

# Freedom Forum

A celebration of those dedicated to our mission to partner guide dogs with the visually impaired through Hometown Training, and the members of those special partnerships.



## ASLI AND MURPHY: A NEW MUSE

Asli (pronounced Ahz-lah) moved to the United States from Turkey with her parents as an infant. She became a professional electrician and was working on the Space Shuttle project when she lost her eyesight, though she remained until the project was complete, and later became a programmer with the VA. Her first guide dog, Jane, worked with Asli from the age of 2 until her retirement from service at 14, though she was still eager to work in her senior years and a beloved companion all her life. Asli writes and performs music, and wrote a beautiful song about her long-time friend and guide that she performs when playing gigs.



Asli also travels for work a few times each year, and her active life is facilitated by her new guide, a hypoallergenic Bouvier des Flandres named Murphy. Asli has already been on three trips with Murphy at her side, and he's learned not only her local area and the places the pair walk together regularly, but is also learning about travel and new spaces. Murphy has already attended three music gigs with Asli, as well, and she notes that he'll get his own song one day.



Asli and Murphy, Bouvier des Flandres



Asli says one really special thing about Freedom Guide Dogs is that they provide hypoallergenic dogs, which has become increasingly important not only for Asli's own minor allergies, but also for her father's severe allergies. She travels regularly to help take care of her parents now that her father is living in a care facility and would not be able to take her guide dog if he were not a hypoallergenic breed, which would make traveling much more difficult. Freedom is one of only three organizations providing hypoallergenic guide dogs.



Asli and Murphy

She also praises the work of Freedom's volunteer puppy raisers, citing Murphy's well-developed house manners and sweet, generous disposition. Above all, she found that Freedom Guide Dogs' Hometown Training program was a huge benefit, allowing her to train with Murphy on their local streets and in her home, without the need to take weeks off of work to travel to and stay at a central training facility as required by most other guide dog organizations. This also helps the guide dog acclimate more quickly and the new partners can begin working together much more efficiently.







## Murphy - Guide Dog in Sheep's Clothing?

Johanna's family were puppy raisers throughout her years growing up, raising a number of Labradors.

When she decided to become a volunteer puppy raiser herself, she was in for a change, working with Murphy, a hypoallergenic Bouvier des Flandres from Freedom Guide Dogs for the Blind. Johanna and her husband were in the process of buying a new home and were supposed to have moved in already, but they encountered issues in the process and were living in a friend's workshop when Murphy arrived. Murphy and Johanna turned this into a tool for success when Murphy quickly learned to disregard loud noises and distractions from the tools and equipment around him.

Although Johanna already

had a wolfhound named Barnabus when Murphy arrived, her husband became a truly devoted dog person when he met Murphy. Right from the start, Johanna says Murphy had the sweetest, most generous personality. "He was my favorite. If I could clone him, I would. He's just full of life, full of love, and always happy." Murphy adapted quickly to life in the workshop, then to the move into the new family home, although his "generous spirit" and experience in a workshop took a slightly mischievous turn when he tried to "help" with home



improvements by making off with every screwdriver he came across!

Johanna made sure Murphy was socialized by bringing him to family activities, going to stores, and even attending church each Sunday. He was loved by the congregation, and everyone would pet him and say how much his fluffy fur felt like sheep fleece. A waiter in a restaurant joked that Johanna wasn't fooling anyone with him, they all knew he was really a sheep! Murphy even went to the rodeo at



the County Fair, and when Johanna placed him up on the bench so he could see the action, he loved watching the bulls running around.

When his wolfhound friend Barnabus passed away, Johanna and her husband decided to open their home to another family dog, and their wonderful experience with Murphy led to them adopt Mouse, who is part Bouvier. Murphy helped to raise Mouse until it was time for him to begin formal guide dog training and go to work with his new human partner Asli, making a sweet and gentle puppy-nanny. Johanna says, "Murphy is all love and affection. He was everyone's favorite, and he set the standard for what we wanted in a dog." She is thrilled that he has started his guide work, and she and her husband are now raising their second Bouvier puppy for Freedom Guide Dogs.



### SPONSOR A PUPPY!

With a generous donation of \$2,000 to Freedom Guide Dogs, you can choose, sponsor and name an imPAWtant Freedom puppy who will help provide *Freedom* and *Independence* to someone in need. Sponsors receive photos and updates as the puppy learns and grows, and a certificate and photo with its human partner when it enters guide dog service. For more information, email [Ashleigh@FreedomGuideDogs.org](mailto:Ashleigh@FreedomGuideDogs.org)



We've made a list, checked it twice. Our pups think these things would be nice:

- Gas/hotel/airline/VISA cards
- Hotel points or discount points
- DuraChew Nylabones, L/XL
- Milk Bone mini dog treats
- Staples, PetSmart, Petco or Pet Supplies Plus gift cards



## 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾 THE ART OF LIVING WELL 🐾 🐾 🐾 🐾

Arthur was born with a genetic eye disease, Retinitis Pigmentosa (RP), which makes cells in the retina break down slowly over time, causing vision loss. Arthur's wife Bonnie also has blindness as well as cerebral palsy, and Freedom Guide Dogs placed a dog with her in 2018. Art has worked with guide dogs for 41 years and all six of his previous guides came from a different organization, but Bonnie worked with Freedom Guide Dogs because of Freedom's willingness and experience serving clients who have other disabilities in addition to blindness. Freedom's Hometown Training Program also meant she did not have to take weeks off from her job to train at a facility. Art's current guide Peyton is 10 years old and has started losing his own vision to cataracts. Peyton is still working with Art using *Rex Specs*, special glasses for dogs that help Peyton continue guiding for a little while longer. Art will need a new guide soon as Peyton enters into retirement and enjoys his golden years. When it came time for Art to get a new guide dog, he also decided to apply for one through Freedom Guide Dogs.



