

Fall 2021 | Volume 87, Number 3

THE SEEING EYE®

GUIDE

A MAGAZINE FOR FRIENDS OF THE SEEING EYE





A Seeing Eye Perspective

Fall is a wonderful time at The Seeing Eye. Our 68-acre campus is located in Morris Township’s historic Washington Valley, which includes many natural wonders – Foster Fields, a preserved 19th century farm built by a grandson of Paul Revere; a protected watershed area for the Whippany River; and

several historic farms and homes. Looking west from the patio outside our dining room, I can see on the other side of the valley the vibrant reds, oranges, and yellows of the changing leaves on the distant tree-covered hills.

It’s a remarkable view, and some of our students have commented on it.

One might ask, “How is that possible? Aren’t all of your students blind?”

Indeed they are. But blindness encompasses many different levels of visual impairment, often leading to misunderstandings with the general public about what it means to be blind. Some of our graduates have even been accused of pretending to be blind, that their Seeing Eye® dog is a “fake,” because they don’t fit commonly held stereotypes of what a blind person can see, can do, or should look like.

When a sighted person tries to imagine what it’s like to be blind, we usually close our eyes. But that isn’t the only form of blindness. My mother, for example, became blind at age 13 when her optic nerve was accidentally severed, and had “light perception” – she could tell if she was facing a bright light, and could perceive high

contrasts, such as a black dog on a white carpet. Other graduates have what’s often described as “tunnel vision,” but it may be more accurately compared to looking through a keyhole or a straw – they can see only in a very narrow area. Some have the opposite, with some peripheral vision but none in the middle of their field of view. Others compare their vision to looking through gauze or lace. Many of our graduates are extremely sensitive to bright light and glare, a condition known as photophobia, having little or no usable vision in full sunlight. Some have degenerative eye conditions, losing more vision each year.

Some of our graduates wear glasses, trying to maximize the vision they have left. You’ll often hear the term “legally blind,” which by definition means even while wearing the best available corrective lenses, the person’s vision is 20/200 or worse – meaning they can only see at 20 feet what most people can see at 200 feet.

Our requirement at The Seeing Eye is that the applicant can benefit from working with a Seeing Eye dog. And we hear from our graduates that the life-changing choice to come to The Seeing Eye has greatly aided their independence, dignity, and confidence.

Your generous donations helped sustain us through this difficult time. Thank you for being a part of The Seeing Eye family. Stay well, and safe travels.

Sincerely,

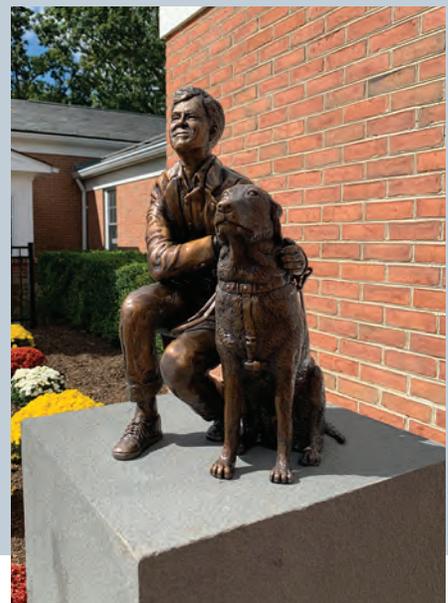
Glenn D. Hoagland
President & CEO
The Seeing Eye

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ON THE COVER: *This bronze sculpture of retired Seeing Eye President & CEO – and graduate – James A. Kutsch, Jr., Ph.D., and Colby, a yellow Labrador retriever, now stands in front of the Main House at The Seeing Eye’s Washington Valley campus. Colby was the seventh of Jim’s nine Seeing Eye® dogs. The sculpture was unveiled on September 23, with Jim and his family in attendance. See story on Page 4.*



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Seeing Eye,

So many people tell me that they would never raise a puppy and give it away. Sadly, these people have never had the chance to hear Jim and Ginger Kutsch talk about the freedom that Seeing Eye dogs give them and so many others with impaired vision. The testimony of Jim and Ginger is how I continue to go through the loss when a puppy leaves, because it is one time in life that you can give without any expectation of return. How many people can say they have given so much of themselves without some form of payment?

