



# BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS

GUIDE DOGS • AUTISM SERVICE DOGS • OSI-PTSD SERVICE DOGS

[bcandalbertaguidedogs.com](http://bcandalbertaguidedogs.com)



A Division of BC Guide Dogs

## Puppy Sponsorship Program Overview

### *Puppies Helping People*

From two months to approximately 15 to 20 months of age, our puppies are in the care of volunteer Puppy Trainers (also referred to as Puppy Raisers). The role of the Puppy Trainer is to make the puppy comfortable in human social environments. This way, when formal training begins in the hands of one of our Accredited Instructors, the puppy is relaxed and able to concentrate on the training and learn the required tasks that will be needed.

Guide Dogs and Service Dogs begin formal training with our Accredited Instructors at 15 to 20 months of age, depending on the level of maturity of each dog. The formal adult training time for Guide Dogs is approximately six months and Autism Service Dogs four to five months. Our VICD training program for PTSD Service Dogs lasts four to six months, with additional time in the *Healthy Community Living Program* once matched with the Veteran or First Responder.

Our amazing dogs end up in one of five possible roles.

- ❖ Guide Dogs – these dogs are placed with clients who are blind or visually impaired.
- ❖ Autism Service Dogs – these dogs are placed with families that have a child with autism between the ages of 3-10.

In the case of our Guide Dog and Autism Service Dog programs, each dog is matched with a pre-approved client approximately one month before formal training begins with the client. Once a match is made, the dog and individual (or, in the case of child with autism, the principal parent handler) are trained together. Guide Dog classes require three weeks of instruction and Autism Service Dog classes last two weeks. Once training is complete, a life-long partnership begins for the graduated team.

- ❖ PTSD Service Dogs – these dogs are selected to work with Veterans and First Responders with Operational Stress Injuries (OSI).

Our PTSD Instructors select and match a trained PTSD Service Dog to suit the needs and abilities of each client. Veterans and First Responders in the PTSD program receive their dogs at their first training session and, from this time on, the dog lives with them. The training cycle

**BC HEAD OFFICE**  
7061 Ladner Trunk Road  
Delta, BC V4K 3N3  
Tel: 604.940.4504  
Fax: 604.940.4506  
Toll-free (Canada):  
1.877.940.4504

**ALBERTA OFFICE**  
11 - 6115 4th Street SE  
Calgary, AB T2H 2H9  
Tel: 403.258.0819  
Toll-free (Alberta):  
1.877.258.0819

**VICD SERVICE DOGS**  
Office: Rms 9-10  
744 Primrose Street  
Qualicum Beach, BC  
Tel: 250.909.0090  
Mail: BC Head Office



takes one year to complete, and the team attend classes twice a week. These dogs have full public access rights once the team graduates.

If your sponsorship dog is selected for our VICD program, you will receive notification. Once the dog has completed their advanced training (four to six months) and the dog is placed with a client, you will receive a testimonial and photo.

- ❖ Breeding Stock – some dogs with the best genetics and temperament will be selected for our scientific canine breeding program. Their role is to reproduce more wonderful dogs that will make a difference in someone's life. These important dogs are deemed to have graduated, just like our Guide Dogs and Service Dogs. If your sponsored dog is chosen to become breeding stock, you will receive notification.

If a dog does not move forward on any of the career paths described above, the dog is either returned to the volunteer Puppy Raisers or placed in a loving forever home.

Our Puppy Sponsorship Program is a popular way for the public to follow a puppy in training. Only a select few of our dogs are in the Puppy Sponsorship program at any given time. Sponsors receive regular 'pupdates' and photos so they can follow their puppy's development. The 'pupdates' are written from the perspective of the pup-in-training and forwarded approximately every 6 months until graduation.

Sponsorship ends when the dog graduates and, at that time, we hope our sponsors continue to support a new puppy in this important program. Occasionally a puppy is withdrawn from the sponsorship program. When that happens, a suitable puppy takes its place and continues sending 'pupdates' and photos to sponsors.

The journey of our puppies is truly life changing for us and the community. We provide love and encouragement to all our puppies, so they can become the best working dogs and companions they can be.