**Chapter 3: Juno Day**

This chapter will explain the purpose and process of “Juno” work, as well as what to expect on this all-important day.

Tomorrow (Tuesday) will be a very important day during which instructors will use Juno work and one-on-one instruction to continue gathering information about each student. During Juno work, instructors will play the part of the dog(“Juno”), allowing each student to begin learning commands, mechanics, and sequencing before receiving your assigned dog. These exercises provide valuable information about each individual’s walking pace, handling, and learning styles, that will all be taken into account during the matching process. For your part, you should come prepared with your new leash and treat pouch, as you will be expected to do once you receive your new guide dog.

***Fun Fact***: We use the term Juno because Juno was the patron Roman Goddess protecting travelers. When the guide dog movement in the US started, Latin terminology was much more widely used than it is today and the term Juno has become tradition.

The day will begin with a 6:00am wake up call, followed by obedience practice in Alumni Hall prior to breakfast at 7:00. We will be practicing Juno-style the four basic obedience commands:

**Sit**

**Down**

**Stay**

**Heel**

We will be explaining these commands in greater detail tomorrow during your one-on-one Juno obedience session. More details about each command can be found in Chapter 4.

After breakfast we will load in the vans and go to White Plains for the day. You will be given the order of when each person will work with an instructor, and the Instructor Assistant will give you an orientation to the lounge while you wait for your turn. The Class Instructors will take you on a Juno walk, with the instructors playing the part of your guide dog. We will take out two students at a time, swapping part way through so that you have opportunity to work with two different instructors. The class supervisor will also be observing all Juno walks. The last part of this walk will be an opportunity work with a live dog with the instructor close by to support both you and the dog. This will be a dog that instructors are considering matching you with, though it may not be the dog you receive in the end. For this reason, you will be given the breed, gender, and color of the dog you walk with, but not his or her name. All dogs will be referred to as “Juno” for the day.

During the Juno and live dog walks, instructors and supervisors will be looking at several factors:

* The pace (or speed) at which you are comfortable walking. Keep in mind that we are looking for a pace at which you can walk for the next 8 years or more. There is no need to show us how fast you can possibly walk, just a comfortable average pace.
* The amount of pull you are comfortable within the harness. Guide dogs work by creating some tension in the harness. It is normal to feel as though the dog is propelling you forward to some extent. Some individuals may prefer a firmer or lighter pull.
* Your voice intonations and overall demeanor. Your voice and body language will play a big part in communicating with your new dog. You will be asked to utilize verbal commands and praise during Juno work.
* There are a variety of other factors that come into play when making matches. Instructors and supervisors have lots experience in picking out subtle factors that can help make a compatible match. We may ask you questions about your home environment, intended use of the dog, other aspects of your life at home.

\*If you have a strong preference for breed, color, gender or type of dog, please let the instructors know during your Juno walks. We always recommend that you keep an open mind about what type of dog you receive and allow the instructors to choose the dog best suited to you regardless of color or gender. If it comes down to a choice between two dogs, we may be able to accommodate you. However, understand that if you state that a certain preference is a “deal breaker”, you are severely limiting the number of dogs that we have available to match with you. All dogs are not created equal, and you may be missing out on a better match.

During your Juno walk, you will also get an introduction to the verbal commands and hand signals used in guide work. Briefly, the basic commands used when working your dog are:

**Forward**

**Right**

**Left**

**Wait**

**To the Door/Curb** (targeting commands)

As with the obedience commands earlier in the day, the working commands will be explained in greater detail during one-on-one sessions, and descriptions can also be found in Chapter 4.

Once Juno walks are complete, the entire class will return to campus. Depending on timing, additional sessions may be offered to practice additional skills such as collaring, harnessing, corrections, or anything that instructors feel would be beneficial. There will be a lecture in the evening, followed by a Transitions Support Session open only to those students who have had one or more guide dogs previously. It can be a long and busy day, so remember to be patient with yourselves and with your instructors as excitement builds. You will be receiving your new dogs the following day, so do your best to get plenty of rest leading up to the big day!

NOTE: If you are training at home, your instructor will likely do Juno walks with you before beginning to work with your new dog. This is an excellent way for you and your instructor to become familiar with each other as well as begin to develop your skills as a guide dog handler. Additional Juno work may be utilized throughout your training as part of the learning process.

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