

FidelcoNews

Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation

Spring 2019

IN THIS ISSUE

The Journey's End

Continued Confidence

Starting Partnerships Right

Two Stories, One Mission

Part of Something Greater



In this issue

1. The Journey's End
2. Dog Days of Summer
3. Donate to New Adventures
4. Ride for Independence
5. Continued Confidence
6. Open House
7. Starting Partnerships Right
8. Two Stories, One Mission
9. Celebrating His Vision
10. In the Beginning
11. In Memoriam
12. Spring/Summer Merchandise
13. Part of Something Greater

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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Welcome



The legacy of our founder, Charlie Kaman, is reflected in everything we do at Fidelco Guide Dogs and in our collective vision. This year, we celebrate the anniversary of his 100th birthday, as well as his legacy, while anticipating

our own 60th anniversary in 2020. It is only as a direct result of your support that we are able to honor Charlie's vision by ensuring we never stop transforming the lives of our clients now and in the future.

In this issue of FidelcoNews, we share the stories of individuals embarking on new adventures with successor guide dogs following incredible journeys with those that came before. Our remarkable clients, generous donors, tireless volunteers and dedicated staff all come together to make this happen every single day.

Thank you for making a lasting difference in the lives of our clients in any season or phase of their journeys.

With your support, our Fidelco German Shepherd guide dog partners will always lead the way.

As always,

The Fidelco Guide Dogs Staff

Administration

Douglas Fuchs
Dr. George Keech
Diane Lindeland
Lori McClain-Russak
Tamer Mourad
Richard Pummell
Mary Panullo

Breeding

Kellee Smith

Buildings and Grounds

Raymond Boyington

Client Services

Tara Meier Wilson

Database

Keri Stevens

Development

Meredith Buono-DaGrossa
Susan Campbell
Corrienne Gagliardi
Marsha Mattis
Risa Nicolosi
Tricia Rowold

Finance

LaTosha Kendall
Kristin Seller

Guide Dog Training

Dakota Bybee
Jennifer Caley
Rebecca Cook
Elizabeth DiPace
Christopher Eastwood

Eric Gardell
Lindsay Kababik
Nathan Lavigueur
Chelsea Mora
Peter Nowicki
Bryant O'Neill
Tiffany Riggs
Alison Ritchie Parkes

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Lauren Booth
Jessica Brown
Susan Cicero
Sophia Donadio
Cynthia Goodroe
Grace Mahoney
Elizabeth Polce
Haley Weinberg
Melanie Yates
Taylor Zuccaro

Puppy Raising

Pamela Bock
Wendy Davis
Rachel Dizel
Spencer Harrington
Therese Lachance
Gianna Panullo
Kelly Anne Weinberg

Veterinary Services

Megan Geraci
Deborah Leamy

The Journey's End

We first shared the awe-inspiring adventures of Bryan B. and his Fidelco guide dog, "Oscar," in the Fall 2014 issue of FidelcoNews.

At that time, the team was about halfway through solo hiking 2,000 miles of the Appalachian Trail. Oscar lead Bryan through stretches of terrain barely 18 inches wide that even the most seasoned hikers struggle to push through. Bryan and Oscar went on to have many more adventures on and off the trail in the years that followed. "Hiking is a metaphor for life," says Bryan. "It's all there — beauty, pain, perseverance and transcendence."

The strength and resiliency Bryan honed over the years on the trail helped him to cope when saying his final goodbye to his trail buddy and loyal partner, Oscar, late last year. Bryan shared that, at first, the physical absence was palpable and excruciating. The trust they had in each other was indisputable.

For so many years on the trails, their movements had been choreographed, innate and seamless.

Oscar's loss felt like something missing in the most basic sense. Bryan reflects, "In hiking, it's easy to get off the trail on a rainy day, when the wind is whipping at your face and you're depleted. It's much harder, but infinitely more rewarding, to leave when the sun is shining down and you could go on forever. I am so gratified to know Oscar had a great quality of life right up until the end."


For all Fidelco Guide Dogs' clients, goodbye will come; often through guide dog retirement, and sometimes through the passing of a trusted guide dog partner. Though the relationship between a guide dog and client is perhaps the height of the human-canine bond, so many can relate to the loss



Bryan B. and "Oscar"

of a beloved companion. With compassionate donor support, we stand behind our promise of being there for our remarkable clients when one journey ends and another begins.

