

vi·sion·ar·y (vizz'n-eri || -erri) adj. 1. Characterised by vision or foresight

# Visionary

Edition **45**

July  
2021

**Celebrating  
International  
Guide Dog Day**  
Around the world

**"Committee Focus"**  
Our new magazine  
Feature



**International Guide Dog Federation**  
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First and foremost, membership of the IGDF enables Guide Dog Schools around the world to join a community dedicated to serving the visually impaired. That community needs and wants to share its knowledge and the IGDF facilitates that.

The map below outlines the contributing countries for this edition of Visionary – **Australia, Canada, Japan, Poland, Singapore, UK, USA**



#### Cover Photo

The Labrador Foundation, Poland out and about in Poznań.

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## Message From The Chair

Bill Thornton | Chief Executive Officer  
**BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, Canada**

### Welcome to the 45th edition of the IGDF Visionary.

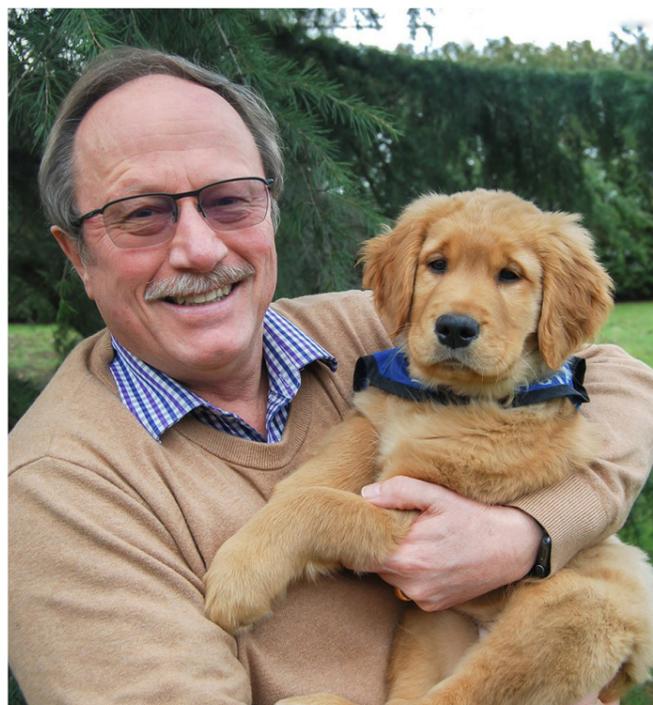
In April we received the results of the ISO ballot to develop International Guide & Assistance Dog Standards. The ballot required the support of 66% of respondents to pass. However, the result was 58% so, by a small margin, the international ballot failed. As the initiative did not receive enough global support, the campaign for ISO standards now ends. Thanks go to our immediate past Chair, Paul Metcalf, and everyone who served on the ISO Committee for all their diligent work on this complex initiative.

Although the outcome is disappointing, the time spent on the ISO project has not been wasted. Through the process, we have learnt a great deal about international standards and discovered other possibilities. So, although the ISO initiative is now closed, the campaign to strengthen our IGDF Standards globally remains active and forms part of our 5-year strategy.

The Board is now focussing on other opportunities to strengthen the global influence of the IGDF Standards and accreditation process. We are investigating how IGDF could become an Accredited Certification Body and at the same time, retain control of the content and implementation of our own Standards and accreditation process.

continued

## Message From The Chair



curriculum. Guide Dogs Queensland and Guide Dogs UK have offered to develop a comprehensive online Guide Dog Mobility Instructor & Guide Dog Trainer education platform. I cannot thank these two members enough. Their generosity will save us months of time and effort. As well as working on the curriculum, the Education Committee found time to run a well-attended webinar in May.

We had hoped that the new website would be launched in April, however this proved too ambitious. Technical delays and the need to include new content and ideas from members meant the launch was postponed until 14 July. We encourage you to take a look and we would also welcome your feedback. All comments – positive and negative – will help the Communications Committee continue to develop this valuable resource. Thanks to Christine Turc, Karen Hayes, and Kazu Oda for all the work that has gone into this project.

The Accreditation Committee, chaired by Susan Armstrong, has completed the revised standards, which will be launched at a webinar on 27th July. Thanks to current AC members, Paul Adrien, David Grice and Chris Muldoon, as well as former members Kees Tinga and Gail Glover for taking on this mountain of work. Thanks also to all members who have provided feedback. This has greatly influenced and strengthened the work completed.

During the last week in June, we held our first members networking Zoom meeting. The event was well-attended and insightful.

This will also help us keep members costs down. We will keep you informed of progress.

The Board has finalized the new IGDF Strategy – Strengthening Connections – IGDF’s plan for the next five years.

The strategy was based on input from you, our members, via our recent members survey. The strategy was launched at a well-attended webinar in April. I would like to thank Karen Hayes, our team leader and Tim Stafford for their role in the successful development of the strategy. Thanks also to the hard work of our Board Members, AC Chair Susan Armstrong, and DC Chair Brad Hibbard.

Our Education Committee, co-chaired by Christine Baroni-Pretsch and Tim Stafford is close to completing the first phase of the project to revise the GDMI

One of the great advantages of being a member of the IGDF is the opportunity to network. In the past mostly only at our conferences. Now with Zoom, we can make sure that there are other opportunities to meet our professional colleagues – and at no cost. Moving forward, we will be holding more networking meetings and I would encourage you to let David Maynard have any topics for future sessions.

**“The currency of real networking is not greed but generosity, networking is an investment in your business”.**

Finally, our administration team has grown by one as Clare Pritchett has started as Office Support Coordinator. We welcome you Clare to the IGDF family. Clare will be working with David Maynard and our Committees, to deliver key strands of the new IGDF strategy. Clare joins us from Guide Dogs UK, so she has a great knowledge about the industry.

On behalf of Board Members, Christine Turc VP, Wells Jones, Tim Stafford, Kazu Oda, Christine Baroni-Pretsch, and Karen Hayes, wishing you all continued success as we move forward towards a post-COVID world.