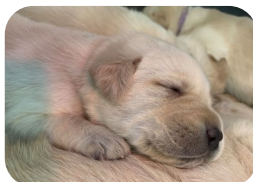
*Art at work at Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh. Photo courtesy of Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh.*

Art looks forward to working with Freedom Guide Dogs when his new guide dog is placed with him this fall. In addition to his regular career and his busy volunteer schedule, Art has also been a member of the Board of the PA Trolley Museum for almost two years, so leaving home to stay at a training facility as required by most other organizations would be extremely challenging for his schedule. Freedom will deliver his dog and a certified Guide Dog Mobility instructor to his home location so the new team can begin working together quickly and efficiently, and Peyton can get to know the newest member of the family too. When Bonnie was getting her guide dog, Art also came to appreciate how Freedom's dogs are bred and trained, with dogs known for their "generous spirit" who are excited to work with their human partners and training that is not food-motivated, as well as a highly customized training experience adapted to each client's specific needs, environment, and abilities.

Art has worked as an Access Technology Specialist at Blind and Vision Rehabilitation Services of Pittsburgh for 25 years, and his guide helps him travel to and from work every day, as well as guiding him during occasional work-related travel. Art also volunteers at the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum, logging 500-600 hours a year restoring and maintaining antique trolley cars, fixing brake valves, pneumatic components and engines so people can continue to enjoy Pennsylvania's antique trolley cars and history for many years to come. Peyton is by his side as he works, greeting friends who drop by to say hello as he relaxes on a carpet Art brings for him. Art also enjoys participating in regular social activities, and having a guide dog allows him to get to all the many activities that fill his and Bonnie's vibrant lives.



*Art (with Peyton) and other volunteers receive the President's Volunteer Service Award at the PA Trolley Museum Volunteer Recognition Dinner in May 2023. Photo courtesy of the Pennsylvania Trolley Museum.*







## Congratulations Spring 2023 Graduates!



Aaron and Tupper, Yellow Lab, NY  
 Alexis and Clover, Lab/Collie mix, PA  
 Asli and Murphy, Fawn Bouvier, FL  
 Kathy and Fritz, Yellow Lab, FL  
 Bella and Dice, Black Lab, FL  
 Walter and Daisy-Lue, Black Lab, FL  
 Kathy and Gallant, Collie, NC  
 Brenda and Carolina, Lab/Collie mix, FL  
 Deborah and Fender, Yellow Lab, NY  
 Joseph and D-Winston, Yellow Lab, NY

Chancey and C-Licorice, Lab/Collie mix, NY  
 Lynn and Geo, Tri-color Collie, FL/NY  
 Darla and Fiona, Yellow Lab, NY  
 Marco and Domino, Black Lab, NY  
 Pete and Gary, Tri-color Collie, FL  
 Gabino and Elliot, Black Barbet, FL  
 Peter and Deuce, Black Lab, NC  
 Kim and Sully, Lab/Collie mix, PA  
 Cathy and Flyer, Yellow Lab, NY  
 Linda and Zigi, Lab/Collie mix, NY



*"The great use of a life is to spend it for something that will outlast it."*

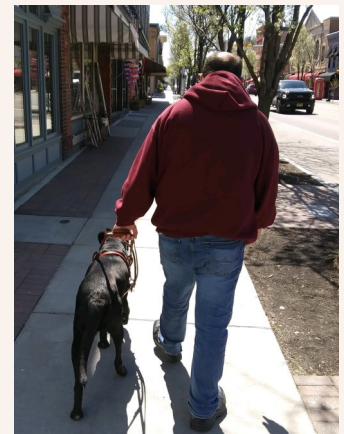
~ William James

It's difficult to find the words to describe the special bond between a person and their guide dog. It's a partnership that we are able to create over and over again through grants, gifts and donations that sustain us from day to day.

Freedom's future depends on decisions made today, and we are always looking ahead to fulfill upcoming client needs. Our future starts with a firm foundation today.

**We invite you to be part of our clients' future!** Please consider including Freedom Guide Dogs in your will or estate planning to help us carry our mission into perpetuity. You may also be eligible for matching funds from your employer, or might consider donating appreciated stocks or bonds. Totally non-profit, we rely on our staff, puppy raisers, volunteers, board of directors and **you** to get the job done, now and in years to come.

With your help today, the future looks like this ~



## PA PA PA PA MILES TO GO PA PA PA PA

Miles, our Puppy in Training sponsored by the Boilermaker Road Race, attended the 2023 race in July.



Later in the month, Miles traded his puppy vest for a guide dog harness for the day and wore it proudly at Doubleday Field.



## BARKTOBER

In honor of White Cane Day, October 15<sup>th</sup> help us celebrate BARKtober all month long! Join us this BARKtober to raise money for Freedom Guide Dogs! Pledge to walk 31 minutes a day for 31 days in October!

Purchase your very own BARK-tober grab bag today for \$31. Each grab bag includes a FGD Water Bottle, FGD Poop Bag Holder and a FGD Drawstring Backpack.



Platinum Transparency 2023

Candid.