

For Immediate Release



Guiding Eyes for the Blind Holds Open House for Prospective Puppy Raisers *Organization invites NYC residents to raise a puppy with a purpose*

(New York, NY) May 28, 2013 – On Sunday, June 23, Guiding Eyes for the Blind will showcase their guide dogs in training at a free open house at the Animal Medical Center, located at 510 E. 62nd Street, New York, NY. The nonprofit guide dog school invites New York residents to open their hearts and their homes for this rare volunteer opportunity – to raise a future guide dog puppy.

The Guiding Eyes open house will start at 5:00pm and run until about 7:00pm. Guests will learn what it's like to be a Puppy Raiser as they meet Guiding Eyes staff and volunteers and cuddle with guide dogs in training. Guiding Eyes graduate and New York City resident Blessing Offor will speak about his experience living with a guide dog. Blessing received his second guide dog from Guiding Eyes in June 2012 - a yellow Lab named Laramie.

Puppy raisers welcome eight-week-old puppies into their homes and teach house manners and basic obedience while socializing the pups to the world around them. They receive full support from the organization, including training classes and free vet care. The volunteers love, nurture, and educate the pups for 14 to 16 months before sending them off to their calling as a guide dog for a blind or visually impaired person.

For someone without sight, a Guiding Eyes dog provides life changing independence, as well as unconditional love and support. Puppy raisers come from all walks of life and include couples, families with children, young adults, and senior citizens. Some already have forever pets of their own, while others commit to raising guide dogs as a way to give their love to a new pet each year. They all share the common desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves.

Battery Park resident Julia Lancian has experienced firsthand the joy and fulfillment that comes with raising a future guide dog. "The Guiding Eyes puppy raising program combines two things that are very dear to me – my love for animals and my admiration for individuals with disabilities," says Lancian, who now volunteers as the organization's regional coordinator in New York City. Michelle Brier, Guiding Eyes' director of marketing and communications, adds that, "Without the extraordinary dedication of our puppy raisers, we would simply be unable to provide guide dogs to the blind and visually impaired."

For more information on becoming a volunteer in New York City, please visit www.guidingeyes.org or contact Nicole Guite at nguite@guidingeyes.org or (845) 230-6406.

About Guiding Eyes for the Blind

Guiding Eyes for the Blind is an internationally accredited 501(c)(3) nonprofit guide dog school founded in 1954. Since its inception, Guiding Eyes has grown to be one of the foremost guide dog schools in the world, known for its cutting-edge training programs, commitment to excellence, and dedication to its elite and superbly trained guide dogs. In 2008, the school launched Heeling Autism, a service dog program designed to provide safety and companionship for children on the autism spectrum. Guiding Eyes provides all of its services at no cost, and is dependent upon contributions to fulfill its mission. The organization's Headquarters and Training Center is located in Yorktown Heights, N.Y. and its Canine Development Center is in Patterson, N.Y. For more info, visit www.guidingeyes.org, like Guiding Eyes on Facebook (www.facebook.com/guidingeyes) or follow @guidingeyes on Twitter.

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Blind musician Blessing Offor lives in New York City with Guiding Eyes guide dog Laramie.



New York City Puppy Raiser Julia Lancian with Guiding Eyes pup Paloma



Scooter is one of the special future guide dog puppies being raised in New York City.

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