



## Suncoast Puppy Raisers

# GDF Suncoast Puppy raiser's Newsletter

December 2016



EST. 1946

## GUIDE DOG FOUNDATION

### *Puppy Saturday Meeting*

*Date: December 10, 2016*

*Where: John's Pass, Madeira Beach*

*12900 Gulf Blvd*

*Time 11:30 am – 1:30pm*

*All are Welcome!*

Hi everyone,

Happy Holidays and our pups want to spend it at the beach! John's Pass is a lovely little shopping village located on Madeira Beach just before going over the bridge to Treasure Island. We have met here before, but this will be our first time during the Holiday Season.

We will start our adventure by parking in the lot west of Gulf Blvd. and gather at the Gazebo. After a brief walk on the beach we will head directly to lunch at the Friendly Fisherman. After lunch, we will do a little walk about and maybe pick up a few Christmas gifts along the way. I know the dogs will want to visit their favorite pet store to personally pick out their favorite toy.

Our group is rather small at this time but we want to extend the invitation to join us even if you are not currently raising a puppy. An RSVP would be appreciated so we can get an idea of how many will be joining us. So get out

your favorite Holiday clothes, dress up your pups and come and we will see you there!

**Direction:** From the north From I275, exit 38<sup>th</sup> Ave. N heading west. Turn right onto Tyrone Blvd which turns into Bay Pines Blvd. At the

split, stay left and follow sign to Madeira Beach across the John Stewart Causeway. At Gulf Blvd., turn left, at 129<sup>th</sup> Ave., turn right into the parking lot. The Gazebo and bathrooms are located in the middle of the lot.

Alternately, you can park at the John's Pass parking garage and walk over to meet us. Call Chuck if you have any problems finding us.



**This month newsletter dedicated to Maddox**

**5-27-2004 to 12-3-2016**

**Born Rochester Michigan; raised by Linda Wiedewitsch in  
Detroit Lakes Minnesota**

**Guide to David Anspach November 2005 thru June 2009**

**Debbie Hietala June 2009 thru December 2016**

## ***Last Month***

We want to thank everyone that came out to help us with the Dogtoberfest. We had perfect weather and many guests stopped at our booth to make inquiries. Hopefully, we will get a puppy application or two. The Dogtoberfest is sponsored by the Suncoast Animal League and has grown in to quite a successful event. The best part is that over 150 dogs were adopted and found their Forever Homes. Lucky for Chuck, none found their way into our home although I did find a couple of Yorkie's to be awfully cute! There's always next year!

Every November, our puppies get invited to be guests at the Great American Teach-In, a type of career day in the schools. So instead of a meeting we asked the pups to go to school. We want to thank the pups and raisers for volunteering their time to educate kids about guide dogs. Chuck and Amy visited two schools and later Chuck donated two bestselling books to both school libraries. The two books are,

“Thunder Dog,” a true story about Roselle, a guide dog led her companion and hundreds of others down the darkened stairs of the World Trade Center, and “Running with Roselle,” also a true story that describes how Roselle was trained as a puppy and how she became a guide dog. Both are written by Michael Hingson, Roselle's companion. Michael has been totally blind since birth and lives in California with his current guide Africa. We met Mike about 8 years ago and have stayed in touch ever since. Both his books are very educational and a must read for all levels.

## ***Training update***

We currently do not have any dogs going in for training and we have not received an update on Rugby or Buddy. However, we are expecting an update any day. We will pass the information along as we receive it.

We do have some news about Peach, raised by Bethani Shilladay. Deana was recently in town to take pictures of Peach to send to New York to determine her status as a breeder. It was determined that she had the right stuff personality and build to be accepted. Peach will continue her time with Bethani until she is called back to New York. There she will be placed in a permanent home while she is bred, producing the best puppies ever. Congratulations Peach and Bethani. Bethani, you're going to become a grandmother!



