

Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation

FidelcoNews

Spring 2018

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AN ONGOING ADVENTURE

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REMEMBERING ED BORDLEY



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Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc.

103 Vision Way
Bloomfield, CT 06002
860.243.5200
27 Cannon Rd.
Wilton, CT 06897
203.529.8201



Fidelco.org



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Partnerships Built On Devotion

Throughout Fidelco's more than 50-year history, we have witnessed hundreds of remarkable women reach the pinnacle of their success with Fidelco German Shepherd guide dogs by their sides.



We are honored to count presidential appointees, screenwriters, executives, lawyers and mothers among our clients. They influence national policies, science, education and the arts. They change the world.

Women are disproportionately affected by blindness in the United States and worldwide; two-thirds of those who are visually impaired are women and girls and that number is growing. As our organization continues to grow and evolve, we are focusing on more ways to provide guide dogs to women affected by vision loss. Undoubtedly, their accomplishments and perseverance will continue to inspire us. We can't wait to tell their stories.

In this issue of FidelcoNews, we are shining a spotlight on our exceptional female clients, tireless volunteers and dedicated staff. They strengthen our community and are integral to Fidelco Guide Dogs' success now and in the future.

Your continued dedication to our charitable mission makes these inspirational stories possible. Thank you for your support.

Eliot D. Russman
President & Chief Executive Officer

HARD WORK, WITH SOFT BENEFITS

A well-trained Fidelco German Shepherd guide dog gracefully leading one of our clients through Times Square in New York City is perhaps the pinnacle of guide dog work. It is irrefutable evidence of the effectiveness of the breeding, training and matching process that goes into each exceptional Fidelco guide dog partnership.

This scene and others like it — the effortless mobility of our hundreds of active guide dog teams — play out across North America every day. It's hard to believe it all begins with adorable, squirmy German Shepherd puppies born at Fidelco's Norma F. Pfriem Pup House.

“Planning the breeding and witnessing the birth...being the first one to hold the puppies and wondering, ‘Who will your partner be? What will your journey be?’ is the most rewarding part of my work.”

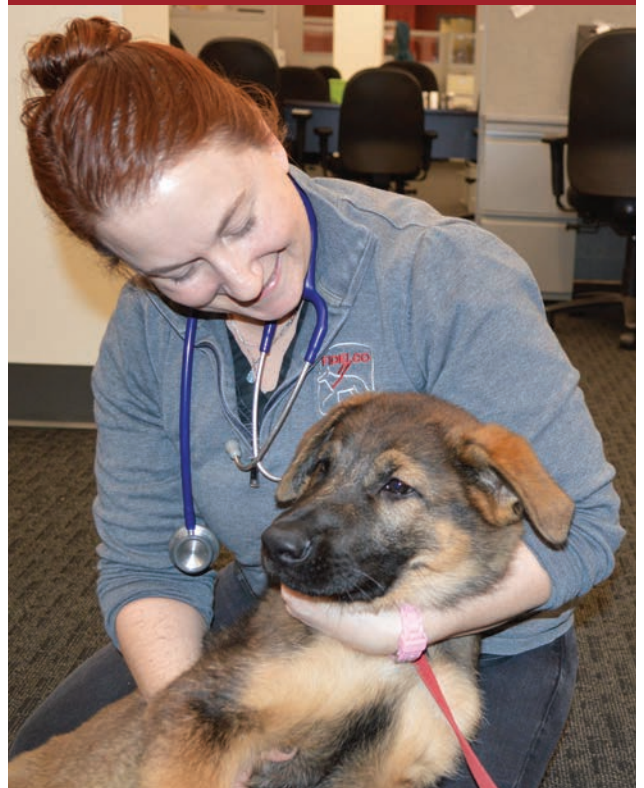
With more puppies born at Fidelco than ever in the organization's history, Veterinary Technicians Megan Geraci and Kellee “Lee” Smith are busy! On any given day, they are administering vaccines and medications, assisting Fidelco's staff veterinarian, fielding calls, calculating breeding cycles, monitoring gestation and preparing for births.