Raising for The Seeing Eye has taught me something that I couldn't learn from a book or even by example. Raising puppies has given me the first-hand experience that when you give of yourself that no payment could possibly be greater than the knowledge that you have helped someone live a full and great life. The experience of raising will remain with me always throughout my adulthood and beyond as these dogs taught me more about the value of friendship and loyalty than any person could have.

Jack Keller

Editor's note: Jack, now a freshman at the University of Delaware, and his family have raised six puppies for The Seeing Eye. The photo shows Jack with their most recent puppy, a German shepherd named Deacon.



Dear Seeing Eye,

There have been so many different traits I've picked up and lessons I have learned from helping raise three puppies for The Seeing Eye: Xena, Valley, and Quita, who is still with us. The biggest, yet corniest lesson I have learned from helping to raise three puppies for The Seeing Eye is: If you really love something, you have to let it go. Obviously, you're not supposed to get overly attached, but how could you not? The bond you form with a dog is so strong and wonderful, that is the one constant thing I would want to have in my life forever. But at the end of the day, they are not yours to keep... they are something so much bigger than you. They are working dogs getting ready to not only change my life but someone else's, to the greatest, most wonderful extent.

Mia Vazquez

Editor's note: Mia, shown here with Quita, a golden retriever she is raising for The Seeing Eye, is now a freshman at the Arizona State University.

Mia and Jack were among the recipients of The Seeing Eye Service Scholarship Awards; see story on Pages 6-7.

Right: Suzanne with her horse, Zippy. Photo courtesy of Suzanne Ament.



HOT to TROT



Above: Suzanne and Ulla, her fourth Seeing Eye dog. Photo courtesy of Suzanne Ament.

Note: *Ulla is pronounced Yule-Lah (rhymes with Beulah)*

From school to stable, with the help of a Seeing Eye dog!

Suzanne Ament, Ph.D., is a professor of history at Radford University in Virginia... and outside of the classroom, she made history as the winner of the Spring Fling Schooling Dressage Show at the Lloyd Harbor

Equestrian Center on Long Island on May 22.

"Like having a Seeing Eye dog, having a horse has given me so much confidence, and I've had so much fun. The bond is very similar," Suzanne said.

Riding a borrowed horse named Dante's Perfect Storm, Suzanne earned the Show's high score and was overall champion out of 54 riders... in a competition that had no separate category for people who are blind or visually impaired!

Dressage is an Olympic sport sometimes described as "dancing with your horse." The horse's rider guides it to perform, from memory, a series of

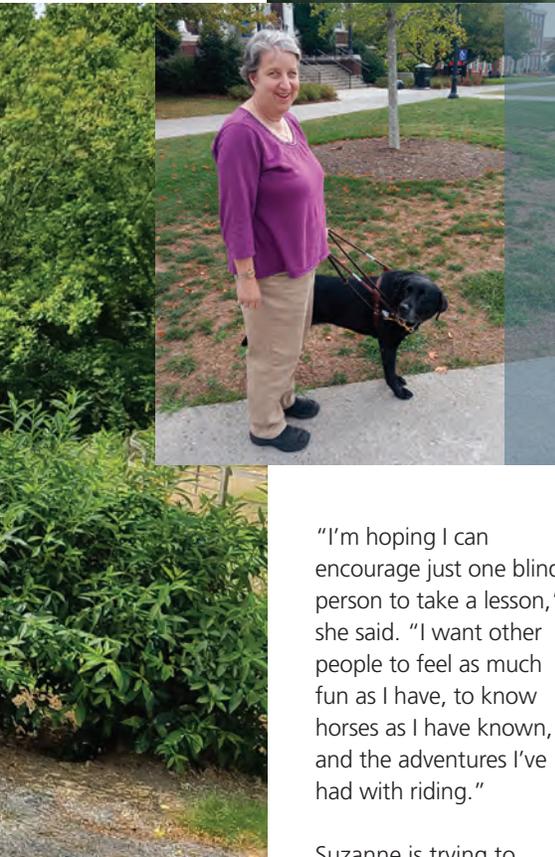
precise predefined movements, known as "tests", such as turning, trotting, or moving diagonally.

"Some people call it horse ballet," Suzanne said. "You're keeping the horse in its best balanced form, so it can do gaits and turns and figures."

There are letters posted around the ring to indicate where each test is to be performed. Suzanne can't see the letters, so at the Spring Fling she enlisted the help of volunteers, known as "living letters," who call out the letter they are standing at to give her an audio reference. When she can't get volunteers, she has an innovative solution: She places a radio at each letter, and tunes it to a different station. The country station might be at A, the reggae station at B, and so on.