**Above Maddox being picked up by Linda at Leader dogs July 17<sup>th</sup> 2004 Below Returned June 13 2005**



## *A Tribute to Maddox*

I lost Maddox today, although my heart is breaking, I knew this day was coming. Maddox wrote 4 entries to his blog that gave a history of his life with me and today he wrote his final entry. The following is the entire blog.

Hello, my friends at Longo Pet concierge invited me to say a few words about my life as a guide dog to put on their website; I'm a little short on words but long on stories. My name is Maddox and I am a 7 year old German shepherd. I was trained to become a guide dog at Leader Dog's in Michigan. I am currently dragging around, oops, I mean, working for a lady named Debbie who lives in St. Pete. I really shouldn't make fun of her because we really do have a wonderful relationship. She works in downtown Tampa and has to take the bus every day. I have a very big responsibility getting her to and from work. As you can imagine, the traffic in downtown Tampa is very busy and drivers are not always paying attention to where they are going. In fact, yesterday we were walking to the bank and a car turned right in front of us while we were already half way across the street! I had to slow us down so they could pass without hitting us. I don't know about her, but the car was on my side and would have hit me first!

Getting Debbie to and from work safely is only a small part of my work. I also help her find the door to get into the courthouse, the entrance is huge and we have to avoid all kinds of people and obstacles to get in. Then we have to go through security, and then up the escalator. Thankfully, once we get to her office, I get a hug, pat on the head, a drink of water and settle in for a long nap. All of this and it's only 7:00am. Good thing she won't need me for several hours before I have some where else I have to take her.

I have a very interesting life as a guide dog and I am very lucky to be doing the work I love. I kind of like this writing stuff but I am tired for now. I'll save up a few stories to tell you the next time I post. Maddox

Hello, Maddox here, you know the 7 year old German shepherd guide Dog? This is my second post and I thought I would tell you a little more about my life guiding my best friend Debbie. As I told you before, I work really hard because Debbie takes me everywhere. Yesterday we had to go to the hospital because Debbie's dad is there. We got a lot of looks as we walked through the long hallways because you don't see many dogs in the hospital. Once we got there, her dad was happy to see me and I wagged my tail for him. I also got a lot of attention from one of his nurses, the other nurse was afraid of me. I don't know why, I'm big but I wouldn't hurt a flea. Well, maybe I would chew on a flea but I wouldn't hurt a person.

I wanted to tell you a little about how I became a guide dog. It was a lot of work and only the best of the best make it all the way. Leader Dogs in Michigan have breeder dogs whose only job is to make puppies to be trained to become guide dogs.



**Maddox served and supported those who supported him. Even as a puppy riding Lions Parade float top, Middle helping St. Pete Lions due public outreach, bottom Lake Holcombe Lions present Debbie and Maddox Chucks moms vest at her memorial. Maddox and Debbie were the inspiration for her to become a Lion. She went on to achieve the highest award issued to Wisconsin Lions.**

After we are about 8 weeks old, a wonderful family agrees to raise us until we are old enough, about 16 months to learn what a harness is. In the meantime that family teaches me manners, makes me relieve outdoors, and takes me every where they can think of so I get used to things. I happen to be raised in Detroit Lakes Minnesota. I had a wonderful lady named Linda that was a police woman that took me all over doing investigation stuff. I had a ball. Then one day we had to say good-bye and return to Michigan for the next step in my training. It was hard to leave but I knew I had a greater purpose in life.

My next new friends were trainers at Leader dogs. They taught me the new facts of life. I was going to wear this leather harness and learn lots of new stuff. I had to learn my left from my right, when to stop at a curb, find all kinds of stuff like, the sidewalk, the door, the steps, the elevator, and more. The hardest thing to learn was when to cross the street safely. I had to learn that you can't trust those traffic lights, to many drivers don't obey them. First I wait for a signal from my handler that they are ready to cross and then I decide if it is safe. I look both ways and have to judge that we have enough time to cross. . No one wants to get hit by one of those big things on wheels, so I learn to really pay attention. If I think it is not safe, I am supposed to stop, block, or even back my handler up. It is a huge responsibility and some dogs just can't cut it.