In the midst of this demanding work, Lee never loses sight of the ultimate goal. She says, “Planning the breeding and witnessing the birth...being the first one to hold the puppies and wondering, ‘Who will your partner be? What will your journey be?’ is the most rewarding part of my work.” Megan was drawn to Fidelco as a lifelong enthusiast of the German Shepherd dog breed. She shares, “They are working dogs and their instinct to herd and protect translates beautifully into guide dog work. It's a privilege to witness.”

We rely on devoted staff like Megan and Lee, dedicated volunteers and loyal donors to help our pups realize their destiny of changing people's lives. As the saying goes, “It takes a village.” Every Fidelco guide dog is the culmination of our incredible team.



Veterinary Technicians **Kellee “Lee” Smith** and **Megan Geraci**



Annual Fidelco Guide Dog OPEN HOUSE

& Lions Appreciation Day

Saturday,
May 19

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Discover how
exceptional
partnerships
begin.

- Dog Demos
- Blindfold Walks
- Puppies

New Shredfest
Secure, on-site
document shredding
while you watch.



To learn more,
visit Fidelco.org

Partners in ExceptionalSM

CONFIDENTLY MOVING FORWARD

Few things could test a new guide dog's abilities or a handler's confidence more than a trip to a foreign country within the first two weeks of a partnership, but that's just how Michelle W. and her guide dog, "Ryder," started their journey.

The team wasted no time, traveling to Italy for a study abroad program soon after they were matched, and the dream that Michelle had clung to from the time she was a little girl—traveling the world without the trappings of blindness—came to life. For Michelle's parents, Ryder was the deciding factor in allowing Michelle to travel to Italy. She remembers, "Once I got Ryder, my parents didn't have any reservations about me leaving. Ryder gave them peace of mind." Since then, Michelle and Ryder have racked up many more airline miles and passport stamps as they take on the world, together.

Michelle was born with Leber's congenital amaurosis—an inherited eye disease—that greatly diminished her usable vision. From a very young age, Michelle was sure about two things: she wanted a guide dog and she wanted that guide dog to be a German Shepherd. Undaunted by the minimum age requirement of 18, she applied to Fidelco three times before she qualified to receive Ryder. That determination and resolve surfaces in every area of her life.

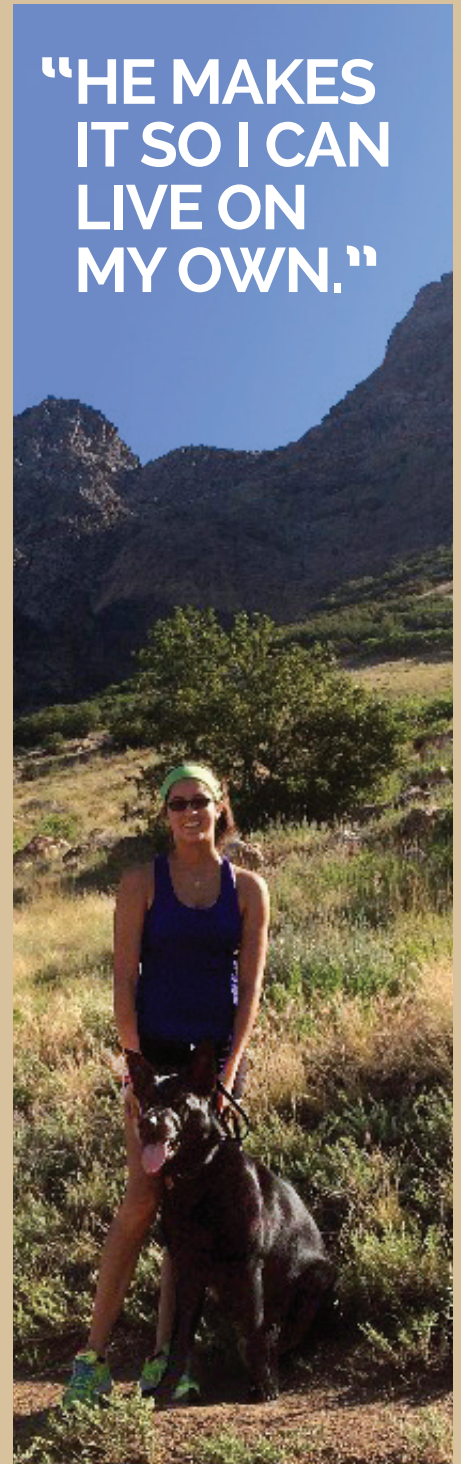
"Ryder is wonderful. I would pick him over my cane any day. I trust him more than I trust the cane."

