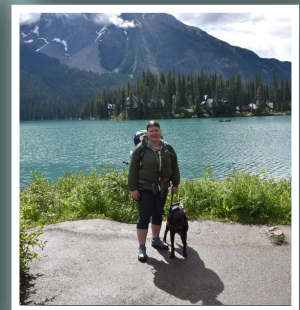


# PARTNERS

## TALES FROM THE SEEING EYE





*“Champ is an unbelievable dog. He’s changed my life completely.”*

*-Marlin Nagtegaal,  
Seeing Eye graduate*

WE ARE PROUD TO SHARE THESE AMAZING STORIES.

## CYNTHIA BRYANT *& Summer*



My name is Cynthia Bryant, and I am the Chair of The Seeing Eye's Board of Trustees. I'm also a Seeing Eye graduate. The photo shows me with my Seeing Eye<sup>®</sup> dog, Summer, a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross. I'm sitting on a low stone wall around a flower garden and Summer, in harness, is sitting next to me.

Since 1929, The Seeing Eye has been creating life-changing partnerships between people and dogs. Every month, we bring people who are blind or visually impaired from across the United States and Canada to our campus in Morristown, New Jersey, to learn how to work with and care for these amazing dogs.

The Seeing Eye has created more than 18,000 matches since our founding, and each one is an amazing story. Here are just a few of them.



## MAUREEN MILLER & *Richard*



Maureen Miller is working with her first Seeing Eye® dog, a black Labrador retriever named Richard. The photo shows Maureen with her arm around Richard, who is in harness and sitting on a raised platform. Maureen is smiling and Richard has his head cocked as he looks at the photographer.

“I am so thrilled that I came to The Seeing Eye and met Richard. It was the right decision for both of us. He’s just phenomenal – he’s such a great dog.”

When in harness, Richard is very professional. “Everyone calls him Sir Richard. He is so well behaved, so focused. People say, ‘that dog looks so serious!’ I say, ‘you ought to see him out of harness.’ When the harness comes off, you see a complete change in personality. When that harness comes off, he turns back into a puppy!”



## JEFF BILLS & Bodine



At age 65, Pastor Jeff Bills was matched with his first Seeing Eye® dog, a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross named Bodine.

The photo shows Pastor Bill standing alongside Bodine outside Hope United Methodist Church in Voorhees, New Jersey – their usual spot before and after services.

“I knew almost nothing about guide dogs. I knew they existed, that was about it,” Jeff said. “My vision was getting worse and I went out as little as possible. I was very tentative about going out alone. My wife, Marilyn, had to be my ‘Seeing Eye wife’. Bodine changed my life, and it changed my wife’s life, too. Now I have the independence I wanted thanks to Bodine.”



## DEVORAH GOLD & Kona



Devorah Gold, of South Bend, Indiana, likes to keep busy. Always has. And as the oldest of six siblings, that's no surprise!

The photo shows Devorah with her Seeing Eye® dog, a black Labrador/golden retriever cross, Kona, at the American Dream Mall in New Jersey. "It is enormous and another place I wouldn't be able to get around without his help. As you can see, Kona loves his job and we have a great time going places together," she said.

"He's an amazing dog and I'm so lucky to have him in my life, both for the companionship and the independence he gives me."



## ROBERT ARRABITO & *Ralph*



Robert Arrabito of Toronto, Ontario, first came to The Seeing Eye in 1989 to be matched with his first Seeing Eye<sup>®</sup> dog, a golden retriever named Ralph.

“When I first went to The Seeing Eye, I didn’t know one end of a dog from the other,” he said. “They gave me a male golden retriever and I just fell in love with him. And I loved the name Ralph because it reminded me of *The Honeymooners*. So when I returned to The Seeing Eye for my second dog, I asked for another male golden retriever... and that he also be named Ralph!”

Robert is now working with “Ralph III.” The photo shows Robert smiling with his arm around Ralph, a golden retriever who also appears to be smiling!

“He is a big help in everything I do, whether that’s getting back and forth to work or getting outside for a leisurely walk at lunch time.”





Sofia Pantel del Cueto of San Juan, Puerto Rico, is currently working with her second Seeing Eye® dog, a black Labrador retriever named Roselle. The photo shows Sofia, with her eyes closed, crouching next to Roselle as she hugs her.

Sofia is the founder of Abre Tus Ojos (Open Your Eyes), a nonprofit organization dedicated to spreading awareness about accessibility, inclusion, and capabilities of people who are blind. She also serves on the board of three other nonprofit organizations in Puerto Rico.

“Roselle is a great Seeing Eye dog, carefully maneuvering us around the obstacle-filled sidewalks on the island,” Sofia said. “She is a very happy dog – when she is isn’t sleeping, she is wagging her tail in pure delight. She enjoys sunbaths in the morning with our housecat, who snuggles with her. She is very sweet and enjoys soft plushy stuffed animals to play and cuddle with.”