After I complete my training, it is time for me to be matched with my lifelong friend. I don't know who that will be but the school will pick out someone they think I will work well with. You'll be surprised how I ended up with Debbie here in Florida, but will have to wait until the next time. It's time for a nap. Maddox

Hello, Maddox here. I have been so busy dragging Debbie around as her guide dog that I haven't had time to write. This is my third post and its fun trying to explain to you humans what it is like for me, a good looking 7 year old German Shepherd, to be a guide dog. Well, I guess I'm good looking,

everyone we pass tells me so. While I like being admired, could you please do it silently? When people talk to me, whistle, cluck or call my name while I am in harness working, I could get distracted and do something that could hurt Debbie, like walk her off a step or into a wall. Once I've stopped and Debbie's taken my harness off, you can visit with me all you want.

That's exactly how we handled it the other day.

Debbie's dad is in a rehab center and boy, were those people excited to see me when we walked in. After she took my harness off, I got to walk around and greet every one. After a lot of loving, I settled down by her side. I did have to watch my tail so it wouldn't get run over by one of those fancy wheel chairs. It made me happy to see those people smile.

Yesterday, on the way home, we had to walk in the rain to catch the bus. I don't mind as much as Debbie does about getting wet. It's just part of the job. The people at the bus stop didn't really appreciate me shaking all over once we got under the shelter. Oh well, I just laid down on the wet concrete to wait for the bus. Then, on the way home from the bus stop, I saw a really big puddle. I tried to take Debbie around it, but



**Top taking Debbie and Chuck for a tour of Leader Dogs. Then on to Detroit Lakes, to meet my puppy raisers Linda and her daughter. Middle at my old house got to run around check the food dish was still there and say hi to my old friend the cat. Bottom my puppy raisers and their current pups.**

she didn't follow me and stepped right into 6" deep water. Next time maybe she'll trust that I'm not just meandering into the street for no reason!

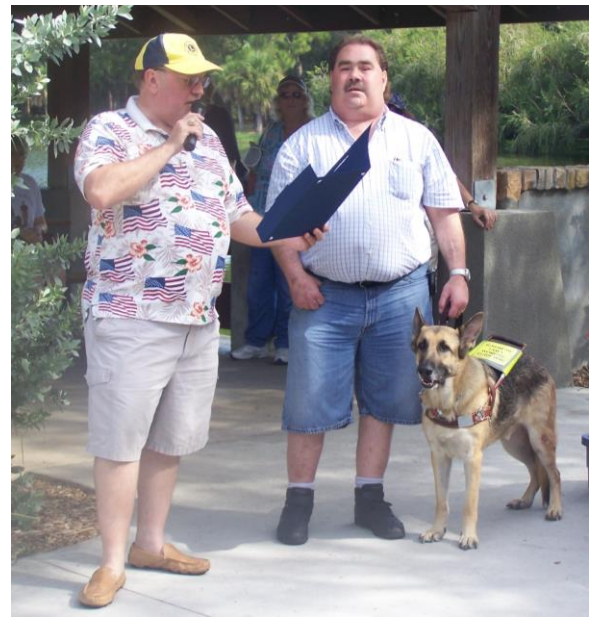
I never did tell you how I got from Leader Dogs in Michigan to Florida. The fact of the matter is Debbie was not my first assignment. A man named David applied to the school for a dog and was originally selected to be matched with me. He came to the school and stayed on campus for about 4 weeks so that we could learn how to work together. Then we flew back to St. Pete. I was about 2 years old. We got to meet Debbie and her guide dog Maggie at some meeting a bunch of blind people were at. Maggie and I socialized at a pool party one summer, but there was no way I was going swimming with her. Then, about a year and a half later, a terrible thing happened. All I know is some guys came and put my buddy on some type of board and then placed him in the back of this big van. I never saw him again. I was beside myself. I was responsible for him, where was he? I couldn't eat and I sure was stressed that I couldn't find him to take him to work. I don't know why, but I got picked up by Debbie and she took me home to live with her and Maggie. Maggie didn't go out with Debbie anymore because she wanted to sleep on the couch more than drag her around every day. I guess Debbie noticed I had no desire to wag my tail or get up to eat so she decided to pretend that she needed me to do my job again. She got out my harness and we took a walk around the block. I felt so good, I was prancing. Then she took me on a big adventure on the bus downtown and to where she worked. I instantly recognized a desk, and knew what to do, laydown underneath it. I was also familiar with the way Debbie's computer talked to her so I felt right at home. From then on she took me every day. I didn't immediately figure out that she couldn't see very well. She definitely could see better than

