



SOUTH AFRICAN GUIDE-DOGS  
association for the blind

## **PUPPY RAISING**

The Puppy Raising Scheme was developed to provide The South African Guide-dogs Association for the Blind with dogs who are well prepared for both advanced training and their future work as Guide Dogs.

The majority of the puppies come from our own breeding programme, but we do accept selected donated puppies occasionally. The pups are placed with their Puppy Raising families at around 7 weeks of age.

Puppy Raisers are very special volunteers who take a puppy into their homes, lives and hearts for 11 to 18 months and then, just when that mischievous puppy has developed into a well behaved and mature dog, they give them back ! Many of them then start all over again with a new puppy !

While the puppy is with the Puppy Raisers, they are socialized as much as possible. It is very important that the dogs are introduced to as wide a range of experiences, places, people and animals as possible.

The pups need to be :-

- introduced to people of all races and ages, especially children.
- taught to relieve themselves only on command when on lead and working – and not to mess in inappropriate places.
- introduced to and be able to behave in an appropriate manner in shopping centres, post offices, shops, restaurants etc.
- taught how to behave in the home, e.g. not messing, chewing, sleeping on furniture etc.
- taught how to behave around people, e.g. not jumping up on them.
- taught basic obedience work.
- 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 an 8 week puppy socialising course at our Training Centre. The older pups move onto a monthly group or individual training session with one of the Puppy Raising Supervisors, either at the SAGA training centre, a shopping centre or a suburban area. All 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 Johannesburg or Pretoria.

The male pups are castrated between 6 and 8 months of age, but the females are usually only spayed after a year of age, so they will have at least one season while on the Puppy Raising 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 -

On 087 754 9295 or [dogs@guidedog.org.za](mailto:dogs@guidedog.org.za)