



# Service Dogs

The South African Guide-dogs Association for the Blind is now training dogs to assist people with other disabilities other than blindness. With numerous commands the Service Dog becomes the physical extensions of their recipients by retrieving dropped items, turning on light switches, pulling wheelchairs and much, much more.

The specially bred dogs are ready and able to perform a variety of basic tasks designed to bring independence to a person with a physical disability.

Out training procedures are highly specialized. The dogs are trained in a variety of environments, including shopping malls, restaurants and other public places to prepare them for working in all types of situations.

Coming from carefully selected pedigreed stock, as puppies they are placed in volunteer homes, "Puppy Walkers" as we call them, to begin their first stages of training.

After 12-14 months with the Puppy Walkers, the pup returns to the training centre to start with approximately six months advanced training. The skills and personalities of the dogs are thoroughly evaluated by the training staff, and each dog is matched and very carefully assessed before being placed with a disabled person.

Who qualifies to receive a Service Dog?

A person is eligible if he or she has limitations that can be overcome with the help of such a dog, and is capable of providing a secure and loving home. If this person, after application and an interview is successful, they must attend a two week training course at our training centre in Sandton, Johannesburg.

For more information :

Telephone : (011) 705 3512, Fax: (011) 465 3858,  
e-mail - [sue@guidedog.org.za](mailto:sue@guidedog.org.za)



- taught how to walk on a lead, according to Guide-dogs specifications, e.g. no sniffing, scavenging or pulling and without being distracted by what is going on around them, e.g. barking dogs at gates.

The Puppy Raising Scheme is a supervised programme, beginning with a 5 week puppy socialising course at our Training Centre. The older pups move onto a monthly group walk sessions, of which we currently have a choice of 6 – some afternoons, spread from Alberton to Pretoria. In addition we visit Puppy Raisers and their pups at home for individual sessions. All of these training sessions take place during working hours, Monday to Friday.

Puppies can only learn appropriate and desired behaviour when the Puppy Raisers are with them to teach them, so a home where the puppy would be left alone all day during the week would not be suitable. In addition the puppies need to attend training sessions and the Puppy Raising Supervisors need to be able to do home visits with the Puppy Raiser and not just the puppy. Homes in which the Puppy Raiser works ½ day are however acceptable. Puppy Raisers for the reasons stated above, need to reside in (preferably) Johannesburg – or Pretoria.

The male pups are castrated at 6 months of age, but the females are only spayed after a year of age, so they will have at least one season while on the Puppy Rearing Scheme.

The South African Guide-dogs Association covers the veterinary costs incurred for pups on the scheme, in addition to vaccinations, deworming and micro-chipping. When Puppy Raisers go away on holiday or bitches are in season, we will board the pups in our boarding kennel. Food for the pups on the scheme is also sponsored.

If you have any queries regarding the Puppy Raising Scheme, please contact one of the Puppy Raising Supervisors:

Caroline or Monica on (011) 705 3512 or – sue@guidedog.org.za

