New Path, New Purpose

In 2015, Barbara Brunner drove past Guiding Eyes for the Blind's Canine Development Center in Patterson, New York, en route to a family dinner. She later browsed our website, curious as to what we were about. Barbara learned we needed volunteers for the Guiding Eyes whelping kennel, and she needed to fill a void in her life. Barbara had just experienced some major changes—the loss of her spouse, on top of retirement. The timing seemed more than a coincidence.

Barbara became a dedicated whelping kennel volunteer, and welcomed Viking, a black Labrador stud in our breeding program, to her home. She also trained for, and provided, home socialization to help future guide dogs prepare for the sights and sounds of diverse environments, and completed a blindfold exercise to gain a thorough understanding of guide dog training. Barbara later adopted Max, a German Shepherd released from our training program.

What was once a passerby’s interest in the mission of Guiding Eyes was now a passion, and Barbara’s involvement continued to flourish. She helped fund the whelping kennel’s remote camera system, donated a dog treadmill, and volunteered at golf outings and training center graduations. Barbara recalls sponsoring a special graduation ceremony when one of Viking’s first pups completed training. “Even though I wasn’t directly involved with that puppy’s accomplishments, I was still so proud,” says Barbara. “The puppy raiser, along with Guiding Eyes volunteers and staff, did so much of the work to get that puppy to graduation day. It really takes a village!”

Barbara was always impressed by how Guiding Eyes provided guide dogs at no expense to recipients, knowing it costs about $50,000 to breed, raise, and train a guide dog. And she was amazed at how our programs were funded solely by gifts from our supporters. Barbara became inspired to make a lasting impact when she learned about the Pathfinder Society. “Guiding Eyes has become a second family to me, and I’m sure thousands of others feel the same. Designating Guiding Eyes as a beneficiary of my IRA gives me peace of mind that Guiding Eyes dogs will continue to make a profound difference in people’s lives for years to come.”
The Gift That Gives to You

Would you like to make a gift and increase your income? If so, consider a charitable gift annuity.

Like many people, you may be seeking ways to augment your retirement funds and may feel more secure knowing you can depend on fixed payments, regardless of changes in the economy.

Charitable gift annuities are designed to provide dependable payments that will continue for the lifetime of you and/or your spouse or another person. Because a portion of the assets used to fund your gift annuity will eventually be used for charitable purposes, you can benefit from significant income tax savings and your payments may be taxed at more favorable rates than other income. You also enjoy the satisfaction of knowing you have arranged for an eventual gift in support of Guiding Eyes for the Blind.

Payment rates for gift annuities are based on the age and number of the person(s) receiving the income and other factors. Once the rate is set for your annuity, it will never change.

You can create a gift annuity by transferring assets such as cash, stocks, or mutual funds to us and completing a simple, one-page agreement. In return, you and/or someone you choose will receive payments for life.

With a gift annuity, you not only enhance your future economic security, but you may also be able to make a larger charitable gift than you thought possible.

Establishing a gift annuity is quick and easy with the benefits to you and your loved ones lasting a lifetime, and you will be making a lasting difference to Guiding Eyes for the Blind.

Contact us to receive more information about a gift annuity.

Did You Know?

- Globally, at least 2.2 billion people are blind or visually impaired, half of whom have a vision impairment that could have been treated with early detection.

- A first-century mural from the Roman ruins of Herculaneum and a 13th century Chinese scroll are believed to be among the earliest depictions of dogs leading people who are blind.

- Guiding Eyes offers graduates a 24/7 “Access Hotline” to provide real-time assistance resolving situations in which guide dog access is denied by public establishments or services.

**Gift Annuity Rates**

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For illustrative purposes only. Please write for current benefits and rates for other ages.

Volunteer Barbara Brunner and Viking socializing Guiding Eyes puppies.
You Decide

Recent studies show as many as 65% of adult Americans don’t have a will. Many believe they are too young to need one, are not wealthy enough, or that it will cost too much. Most often, however, making an estate plan is simply delayed until it is too late. Though it’s hard to believe, by neglecting to make a will and other estate plans, people are choosing to forfeit their right to decide what will happen to their assets after their lifetime.

