs meet?

A: Puppy clubs typically meet once a month and sometimes more often when puppies are younger. They also hold fun socialization outings in the community!

Q: What costs are covered in GDB's puppy raising program?

A: Veterinary care is entirely paid for by Guide Dogs for the Blind. We also provide leashes, collars, and other equipment.

Q: What supplies does a puppy raiser need to provide?

A: Puppy raisers typically provide food, toys, food and water bowls for their puppy. Our club will provide the crate and ex-pen, a puppy coat and gentle leader. GDB will provide collars, a leash, a tie down, and other essentials.

Q: How old do I have to be to be a puppy raiser?

A: All ages can participate, however primary puppy raisers must be at least 9 years of age. Youth raisers must have full support from a parent or guardian, including attendance at club activities and in management of the puppy in all settings.

Q: Can I raise a puppy if I work or go to school full time?

A: Yes, if you are able to take the puppy to work or school with you. If your work or school doesn't allow puppies in training to attend, we may be able to facilitate a co-raising arrangement in which a single puppy can be raised in two different households to accommodate raisers' work schedules and time commitments.

Q: Am I allowed to have other pets in the home while I raise a guide dog puppy?

A: Yes, as long as the other pets are well behaved and don't negatively impact the puppy's development. Our dogs need to learn to be comfortable around other animals so having other pets in the home can be extremely helpful. The leader of your club will meet your pet at your home visit.

Q: What type of training methods do you use with your puppies?

A: We use positive reinforcement as the basis for most of our puppy training games and exercises.

Q: Do puppies ever get to take a break and have fun?

A: Yes, every puppy has daily training games and exercises, but the rest of their day contains normal puppy activities such as playing and exercising.

Q: Do I need to have a fenced yard to raise a puppy?

A: No, a fenced yard is not absolutely required, but a puppy raiser must have access to a safe and secure outside area to relieve and exercise the puppy. We will work with you to find the best settings.

Q: What do I do with a puppy if I go on vacation or have an emergency?

A: Depending on the circumstances of the trip, a puppy may be able to accompany you on your vacation. If it is not appropriate or possible for the puppy to attend the vacation or there is an emergency, the puppy raising club leader assists with finding another puppy raising home to provide temporary care for the puppy. Our puppy sitters love to watch puppies in training!

Q: What happens if the puppy I'm raising does not become a guide dog?

A: Puppies that don't graduate as guide dogs, K9 Buddies, or enter into our breeding colony are known as "career change" dogs. If a puppy is career changed, it is first considered for placement

with one of GDB's partner service dog organizations. If this is not an option, the puppy raiser may be given the opportunity to adopt the dog as a pet.

Q: Will I get to meet the individual who received the dog I raised?

A: Usually, yes. Puppy raisers are invited to attend the graduation of the puppy they have raised, whether the dog becomes a guide dog, a member of our breeding colony, or a K9 Buddy dog. Graduation generally includes time to meet the dog's handler or breeder custodians. There are circumstances where guide dog teams are trained in-home and we offer virtual participation in the graduation.

Q: Is it hard to give the puppy up?

A: Yes, and we are fortunate to have many puppy raisers who have raised more than one dog for us. They tell us that it is always hard to bring the dog back to campus for formal training, but their emotions are outweighed by the exciting possibility that the dog they raised could provide enhanced safety, independence, and inclusion for someone who is blind or visually impaired. Lastly, there will always be another puppy waiting to join your heart and home!

Q: Are there other ways to participate with Guide Dog for the Blind if I am unsure about making a commitment of a year or more?

A: Yes, within the puppy raising program there are opportunities for volunteers to do more than raise a puppy full time. Puppy clubs in your area are often looking for club volunteers to fill support roles, including puppy sitting, for the puppies in the club. That is an amazing volunteer experience that really prepares you for raising your first puppy! If you live near one of our campuses in either San Rafael, CA or Boring, OR, there are many campus volunteer opportunities as well.