### Bill



## IGDF Assessments

Update from **IGDF Office, UK**

Due to the continuing restrictions on international travel, assessment visits are still suspended. There are therefore no new members or assessments to report.

The Remote Assessments Working Group has developed detailed guidance for the roll-out of remote assessments.

The first trial assessment will take place very soon for Vision Australia. Other remote assessments are being scheduled for the final quarter of 2021.

Organisations awaiting an initial assessment visit will be prioritised once face-to-face assessments are resumed.

Thank you to all the organisations concerned for your continuing patience.

### Thank you and farewell

**After 11 years’ service as an IGDF Assessor, David Markham of Guide Dogs Victoria has retired from the role.**

**A huge thank you to David for all his hard work over the years.**

## Members to benefit from generous support

Paul Adrian  
IGDF Education  
Committee

### Appointment of new Assessors

The following new IGDF Assessors have been appointed:

- Kim Ryan, Guide Dogs Tasmania (Australia)
- Thibaut Blairon, Irish Guide Dogs (Republic of Ireland)
- Tony Harvey, Guide Dogs for the Blind Association (UK)
- Benjamin Cawley, Guiding Eyes for the Blind (USA)

Thank you to everyone who applied to become an Assessor. 12 applications were received for the 4 vacant positions and the standard of applications was high.

### Congratulations

Congratulations to the following organisations which have been accepted as a new Enquiring Organisations:

- Dogs for Life (Slovakia)
- Instituto Carioca de Cão Guia (Brazil)

### Best Wishes

Our best wishes go to the following organisation which has left the IGDF:

- Hondenboot Antwerpen (Belgium)

As the IGDF Education Committee began work its first task was to develop a core curriculum for qualification of Guide Dog Trainers and Guide Dog Instructors. While this piece of work is nearly complete the greater challenge is to draw together the huge amount of learning materials that are needed to underpin the curriculum, and then make them available to members.

Two organisations have immediately come on board with commitments to supporting this project with their substantial resources.

Guide Dogs UK have an ambitious plan to recruit and train Instructors in the next few years. "Guide Dogs UK support the initiative to develop a core curriculum, syllabus and learning materials as it aligns to our own investment in the recruitment and development of at least 100 trainees over the next few years. We aim to implement a trainee competency framework combined with dedicated resources and modernised learning technology that will enable us to do more than ever for our service users. We want to progress our own plans at pace but in a manner that retains our close engagement with IGDF. While we have some exceptional resources to contribute, we also have much to learn from other members" said Pete Osborne, Director of Operations at Guide Dogs UK.

Guide Dogs Queensland, together with their Guide Dogs Australia partners have also agreed to share the learning materials they are developing, and the online learning platform they are using to deliver training to their staff. Born of an idea first discussed in

2016, Marc Lyell, Senior Instructor and Cadet Educator from Guide Dogs Queensland has been working on this project virtually full time since 2018.

**"The initial focus of this work was to create Orientation & Mobility educational material to be included within our GDMI Education & Training course"** said Marc.

**"After creating the content for the O&M course section of the GDMI course we turned our attention to two key innovations – creating an online Learning Management system for the course and updating the course content for the Guide Dog Training and GDMI components. While our course was primarily for our**

**own organisation we had always wanted to share this knowledge with others in the IGDF community who might benefit. Engaging with the IGDF Education Committee was a natural step."**

Both Pete and Marc were at pains to emphasise the international benefit of this work, including to smaller and less well-resourced organisations. The IGDF Education Committee remain keen to hear from other member organisations with GDMI and GDT educational resources that they are willing to share. These resources may be large or very small but together they will enhance the value of the learning library we will be establishing for the benefit of all members.



Pictured are four trainee Guide Dog Mobility Instructors with their Instructor during an Orientation and Mobility intensive as part of their GDMI course

# International Guide Dog Day 2021

Matt Collins  
Vision Australia



Ollie Fanshawe and Seeing Eye Dog Sadie

**International Guide Dog Day 2021 saw the team at Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs celebrating the recent pairing of Ollie Fanshawe and Seeing Eye Dog Sadie.**

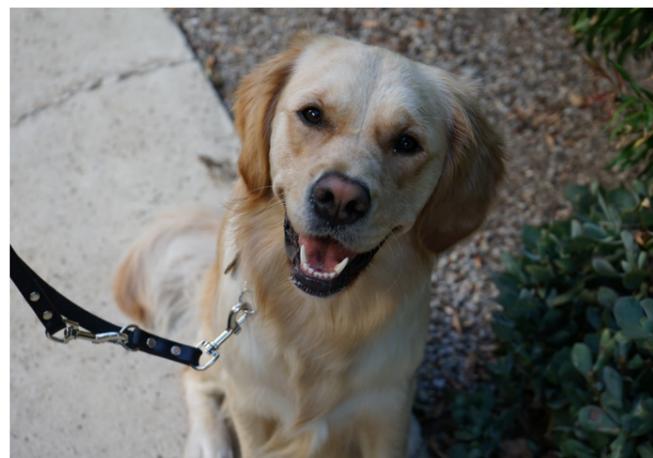
While we are currently pairing roughly four dogs and clients per month, Ollie stands out as being one of the youngest clients we've ever trained and matched being only 14 years of age.

This matching has been years in the making, both due to the client's young age, but also in finding a dog that matched his temperament and needs. As an organisation, we were able to work through our waitlist despite the impact of COVID-19, matching a record number of dogs with clients, and in general reducing our waitlist to the lowest it has been for a while.

While Seeing Eye Dogs primarily operates out of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia,

Ollie and his family reside in Brisbane, Queensland, over 1700km away.

Ollie was born legally blind and for as long as his mother can remember, he had wanted a Seeing Eye Dog of his own. To prepare him for the responsibility of having a Seeing Eye Dog, the family adopted a rescue Labrador, entrusting almost entirely the feeding, walking and caring for the dog to Ollie.