In general, without a will:

• No person outside your family can receive anything from your estate.

• Your relatives’ legal relationship to you dictates how much they inherit, regardless of need, merit, or your wishes.

• No charitable organization can receive anything you may have intended for them.

When properly drafted by a qualified attorney, a will or living trust not only provides for your spouse, children, friends, favorite charitable interests, like Guiding Eyes for the Blind, and others you wish to remember; it minimizes estate settlement costs. Your will or trust will also direct that your property be managed as you want, and valid documentation will spare your survivors headaches, heartache, and expense.

Having earned your property, you have the right and privilege to distribute it as you wish after you no longer need it. By planning today, you’ll be the one making the decisions.

Ways to Give Outside of Your Will

Your will is not the only tool in your estate plans you can use to make a gift. Other ways include:

**Retirement plans.** It’s easy to include Guiding Eyes for the Blind as a beneficiary of your IRA, 401(k), or 403(b) assets through a “beneficiary designation form” that you can obtain from your plan administrator or find on their website. By leaving other assets to your heirs instead, they will not have to pay income tax on your bequest.

**Checking, savings, or investment accounts.** Guiding Eyes for the Blind can receive all or a portion of these assets through a “pay on death” provision you arrange with the financial institution.

**Life insurance.** You can name Guiding Eyes for the Blind as a final beneficiary of a life insurance policy, or even give it now if it is no longer needed for its original purpose.

An attractive feature of all these plans? None is a permanent designation; you can arrange your “gift of a lifetime” knowing it can be changed at your discretion.

The purpose of this publication is solely educational, namely to provide general gift, estate, financial planning and related information. It is not intended as legal, accounting or other professional advice, and you should not rely on it as such. For assistance in planning charitable gifts with tax and other implications, the services of appropriate and qualified advisors should be obtained. Consult an attorney for advice if your plans require revision of a will or other legal document. Consult a tax and/or accounting specialist for advice regarding tax and accounting related matters. © Copyright 2020 by Sharpe Group. All Rights Reserved.
Gaining Vision Without Sight

In my first few weeks working at Guiding Eyes, I participated in a blindfold exercise, navigating our halls and stairwells with a coworker as my eyes. It was intimidating, I’ll admit, but the experience provided me with a greater awareness of the challenges faced by millions of individuals with visual impairments.

Soon after, I shadowed a class of students learning to navigate public spaces with their new guide dogs. I followed behind as the harnessed heroes led students through city intersections, crowded stores, and up and down escalators and stairs. To say I was inspired is an understatement. What I witnessed only scrapes the surface of the tremendous efforts put forth by the Guiding Eyes community to prepare a dog for guide work.

Helen Keller once wrote, “Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence.” These words help define the success of our students. Their positive energy, perseverance, hope, and trust in the guide dog they are strategically matched with opens the door to a world of independence and opportunity. I invite you to witness this yourself by attending one of our monthly graduations or coming in for a tour. Please contact me, Heather McGorman, Planned Giving Officer, at (914) 243-2250 or email hmcgorman@guidingeyes.org to arrange a personal visit or to learn about our Pathfinder Society.

Guiding Eyes for the Blind has provided expertly-trained guide dogs to people with vision loss at no charge for over 60 years. Please partner with us through a gift in your estate plan and, together, we can support dynamic guide dog teams for years to come. We can’t do it without you! Thank you!

Our Growing Team

Guiding Eyes for the Blind is pleased to welcome Heather McGorman, Planned Giving/Special Gifts Officer, as the newest member of the Development department.

Heather has nearly 15 years of fundraising experience, specializing in charitable gift annuities, corporate giving, and donor relations. “To support a mission that brings confidence and independence to people through the service and companionship of extraordinary dogs is an all-around win. I am proud to be part of this exceptional organization.”

Heather will be working closely with Gail Resnikoff, Director of Planned Giving, to help donors achieve their charitable goals while securing the future of Guiding Eyes programs through planned gifts.

To learn more about charitable gift planning options, please contact Heather at (914) 243-2250 or Gail at (914) 243-2237.