



# Always Doing His Best

George Holliday has had an active and fulfilling life. Born legally blind, he eventually lost all his vision but learned at an early age to be an achiever.

"I learned things from my father when I was young," George reports. "He would say to me, 'Go do (so and so),' One day, I said 'I can't do it.' My dad said, 'Did you try? You go try again, and then come back to me and tell me you can't do it.' When I did things, I was determined to be the best. I might not be the best, but I was being my best." That led George to a life of success.

George worked since age 12 in a variety of positions. After graduating, he worked at the Center for the Blind in Philadelphia where he quickly became a foreman. Next was retail sales where he moved from department manager to store manager in a department store in western Pennsylvania.

George then moved to Maryland where he started a carpet installation business with his brother-in-law. Despite his visual impairment, George was able to lay carpet with assistance from a laborer-helper.

While laying carpet, George got involved in the Maryland vending program and started his own catering business. Catering an event for the Voice of America, he was told that someone wanted his attention. It turned out to be President George H. W. Bush, who said

he heard about a blind caterer and wanted to meet him.

Next George became an assistive technology specialist, working with blind and visually impaired clients in New Jersey. When that contract ran out, he became a counselor at the Wills Eye Hospital, counseling newly blinded patients.

George found his counseling work very rewarding. One of his best outcomes was counseling a woman who quit her job due to her blindness. "I referred her to rehabilitation services," George stated. "Nine months later she returned and said, 'I want to thank you. Because of you, I got my job back.'"

Recently Jamie, a Freedom Guide Dogs Lollie, was placed with George by Freedom's Guide Dogs' Mobility Instructor Jeff Butterman and Yuko, a guide dog training apprentice from Japan. "I got my first guide dog in 1997 and had three dogs before I got Jamie," George states. "I came to Freedom when my last dog died from cancer. Around that time, a friend of mine got a dog from Freedom so I called them and received a dog in a short period of time. It just worked out that way."

"It was great having two Instructors," George stated, "and Yuko was very observant and very particular. She would tell me that I might be used to doing things a certain way, but I needed to get

back to focus...and the Hometown Training™ was great!"

George feels that he is much more independent with a guide dog over a white cane. "I'm a fast walker," he said. "I've had a lot of people ask me if I'm training my dog because I walk so fast. I tell them no; I'm just following my dog!"

George currently lives in the Philadelphia area with his wife Sarita and retirement hasn't slowed him down. He says, "I'm now teaching people how to throw darts. We use an audio dart board that gives audible feedback on where you're hitting the board. I'm in the Audio Dart Club of Delaware Valley and throw darts competitively. In November I'll be competing in a national tournament in Minnesota. The tournament has five events and the first prize for each event can be from \$400 to \$600. I'm usually in two tournaments a year, and I've never come away from a tournament where I didn't win something." ♥



*George in a bright blue shirt sitting with his arm around Jamie*

# A Special Honor

In May we had the honor of hosting our friends and long-time supporters from the Japanese Guide Dog Association!

With great pride we certified Yuko Inoue Tabudlo as an official Guide Dog Mobility Instructor (GDMI) during her time here. She was an integral part of George's placement with Jamie.

We value our continued sharing of ideas, knowledge and dogs between our schools! We share the same purpose and are aligned to the same mission, impacting the lives of the visually impaired by providing guide dogs to those in need.

"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."  
—Helen Keller ♥



Sam Tawada, Eric Loori & Yuko



Yoku, George & Jamie

# Con-grad-ulations Spring 2024 Class



Black Lab with graduation cap



Amy and Journey, Lab/Collie mix, NY  
Bernadette and Vale, yellow Labrador, NJ  
Chuck and Rania, Lab/Golden mix, FL  
Elizabeth and Bunzy, brown Poodle, FL  
George and Jamie, Lab/Collie mix, PA  
Ken and Winslow, black Labrador, NY  
Korrine and Kira, brindle Bouvier, CT  
Maddie and JR, Lab/Collie mix, GA  
Marcy and Miles, yellow Labrador, FL  
Marilyn and Tanner, yellow Labrador, FL  
Melissa and Pharoah, black Labrador, FL  
Olga and Henley, yellow Labrador, CT  
Patricia and Hampton, sable Collie, PA  
Patricia and Kai, black Goldendoodle, PA  
Shiri and Jarvis, Lab/Collie mix, NY  
Tasha and Legacy, Lab/Collie mix, FL  
Tresca and Kacy, black Bouvier, NC



# The Gift of Freedom Thru Volunteering

Sue and Rick Olley joined Freedom Guide Dogs ten years ago, raising puppies to be guide dogs. Receiving puppies about eight weeks old, they raise and socialize them for eighteen months and then return them to Freedom for formal guide training.