Michelle recently graduated from the University of Connecticut (Ryder proudly wore his own cap at the ceremony!) and began a Master's Program at UMass Boston, where she's studying to become a teacher for students who are visually impaired. Since graduating, Michelle began working at Perkins School for the Blind, realizing another lifelong goal of helping young, visually impaired students excel academically while preparing them for independent living.

Ryder is a beloved member of the school community and has eased Michelle's transition from her hometown. The team ventures into Boston. They hike and rock climb. They thrive.

"Ryder is wonderful. I would pick him over my cane any day. I trust him more than I trust the cane. I'm able to take him places I would never have considered going without him. I did not go out at night by myself at all before I had him. He makes it so I can live on my own."

**"HE MAKES
IT SO I CAN
LIVE ON
MY OWN."**



Let's Start This Puppy Up. Again.

8th Annual Fidelco Guide Dogs

Ride For Independence

Improving blinded
veterans' lives



Sunday, July 22 at 9:30 a.m.

Bear's Smokehouse BBQ

Live Music • K9 Demos

Pre-Registration now open

Details at Fidelco.org



GUIDE DOGS



An Ongoing Adventure

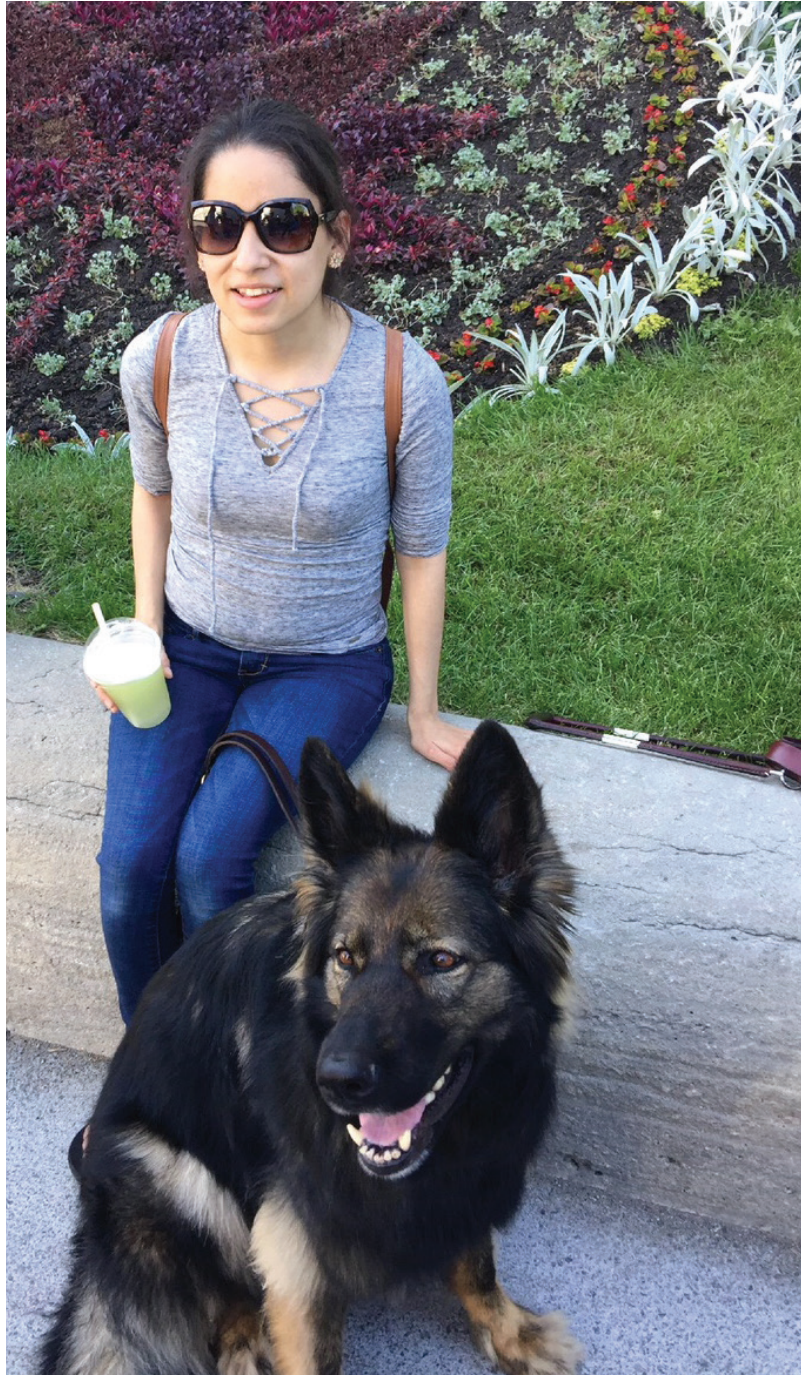
When Lina C. was just a baby, her parents traveled from Colombia to the United States seeking treatment for the retinoblastoma that had spread to both of her eyes. Doctors saved her life, but Lina's resulting blindness kept the family in the United States where they knew their daughter would have access to resources that would help her to lead a full life. Still, they worried for Lina and wondered about the unforeseen challenges she would inevitably encounter.