Suzanne entered the competition because she wanted to bring awareness to visually impaired riding and especially para-dressage, where the sport is adapted for people who have disabilities.

Suzanne riding Dante's Perfect Storm at the Spring Fling Schooling Dressage Show. Photo courtesy of Suzanne Ament.



"I'm hoping I can encourage just one blind person to take a lesson," she said. "I want other people to feel as much fun as I have, to know horses as I have known, and the adventures I've had with riding."

Suzanne is trying to network with other

blind or visually impaired riders, and asks anyone who participates in para-dressage, or would like to, to contact her at seament@radford.edu.

She said riders who are blind or visually impaired often encounter obstacles, and not the kind horses can jump over. Stables often don't want to accommodate riders who aren't sighted. "I don't have a disability that would make me vulnerable to falling off," Suzanne said. "I just can't see."

Suzanne, who teaches Russian history as well as world history, is now working with her fourth Seeing Eye dog, a female black Labrador retriever named Ulla. She was matched with her first dog, a female Labrador retriever named Sparkle, in 1986. At the time, she was pursuing a doctorate degree in Russian History at Indiana University.

"My vision was getting worse, and I felt like I was getting more isolated," she said. "My

mom, actually, was the one who pushed for a guide dog. I thought, 'If I get a dog, people will only want to talk to me about the dog. It will be like having a new baby for the rest of my life!'" But she finally decided to get one, and came to The Seeing Eye.

"And having a dog actually opens more conversations with people," she said. "You get to talk to more people, about anything, because they are more likely to talk to you."

While at The Seeing Eye, Sparkle jumped at an unfamiliar sound while in harness. That drew the attention of Dick Krokus, who headed The Seeing Eye's instruction and training program at the time.

"She spooked, just like a horse," Suzanne said. "A little sideways jump when something startled her. Mr. Krokus wanted to see if it would affect her work. I really didn't want to lose her. I was walking along and he was shadowing me to watch her. I was almost in tears, saying, 'Sparkle, if you want to be my guide, you better do this right!' And she didn't spook once. I knew she was the right dog then."

As it happened, Suzanne's class at The Seeing Eye had three Ph.D.'s in it. "And I was just a graduate student hoping to get a Ph.D. I was the Ph.D. wanna-be. At the time, The Seeing Eye would address us formally, as Miss Ament or Ms. Ament. But they were called doctor. I said, 'I'm not coming back until I'm Dr. Ament!'"

Sure enough, before returning for her second dog, Suzanne earned her Ph.D. She also became fluent in Russian, and studied Spanish, German, Serbo-Croatian, and Albanian.

Suzanne first became interested in horses as a third grader in Washington, D.C., when other girls were talking about riding horses on weekends. "One girl talked about taking her horse swimming in a pond. I thought, 'That is so cool!' So I begged my mother to let me ride."

In 2011, she got married – which got her back into serious riding, and then dressage.

"My husband and I wanted to do something together. I suggested tandem bicycle riding, but he wasn't interested in that. Instead we tried horse riding."

Now Suzanne and her husband, Jim Boone, own two horses – Zippy and Hank.

"They're older horses, so we don't do a lot with them, but I do ride Zippy, and I love taking care of her. I love just being in the barn. Grooming her, feeding her, cleaning tack. I just lose track of time. It's very relaxing."

At The Seeing Eye, students are taught how to groom their dogs. Does the same technique work on a horse?

"It's pretty similar, actually," Suzanne said. "It's just a lot bigger!"

An Enduring Legacy

Retired CEO
Jim Kutsch
honored
with sculpture at
The Seeing Eye



James A. Kutsch, Jr., Ph.D., the first and to date only graduate of The Seeing Eye to serve as our President & CEO, was honored – and surprised – with a bronze sculpture unveiled in September at the Washington Valley campus.

Jim, with his wife, Ginger, also a Seeing Eye graduate, and other family members were invited back to campus on September 23 for the unveiling of a portrait photograph that will hang in the Dorothy Harrison Eustis Lounge alongside the portraits of other leaders from The Seeing Eye's 92-year history. The portrait of Jim and his ninth Seeing Eye dog, Easton, a male yellow Labrador retriever, was taken by photographer Ron Wyatt. Also attending the unveiling were members of The Seeing Eye's Board of Trustees and staff.