David, but it took me awhile to understand that she needed me to step up my game.

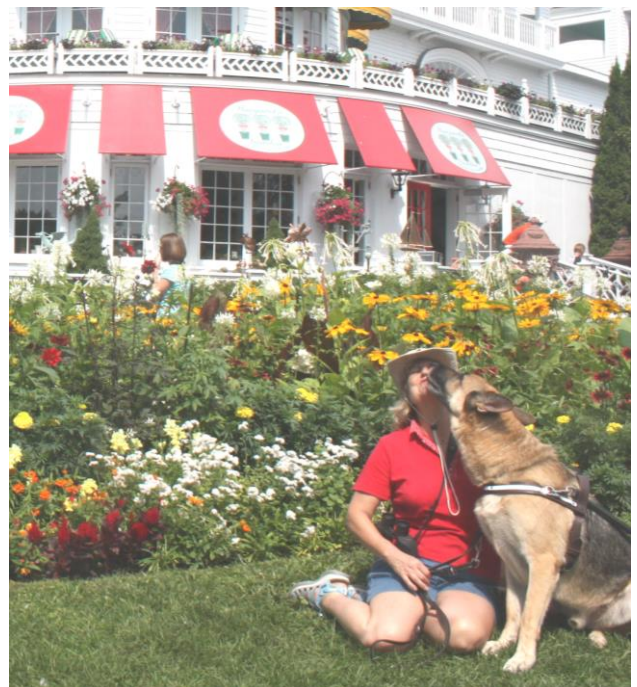
We were not working too long together when another terrible thing happened. One day I said good bye to Maggie as I usually did on our way to work and when we came home, she wasn't there. I never saw her again either. Although I love being Debbie's partner, I miss playing with her. I figure she's out there playing with David.

Well, it's time to sign off. Debbie is off today and we are going shopping for half price Valentine's Day stuff, whatever that is. Talk to you soon. Maddox

Hi friends, Maddox here. People often wonder if guide dogs ever get a chance to play and just be a dog. Are you kidding? This is the best gig in town. Here is a typical day. I get up at 5:30 and eat. We harness up and I work for 12 minutes dragging Debbie to the bus stop. Then I get on the bus and take a 35minute nap. Then I work 7 minutes getting her to her office, and then I sleep for 6 hours. The whole



**Above here I am with Dave. I loved guiding you. When you went out the door without me and did not come back I was lost for a while and very unhappy. Then I realized you no longer needed my help but Debbie did! Once I figured that out everything made sense. It took me a little while to get Debbie and Leader Dogs to know that but I persevered till they understood as well. Below taking a break from showing Debbie around Mackinaw Island MI. I just thought I would tell her thank you for letting me guide her.**



process works in reverse back home. It only gets intense if I have to take her somewhere else on the way home. Then, it is work mode, head down, ears back and nose forward ready to serve and protect.

. Once I get home, harness comes off and the rest of the evening is mine.

First, I have to let the rest of the group know I'm home. There's Trouble, a pit mix that always has to try to one up me. Then, the 10 pound Poodle that thinks he's in charge. He talks a big story but he doesn't have any teeth, I humor him and just push him aside. Then there's the cat. I love chasing her! I have a fenced in back yard with a pet door so I can come and go as I please. Then, there is the swimming pool. I don't really like to go in it but I love to chase Trouble around the outside of it.