Like so many young clients, Lina's partnership with her guide dog, "Quest," was years in the making. In 2017, the summer of her freshman year in college, Lina was matched, and the timing could not have been better as she faced two difficult circumstances; her parents' separation and transferring to a new school. Lina reflects,

"I often felt clumsy with my white cane and very self-conscious. Having Quest was an enormous help. She was a constant companion; something to focus on other than all the issues I was facing."

In the first days at her new school, a Fidelco Placement Specialist helped to acclimate the team to the new routes they would travel. Having Quest made the transition easier in other ways. Lina recalls, "I was a transfer student and with that comes some trepidation. Having Quest helped me meet so many people. She allows me to travel with much more grace. My parents don't worry. I feel freer, faster and empowered."

Lina recently graduated from UMass and is applying for graduate programs in mental health counseling while interning at Lowell Association for the Blind. Quest — aptly named — will be there for every step of that adventure, too.



Lina C. and "Quest"

9TH ANNUAL DOG DAYS OF SUMMER FOR DOG LOVERS AGES 8-11

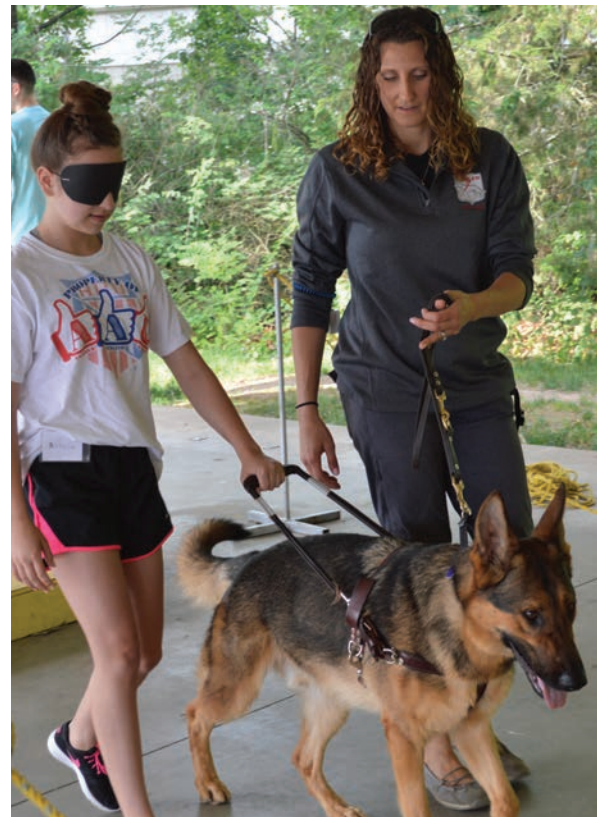


2018 Children's Program | June 18–August 10

Weeklong, half-day sessions 8:00 a.m. to Noon or 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

- Have fun with puppies.
- Discover how guide dogs are created.
- Experience "blindfold walks" with a guide dog.
- Meet other types of working dogs.