Melissa, Ollie's mother, says he was "committed to the goal" of having a Seeing Eye Dog and to him it was never about age but readiness. The day the family got the call from Vision Australia that Ollie had been matched with Seeing Eye Dog Sadie and they could fly to Melbourne to start training, she says his aura changed.

**"He was indescribably excited and I know that he knew then the difference Sadie was going to make to his life."**

She says the moment the pair met had been "so special."

"She came in, sniffed him and within 10 minutes you could tell she knew she had found her forever person in our boy."

Sadie has been with Ollie for two months now and Melissa says his mobility and quality of life has improved massively.

"Everyday Sadie prances along as if she is thinking this is what I have been trained for and I am going to do the best job I can do. They are a match made in heaven."

Lester Chraim, Seeing Eye Dogs manager client services, says Ollie represents a 'change of thinking' around age and Seeing Eye Dogs.

**"Being matched with a Seeing Eye Dog is quite exciting for our clients, but it's also a serious commitment to ensure the match is successful. In the past we have traditionally matched Seeing Eye Dogs with clients over the age of 18, but as we continue to evolve as an organisation, we're looking at expanding who we work with."**

"Matching a Seeing Eye Dog with a handler comes down to a number of factors. Ollie has strong orientation and mobility

skills and is committed to developing his skills as a dog handler and we're confident the match will be successful.

"Ollie and Sadie are an exciting match for Seeing Eye Dogs. By the time Ollie finishes school, he'll be an experienced Seeing Eye Dog handler which will provide added independence as he moves into further education or employment and we're excited about replicating that with other young people in the future."

Ollie and Sadie also represent Seeing Eye Dogs operations returning to normal after COVID-19. Border closures and other restrictions were factors we had to work our way around, but as an organisation we found our footing quickly and implemented several solutions enabling us to continue our work and even shrink our waitlist.

No matter what challenges lay ahead in 2021 and beyond, we are prepared, and can't wait to see where we are at when International Guide Dog Day 2022 rolls around.



# International Guide Dog Day in Poland

Irena Semmler  
The Labrador Guide Dog Foundation



**The Labrador Guide Dog Foundation in Poznań (Poznań, Poland) celebrated this year's International Guide Dog Day (28.04.2021) applying restrictions related to COVID-19.**

Due to these restrictions, we were unable to meet at the Foundation's headquarters, and therefore we decided to celebrate this day with a walk around the city with the participation of future guide dogs and volunteers.

The walk was broadcast live on our Facebook profile. Assistance dogs are still not very common in Poland, so it's no wonder that our team aroused a lot of interest. It was a great opportunity to hand out leaflets and disseminate knowledge about dogs that help people with disabilities.

We used the walk as a form of group training, and also a public demonstration of the quality of our service.

Due to the very favourable reception of our initiative, we have decided to take steps to ensure that the walk on the occasion of the International Guide Dog Day becomes a permanent fixture in our calendar. We hope that next year it will be attended by more people and dogs.



# Pawgust

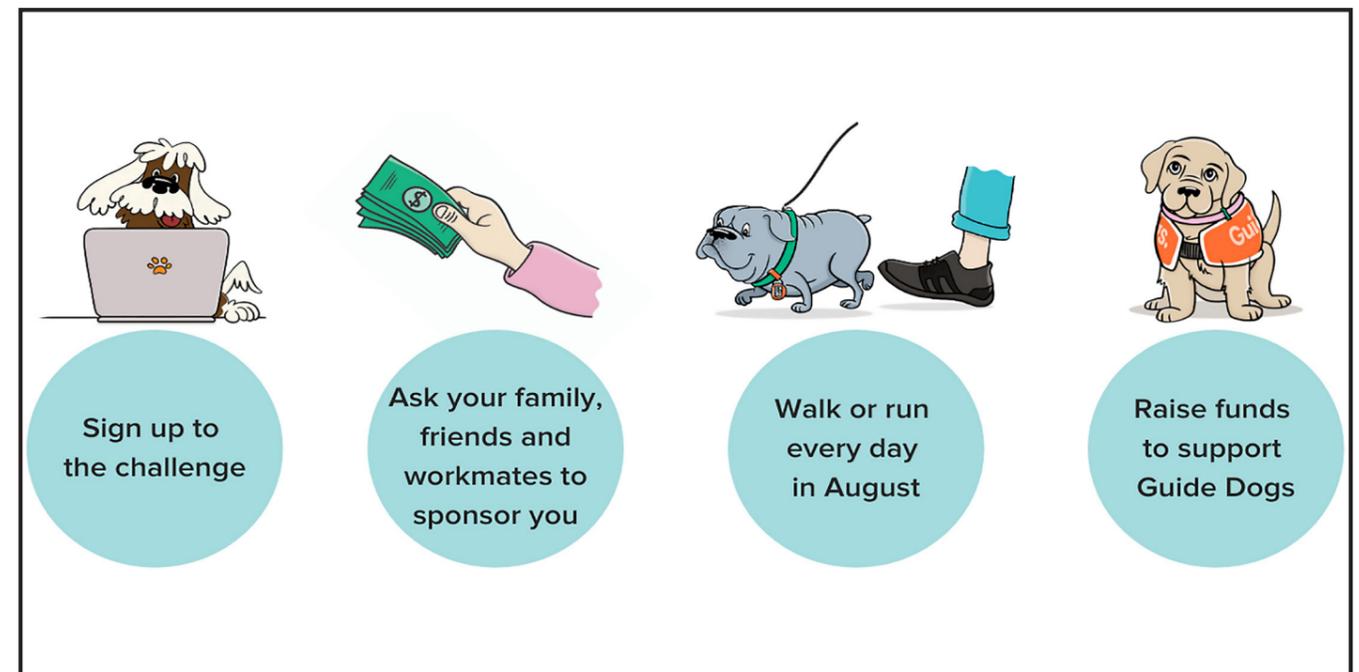
Guide Dogs Australia

**In 2018, Guide Dogs Australia launched their first national Community Fundraising Campaign titled – Pawgust. Pawgust sought to engage with new community audiences to raise funds for Guide Dogs Australia.**

The campaign proposition asks the community to commit and register with Pawgust to walk their dogs for 30 minutes for 30 days during the month of August, engaging with their friends and family to sponsor them to do so, and raise much needed funds for Guide Dogs.

has now raised AUD3.3M, has engaged 34,325 participants and 22,835 fundraisers in total. Pawgust has also proved attractive and opened up opportunities for new commercial partnerships for Guide Dogs Australia, including Sketchers and more recently Paramount Pictures, ahead of the launch of their new feature length movie – 'Paw Patrol' in August this year.

