



GDF Suncoast Puppy Raisers Newsletter

November 2016



Suncoast Puppy Raisers
Puppy Saturday Meeting
Date: November 12, 2016
Event: Dogtoberfest
Where: Highlander Park
1920 Pinehurst Rd., Dunedin
Time: 2 hour slot between
11:30am – 5:00pm

Info: www.dogtoberfest.info
Hi everyone, The 9th Annual Dogtoberfest, sponsored by the Suncoast Animal League is one that we have participated in almost every year. It is not only a wonderful event, but a great way to get our puppy group out into the public and a perfect exposure for our dogs. The focus of the event is the “Super Pet Adopt-a-Thon”, with over 50 rescue groups, so if you are in the market

for a new pet, here is your chance. If you are soft hearted and have trouble saying know, make sure you have an escort, like Chuck, to keep you in check. On the main stage there will be music, a costume contest, and my favorite, the “Running of the Wieners.”

We plan to have a booth at this event and will need volunteers throughout the day to help us greet people. Chuck and I will be on hand to set up the booth but we will need Puppy Raisers to help at the booth from 11:00am till we break down at 5:00pm. We just request each volunteer to spend 2 hours at the table and then spend the rest of the time enjoying the event. Let us know the hours you wish to help at the booth. You never know what you will encounter, one year I got to hold a pet skunk. Although Skunk Rescue says they make good pets, I still don’t think I want one.

The event is free, but parking is \$5.00. Let’s enjoy a beautiful day in the park with our furry friends and we will see you there.



Above Suncoast Puppy Raisers last month with Congressman David Jolly and below the White Cane Walk.



Last Month

The Low Vision Expo sponsored by the Pinellas Council of the Blind was a huge success. It was well attended and we had several inquiries at our table about guide dogs and puppy raising. Special guests at the event were “Dan Mann, CEO of the Lighthouse of Pinellas and Congressman David Jolly.

The “White Cane Safety” walk was also a success. Over 30 participants with their canes and guide dogs walked along Park Blvd clearly visible to motor vehicles to bring attention to approach us with caution and that by law, we have the right of way. Unfortunately, a lot of pedestrians with the right of way have been hit or killed. I happened to be one of them while crossing MLK at 77th Ave. In the middle of the crosswalk, a car knocked me down. I wasn’t seriously injured but hope the person that hit me is now educated about the White Cane Law.

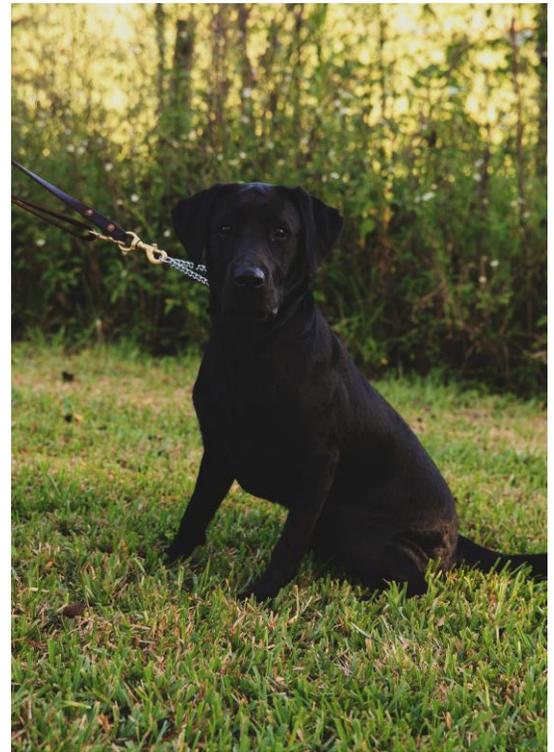
We had a lovely dinner at Sunset Grill Wednesday, October 26th. Our special guest was David with his dog guide Clair Rose. Claire Rose, raised in our group by Darleen Bigham, has been David’s guide for about a year. Because they live in Clearwater, Darleen and her puppy have been able to stay in contact with David and Claire Rose. Having dinner together gave us an opportunity to see them work together and ask questions that most people don’t get the opportunity to ask of a guide dog user. Although Amy and Claire Rose had their sisterly nuzzling under the table, Claire Rose was on her best behavior. Thank you David and Claire Rose for sharing an evening with us.

