



The Guide Dog Foundation Suncoast Puppy Raisers Newsletter April 2014



Puppy Saturday Meeting

Date: April 12, 2014

Where: Plant Park, 401 W. Kennedy Blvd, Tampa

Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm

Hi everyone,

Our puppies have a special day in the park planned with the Delta Gamma girls from the University of Tampa. Founded in 1873 in Oxford Mississippi at the Lewis School for Girls by 3 women, Mary Comfort Leonard, Eva Webb Dodd, and Anna Boyd Ellington, they wanted to challenge women to maintain high ideals, encourage intellectual growth and to dedicate themselves to community service. Delta Gamma is the oldest women's fraternity, currently with over 200,000 initiated members, 147 collegiate chapters in the US and Canada, with the oldest existing chapter, Delta Gamma Eta, at the University of Akron, in Ohio, founded in 1879.

Since 1936, when one of their members became blinded, Delta gamma's philanthropic focus has been on sight, funding genetic research, low vision adaptive technology including tapes, Braille books as well as sponsoring centers for the visually impaired and schools for the blind. Delta Gammas give over 150,000 volunteer service hours for sight per year. Their motto is "do good" and their dedication to serving their community allows them to do a lot of good!

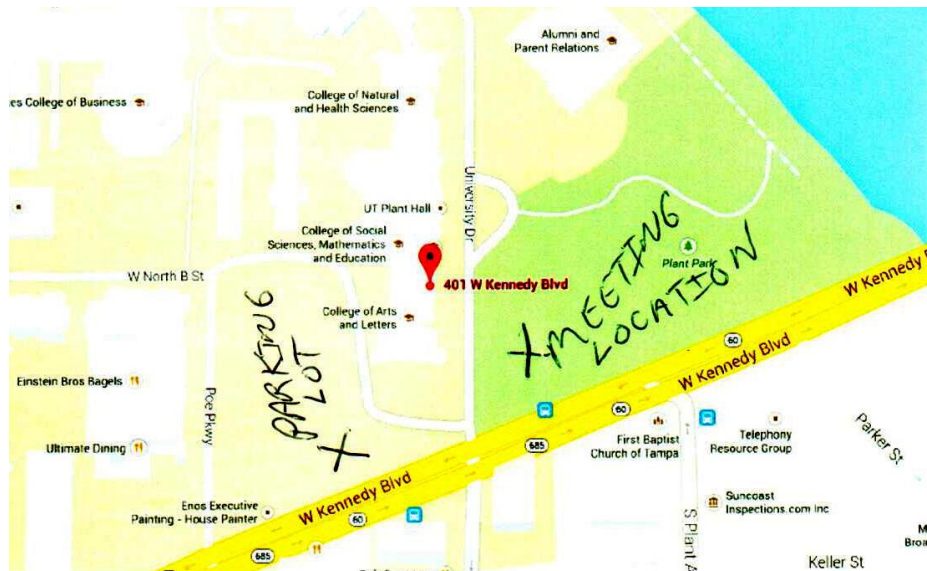
It is through their volunteer service hours that we became acquainted with both the Delta Gamma Fraternities at the University of Tampa and the University of South Florida. I was also invited to be a guest speaker at their state convention last year. There were over 200 young bright college women in the audience along with 30 or so alumni and Chuck was the only male in the group!

Anyways, the girls asked if they could attend one of our meetings and of course, our meetings are open to everyone. Once I realized there were about 75 girls that wanted to participate, it became clear, we needed to bring our meeting to them instead of them coming to us. Therefore, we will be meeting in Plant Park, at the entrance to the University of Tampa, located on Kennedy Blvd., just west of the Hillsborough River.

I've asked the girls to give us a little presentation on what they do and to select 10 volunteers to be instructed by our raisers to put the pups through some obedience commands while we let the other girls be our distractions. Perhaps we can convince the girls they need to raise a puppy for GDF as one of their community projects. How about it Delta Gamma?