"In all things of nature there is something of the marvelous." —Aristotle

Soon after Oscar passed away, Bryan reached out to Fidelco Guide Dogs' staff to begin the process of partnering with a successor Fidelco guide dog. For Bryan and all our clients, blindness is a reality 365 days of the year. Your support enables us to be there for them without interruption. Bryan and his future guide dog's story has yet to be told, but we are certain the adventure will continue. Stay tuned for the next chapter. 

10TH ANNUAL DOG DAYS OF SUMMER



Offering two sessions for dog lovers
ages 8–11 and 12–14



2019 Children's Program | June 24–August 2

Weeklong, half-day sessions 8:00 a.m. to Noon or 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Check online for age schedule.

- Enhanced hands-on activities with puppies and dogs.
- Discover the guide dog's journey.
- Experience "blindfold walks" and "meals in the dark."
- Meet other types of working dogs.

Register now for \$275.00. For more information, please visit Fidelco.org



Register Today!

103 Vision Way
Bloomfield, CT
860.243.5200

Fidelco.org
events@fidelco.org



Donate to New Adventures



Monthly recurring donations — Your monthly support sustains our mission, enabling us to deliver services of the highest quality to our clients. We've made it very easy for you to become a monthly donor—and it actually saves us money.

Kazzi Fund — Support the more than 200 puppies born during the past two years, and the never-ending future litters of guide dog puppies.

Veterans Guide Dog Program — Your donation toward Fidelco Guide Dogs Partnership Program for veterans and their family members supports our commitment to America's blinded heroes.

IRA Rollover — If you are age 70½ and older, you may donate directly from an IRA to organizations like Fidelco Guide Dogs. These distributions will not be included in your taxable income and they count toward all or part of your annual Required Minimum Distribution (RMD).

Legacy gifts — A gift through your living will or trust allows us to continue providing programs and services of unsurpassed quality to our clients who are blind. We offer a variety of charitable gift planning opportunities—from naming Fidelco Guide Dogs in your will to creating a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust—that may help

you meet your financial goals while securing our future.

Company match — Fidelco Guide Dogs participates in workplace giving campaigns nationwide, connecting generous employees with the opportunity to powerfully enhance the lives of our remarkable clients. Please ask your employer how to participate in its matching gifts program, or sign up your company today!



9TH ANNUAL RIDE FOR INDEPENDENCE

RIDE WITH OUR PACK.

Help blind Veterans thrive.

Sunday, October 6

103 Vision Way, Bloomfield, CT



GUIDE DOGS

- BBQ Lunch
- Live Music
- Kg Demos
- Police-Escorted Ride

Bloomfield, CT
Register today at Fidelco.org

Continued Confidence


Cherished memories and sad goodbyes. Perseverance and great achievement. For nearly 30 years, Fidelco Guide Dogs' client Janet L. has journeyed through life with her guide dogs.

They have been a constant source of companionship, each perfectly different and offering what she needed most at the time. This is only possible because of your support and belief in our mission.

Janet is the former Commissioner of the Massachusetts Commission for the Blind — a position first held by Helen Keller — and the former presidentially-appointed

Commissioner of Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA). Always exuding confidence and grace, Janet says:

“I am so fortunate to have accomplished my lifelong goals and know my success would not have been possible without Fidelco Guide Dogs. My last guide dog, ‘Osbourne,’ was able to handle virtually any situation from the White House to the school house and beyond.”

Osbourne sadly passed away last year. He will never be forgotten, but Janet has learned from experience that the best memories remain and the grief slowly dissipates. Janet's adventure now continues with her fifth Fidelco German Shepherd guide dog, “Vinny,” leading the way. 



Janet L. and “Osbourne”

Annual Fidelco Guide Dogs OPEN HOUSE

& Lions Clubs Appreciation Day

May 11

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Discover how exceptional partnerships begin.

- Puppies – Dogs
- Blindfold Walk Experience
- Food Trucks
- Live Music
- Vendors
- Dog Demonstrations

Shredfest II

Secure, on-site document shredding while you watch.



To learn more,
visit Fidelco.org

Starting Partnerships Right

Fidelco guide dog in training, “Magno,” will one day become a trusted and loving partner for a person who is blind.



Sarah and Heather with Fidelco guide dog puppy “Magno”


He’ll spend about a decade leading a client through a crowded airport, across a college campus, down a hiking trail, into a classroom or boardroom. And everywhere in between.