Pre-register by May 1 for \$255.00, or after May 1 for \$275.00. For more information, please visit Fidelco.org



Register Today!

103 Vision Way
Bloomfield, CT
860.243.5200

Fidelco.org



VOLUNTEER STORY: GALE HORAN

Fidelco's Norma F. Pfriem Pup House is a familiar and cherished territory for nine-year volunteer, Gale Horan.

Gale has volunteered countless hours to Fidelco, providing care for puppies who will one day change the lives of our clients. Gale works with pups from birth to 8 weeks old, exposing them to new environments and stimuli. She holds them to get them used to human contact, patiently teaches them basic commands and gives them unlimited amounts of love and affection. With more puppies being born than ever before in Fidelco's history, Gale's work is never done.

Fidelco Guide Dog trainers are fixtures in the community of West Hartford, CT. It was there, while working in the area, Gale first learned about Fidelco. As a lifelong dog lover who grew up with German Shepherds, she was immediately drawn

who is now a guide dog partner to SSgt. Michael Malarsie, USAF (Ret.). She remains close with the Malarsie family and beams every time Michael and Xxon appear in television commercials.

"Wynn," the second Fidelco puppy Gale raised, became a career-change dog in 2011 and has been part of the Horan household ever since.

Gale shares, "I get more than I give and it is so heartwarming to see what Fidelco guide dogs can do." Gale is part of a legion of more than 350 volunteers whose tireless commitment makes Fidelco's charitable mission possible.

to the organization. Once her two children entered college and Gale had more time, she raised her first Fidelco dog, "Xxon,"



"I get more than I give and it is so heartwarming to see what Fidelco guide dogs can do."

Remembering Ed Bordley

Fidelco Guide Dogs mourns the passing of our remarkable client Ed Bordley.

Ed was more than a five-time Fidelco German Shepherd guide dog handler; he was the embodiment of Fidelco Guide Dogs' mission and our dedication to providing limitless potential. Through increased independence, he accomplished the goals he put forth for himself and improved the world around him.

Ed achieved many things in partnership with his five Fidelco guide dogs; he graduated from Harvard University and Harvard Law School, guided by "Megan." He built a successful career and enjoyed a loving family life with "Quasar," "Zeppelin," "Gunnar" and "Kaleb."

Ed shared some favorite insights about his Fidelco guide dogs during a 2013 event honoring our donors. He told the assembled audience of 300 that, "A guide dog offers independence and a true sense of confidence.



Ed and Kaleb

You just know each other. Guide dogs are dignified, smart, loyal, work hard and they look good."

We believe Ed is reunited again with his beloved guide dogs, Megan, Quasar, Zeppelin and Gunnar, who were waiting for him at The Rainbow Bridge — that other-worldly place where animals go upon death, eventually reuniting with their owners.

In tribute to Ed, Fidelco Guide Dogs will be naming a German Shepherd guide dog puppy "Bordley." This pup will change the life of a Fidelco client in 2020 and ensure Ed's legacy of achievement.

GIFTS THAT GIVE BACK

Visit Fidelco's Bloomfield campus store to purchase the perfect gifts! Shop Fidelco clothing, jewelry, calendars, cards, dog toys and more!



A. Fidelco Men's and Women's Soft Shell Jacket

B. Tech Fleece Colorblock Hooded Sweatshirt

C. Vintage Cap

D. Fidelco Inverted Umbrella

All items can be ordered at Fidelco.org and by visiting the Open House on May 19.

Honor your favorite dog, puppy, or organization with a brick for Fidelco's walkway or a garden stone to be displayed.



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Fidelco.org

Please donate today at Fidelco.org



Partners in ExceptionalSM