Guide Dogs Australia is seeking expressions of interest from Guide Dog organisations interested in engaging with



During the course of the 30 days of Pawgust, Guide Dogs Australia also utilised the Pawgust to raise awareness of their work and educate the community around the issues facing people with low vision and blindness.

The first year of Pawgust was a huge success and now four years on, Pawgust

Pawgust as a community fundraising initiative for their organisation.

For more information on Pawgust visit [www.pawgust.com.au](http://www.pawgust.com.au) For registering an expression of interest in Pawgust for your organisation, please contact, Paul Morton, General Manager Fundraising at [Paul.Morton@guidedogs.org.au](mailto:Paul.Morton@guidedogs.org.au)

**In Southeast Asia, it is common to find small dogs as pets in people's homes, while bigger dogs are usually seen roaming the streets, or trained for police or military work. Thus, most medium or large dogs are thought of as "aggressive" or "fierce". Dogs aiding the softer side of humanity are mostly unheard of. In fact, children are often warned against approaching dogs for fear of being bitten. This fear is not totally unfounded as there have been outbreaks of rabies in the region throughout history.**

Yet, as the world became increasingly connected through globalisation, the harnessing of Man's Best Friend's ability to render help apart from guarding, police and military work is surfacing from the pages of books on the back shelves of libraries to become reality on the ground.

In the last 20 years, awareness of dogs being used in therapy and as guides for the blind in Southeast Asia has risen tremendously.

In fact, there are now nursing homes with therapy dog programmes as well as a counselling center using dog therapy.

It is in this climate of awareness and change that Singapore has seen Guide Dogs coming into our midst.

Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd, since its conception in 2005 has helped to bring to light the ability of using dogs as guides for the blind, and to highlight the fact that the visually impaired among us can be enabled to live their lives independently.

In Asia, where the medical and charity models of disability are often in place, this awareness is slowly gaining traction in Singapore, allowing us to move towards a more inclusive society.

## Accessibility

Positive changes in Singapore's legislation such as granting access to Guide Dogs on public transportation, cafes and restaurants are major milestones which allow Guide Dog users here to readily access places that are necessary for daily independent living.

TGSIs, braille wordings on signages and audio signals installed in traffic lights, are gradually granting increasing accessibility to the visually impaired community.

These changes have encouraged more of the visually impaired community to pick up the courage to venture beyond their own homes, becoming more independent and mobile.

## Culture

However, despite such a climate of positive changes, it is inevitable that there will be push backs from groups whose mindsets and traditions take longer to convince. This is especially so among certain groups and cultures where the idea of having dogs within the home is considered undesirable.

At the same time, the misguided concept of dogs being "dirty", will cause allergies or bite is another barrier that hopefully, with education, will change.

## General Awareness / Acceptance

Thus, Guide Dogs Singapore seeks to engage with community partners, educating the public and reaching out to young minds in hope that many more will see the positive changes a Guide Dog can have. This is done through initiating dialogues with government agencies and the authorities to work on improving current legislation and infrastructure.

Educational programmes and talks are organized in partnership with public-facing staff of various organisations to increase awareness of both Guide Dog usage and the needs of the visually impaired community.

Similarly, such programmes and talks are held in schools to bring awareness to the next generation.

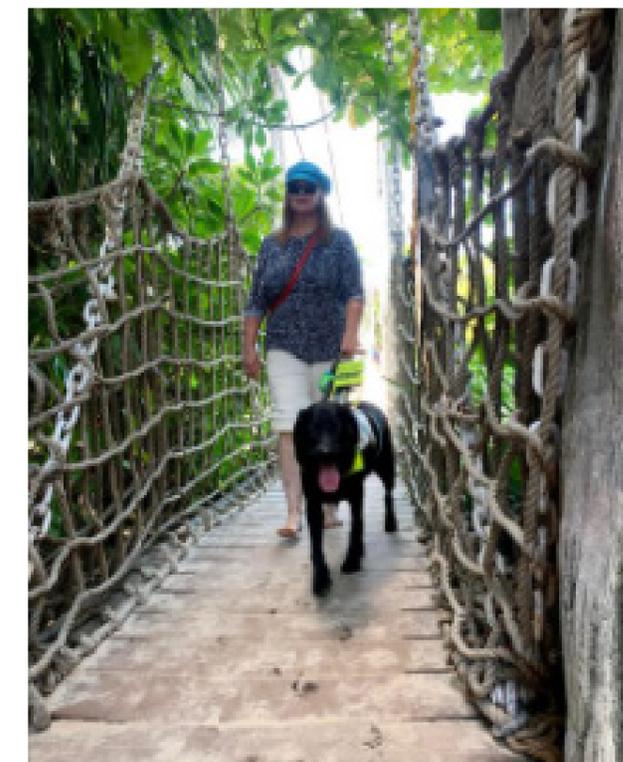
It has been a gradual process, and we are still working towards greater awareness and acceptance. Yet, the fruits of these efforts are beginning to show through initiatives by the authorities towards development of infrastructure that is VI friendly, and an increase in signages in public areas and food establishments that specify Guide Dogs access.

Most heartening of all is to hear the public recognizing Guide Dogs for what they do and speaking up for our Guide Dog users.