Training Up Date

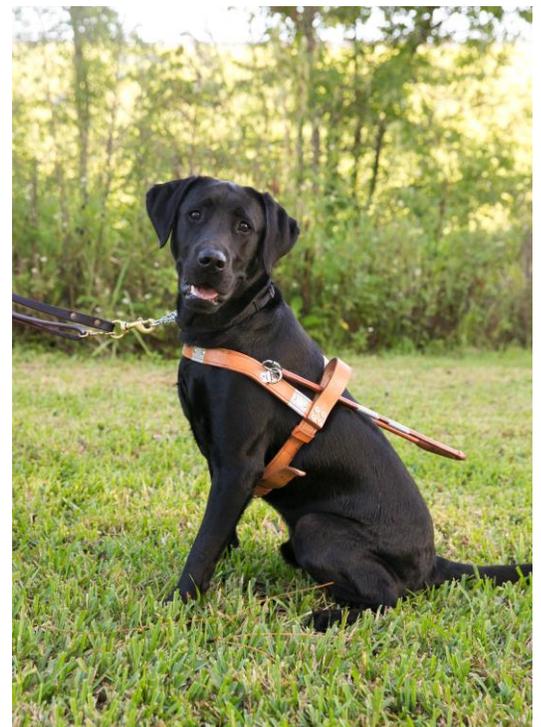
Last month, Rugby, raised by Francis Lucus, and Buddy, raised by Jackie Jordan, went in for training. However, they did not return to New York and the Guide Dog Foundation, they went to Southeastern Guide Dogs, along with several other GDF dogs. Southeastern made a request to Guide Dog Foundation for some “in for training” dogs because they found themselves short, and GDF was able to grant the request. So far, we have not gotten a training update, but we got an awesome picture. We may be a little prejudice, but we think Rugby and Buddy are by far the best looking dogs!

Essie Update

We got word this week that Essie, raised by Don and Donna Thompson was dropped for small animal distraction. Although she did good work, a squirrel would just send her over the top. Since this could potentially be dangerous to a guide dog user, she was dropped. Although very disappointed, the Thompsons understand and have decided not to adopt her back. Don stated that Essie is a lovely dog and will make a good pet. Good luck Essie and we hope you find a family that needs a lot of squirrels chased out of the yard.



Rugby In For Training at SEGD above and below.



Great American Teach Inn

It is here again this year the Teach Inn is November 16th in Pinellas County schools and November 17th in Hillsborough County schools. If you are unaware the Teach Inn is a nationwide event in which schools invite people from all careers to come and talk about what they do for a living or what the organization they represent does. We are always popular. If you have been asked to do a Teach Inn at a school and are able to do it let us know the school you are covering. If you have not been asked and can help us out on either day we have schools asking us in both counties. Let us know which day you are available and the times you can help. We will set you up to be a presenter at a school. The kids love to see our puppies and it is a great exposure for our pups. Hopefully when we are done the kids understand why they should not pet or disturb a service dog.