After our meeting, we plan to go somewhere for lunch. By then, we've usually worked up a pretty good appetite. See you then.

Directions: From Pinellas County get onto I275 north bound towards Tampa Take the Downtown West exit #44 Ashley Drive stay to the right to stay on Ashley drive you will be following the river and will be able to see the University of Tampa across the river. Go to Kennedy Blvd and turn right. Cross over the river and the first Right you can make is University drive take it and immediately take a left on North B there will be a parking lot straight ahead of you that Says Faculty and staff only Monday thru Friday. Park in this lot. When you turned onto University Drive Plant Park was on your right. This is where we will meet. If you need different directions or help finding us call Chuck on his cell phone.



Last Month

Last month we took our puppies to the Sarasota County recreational Center and Skate Park. It was an awesome experience for them. First, it was crowded with a bunch of noisy kids, but it also had an incredible playground for the kids to play instruments, bang on things, play on swings, go down slides, and generally have a great time. The skate park was full of kids doing amazing things on boards with wheels. I think the puppies wanted to join in the fun. The meeting was a bit of a drive but I think it was well worth it.

On Wednesday, March 26th, the pups visited Congo River Adventure Golf for some much needed relaxing putt putt golfing. The place was packed so the puppies decided to start on the 18th hole and work their way backwards. They didn't know golfing could be so hazardous, there were water traps, swinging bridges to walk over, and a bunch of things to watch that little ball roll through. Maybe mini golfing is not so relaxing after all. Well they all survived to return another day.

Up Coming Events

On Saturday April 26th, we will need volunteers to pour beverages for the 3rd annual Blues Bash on Treasure Island, formerly known as the "Bikini Blues Bash." But, this is the year they "dropped their bikinis" and changed the name to the TI Blues Bash. The deal is, the Suncoast Blues Society tasks us with providing our own volunteers to pour beverages for the event and we keep all the tips which we donate to our Suncoast Puppy Raiser account with the Guide Dog Foundation. Our goal is to raise \$6000.00 to sponsor a puppy. The last two years we managed to deposit over \$1000.00 in tips each year. That along with other donations we have collected, our account is at about \$4800.00. This could be the year we reach our goal!

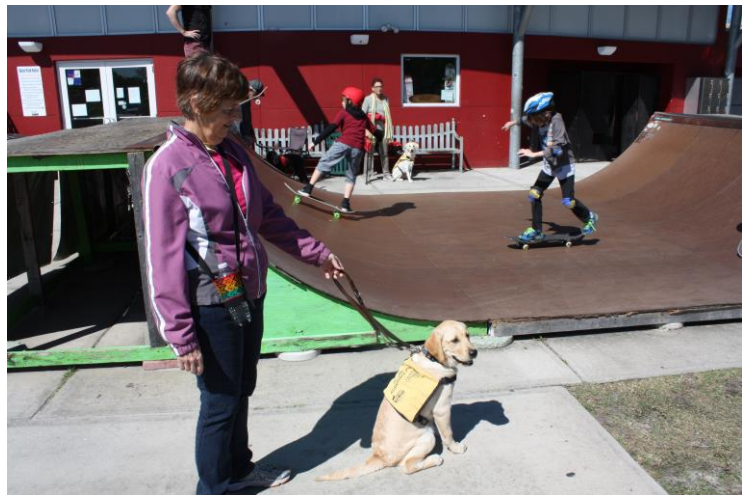
We will also need volunteers and pups to man a booth to show off our puppies, answer questions and hand out literature. Just seeing and petting the pups brings in tips as well!

The event goes from 11:00am until 10:00pm, so we will need A LOT Of fun loving, good hearted, volunteers to help us reach our goal. So save the date and if you can help, send us an email to dhietala@tampabay.rr.com or chuck@suncoastpup.org

21st annual Raymond James Symphony Under the Stars: Featuring the award-winning Florida Orchestra Saturday, May 10, 2014 6 p.m. - 9:30 p.m. Raymond James Stadium, Tampa. As in the past we expect Donna Thompson will have a lot of friends for this event. It is for Employees of Raymond James and their family and friends. Donna wanted us to put out a save the date notice and if you would like to attend this year's event let her know how many tickets you would like. We will have more information about this event in next month's Newsletter.