Singapore has come a long way in terms of Guide Dog awareness, but there is still much room to grow. As the number of our Guide Dog teams gradually increased to

the current 6 over the past 15 years, it is our hope that there will be a progressive mindset change that losing the sense of sight does not mean being dependent on others for the rest of one's life. That despite the traditionally held ideas of dogs being pets or guards, there are other ways that dogs can and do actively help mankind.

**Hi Guys. This is a picture of me with my guide dog, Mike, at Sentosa. We're from the UK and staying in Singapore at the moment and pleased to say have found people in Singapore to be very welcoming, especially on the MRT.**



Some encouraging feedback from a UK Guide Dog team vacationing in Singapore in 2019, who posted about her positive experiences on our Facebook.

# International Guide Dog Day Down Under

Gemma Hillis  
Guide Dogs Victoria



Small scale events being held after a year of Zoom based activity

**This year, Guide Dogs Australia celebrated International Guide Dog Day with activity across the country focussed on how the community can help Guide Dogs carry on their important work of guiding a person with low vision or blindness undistracted.**

The idea of “petiquette” came after a national survey of Guide Dog Handlers found 70 percent of Handlers reported distractions from poorly behaved pet dogs in the past 12 months, and more than 40 percent of Handlers said they had noticed an increase in these distractions over the past year.

Off-lead dogs, uncontrolled dogs on leads, and people with pet dogs not making themselves known before approaching a Handler were listed as the most common

distractions. Half of Guide Dog Handlers surveyed said this made them feel anxious and unsafe with many changing their travel habits or avoiding locations as a result.

Throughout 2020, animal adoption agencies in Australia recorded the biggest spikes for adoptions and breeder waiting lists were at capacity, as many people sought COVID-19 comfort in the company of a new pet dog. This influx of “COVID-pups” is likely to blame for the increase in dog distractions.

International Guide Dog Day was the perfect opportunity to launch a public-facing community education and media campaign designed to highlight issues of pet dog distractions, and asking pet dog owners to keep their dogs on a leash when out and about. The campaign generated mass media coverage across the country, including nightly TV news bulletins, major daily newspapers and radio interviews.

As a part of the campaign, Aussie children’s band, The Quokkas, released a song inspired by band member and Guide Dog Handler Matt McLaren’s own personal experience with his own Guide Dog Indy. The catchy tune, ‘Don’t Pat Me Please’ explains how to behave around a Guide Dog in harness and is available worldwide on Spotify and iTunes.

**“International Guide Dog Day is about recognising the important role Guide Dogs play in supporting people all around the world with low vision or blindness to achieve their goals and live independently,”** said Karen Hayes,

CEO of Guide Dogs Victoria and IGDF Board Member.

**“The past year has thrown everyone challenges and while pets brought so much joy to Australian homes during the pandemic, reduced socialisation and training of pets during lockdowns can lead to poor ‘petiquette’. This can cause anxiety for Guide Dog Handlers. While community members and their pet dogs may not intend any harm, for someone with low vision or blindness, a distracted Guide Dog can be hazardous,”** Karen added.

“Since being matched with my Guide Dog Jontie almost three years ago, my life has changed in so many positive ways – with him by my side I have confidence, freedom and independence that I thought was lost to me. He plays such a vital role in helping me get to school and work, to my cycling training, to travel, all in a safe way,” said 18-year-old Guide Dog Handler, Ben Said.

“I live in a beach side community with lots of pet dogs. While most people do the right thing, myself and Jontie deal with distractions from off-leash or poorly behaved dogs almost daily, especially since COVID-19. It’s frustrating, can be disorientating, and even dangerous. My one piece of advice to the community would be keep your dog on a lead when out in public and don’t approach a working Guide Dog with your pet dog just to say hello. Give us plenty of space so we can get around in the safest way possible,” said Ben.

After celebrating International Guide Dog Day remotely in 2020, this was also one of the first opportunities for the Australian Guide Dogs family of Handlers, staff, volunteers and supporters to reconnect in

person at some small-scale events, after a year of Zoom-based activity due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Notable events included a Sydney-based Guide Dog Handler breakfast that brought together Handlers with Guide Dog staff to acknowledge and celebrate this special day. A public information session was held following the breakfast showcasing Guide Dog training as well as tips and tricks for the community on how to ensure their pet dog is well-behaved.

An event in Melbourne acknowledged Guide Dogs Victoria’s International Guide Dog Day Annual Awards. It was the first time several Guide Dog Handlers in attendance – who had trained during COVID-19 lockdowns – had the chance to meet and connect with other Handlers. In regional areas, events like one held in Bendigo, Victoria again allowed for in-person connection and celebration.



International Guide Dogs Day in Bendigo allowing in-person connection and celebration.

continued

## International Guide Dogs Day Down Under

An online Handler-led forum, with Handlers from across the country, was also held on the day, providing a safe space for Guide Dog Handlers to share their experiences and discuss tactics and self-advocacy for dealing with dog distraction issues.

More than 250 Guide Dogs staff across several states including NSW and Victoria joined together the day after International Guide Dog Day to keep the celebrations going with a special online session including guest speakers from the Guide Dog Handler community.

## International Guide Dog Day – Literally

Catherine Kieran <b>CNIB</b>	Rivi Israel, <b>Guide Dog Foundation</b>	Rachelle Kniffen <b>Leader Dogs</b>
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**When the COVID-19 pandemic created a crisis for guide dog handlers in Canada who typically receive their dogs from schools in the United States, CNIB Guide Dogs had to think outside of the box – or outside of the dog crate – to find a creative solution. With travel restrictions and border closures in place, applications for CNIB Guide Dogs skyrocketed – an increase of more than 375%.**

CNIB Guide Dogs is still relatively new (established in 2017), so it doesn't have its own breeding program yet. Diane Bergeron, President, CNIB Guide Dogs knew she needed to act fast to obtain more dogs for their clients. So, she started making calls.

Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind (GDF) in New York and Leader Dogs for the Blind (LDB) in Michigan came to the rescue – as good friends do in times of need – with offers to help that have resulted in a unique cross-border partnership to benefit Canadians who rely on guide dogs.

This international collaboration has seen both GDF and LDB provide much-needed dogs to CNIB Guide Dogs. In return, CNIB Guide Dogs made its certified Guide Dog Mobility Instructors in Canada available to help train Canadian recipients of dogs from the American schools.

**“If there is ever a time to focus on your mission and to support individuals in need, it is now,” says Diane Bergeron, CNIB Guide Dogs President. “Despite the border closures, CNIB Guide Dogs is working towards a common goal with Guide Dog Foundation and Leader Dogs for the Blind, to provide guide dogs and training to individuals who are blind or partially sighted.”**

On March 24, 2021, Lyn Morris of Ontario, Canada received Leo, a two-year-old black Labrador retriever from LDB that was placed by a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor from CNIB Guide Dogs.

**“Leader Dog is a strong advocate for cooperation among guide dog**

**organizations,” said David Locklin, Leader Dog’s Director of Programs, “This collaboration is a great example of what can be accomplished when we come together because it helps to serve more people who are blind. After all, that is the end goal for all of us.”**

A few weeks later, on April 19, 2021, Jack McCormick of Ontario, Canada received Baloo, a two-year-old black Labrador-golden retriever cross that was raised and trained by GDF and matched with further training by CNIB Guide Dogs.

“The Guide Dog Foundation is very active with the International Guide Dog Federation, and this collaboration between GDF and CNIB Guide Dogs embodies the spirit of the IGDF,” said Brad Hibbard, the Guide Dog Foundation’s Chief of Program Operations.

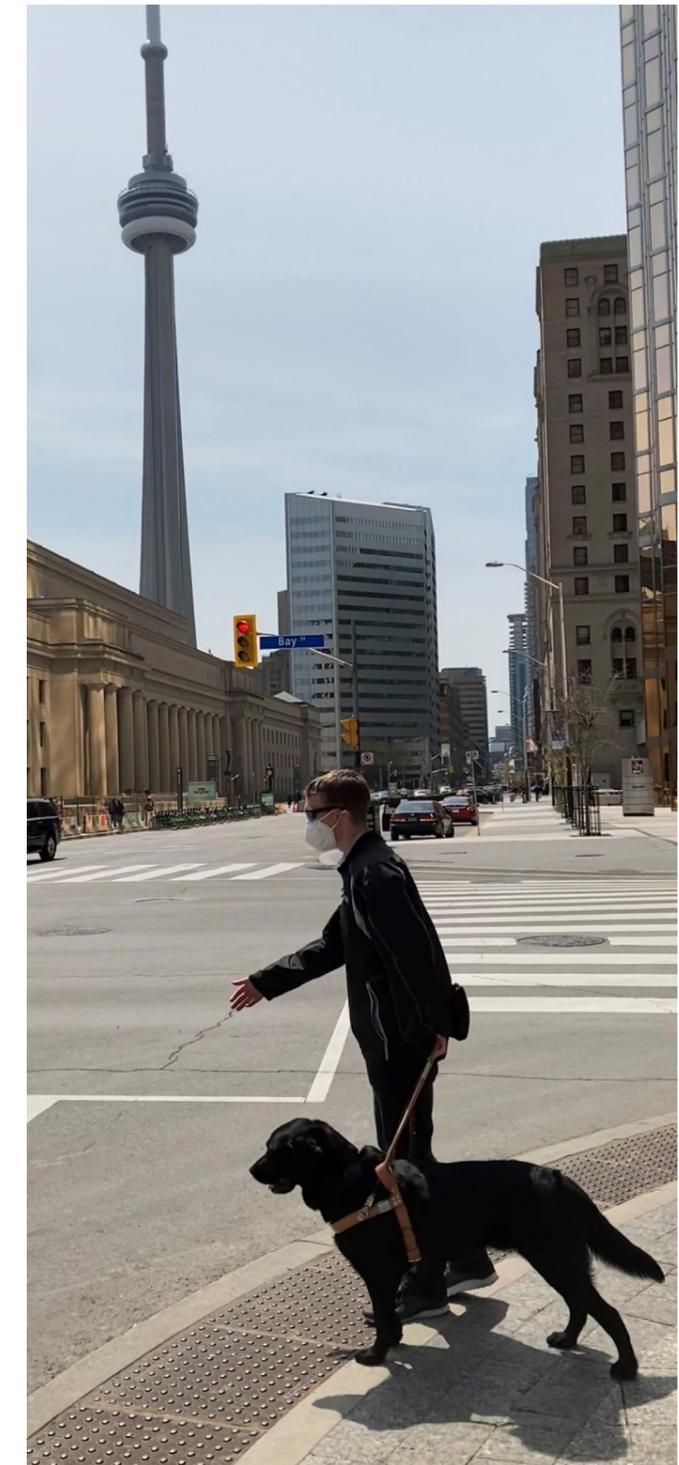
“I’ve personally known several of the principals at CNIB Guide Dogs and was happy to brainstorm with Diane Bergeron on how we could leverage the expertise and resources of both organizations to knock down the obstacles to serving blind and low vision Canadians during the pandemic.”

CNIB Guide Dogs, Leader Dogs for the Blind and Guide Dog Foundation have essentially created a ‘guide dogs without borders’ situation.

**“This partnership has been a tremendous learning opportunity for our CNIB Guide Dogs team members to learn from two world-renowned, highly respected guide dog schools,” says Bergeron. “We welcome the opportunity to collaborate further with these organizations after the pandemic is over.”**

CNIB Guide Dogs expects to establish a breeding program later in 2021. In the meantime, GDF has contributed two dogs and LDB has provided ten dogs to be trained at CNIB Guide Dogs in Canada.

Good friends, indeed.