Fidelco Guide Dogs proudly partners with Eschenbach Optik of America as it generously sponsors Magno’s training and placement; and with compassionate mother/daughter volunteer puppy raiser team Sarah and Heather Silverman

as they provide the loving foundation he needs to thrive. These partnerships create the ultimate partnership between a client who is blind and an elite Fidelco German Shepherd guide dog.

For the Silvermans, puppy raising is a family affair; both Sarah and Heather have individually raised two Fidelco guide dogs, and now they’ve teamed up—with help from their whole family—to raise Magno. Heather recently told us about her New Year’s greeting card detailing the progress of all the pups the family has raised. After a lengthy description of each, she closed the message by writing, “Oh yeah — the kids are good, too!”

With the Silvermans’ loving guidance, Magno recently earned his red jacket after demonstrating he possesses the temperament and skills necessary to begin some serious guide dog training work.


In addition to puppy raising, Sarah gives her time every weekend assisting Fidelco Guide Dogs staff with “Puppy Class” in our Fairfield County/Wilton campus where puppy raisers participate in weekly socialization and training activities, building a community with other volunteers. Fidelco Guide Dogs relies on more than 250 volunteers like the Silverman family and simply could not operate without their support. 



Shared values

Five years ago, Karen Waggoner accompanied her then fifth grade daughter to Fidelco Guide Dogs to learn how her class could become involved with the local nonprofit. A lifelong lover of dogs, Karen was quickly moved by the mission and began volunteering herself.

She remarks, “I’ve worn many different volunteer hats at Fidelco Guide Dogs, and have learned that so much comes together to make these incredible partnerships work. It’s deeply fulfilling.”

Volunteers like Karen are the lifeblood of Fidelco Guide Dogs. We exist only because of their selfless dedication to our work. 

Two Stories, One Mission

“On my first placement with Peter, I saw the joy on our client’s face when he met his new guide dog...the excitement in his step when he confidently crossed the street behind her...and the satisfaction in Peter’s eyes when he knew he was helping to change another life.”

These are the words of Fidelco Guide Dogs’ newest apprentice guide dog trainer, Dakota Bybee, as she describes witnessing her first guide dog placement with Peter Nowicki, our most tenured trainer. Peter has completed close to 300 guide dog placements over the course of his 40 years on the job, 30 of those as an employee of Fidelco Guide Dogs.



“Ocean,” Dakota, “Ubi,” “Ziggy,” “Vixen,” Peter, “Qwerty.” (Photo taken by Karen Waggoner. See her story on page 7.)

Peter placed his first Fidelco German Shepherd guide dog, “Nissa” from our N-11 litter in 1989, after having spent a decade at another guide dog organization. Peter recalls working with Charlie Kaman at that time and reflects, “Charlie cared so much about our dogs and clients. He had a tremendous presence and was in the office six and a half days per week; his investment inspired us to work as hard as we could to make these extraordinary partnerships between client and dog succeed.” Like Peter, Dakota knew early on that she wanted to combine her passion for animals with helping people. One day while out driving, a “Fidelco Guide Dogs” sign caught Dakota’s attention. As quickly as the sign whirred by, she knew this dream of hers was going to happen.

Dakota initially joined Fidelco Guide Dogs as an assistant for Dog Days of Summer—Fidelco Guide Dogs’ summer program for kids. She remembers,

“I met clients whose stories brought me to tears. I met trainers who expressed how their work had forever changed them. I knew instantly my place was in the training department.”

Becoming an internationally accredited guide dog trainer/instructor is not easy; it’s a rigorous three-year program with practical on-the-job training under the guidance of an experienced training staff. We anticipate that apprentice trainers like Dakota will train a minimum of 24 dogs over the course of their three-year program.

The passion our training staff brings to our dogs and clients strengthens our organization in every way. From Dakota’s first placement with Peter, it’s evident his dedication to our dogs and clients is as strong as it was 30 years ago when he joined Fidelco Guide Dogs, like Dakota. 

Celebrating His Vision

Aviation, music and dogs. These were the disparate passions of Fidelco Guide Dogs' founder, Charles H. "you can call me Charlie" Kaman, whose 100th birth date anniversary is celebrated this year.

In honoring the anniversary of Charlie's birth, we reflect on his larger-than-life legacy that still flourishes nearly 60 years after the first German Shepherd Dog puppies were born at his home in 1960.