Above and below: Checking out the Skate Park at last month's meeting in Sarasota.



Training Tip-Puppy Sitting

It is about that time of year that we have a lot of our raisers go on vacation. It is a great experience and fun to take your puppy with you, but in the event you choose not to, we will help you get a puppy sitter. Please send your requests via email and it is not necessary to send them too far ahead of time. About 2 to three weeks in advance is enough. We have found that if we set up sitters too far in advance, we have to change them due to unforeseen circumstances.

We usually send out an email announcing the dates we need a sitter. Then, depending on the responses, try to get a sitter that is most convenient for both parties. We prefer for both parties to work out the details of drop off and pick up between themselves.

The raiser of the pup needing sitting services should provide; the crate, dog food, feeding instructions, puppy coat and leash, toys, any meds, heartworm, or flea control if applicable, and vet information in the case of an emergency.

The raiser providing the sitting service is responsible for; bringing the puppy to scheduled meetings such as Puppy Saturday, the second Saturday of the month, and sub group meeting, usually the 4th Wednesday of the month. If you cannot attend, it is the sitter's responsibility to let either the area coordinator or group leader, know you won't be attending.

Most of our raisers already have a guide dog puppy of their own, but it is not unfavorable to puppy sit another one. Generally, it is a good social learning experience for a puppy to be in a multiple pet environment. When two or more dogs get together, they become a "pack" and there is a definite social hierarchy to being in a pack. At home, your puppy may be "Top Dog," but in a home with other dogs, they may become "the bottom of the heap!" Dogs can also be very territorial, about their environment, toys, food, and the people they live with. Therefore, if you are bringing another puppy into your home for sitting, it is best to introduce all parties on neutral territory, outside in the driveway or front yard. Let the dogs sniff and interact with each other. If tails are up and wagging, no problem. If there is posturing by any dog, tails down, hair hackling up, growling, immediately correct the offender to let them know this is not acceptable behavior. Extend the greeting time and then let the less dominant dog enter the house first.



Above: A future musician plays for the Suncoast Puppy raisers, Below: taking a break at last month's meeting in Sarasota.



This is giving the other dog the message that the “pack leader,” that is you the handler, is allowing the other dog to come in. Once in the house, let them freely interact but continue watching for any negative behaviors. Avoid introducing toys that could be fought over and don’t feed the new comer in the resident dog’s space until you are assured there won’t be any issues.

Generally speaking, at least with our guide dog puppies, there is very little posturing or jealousy issues. It is more on the part of the personal pet who feels their territory is being violated. At any rate, it usually works itself out and there will be peace once again.

Next, don’t be surprised if the dog you are sitting has an accident in the house even though you were told they are 100% housebroken. Their routine is more than likely different from yours and you may not be familiar with the cues the pup is trying to give you to let you know they need to go out. It helps to have some insight from the raiser as to the pup’s normal routine so that you can try to keep it consistent.

Don’t be surprised if the dog you are sitting tries to get up on the bed, counter surfs, or tries any other inappropriate behaviors. I can assure you, they don’t do this in their own home but will test you to see if it is okay in yours. Just firmly correct them, look them straight into their eyes, and let them know you are on to them! Sort of like you did with your kids when they were growing up.

The only real problem with puppy sitting is, you end up falling so much in love with the pup you are watching that you don’t want to give them back. Your personal pet, on the other hand, is saying, “don’t let the back door hit ya, and maybe now I can get some rest!”

We look forward to seeing you all at the University of Tampa! You’re A/C’s Debbie & Chuck Hietala



All pictures this page Congo River Golf at last month’s meeting



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