

Growing Together

2011 Annual Report



Carolyn and Guide Dog Louis

BC & Alberta Guide Dog Services



Providing guide dogs for blind and visually impaired persons in B.C. and Alberta



B.C. Guide Dog Services



Alberta Guide Dog Services

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Earlier this year, I was humbled to receive the Order of Canada in recognition of my contributions to BC & Alberta Guide Dog Services and other charities. I share this honour with all of the volunteers and supporters of BC & Alberta Guide Dog Services for their truly life-changing work. Over the last 15 years, Leah and I have had the privilege to witness the remarkable growth of this organization – we still remember the early days when they only had two puppies to train. Today, they have a full staff, an amazing network of volunteers, and over 100 graduated service dogs. To all of you who support this wonderful charity – thank you! Leah and I look forward to supporting BC & Alberta Guide Dog Services through their next phase of growth and we hope that you will join us in *making a visible difference*.

— Leah Meeker and Howie Meeker, C.M.
 Patrons

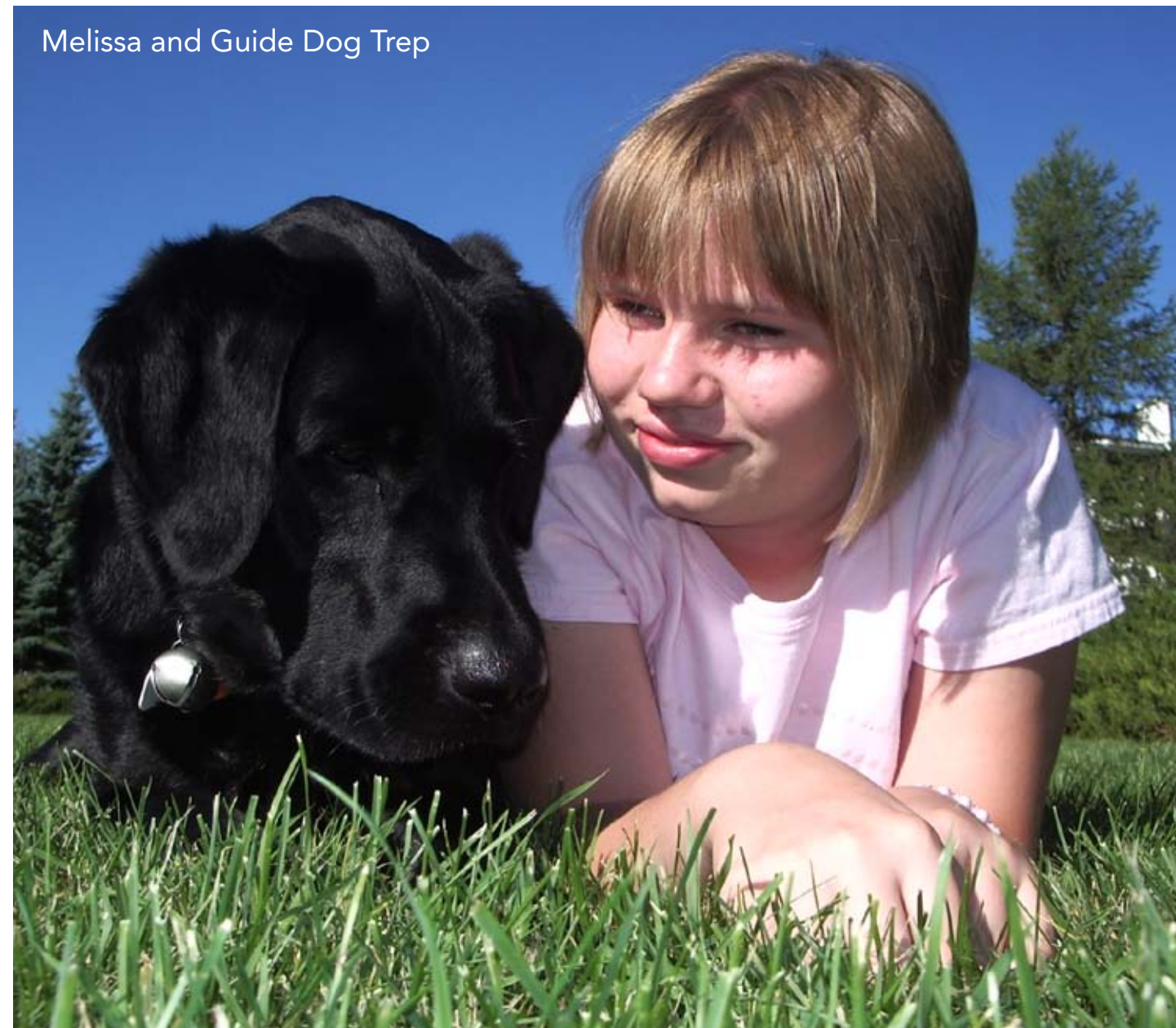
OUR MISSION:

To meet the demand for professionally trained Guide Dogs for blind and visually impaired citizens of British Columbia and Alberta, at all times meeting or exceeding international standards as set by the International Guide Dog Federation.

ACCREDITED MEMBER OF:



Melissa and Guide Dog Trep



Every 12 minutes, someone in Canada develops blindness or partial sight.

Our professionally trained guide dogs provide increased safety, mobility, and confidence for their partner.

Message from CEO and Chair



Our 2011 fiscal year has truly been a period of growth — our volunteer base has grown, our canine teams have grown, and last of all, our staff has grown. All of this progress can be attributed to the successful teamwork of our donors, volunteers, and staff, thus we have chosen 'Growing Together' as the theme of this report.

June was our 15th anniversary and we have exceeded our initial goals for this milestone year. Our thanks to everyone who has helped us establish such a firm foundation for the organization. With excitement, we look forward to the next 15.

William S. Thornton

Verne Blyth

Our partnership with our sister charity Autism Support Dogs continues to flourish — in May, we graduated our 100th service dog, comprising 85 Guide Dog Teams and 15 Autism Support Dog Teams!

In order to support this growth, we've increased our staff to ensure that our high standard of service is maintained. In the training department, we've certified a new Guide Dog Mobility Instructor (GDMI) and welcomed a veteran GDMI from Holland. We've also hired a Marketing and Communication Specialist to raise greater awareness of our work. Thanks to a generous bequest from Victoria Adams, we've realized our long-time goal of establishing a Vancouver Island office. One of our GDMIs now works on the Island full-time, which has greatly improved our ability to serve clients in that community.

After many years of healthy surpluses, we've posted a deficit this year in order to fuel this progress; however, we are confident that the long-term results of this strategic decision will far outweigh the temporary cost of this compromise.

Though we have too many highlights in a year to summarize in such a short piece, we wish to extend a special 'thank you' to Variety-The Children's Charity for featuring BC Guide Dog Services and Autism Support Dogs on their 2011 Show of Hearts Telethon. This has helped us significantly in reaching out to families with a young autistic child.

We'd also like to extend our congratulations to patrons Leah and Howie Meeker for Howie's appointment as a Member of the Order of Canada in December. We are tremendously grateful for and honoured by the Meekers' contributions to BC and Alberta Guide Dog Services over the years.

Lastly, we will be launching our Capital Campaign in 2012 to build a new state-of-the-art breeding and visitor's centre. We will keep all of our supporters informed through our Communication Department as we move forward with these exciting plans.

William S. Thornton, CEO

Verne Blyth, Chair

Donna & Eddy



I prayed for him...

I lost my sight due to Retinitis Pigmentosa when I was 23. When I received my first guide dog, I was amazed how walking independently had changed from a slow cautious struggle to a comfortable pace. Since my first guide, I have had the pleasure of working with two more dogs, and in 2010, I needed to prepare for the transition of working with a fourth dog.

In March, 2011, I received a call from Bill Thornton telling me that he had dog which may be a good match for me. I had the pleasure of meeting two fine dogs shortly afterwards and I was in love with the one named Eddy at first meeting. I felt both nervous and thrilled with anticipation as I awaited the decision.

There are no words I can use to convey how I felt the day [Guide Dog Mobility Instructor] Corinna Adams called to tell me that I would be begin training with Eddy in May.

Eddy is an energetic, strikingly handsome 2 year old black Labrador cross Golden Retriever. He has a confidence in his work which is undeniably the best I've ever seen in a guide. He responds quickly to verbal and physical instruction, he is prepared to work no matter the time of day and doesn't back down from challenging routes or situations.