While the portrait is *de rigueur* for retired Seeing Eye presidents and Board of Trustee chairs, the sculpture is a rare honor, and a surprise for Jim. The sculpture stands in front of the Main House, just outside the window of the President and CEO's office, and is just the third at The Seeing Eye, joining a bust of pioneering Seeing Eye instructor G. William Debetaz alongside a German shepherd, and "Best Friends," a statue of a girl and the puppy she is raising for The Seeing Eye.



Above: Jim and Ginger Kutsch, center, with their Seeing Eye dogs Easton, a yellow Labrador retriever, and Willow, a black Labrador retriever, with Seeing Eye President & CEO Glenn Hoagland, far left, and members of The Seeing Eye Board of Trustees.

Not located on campus, but perhaps the best known statue connected to The Seeing Eye, is the lifelike depiction of co-founder Morris Frank and Buddy, located just off the Morristown Green.

The sculpture, which is mounted on a bluestone column donated by Morris Brick and Stone, depicts Jim crouching next to Colby, a male yellow Labrador retriever who served as Jim's Seeing Eye dog for half of the 14 years he served as President and CEO. The sculpture was commissioned courtesy of donations from members of The Seeing Eye's Board of Trustees, and its procurement and the ceremony was organized by executive assistant to the president Jennifer Lieberman.

Surrounding the column are stones engraved with the names of the nine Seeing Eye dogs Jim has used, the first a female German shepherd name Sheba he was matched with as a college student in 1970. A brass plaque, in print and braille, reads "James A. Kutsch, Jr., Ph.D. The Seeing Eye's first Graduate to serve as President & CEO, 2006 – 2019."

"The Seeing Eye dogs and philosophy and graduates, the students I met here, had a very profound effect on my life as a younger person," Jim said. "It culminated in the true honor and privilege to serve first as a board member and then as president and CEO. I am just shocked at all of the recognition here."

Trustee Chair Tom Duffy praised Jim's contributions as a leader as well as a person.

"Quite frankly, I've been in awe of him. He is remarkable in terms of what he has done in his life," Tom said. "He is one of the world-class CEOs, runners of an organization, nonprofit or otherwise, and I've seen a lot of them. More importantly, he's just an unbelievable human being."

Glenn Hoagland, who succeeded Jim as President & CEO in September 2019, said he tremendously benefited from Jim's guidance as the organization's outgoing leader, as did the guide dog industry as a whole. Jim served as president of the International Guide Dog Federation, the organization that accredits guide dog schools throughout the world, and as president of the Council of U.S. Dog Guide Schools.

"You've not only led, strengthened, and sustained the school for all these years, but you've really contributed tremendously to the guide dog profession," Glenn said. "Through your sharing of your knowledge and your expertise, you really supported the development of the guide dog profession throughout the world."

Kutsch's son, Jason, delivered a moving speech about his father.

"Growing up, The Seeing Eye was always a part of our lives," he said. "And we're proud to bring our children back. It has been an influence on our family for three generations."



Top: Jim and Ginger Kutsch with members of The Seeing Eye's leadership team. Photo by Michelle Barlak.

Above: Jim and Ginger Kutsch with members of their family who attended the unveiling ceremony. Photo by Michelle Barlak.



Right: Photographer Ron Wyatt and the portrait photograph he took of James A. Kutsch, Jr., Ph.D., which will hang alongside portraits of our other presidents and board chairs in the Dorothy Harrison Eustis Lounge at The Seeing Eye. Photo by Michelle Barlak.

Seeing Eye Director of Instruction & Training Dave Johnson interviewed via Zoom Seeing Eye graduates, right, Martha Ruether, and, below, Scott Smith and Christina Panczak-Smith.



Seeing Eye President & CEO Glenn Hoagland welcomes attendees to the virtual Family Day.



A Virtual Family Day

The Seeing Eye Thanks Our Puppy Raisers

“Welcome to the second annual, and hopefully the last, virtual Family Day,” Seeing Eye President & CEO Glenn Hoagland said at the start of this year’s virtual program. “We really look forward to welcoming you back to campus next year, and we really, really miss you.”

Family Day is an annual event at The Seeing Eye, when puppy raiser families are invited to the Washington Valley campus to tour the facility, see instructor demonstrations, and listen to presentations from staff and graduates. However, for the second straight year, the health risks associated with the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic led to The Seeing Eye holding a virtual event.