Even at home, I am still on duty of sorts. I think it comes with the German Shepherd breed. I always do a perimeter patrol of the back yard every hour or so and strategically place myself in the middle of the floor to take a nap, that way I can watch all doors to the house, front, back and bedroom. Of course you always have to watch for people coming to the door to steal your stuff. That's why dogs bark at the mail carrier. Every day, this person, usually the same one about the same time, comes up to the door. We dogs just know they are coming to steal our stuff. We ferociously bark at the window or door and, poof, they go away. Works every time! Sometimes you do have to open the door to make your point, but they usually leave after seeing me.

Basically, guide dogs have it made. The only things we don't like are when we are left behind. Sometimes Debbie uses her cane instead of me. She says it's because she is going somewhere that I would not like. She's probably right, I hate loud music and I don't like the cannons at the football game. Also, if she is going to someone's house, she



**The pictures above is what Maddox was all about, guiding and leading. All Maddox ever wanted to do since he graduated with Dave is to guide. Leading the way and teaching other people and pups about being a Guide Dog was fun. But guiding was serous work and work he loved to do. Many pups and more than a few other Guide Dogs found out how serious he was when they approached him while Debbie was holding the harness. A growl and a snap of his teeth let them know do not bother me now I am working. Same pups out of harness he would romp and play with. While serious about his work he also loved to play. Below are some pictures of him playing.**



doesn't really need me to lead her around. I just let her know how much I missed her by jumping all over her when she gets back.

That's all for now, I'll catch up with you next time. Maddox

Hi all, Maddox here. It's been a long time since I've written, so I'll try to fill you in. I am 12 ½ now and I am retired. Debbie retired me in July just after I turned 11. She noticed that my back left hip was slipping a little and I was having a much harder time walking. She didn't just stop all at once, but started not taking me every day. I really hated it. I was born and bred to work and besides my job is to keep Debbie safe. One day, I was so upset to see her leave that I got out of the back yard to follow her. She didn't know it but luckily my tag has Chuck's phone number on it so I was able to be returned home.

As time went by, I took it upon myself to protect the house and fenced in yard. About once an hour I'd go out the pet door, do my perimeter check, then do the same in the house, when all was well, I'd take a nap. I still had Trouble, Debbie's dumb pit mix and the stupid cat to keep me company so I was never really alone. But when she came home, boy I get excited! I'd grab my toy, bark, and prance like a puppy.

Now, it's Thanksgiving 2016, and I'm really slowing down. I don't have a lot of pain, I just don't have the energy I used to have. But, I know I am well-loved and like to lay right in the doorway so everyone has to walk around or over me. I'm happy and content to know I have lived a long and fulfilling life.

Then yesterday, December 2, 2016, I didn't feel too good. I was dizzy and couldn't walk. Debbie and Chuck took me to the doggie hospital where they tried to make me feel better. I'm a little disoriented and I really am not sure what is going on. But, I love and trust my Debbie. She knows just where to rub and pet me to make me relax. I also trust her to make the right decisions on my behalf because I know she loves me very much.

I love you too Maddox, that is why when I was told you were not going to get better I made decision to let you go over the rainbow bridge. There you can play with Maggie, see your other best friend David and I will see you again one day.

You were the best guide dog ever and I will miss you every day. Rest in Peace my friend. Signing off for both of us Debbie and Maddox December 3, 2016

Chuck here, Debbie and I send all of you our love to each of you and your families. Have a wonderful Holiday season. We can all learn from Maddox's example. He lived his life with joy and gusto. Guided those who needed him and taught others how to do what he did. Hi credo was love all you can, guide those who wish your guidance, work hard, play hard, kiss more than you bark, and never miss a chance to take a nap! Thanks Maddox you left paw prints in more hearts than you will ever know Rest in peace my good buddy.



**Debbie, Santa and Santa's favorite reindeer Maddox wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**

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**Some of Maddox's favorite adventures and friends.**