As a serial inventor and innovator, Charlie achieved the extraordinary by turning each of these passions into successful business ventures. Charlie was an inductee into the National Inventors Hall of Fame and received numerous awards throughout his lifetime, but his enduring legacy is much more than personal

"It came down to the helicopters, guitars and dogs." —C. William "Bill" Kaman, son of Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation's founder

achievement. Because of Charlie, thousands of lives have been transformed through partnerships with elite Fidelco German Shepherd guide dogs. Individuals, families and communities are different today because of Charlie's vision all those years ago.

Legend has it that the seed for what would become Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation was planted when tragedy almost struck Charlie's young son, Bill, during a family outing. He ran out into a busy parking lot when the family's newly adopted German Shepherd Dog leapt from the car and quickly intercepted, creating a barrier between an oncoming vehicle and Bill.

This near-miss inspired Charlie and his wife, Roberta, to explore how the intelligence and intuition of these special dogs could benefit others. At their home, the



Charlie Kaman with world tennis pro Ivan Lendl and Peter Nowicki (circled), circa 1993.

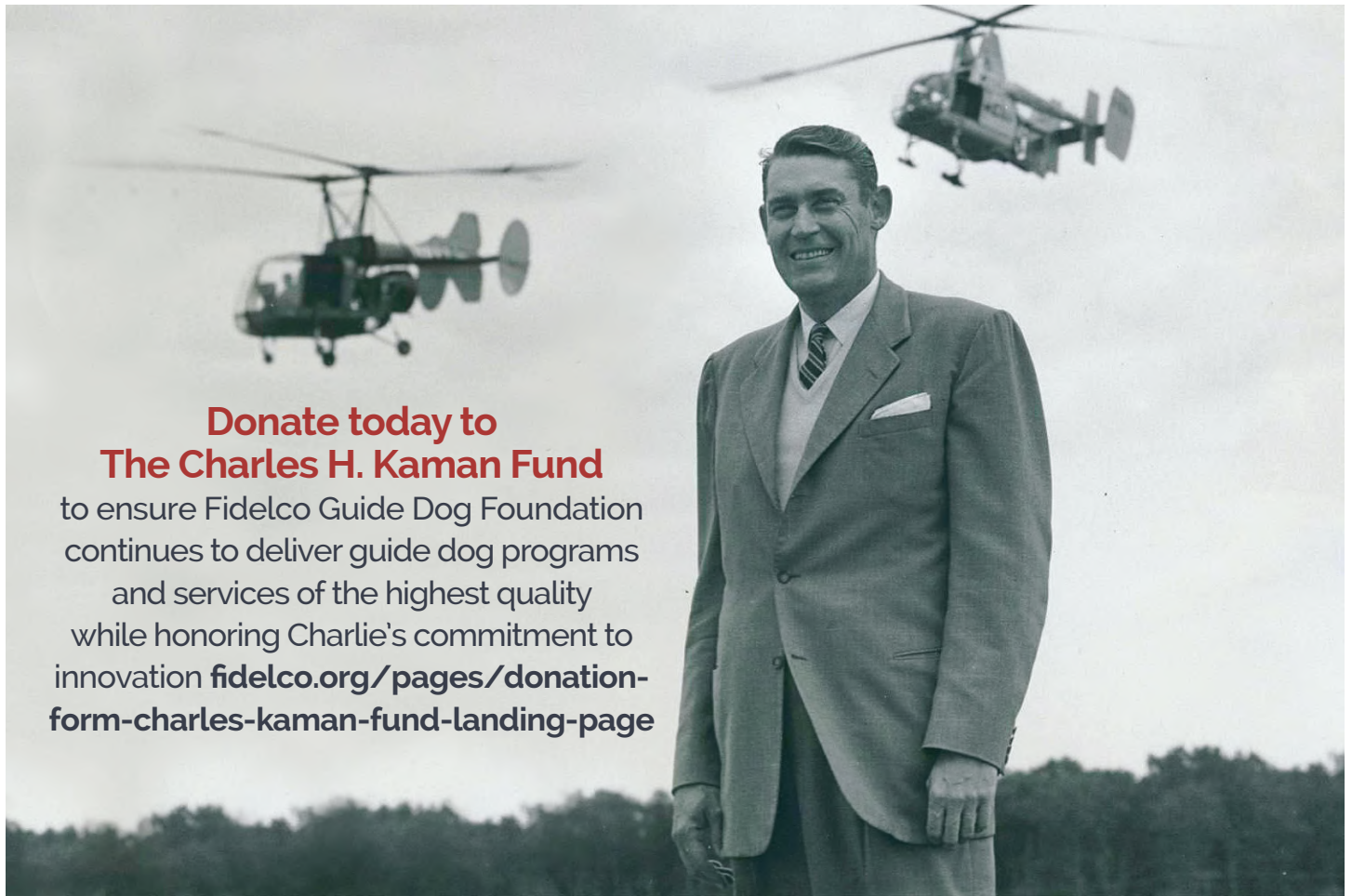
Kamans began breeding German Shepherd Dogs from exclusive East and West German bloodlines for stamina, health and intelligence. They gave these dogs to other guide dog organizations from 1960–1980, when they established the Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation as a breeding and training organization and placed the initial five Fidelco German Shepherd guide dogs.