"When I retired ten years ago, I looked for volunteer work that we could do while traveling," Sue stated. "Many positions frown on travel, but Rick read an article about volunteers needed to raise puppies and said, 'This is a great job for you!' It didn't take me five minutes to go online and find Freedom, relatively close to us in New York. In a couple of days, we visited the school, and a few weeks later we got our first puppy, Pete, a Lollie. We currently have Ralph, our eighth pup, and are about to pick up puppy number nine."

Six months of the year, Sue and Rick travel with their camper throughout the United States and Canada with their pups, exposing them to different places and activities. Their winter months are spent in DeBary, a small town in central Florida, where they currently live.

An essential task of raising future guide

dogs is socialization, exposing them to different environments. "We do basic obedience with the pups and give them as many experiences as we can. We go to restaurants; grocery, department, and pet stores; and almost everywhere we go. Ralph even went whale watching in Alaska with us!"



Sue with Lollie Ralph at an Alaskan and Russian WWII memorial in Fairbanks, AK

"We have a really nice group of puppy raisers and (guide dog) handlers in central Florida," Sue tells us. "We try to gather at least once every two months. We take the puppies all over, including on the transportation at Disney—the monorail, gondolas, buses, and boats—and the pups love it!"



Sue and Ralph, Mississippi River headwaters, MN

Sue and Rick tell us that when the puppies are returned for training, they receive periodic reports of their progress. "We get reports and pictures,

and if they're having an issue, we talk about whether we experienced it. And occasionally we get to see them during their training."

Asked what she liked most about puppy raising, Sue answered, "Everything! I've always loved dogs and had a good rapport with them. This is just the best—the wagging tails, the running, the playing—it's so much fun." ...See page 3





Consider making a tax-deduction to Freedom Guide Dogs during the month of September and have your dollars DOUBLED! All month long, donations will be matched dollar for dollar, up to \$5,000, by our generous supporters, Carol Parish and Marty Zeldin.

September is National Guide Dog Month, and what better time to celebrate the great work that guide dogs do, to raise awareness, and to show appreciation and support?

It costs Freedom \$30,000 to raise, train and place ONE specially trained guide dog with someone who is blind or visually impaired, giving them freedom and independence. After more than 30 years, we can proudly say that we continue to place our trained and qualified guide dogs with deserving individuals absolutely free of charge.

Every dollar makes a difference—and in the month of September, a DOUBLE difference!

Won't you make a donation that will make a DOUBLE impact on our mission of "Providing another pair of eyes to those who cannot see?" ♥



Heartfelt thanks to Carol Lehrer and all of our friends at Port 5 Naval Veterans in Bridgeport, CT! These folks know how to throw a party, and of course it is more fun when it involves Freedom pups. It was a beautiful day of fun, friendship and festivities, culminating in a generous donation of \$3,094.58 and a big box of toys and treats to Freedom!



Carol's Port 5 crew and donation check



UConn, Owen & Pepper & families



Box of donated toys and treats

We are so grateful to Carol and Port 5 for their hard work and generosity, and to Freedom pups Owen, Pepper and UConn for representing! ♥

....Olley, continued from page 2

And Rick laughingly added, "The dogs get attention, and Sue gets the chance to have new people to talk to!"

"One of the things that I REALLY like about raising dogs," Sue continued, "is that we are very blessed to have contact with all we've raised but one. I have to say it's the best thing to see them doing what we prepared them for."



Lollies Loki, Ralph and Pete

Asked about his part in raising puppies, Rick jokingly remarked, "I pick up poop!" More seriously he responded, "I just get to enjoy the dogs, and basically, we do things together—the three of us. Our

dogs have a different experience than some because we don't work, and our dogs are seldom left alone. We have a lot of fun with it; the dogs are great, the experiences are great, and we meet a lot of people we wouldn't meet. I think the dogs do as much for me as I do for them."



Hank (yellow lab) and Loki (Lollie puppy) at the camper door

When asked what she would say to potential puppy raisers, Sue responded, "Do it! Don't think about it...just do it!"

The biggest question we always get is, 'Isn't it hard to give them back to the school for training?' Yes, it is. Giving them back is hard. We normally get a puppy when we give one back, and that makes it a little easier. Giving up the puppy is what you sign up to do—you know what's going to happen."

Sue continues, "But for me, it's the contact with the person the puppy is placed with. The biggest day is when they're placed with their person. Then I know that we've done a good job, and we've sent them on their journey."

Thank you, Sue and Rick, for your part in "providing another pair of eyes to those who cannot see." ♥

We're always looking for puppy raisers! They house young pups until about 18 months old, teach them basic obedience, and expose them to real life. Visit [www.freedomguidedogs.org](http://www.freedomguidedogs.org) for more information today!

Need a shorter commitment?