## Sticker Art Project to Promote Accessibility

Japan Guide Dog Association



Mr. Matsui who wants to help people understand guide dogs. Here he is pictured with his colleagues at S-PAL Sendai with some of the completed sticker art.

**‘Do you have any concerns about accepting guide dog users?’ This was one of the questions asked in a questionnaire about the acceptance of guide dogs conducted by the Public and Media Communication Department of Sendai Training Center, targeting managers of about 800 restaurants.**

The most common response to this question was “nothing in particular,” followed by concerns such as “the reaction of other customers” and “what if there are people who don’t like dogs?,” “Will children be scared?”

Is there anything we can do to make shop owners feel more comfortable accepting guide dogs? We came up with a “Guide

Dog Sticker Art” project and held events at commercial facilities so that the local people who are the customers can deepen their understanding of the acceptance of guide dogs.

Guide dog sticker art is a participatory project. Customers are asked to put guide dog stickers distributed at fundraising events on a white backing board to create a picture. The picture that emerges is the “assistance dog symbol,” which promotes the acceptance of assistance dogs for people with a physical disability. Since July last year, we have had the cooperation of seven commercial establishments in Miyagi Prefecture, where we have done guide dog sticker art.

Around 300 guests, from children to adults, attend each event. When it begins, people are eager to find out what kind of picture their stickers turn out to be. As each sticker encouraged the acceptance of guide dogs, the assistance dog symbol gradually emerged, and by the end of the event, a magnificent sticker artwork was completed.

At the same time as the sticker art event, there will be a voting survey using the sticker sheets that have been pasted. The questionnaire asked, “How would you feel if there were guide dogs in the shops that you frequently go to?” Customers’ faces light up when they imagine that there is a guide dog in their favorite shop. The image of guide dogs is favorable, and many sticker sheets are collected in the “I don’t mind” and “I am happy” boxes.

**Mr. Yoshihiro Matsui, Sales Promotion Group Manager of “S-PAL Sendai,” one of the venues, saw this activity, said, “We want our customers to enjoy shopping with guide dog users with peace of mind. We would like to continue cooperating with this kind of activity because it is an opportunity to spread understanding not only among our employees but also among our customers and society as a whole.”**

The completed sticker art was later displayed in the shopping center for a period of time to continue to promote understanding of guide dogs among employees and shoppers.

Acceptance is not enough to spread awareness. By listening to the voices of both shops and customers, we will continue our efforts to create a society where acceptance is the norm.

## Committee Focus: Brad Hibbard

**Interview with Brad Hibbard, Chief Programme Officer at the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs. Brad is also Chair of the IGDF Development Committee.**

**How did you first get involved in the guide dog sector?**

During my military service (US Air Force), I was assigned to the Dog Training Section where all of the Military Working Dogs were sourced for the different branches of the service, allied military forces and US Federal law enforcement agencies.

When I separated from the military, I decided to enter the assistance dog industry and first worked for 2 years at Pilot Dogs in Ohio and then began my career with Guide Dogs for the Blind.

I worked for GDB for 27 years and ultimately oversaw all of the Training operations at both campuses (California & Oregon).

I joined the team in New York at the Guide Dog Foundation and America’s VetDogs where I am the Chief Program Officer.

**Briefly describe the responsibilities of your day job.**

I oversee all of the Program Operations departments which include Breeding, Puppy Raising, Training for the dogs, education for our clients (users) and graduate support in their home areas.

**Briefly describe your IGDF role.**

I am currently, the Chair of the Development Committee. This group of dedicated professionals in the Guide dog

continued

## Committee Focus: Brad Hibbard



to see new organizations start to provide guide dog services in regions where it didn't exist before!

### What advice would you give to someone who would like to get involved in IGDF?

Let your leadership know that you want to be involved and ask them to forward emails when they receive opportunities like calls for new assessors or then need for new committee members. The IGDF is expanding those opportunities and we need the great minds that are out there to help us advance.

### What do you see as the main challenge currently facing the guide dog sector?

Accessibility continues to be a challenge which is unfortunate in the 21st century and the rise of the fraudulent assistant dog can have an effect on accessibility for genuine assistant dog owners.

Loose dogs and irresponsible owners are an even bigger and immediate issue. We're hearing from way too many guide dog users that they've been interfered with or even attacked when going about their business.

### What do you see as the main opportunity for the guide dog sector going forward?

There are still many countries and regions that don't have guide dog service so we should continue to assist where we can. There are also many opportunities for the organizations to network more effectively so that best practices and problem-solving strategies can be shared as well as educating people and influencing

industry work closely with our Enquiring and Applicant organizations to help them achieve membership status and to develop guide dog services in their home regions.

### How do you find time to balance all these responsibilities?

We have a great committee and David Maynard in the IGDF head office works hard to keep me on track. We spend evenings and weekends catching up on IGDF business outside of our "day job".

### What do you like most about your current IGDF role?

I've always loved promoting the GDF and the value of being member. With development work, there's a large satisfaction in helping new members get a good foundation. It's always fantastic

legislation through our standards and collective voice.

### What is your funniest or most embarrassing guide dog moment or story?

I had a funny moment, where someone had their dog during class, pull all their underwear out of their draw and bring it down the hallway. The female client was mortified.

### Do you have any dogs or other pets at home?

Since I became a professional dog trainer back in the military I have not had a dog, but I look forward to having a dog when I retire from the industry. I do have two cats at home, but I have no desire to train them.

### What do you do to relax in any spare time you have outside work and IGDF?

Whilst I like to read and listen to music, my wife and I love to travel, so the pandemic has put a crimp in that. We look forward to when we can once again experience different cultures around the world.