The rest, as they say, is history. Today, Fidelco Guide Dogs is a recognized leader in the guide dog industry and still the only guide dog organization to exclusively breed the German Shepherd Dog. More than 1,500 guide dogs have been placed throughout North America and in six Canadian provinces. The Kamans' backyard has indeed grown.

We are honored to be stewards of Charlie's dream and privileged to ensure those of our clients never stop coming true. On behalf of the clients, volunteers and staff at Fidelco Guide Dogs—Happy Birthday, Charlie. Thank you for your passion, your vision and your belief in exceptional dogs and people.

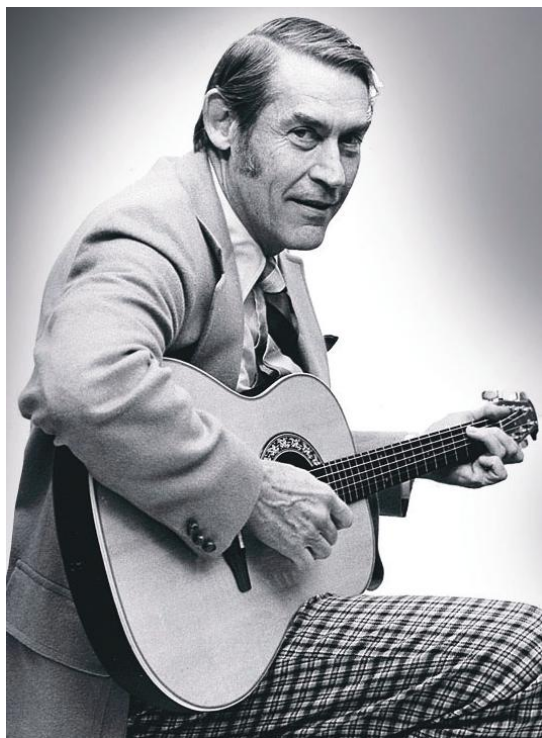
Donate today at fidelco.org/pages/donation-form-charles-kaman-fund-landing-page

In the Beginning...



Donate today to The Charles H. Kaman Fund

to ensure Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation continues to deliver guide dog programs and services of the highest quality while honoring Charlie's commitment to innovation [fidelco.org/pages/donation-form-charles-kaman-fund-landing-page](https://www.fidelco.org/pages/donation-form-charles-kaman-fund-landing-page)