Eddy readily fit in with my family which consists of myself, my husband Ron, my 12 year old son Daniel, my 10 year old daughter Raylene and our 4 year old house princess Prudy [a retired guide

Team sponsored by Mr. Donald Cosby

dog]. Off duty, Eddy enjoys playing tug, tumbling with the children and Prudy, following me around as I do things around the house or laying in his bed with one of many stuffies. His waggy tail lets us all know he loves us.

My heart filled thanks goes out to Eddy's puppy raisers, his boarding family, Corinna his instructor and BC and Alberta Guide Dog Services. You have all contributed in making Eddy the prize guide that he is.

Officially, Eddy and I became a team on June 2, 2011, and I look forward to many years with him at my side. With him I feel a secret comfort and private peace as we travel along both familiar and unfamiliar streets.

Demand is growing, and so must we.



In partnership with Autism Support Dogs, we graduated our 100th service dog team this year.



There is a 3 year wait list to receive a guide dog.



It costs \$37,000 and takes 22+ months to produce a guide dog.



In the next few years, the need to replace retired guide dogs will greatly increase overall demand for our services.



Rosamund & Rory

“I can go to places that I would never even attempt on my own.”

I grew up in England and lost my sight at the age of two. I had a white cane in high school but was never really taught how to use it properly, so I mostly just carried it around.

When I was 17, I joined Britain's Voluntary Service Overseas (VSO) and travelled so much that I never applied for a guide dog. I eventually moved to Vancouver, and one day after a big overnight snowfall, I tried to go to the corner store by myself. Because the snow covered the all of the landmarks that I needed to find with my cane – sidewalk edges and curbs – I quickly had to give up and return home. That's when I decided that I needed a guide dog.

Since then, I have had five guides including my current dog Rory. My previous dog Janey, who is now retired, was also trained by BC Guide Dog Services.

Having a guide dog by my side has made a huge difference in my life. There have been times when I haven't had a guide dog (transition periods while waiting for the next



Team sponsored by Provincial Employees Community Services Fund

dog), and it takes an unbelievable amount of concentration just to take a walk by myself. With a dog like Rory, I can go to places that I would never even attempt to visit on my own.

Just walking with my dog brings me so much pleasure. I'll go for a walk even if I don't have any errands. If it's garbage day, she just scoots around the bins on the

street and I'm not even always aware of the obstacles that we've avoided unless a passerby tells me.

I'd like to extend a huge 'thank you' to everyone that supports BC Guide Dogs - what a difference you have made not just in my life but in the life of many others who use a guide dog. You have helped us live more productive, happier, and healthier lives!

Growing Up: The Journey of Life-Changing Dogs



Good Genes

Each of our litters is the result of careful planning and expert breeding knowledge. Knowing the genetic history of our dogs helps ensure that we provide clients with the healthiest guide dog possible. We carefully select breeding moms and dads based on healthy genes and desirable temperament.

Throughout the 2 month gestation period, the pregnant mom is well-cared for by dedicated volunteers like Diane Mott. With the help of a Puppy Raising Manager, our litters are whelped (delivered) at home. Once the puppies are born, Mott commits her full attention to the mom and litter, and rarely leaves her home for the next seven weeks!

Thanks to our strong relationships with other members of the International Guide Dog Federation, we often share or exchange puppies with other guide dog schools to ensure that we have healthy breeding stock.

Strong Basics: Socialization & Obedience

The ability to adapt to new situations is a key skill for a future guide dog that might encounter any number of situations in its working lifetime. Good socialization — learning how to behave around people and animals and visiting different places — is best cultivated at an early age. That's why our puppies are raised by volunteers in their own home rather than in kennels.

"Our puppy has seen more of the world than most pet dogs because we can take him everywhere we go," explains long-time volunteer puppy raiser Bev Bullock. Equipped with a puppy training jacket and ID card, our dogs are permitted to enter most restaurants, malls, and other establishments.

Puppies-in-training also attend bi-weekly obedience classes to build a strong foundation of basic skills in preparation for advanced training, which we liken to "going off to college."

Professional Training

At approximately 15 months of age, qualified dogs enter advanced training with a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor (GDMI). Just as teenagers move away for college, our guide-dogs-to-be move into a volunteer boarder's home to be closer to our office.