## BILL MEINECKE & *Wexlie*



Bill Meinecke of Virginia Beach, Virginia, is now working with his seventh Seeing Eye® dog, a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross named Wexlie. The photo shows Bill with his arm around Wexlie.

But it was more than 50 years ago when he first came to The Seeing Eye. On July 13, 1969 – exactly one week before Neil Armstrong stepped onto the surface of the moon – Bill was matched with Sandra, a German shepherd.

And, just as it was in space, for Bill that first walk with Sandra was both one small step and one giant leap.

“When I first picked up the harness and said ‘forward!’, I was excited and a little scared at the same time,” Bill said. “Can I really trust this dog? That was proven to me when she took me around a big tree in the middle of the sidewalk.”



## CAITLIN HIGGINS & *Lucky*



Caitlin Higgins of Calgary, Alberta, is currently taking online courses while volunteering at a bingo hall... where, naturally, everyone wants a little luck. And her Seeing Eye® dog, a black Labrador retriever, is named Lucky!

“Everyone there loves her,” Caitlin said. “They’re always waiting for me to take off her harness so they can say hi.”

The photo shows Caitlin hiking with Lucky in Yoho National Park in British Columbia, on the edge of a large lake with picturesque mountains in the distance behind her.

“I hear it all the time. ‘You’re so lucky to have Lucky!’ And I am. She’s a very good puppy. She’s always her happy little self.”



## COLIN BAXTER *& Chase*



Colin Baxter was a student at Texas Tech University in Lubbock when he was matched with his first Seeing Eye® dog, a yellow Labrador retriever named Chase. Today, Colin and Chase are still found around campus, where Colin works as a section coordinator in the Admissions Department.

“Chase is the perfect guide dog for me,” Colin said.

The photo above shows Colin smiling and posing with his arm around Chase, who is in harness and sitting on a raised platform alongside Colin.

A key moment in Colin’s life occurred when his now fiancée spotted him in class with Chase at his side. “She fell in love with Chase and then decided that she liked me,” Colin jokes.



## MATT CHAO & *Fancy*



Seeing Eye graduate Matt Chao first learned how to sail as a high school student at Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in history from Brandeis University and a master's degree in counseling education from Springfield College, he returned to sailing through a program offered by the Carroll Center for the Blind. Now he's on a competitive racing team – and he's won a silver medal and two bronze medals.

“It is a challenge just to get recognized as a competitive sailor. The blindness is not who I am. The sailor is who I am,” Matt said. “I just happen to be totally blind.”

The photo shows Matt standing next to his fifth Seeing Eye® dog, a black Labrador/golden retriever named Fancy. When Matt is racing, he doesn't sail with Fancy. “How do you train a dog to sit on the windward side... especially retrievers who love the water?” he asked with a grin.



## KEIANNA PARKER & *Martin*



Keianna Parker of Chicago first came to The Seeing Eye in 2005 to be matched with a black Labrador retriever named Earnest. She recently returned to be matched with a yellow Labrador/golden retriever cross named Martin. The photo shows Keianna as she leans close to Martin, who is sitting on a raised platform for the photo.

“Martin is the most chill, personality wise,” Keianna said. “He would very much rather relax and have a tummy rub than play ball like the other ‘kids’. However, when it comes to going out to work, he is all in!”

Keianna works for the Chicago Lighthouse, an organization that provides services to people who are blind or visually impaired. She works for a call center, assisting patients who are calling to make appointments.

“I will forever be grateful to The Seeing Eye for the gift of my Martin,” Keianna said. “He has definitely helped bring me back to myself. I love every adventure that we have together.”



## JOHN TROTT & *Emerald*



John Trott of Westfield, New Jersey, is working with his first Seeing Eye® dog, a black Labrador retriever named Emerald. The photo shows John smiling as he crouches next to Emerald by the seaside in Atlantic Highlands.

“Emerald’s my little jewel,” John said.

A long-time pharmaceutical executive, John came to The Seeing Eye after a degenerative eye disease had caused his vision to deteriorate to the point where independent travel was difficult. His wife encouraged him to get a guide dog from The Seeing Eye.

“I was so darn impressed. Everyone there is so nice, so professional, and so helpful,” John said.



## INSPIRING STORIES

The difference The Seeing Eye makes in the lives of people with blindness and low vision can be best explained by the graduates of our program – people whose lives are enhanced by their daily experiences with their dogs.

The Seeing Eye is the world's oldest guide dog school. We breed, raise, and train the world-famous Seeing Eye® dogs, and every month bring people who are blind or have low vision from from across the United States and Canada to our campus in Morristown, New Jersey, to learn how to care for and work with these amazing dogs. We are a charitable organization supported solely by donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations.

Please help us by visiting [www.SeeingEye.org/SupportUs](http://www.SeeingEye.org/SupportUs) or by calling (800) 539-4425.

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