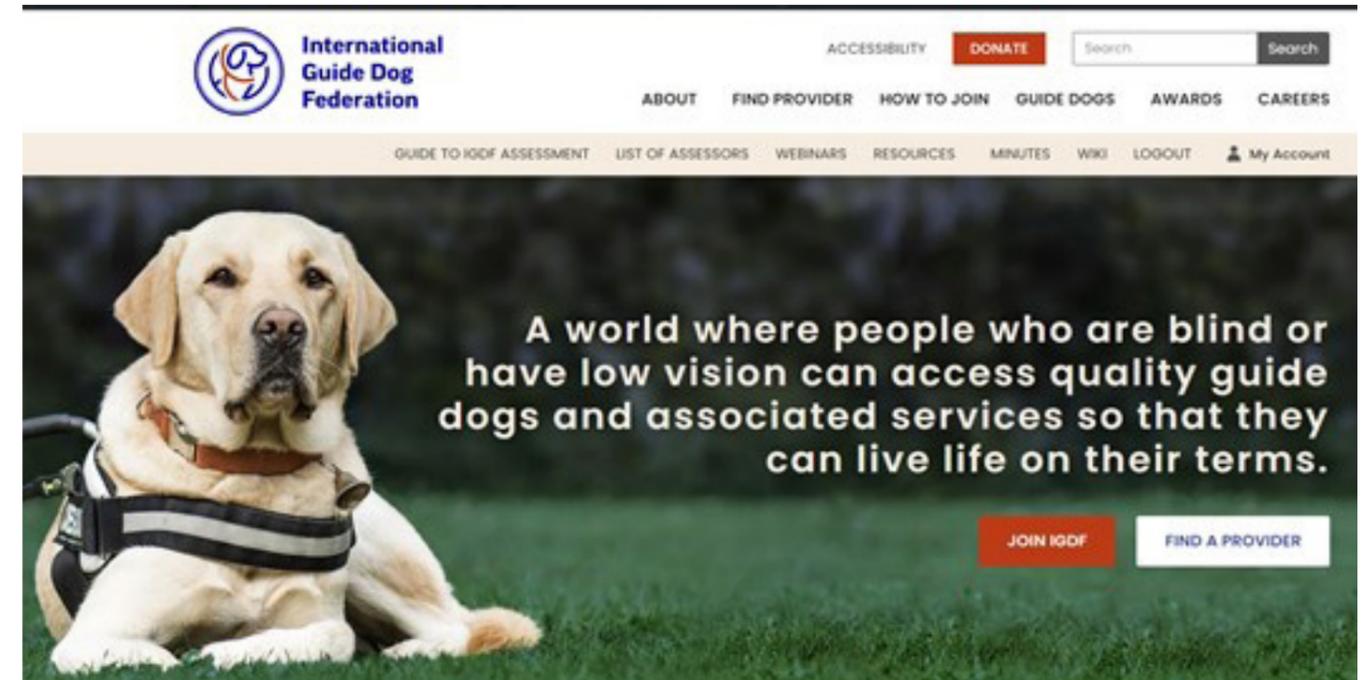
## New IGDF Website

**The new IGDF website went live on 14th July. It has lots of exciting new content and features, including improved resources for IGDF organisations.**

Please take a look and encourage your colleagues to register for a user account.

Further new content and features will be added over the next few months, so do keep checking back.

If you have any comments, updates, or suggestions for new content, please contact [enquiries@igdf.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@igdf.org.uk)



## Knowledge Sharing Webinars

Stay in touch with news, research, and best practice from around the world by attending our regular webinars. Webinars are open to all IGDF Members, Affiliates, Applicant Organisations and Enquiring Organisations.

### July

#### IGDF Revised Standards & Remote Assessments Update

**Date:** Tuesday 27th July, 8.30pm UK

**Led by:** Accreditation Committee

### August

#### Can we influence female guide dog health, development, behaviour and progression by neutering bitches before or after puberty?

**Date:** Tuesday 24th August, 10am UK

**Led by:** Rachel Moxon, Guide Dogs UK

#### Stronger Together - Philanthropy and Marketing Partner to Build Multi-Channel Support and drive real Organisational Success

**Date:** Tuesday 31st August, 8pm UK

**Led by:** Dani Landolt and Melissa Weisse - Leader Dogs for the Blind, USA

### September

#### Can we predict guide dog success by measuring puppy behaviour as early as eight months of age?

**Date:** Tuesday 28th September, 9am UK

**Led by:** Becky Hunt, Guide Dogs UK

### October

#### Taking Advocacy to the next level

**Date:** Tuesday 12th October, 3pm UK

**Led by:** Melissa Allman, The Seeing Eye

#### Dog Care and Welfare: Cooperative Care... It's your choice, isn't it?

**Date:** Tuesday 26th October, Time TBC

**Led by:** S. McIver & E. Harvey, Guide Dogs UK

### November

#### End of Life Decision-Making: When is the right time to say goodbye?

**Date:** Tuesday 16th November, 9pm UK

**Led by:** Dr. K. Kuzminski, Guide Dogs for the Blind, & Dr. C. Moeser, Guide Dogs NSW/ACT

#### Making Use of Your Assets

**Date:** Tuesday 30th November, Time TBC

**Led by:** Jenn Ceia, The Rehabilitation Centre Silver & Kim Ryan, Visibility

**Registration link coming soon.**

### December

#### Supporting staff through change using a behavioural science approach

**Date:** Tuesday 14th December, 9am UK

**Led by:** Hannah Wright, Guide Dogs UK

# Visionary

## Next Issue

The deadline for articles for the next issue of Visionary is: **1st October 2021**.

### Special Feature

The Tokyo Olympics and blind sports. Share your stories of preparations for Tokyo Olympics and/or blind sports in your country.

Please send articles on this or any other topic to the IGDF Office by the above deadline.

Please supply your articles as a Word file with original images attached as separate jpeg images.

The IGDF Office will contact you if your article is accepted with details of how to submit a recording for the Visionary podcast.



**Disclaimer** | Whilst the International Guide Dog Federation (IGDF) retains editorial right to all articles presented within the Visionary, accuracy of specific detail and figures quoted are as provided by the author and their supporting organisation. The IGDF, whilst welcoming feedback on content, will not enter into any dialogue relating to perceived inaccuracies in these areas.