The virtual Family Day program was launched on August 14, and Seeing Eye Puppy Raiser families could log in at any time for the next 30 days to “attend.”

For many years, The Seeing Eye has bred its own puppies and then had them fostered with families who live in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Carroll County, Maryland. Those families raise the 7-week-old puppies until they

are old enough to return to training, usually spending 15 to 17 months with the families.

“We know it’s hard, hard work, and yet you bring our puppies forward on their destiny to becoming Seeing Eye dogs,” Glenn said.

In addition to the virtual program, the names of 44 high school seniors were announced who were awarded The Seeing Eye Service Scholarships. These are students who raised at least two Seeing Eye puppies, including one in either their junior or senior year. The awards were funded by Josephine Aresty; Bernice Barbour Foundation; Benebone; in memory of Bernice Delmont; Anton and Augusta Birkel Foundation; Edward A. Bragaline; in memory of Emma Kate Brunskill; David M. Crowley Foundation; Katherine Ann Engleking; Fludzinski Foundation; in memory of William Heady; Bruce J. Heim Foundation; Hermione Foundation; Sandy Hill Foundation; Sally A. Jumper; Michael J. Kosloski Foundation; Aaron & Rachel Meyer Foundation; PETCO Foundation; the Radcliff Family; Toni and Vincent A. Stable; and The Seeing Eye.

Also speaking at Family Day’s “opening ceremonies” were Seeing Eye Board of

Trustees Chair Tom Duffy, Vice Chair Dr. Margaret “Peggi” Howard, and Trustee Kathy Kiernan; Director of Instruction & Training Dave Johnson; Director of Canine Development Peggy Gibbon, and Manager of Puppy Development Jill Jaycox.

“Our puppy raisers are quite frankly in many respects the foundation of the great work that gets done at The Seeing Eye. taking care of those puppies in the early months and through the first 14 or 16 months is really hard work, and you’ve done that in such a selfless way, and contributed to this mission in such a massive way,” Tom said.

After the opening ceremonies, Dave hosted a Zoom call with three graduate speakers: Scott Smith and Christina Panczak-Smith, a married couple from Florida, matched with black Labrador retrievers named Hachi and Kandi, respectively; and Martha Ruether, a New Yorker currently living in Ohio while attending graduate school at Malone University in Akron who is matched with her first dog, a female black Labrador/golden retriever cross named Brooke.

The next part of the program was a video showing, step by step, what happens to Seeing Eye puppies when they are



brought back to The Seeing Eye after being fostered with the families, from the first weigh-in to being assigned to an instructor to learn how to be a guide dog. The video was filmed and edited by The Seeing Eye's Tricia Souder and featured Bryan Harr, Leann Wishnic, Eithne Kelly, Kristen DeMarco, Kristen Oplinger, Peggy Gibbon, Dr. Katy Evans, and Dr. Kyle Quigley.

"The Gift of Life," written and narrated by Dr. Dolores Holle, was a behind-the-scenes look at the breeding station, starting with the ultrasound of pregnant breeder dogs to puppy delivery, and from fun time in the puppy playroom to transportation to Puppy Development. The video was filmed by Dr. Dolores Holle, Michael Colella, and Sue Hofbauer, edited by Kathleen Freeberg, and featured Dr. Julie Cohen, Kristyn Davis, Darlene Gnitchtel, Sonja Harshman, Jean Heidgerd, Denise Henderson, Maria Herver, Sue Hofbauer, Laura Keck, Tracia Reinstra, and Nicole Yue.

Next we took a page from Jerry Seinfeld with a segment called "Instructors In Cars Having Coffee."

Assistant Director of Instruction & Training Jim Kessler introduced puppy raisers to The Seeing Eye's newest dog van, and picked up Instructor Chris Mattoon to discuss home turnover, which is what we call it when a student getting a replacement dog can't for whatever reason come to The Seeing Eye, and we send an instructor to their home instead.

The closing remarks featured Seeing Eye staff members and some Seeing Eye dogs in training thanking puppy raisers for all they do, and dog obedience demonstrations given by Seeing Eye instructors, as well as final thoughts from Glenn.

"We cannot express how much we appreciate what you do as puppy raisers. We know how much it means to our mission," Glenn said.

And a special thanks to sponsors Helen Skiba-Powell, the Allergan Foundation, and Benebone for making this year's virtual Family Day possible!