Training Tip –Animal Distractions

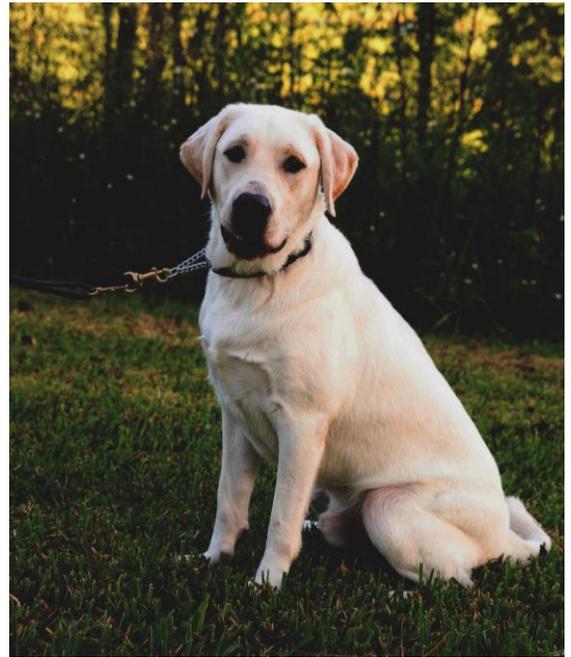
Almost everyone in our group has complained that their puppy is overly distracted by the presence of other dogs. Yes, and after handling Amy at a puppy event last week I can see how challenging it can be to keep a 10 month old dog under control. Under normal circumstances, Amy is well behaved and not a problem, but around other dogs, she was a handful. Unfortunately, being distracted by other dogs is a normal reaction and is a stage of puppyhood that needs to be addressed if they are going to become guide dogs.

The first piece of advice is to make sure your puppy gets plenty of exercise to relieve some of that pent up energy. Some raisers plan “play dates” with other puppies or if you can take them on a long walk or energetic bout of play in the back yard.

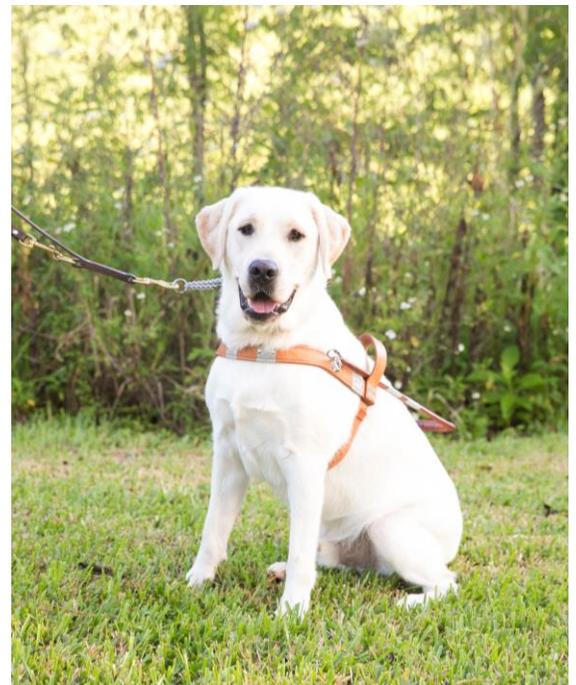
Next, learn to anticipate your puppy. If you know your puppy is “dog crazy” watch their body language as you get closer to another dog. Anticipate their excitement and nip it in the bud. Start by shortening up the leash and be ready for a firm leash correction accompanied by a very stern verbal NO. Next, try to position the puppy in order to break eye contact with the approaching dog. Other techniques are to put your puppy into a “sit” or “down” until they either gain their composure or the other dog passes by.

A final technique is to offer a food reward for ignoring the other dog. The timing on this is critical and will not be effective if the timing is off. When the dog is overly excited, do whatever you can to get the puppy to look at you, and then give the treat. The reinforcement is, if the puppy looks at you and away from the distraction, they are rewarded with a treat. Food rewards do not work for all pups but it can be an effective tool.

Just remember that dogs are naturally distracted by other dogs and small animals. What we are looking for is reducing the recovery rate so they can continue their work. Feel free to ask for additional help and demonstration of techniques at our next meeting. We Hope to see you all at Dogtoberfest. Debbie & Chuck



Buddy above and below In For Training at SEGD



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