Co-raisers share a puppy with another family and follow a schedule, raising the puppy between two homes.

Finishing raisers take in older pups who need a raiser for a few months before they come back for formal training.

Puppy sitters fill in for a few days.



# To Those We Don't 'See'

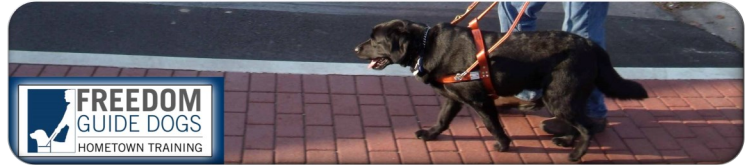
Freedom receives in kind donations from generous companies that work with us behind the scenes. We'd like to take a moment to thank these wonderful sponsors:

Purina Dog Food for their donation of the bags of food that feed our dogs in the kennel throughout the year;

Diamond Chemical for their donation of 80% of the cleaning supplies used to keep our kennels safe and spotless;

Walmart Transportation Distribution Center for picking up our dog food donation from the Purina plant in Dunkirk, NY and delivering it to the Freedom campus in Cassville.

We are so thankful for the thoughtful assistance that we receive from our friends! Our road would be harder without your company on our journey! ♥



This is what's possible because of you —Hometown Training™ and someone gaining independence with one of our specially trained guide dogs. We are so thankful for your generous support!

Reflecting on what we've done together makes it apparent that there is so much work still ahead, and our future depends on *you!* Totally non-profit, we appreciate all of your donations, and every penny counts! And you may be able to help our mission in perpetuity. Please consider including Freedom Guide Dogs in your estate planning, charitable donation of appreciated stocks or bonds, matching employer funds....even donating a used car or boat!

We are so thankful for your thoughtful support! ♥

## "I Have Always Loved Animals"

"I have always loved animals," stated Jeffrey Butterman. "From an early age, I would bring strays home and had a genuine need to help and save any animal I could. It was not a surprise when I decided to go to Syracuse University for Animal Studies."

With Freedom Guide Dogs for nine years, Jeff explained, "I started at Freedom as a guide dog mobility instructor, as I had experience at other schools. I trained protection dogs, and service dogs for hearing, seizures and individuals with wheelchairs, but guide dog work was always closest to my heart. When I found Eric and Sharon's organization it was a done deal; Freedom and I just fit."

Jeff, who is humble in reference to his career, has been a positive force for the Freedom family. Along with his guide dog training, he has hosted several successful fundraisers and contributed time and effort to ongoing fundraising efforts. He also promotes goodwill in public relations.

Jeff's experience has drawn attention from Donghyun Kim, a faculty member and advisor of the Manning College of Information and Computer Sciences, and Hochul Hwang, a PHD student, a technical team from UMass Amherst. They came to Jeff's hometown of Rochester, NY to ask advice on a robot guide dog they are designing. While the prototype is still in the initial stages, they required an actual walk with a guide dog to help them understand the physicality of being guided. They have kept in touch and continue to ask for insights.



*Jeff walks the guide dog robot prototype*

explained, "We were together every day. Shiori stayed for a little over six weeks and the following year Yuko stayed for a



*Jeff and Yuko, from Japan, arms raised in victory like a statue behind them*

Freedom's relationship with the Japan Guide Dog School was strengthened by Jeff and his wife housing and instructing two Japanese exchange trainers: Shiori Nishida and Yuko Inoue Tabudlo. He

explained, "We were together every day. Shiori stayed for a little over six weeks and the following year Yuko stayed for a couple of months. My wife and I got to know them both and learned much about their culture and their school. Both ladies joined me in training and placing several guide dogs as well. It required all of us to adjust our thinking and our lifestyles. Ultimately, we became close friends and continue to talk often, even though we are now a world apart."

When asked about his history, Jeff explained, "I have lived an entire life, but that is not really what is important. Being a guide dog trainer is not a one-sided experience. Every person I help helps me in return. My world gets bigger just as theirs does. But it's not just the clientele; there are so many others that have become part of my life: people I worked with in the past, other Freedom staff members, puppy raisers, and, in many cases, the families of those getting guide dogs have all become part of my life. George and Jamie for example." Yuko joined Jeff for the placement of Jamie, a Lollie breed (Labrador/Collie mix) that has become an increasingly successful and integral part of Freedom's program.



*Freedom GDMs Eric Loori, David Sutch & Jeff Butterman with 3 black dogs in harness*

When asked what he likes best about working with Freedom, Jeff explained that while not every client

becomes a long-standing relationship, they all change him, sometimes a little, sometimes a lot. Freedom Guide Dogs is his home until he retires, and he is looking forward to building new relationships and strengthening current ones. ♥

*Editor's note: Article written by Jeff Butterman and Kelly Jo Stone*