THE SEEING EYE SERVICE SCHOLARSHIP AWARD RECIPIENTS

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| Ellie Buckard | Andrew Lederach |
| Ella Caddeau | Jason Mastroianni |
| Bella Chiappa | Trevor Mauk |
| Jacqueline Cooper | Brianna McGill |
| Julia Crudele | Carrie McKee |
| Elise Dejewski | Emma Monday |
| Alex Douglass | Sarah Nagler |
| Kate Douglass | Jordan Newquist |
| Aaron Eaby | Kaia Peterson |
| Devin Genderson | Ava Probst |
| Frank Genderson | Andy Pruss |
| Lucas Hawcroft | Ava Rodgers |
| Sheila Hulseman | Owen Romano |
| Mia Hwang | Justin Ruth |
| Thomas Johnson | Anthony Sblendorico |
| Samantha Joseph | Sage Sedlacek |
| Jack Keller | Kate Seminaro |
| Gabriella Kittaneh | Sam Sparovich |
| Matthew Kuloszewski | Emma Svetvilas |
| Jack Lambert | Julia Taylor |
| Luke Lambert | Felicia Vagnozzi |
| Emily Langer | Mia Vazquez |

Puppy Raising...and Fund Raising!

Congratulations to Dina Capeci, whose puppy Fairyn was the top fundraiser in The Seeing Eye's Puppy Raiser Calendar Contest! Dina's photo of Fairyn raised \$7,754 for The Seeing Eye. All told, the photos submitted by more than 100 Puppy Raisers raised \$86,265 for our mission!

Dina is a member of Caring Eyes Puppy Club in Bergen County, New Jersey. She is a high school sophomore who hopes to become a veterinarian. "Dina rallied her family and all our friends to The Seeing Eye cause," said her father, John Capeci. "But what really happened here is that family and friends realized how important The Seeing Eye is to Dina and how noble the cause is. The organization is an inspiration, and so is seeing a young girl develop into a proud charitable and caring person."



To order the **2022 Seeing Eye Puppy Raiser Calendar**, go to www.SeeingEye.org/calendar, email puppycalendar@seeingeye.org, or call 800-539-4425 ext. 1802.

Share Some Holiday Cheer This Year

The Seeing Eye's popular holiday cards are here! There are three options this year: a golden retriever next to a Christmas tree; a chocolate Labrador retriever trying to catch snow on her tongue; and a black Labrador/golden retriever cross with her snout sticking through a boxwood wreath.

Cards can be ordered as is, through our online store, or, if ordered by December 1st, they can be personalized with up to two lines of custom text printed inside, with or without return addresses on envelopes. This year we are relying on volunteers to assist us with fulfillment of standard cards, while our vendor will fulfill any personalized orders, all shipping directly to you.

Non-personalized cards are \$21 (plus shipping) for a box of 20 cards and envelopes. Personalized cards with blank envelopes are \$29 (plus shipping) for a box of 20 cards and envelopes. Personalized cards with return address printed on envelopes are \$36 (plus shipping) for a box of 20 cards and envelopes.
Checks or credit cards only, please.



To order these cards from The Seeing Eye, please visit our online store at www.SeeingEye.org/store. If you would like your 2021 card personalized with your name, additional message and return address, please email Michelle Rhoades at MRhoades@SeeingEye.org or call the Donor and Public Relations Department before December 1st at 1-800-539-4425.

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For more information, go to <https://careasy.org/nonprofit/The-Seeing-Eye-Inc>



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The 2022 Seeing Eye Puppy Calendar is now available for purchase!

This beautiful wall calendar features
pictures of Seeing Eye puppies,
taken by Seeing Eye puppy raisers!

To order, go to
www.SeeingEye.org/calendar.



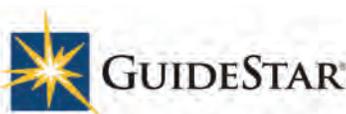
The Seeing Eye

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The Seeing Eye follows the guidelines recommended by the Council of U.S. Dog Guide Schools for the humane care and training of dogs to be guides, and the instruction and graduate services offered to people who are blind or visually impaired.

The Seeing Eye is an accredited member of the International Guide Dog Federation. The mission of The Seeing Eye is to enhance the independence, dignity and self-confidence of people who are blind, through the use of specially trained Seeing Eye dogs.