In Memoriam


**“What we have once enjoyed we can never lose.
All that we love deeply becomes a part of us.”
—Helen Keller**

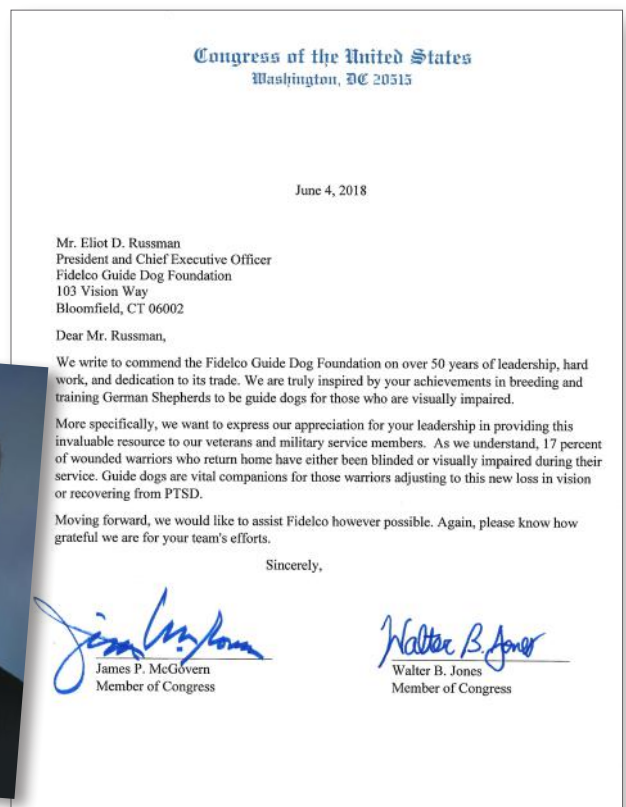
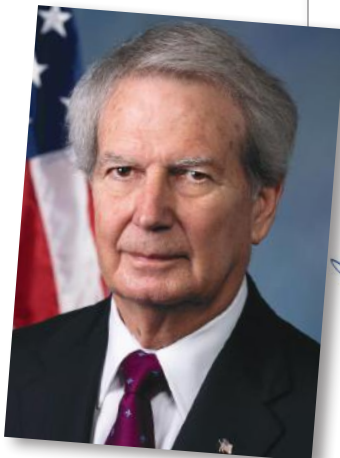
We remember and honor the legacy of every Fidelco German Shepherd guide dog who has crossed The Rainbow Bridge. Each is forever part of an important chapter in the lives of our clients, puppy raisers and staff. Each holds a special place no other guide dog can take. All are cherished and missed. 



Congressman Walter Jones

Fidelco Guide Dogs mourns the passing of our good friend and supporter, Congressman Walter Jones of North Carolina.

Congressman Jones embodied the concept that leadership is service to others. A fierce advocate for our military men and women and Veterans, Congressman Jones was an early and enthusiastic co-sponsor of the “Wounded Warrior Service Dog Act” that provided the first-ever federal funding for guide dogs/service dogs after meeting our battle-blinded Veteran clients and their Fidelco German Shepherd guide dogs. He welcomed us into his Washington, D.C. office for regular updates and to meet with new Veteran clients and their Fidelco guide dogs. Congressman Jones was a dog lover and shared stories with us about his beloved “Darby.” 



Spring/Summer Merchandise

Visit Fidelco Guide Dogs' Bloomfield Campus store to purchase the perfect gifts! Shop our clothing, jewelry, calendars, cards, dog toys and more!

- A. Fidelco Yeti products
- B. Fidelco Guide Dogs bracelet
- C. Fidelco Guide Dogs window decal and car magnet

All items can be ordered at Fidelco.org



Honor your favorite dog, puppy or organization with a brick for Fidelco Guide Dogs' walkway or a garden stone to be displayed. Call 860.243.5200 to order yours.



Part of Something Greater

Fidelco Guide Dogs welcomes Richard Pummell as part of the senior management team in the role of Vice President, Director of Human Resources, Talent Management & Culture. Richard's experience spans 20 years of working with companies in the United States and England. This new position marks Fidelco Guide Dogs' growth in recent years to approximately 600 individuals engaged with the organization across North America, including staff and volunteers throughout New England, and clients from Maine to California and across Canada. Richard shares,

"I joined Fidelco Guide Dogs because of an immediate connection to the mission which is deepening every day. I enjoy the opportunity to work with employees and volunteers who are so devoted to every aspect of our mission, and to interact with clients whose stories are nothing short of incredible."

Richard participates as a member of the Coast Guard Auxiliary and serves on the boards of two Hartford nonprofits: the Coalition to Save Sheldon/



Charter Oak Neighborhoods, which is focused on improving the neighborhood around the Colt building in Hartford, and Achieve Hartford, which seeks to improve the workforce talent pipeline in Hartford. Richard and his partner live in Hartford along with their cat, "Alistair." 🐱

The Power of Partnership

We extend our sincere gratitude to the Killingworth Lions Club, the Haddam Lions Club, the Goffstown Lions Club, the Somers Lions Club, the Connecticut Eye Bank and Miller Nissan for enabling us to add this special van to our fleet in support of those affected by breast cancer.

Partners in ExceptionalSM



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GUIDE DOGS



**Celebrate new life this spring
by ensuring we can continue
providing future successor guide
dogs to our remarkable clients
like those featured within.**

Donate today at Fidelco.org