A GDMI will train a string of 3-4 dogs at a time over the course of approximately 5 months. Dogs undergo a full day of training every weekday, with evenings and weekends to relax and play in the comfort of their boarding home.

All of our training exercises are done in public places to replicate real life situations. Training walks are often done in busy downtown areas, on heavy traffic routes, or in parks where other dogs might be present.

Perfect Match

We get to know our applicants through a series of interviews and in-home assessments. By understanding the daily life and specific needs of each applicant, we can try to find the best canine match and provide customized one-to-one training.

Since 1998, we have been committed to providing domiciliary (in-home) training for clients. Rather than have clients come to our location, our GDMI's travel to the client's home with the dog, so that the team can train on familiar routes.

It takes two years and \$37,000 to breed, raise, and train a guide dog, but clients pay only a symbolic \$1 for a guide dog and our services.

Strong Support System

A dog-client team is generally ready to graduate after three weeks of training together, but our work doesn't end there. In fact, our relationship with the client is only in its early stages. Each team that we graduate represents a commitment of up to 8 years, during which we make annual home visits. These visits give us the opportunity to ensure that our dogs are well cared for, and to give any additional training that might be needed.

Many of our clients have also kept in touch with their guide dog's volunteer puppy raisers and boarders after graduation, adding to their network of support within the BC and Alberta Guide Dog Services community of volunteers and staff.

Happily Ever After

For the health and well-being of both our clients and canines, we retire our dogs at the age of 10. At that time, if the client is unable or prefers not to keep the dog as a pet, we arrange a suitable adoption.

Once a dog is retired, we give priority to the client to receive a replacement guide dog. In the coming years, more and more of our existing clients will require a replacement dog, and we are working hard to meet this increasing demand for our services in the community.

Growing *for and with* the Community

In June 2011, we opened a new office in Victoria to better serve the Vancouver Island community.

We continue to grow our relationship with Autism Support Dogs, our sister charity. Together, we graduated our 100th service dog in May 2011.

We hired a Marketing & Communication Specialist to better connect with our stakeholders. All graphic design is now handled in-house, saving time and money.

We hired a 4th Guide Dog Mobility Instructor (GDMI) so that we can train more life-changing guide dogs.

OUR FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

BC FOUNDING PATRONS

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Edmonton Public Teachers (Local No.37, Alberta Teachers' Association)

BRITISH COLUMBIA GUIDE DOG SERVICES

Financial Highlights
As at June 30, 2011
(Audited)

	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Results for the year:					
Revenue	\$1,118,375	\$1,210,371	\$1,062,239	\$1,092,771	\$1,108,552
Fundraising activities expenses	251,899	197,294	111,602	132,305	120,047
Training/client services expenses	782,929	777,332	683,397	578,486	450,763
Administrative expenses	193,376	140,957	143,282	136,977	127,625
Total expenses	1,228,204	1,115,583	938,281	847,768	698,435
Excess (deficit) revenue over expenses	(109,829)	94,788	123,958	245,003	410,117
Transfers to endowment funds	0	0	8,272	5,472	0
Transfers to capital fund	0	0	51,195	320,937	158,180
Year end:					
Operating fund cash/investments	\$ 207,402	\$ 258,143	\$ 293,280	\$ 217,605	\$ 294,933
Endowment fund investments	217,974	215,736	204,059	185,547	179,139
V. Adams fund cash/investments	1,658,165	495,680	0	0	0
Capital assets at cost	866,014	802,847	793,036	772,349	707,443
Bequests receivable	64,459	1,168,959	1,167,257	242,257	77,257
Total assets	2,949,967	2,945,549	2,409,929	1,341,475	1,209,028
Accounts payable	48,004	29,344	48,838	34,658	18,603
Mortgage payable	0	0	0	32,462	282,000
Deferred revenue**	1,777,134	1,701,229	1,240,903	278,126	157,199
Net assets	1,105,147	1,214,976	1,120,188	996,229	751,226

** Includes amounts for restricted use: 2011: \$ 1,682,115; 2010: \$1,590,000; 2009: \$1,000,000

Should you require a full set of audited statements, please contact our office directly.

“My guide dog is my **courage**,
motivation, and opportunity
for **a better life.**”

— Karl-Erik + guide dog Phoenix

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