

FidelcoNews

Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation

Fall 2019



IN THIS ISSUE

Writing Their Own Destiny

Taking the Next Step

Ride for Independence

Hartford Marathon

In this issue

1. Writing Their Own Destiny
3. Where Has Fidelco Been?
4. Taking the Next Step
6. Ride for Independence
7. Ambassador Spotlight
8. A Story You Have to Hear
10. Lucky Seven: Suburban Subaru
11. Ways to Give
12. Hartford Marathon
13. Fidelco Merchandise

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



©2019 Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc.

60th Anniversary



As 2020 approaches and we anticipate the 60th anniversary of Fidelco Guide Dogs, we can't help but reflect on the tireless dedication of all who have helped us along the way. Loyal donors, remarkable clients, and dedicated staff, volunteers, and ambassadors from every walk of life have given unquantifiable amounts of time, energy, and resources to fulfill one life-changing mission.

The unique and individual stories of our clients' partnerships with their Fidelco German Shepherd guide dogs could fill thousands of pages. That's only possible because of people like you who are committed to changing lives. We can merely speculate the "numbers"; the safe crossings, human connections, indelible bonds, and dreams achieved with Fidelco guide dogs leading the way.

It's humbling to know how many lives have been touched, and how many rely on us now and in the future to ensure their safety and independence. We think our founders, Robbie and Charlie Kaman, would be proud of the longevity and power of their legacy. Please donate today. With your support, we will continue meeting the needs of those we proudly serve for the next 60 years and beyond. Thank you.

Warm regards,

The Fidelco Guide Dogs Staff

WRITING THEIR OWN DESTINY.

Fidelco guide dog "Corey" is equally comfortable attending movie premieres as she is riding the subway. Her partner, Kody K., is a New York City-based author who published her first book, *The DUFF*—a *New York Times* and *USA Today* bestseller later made into a major motion picture—as a senior in high school. Together, Kody and Corey live and thrive in the city that never sleeps.

Kody grew up poor in a small town in Kentucky without mass transit and little accessibility for someone with vision loss. The lack of entertainment in the form of internet and cable at home pushed Kody to foster a love of storytelling as a little girl. As she got older, putting pen to paper and writing the imaginative stories that took shape in her mind became a passion, transporting Kody into worlds of her own creation. Ironically, before Kody discovered her love for writing, she was a "reluctant reader"; the only books accessible to her were in large print, and geared toward younger audiences. This changed (dramatically!) when more advanced books became accessible to Kody. She remembers this as a critical turning point in her life.

After graduating from high school, Kody attended Ithaca College for two years. With her career in full swing, Kody made the decision to move to New York City to focus on writing. At this point, she was still using a white cane to travel.

"I'm not sure exactly why it hit me one day. I had considered getting a guide dog in the past, but the thought hadn't entered my mind in a long time," Kody remembers.

"I felt I was getting by with my cane. But something urged me to apply to Fidelco in the summer of 2012. I knew my guide dog would have to be a German Shepherd, no question. It came down to Fidelco because other schools' training culminated in a final New York City 'test walk,' but I needed that every day! New York City is like a giant obstacle course. So the idea of Fidelco training me in my home environment was hugely appealing."



Kody K., Fidelco Guide Dogs client and author of the book, *"The DUFF."*

WRITING THEIR OWN DESTINY. [continued]

"Corey greeted me by immediately licking my face and that just sums up her personality. She's very focused in-harness and won't solicit attention, but she loves people. All you have to do is smile at her."



Kody and "Corey"

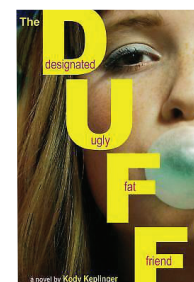


"Corey"

Kody's placement specialist, Eric Gardell (featured on pages 4 and 5), had her try out two quick-paced guide dogs whose gaits and personalities were well-suited for city living. But the first time Kody met Corey, she knew. Kody travels extensively for work with Corey leading the way. The pair has ventured to France, Germany, Scotland, and all over the United States. In 2016, Kody and her best friend, Kate—who also has a guide dog—traveled to Europe together. They explored Berlin, Edinburgh, and Paris. "We were able to

completely absorb the experience without having to worry about navigating places we'd never been," Kody remembers. "We had the best time."

Kody has published seven books since *The DUFF*. She is the co-founder of Disability in Kidlit—an online forum that focuses on the portrayal of



disability in middle grade and young adult literature. She is also a teacher at the Gotham Writers Workshops in New York City.

FIDELCO TIMELINE

 **1960**

Fidelity Breeders Cooperative is founded; Fidelco German Shepherd guide dogs are provided to existing guide dog organizations for placement with people who are blind or visually impaired.

 **1981**

Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc. is formally established as a guide dog breeding and training organization, and the first five Fidelco German Shepherd guide dogs are placed.

 **1991**

Fidelco undergoes a major expansion to accommodate the organization's growing needs; thousands of square feet are added to the kennel, administrative, and training areas.

 **1996**

Fidelco establishes its Apprentice Training Program, a rigorous three-year program in which apprentices train a minimum of 24 dogs before becoming certified Trainer/Instructors.



WHERE HAS FIDELCO BEEN?

This past summer, Doug Fuchs, Vice President of Guide Dog Services, and Tommy Mourad, Vice President of Guide Dog Training, traveled to Europe to visit guide dog breeding and training facilities in Warwickshire, England and Lezoux, France.

The trip was made in the spirit of collaboration; sharing information with other guide dog organizations nationally and internationally significantly enhances the quality of Fidelco's programs and services.

Guide Dogs for the Blind National Breeding Centre in Warwickshire was the first stop. The Centre is the only guide dog school in the UK. Doug and Tommy reviewed data, best practices, breeding techniques, and the sharing of breeding stock.

Next, Doug and Tommy traveled to Lezoux, France, where they spent another busy day with staff from the French Breeding Cooperative which provides



Fidelco's Vice President of Guide Dog Services, Doug Fuchs, and Vice President of Guide Dog Training, Tommy Mourad, pose with the team at the Guide Dogs for the Blind National Breeding Centre in Warwickshire, England.

guide dogs to all guide dog schools in France. Doug and Tommy met with their medical and breeding teams, but the highlight of the trip was seeing "Paris," a 6-month-old female German Shepherd Dog who is being raised for Fidelco by a French puppy raising family!

By working collaboratively with organizations like the French Breeding Cooperative, Fidelco will enhance its canine colony while improving upon the "breed within a breed" that is its hallmark. As the only guide dog organization that solely breeds, raises, and trains German Shepherd Dogs to be

used as guide dogs, Fidelco is considered an expert on the breed.

COMING TOGETHER.

This year, Fidelco participated in two important conferences—the **National Federation for the Blind Conference** in Rochester, NY, and the **American Council of the Blind Conference** in Las Vegas, NV. Fidelco Trainer/Instructors interacted with staff from many other guide dog organizations, and shared information about Fidelco's programs and services. Fidelco clients were in attendance as well, offering first-hand accounts of how their guide dogs have powerfully impacted their lives.

2000

The first international guide dog placement is made with a client in Canada.

2001

Five released Fidelco German Shepherd Dogs—"Logan," "Hero," "Zuby," "Ira," and "Fergus"—assist the Connecticut Police Canine Training Unit in a search and rescue mission over an 11-day period at the World Trade Center site.

2006

Fidelco places its 1,000th guide dog.

2016

Fidelco opens a training center and administrative office in Wilton, CT through a generous grant from the Norma F. Pfriem Foundation.

TAKING THE NEXT STEP.



Fidelco staff members Lindsay Kababik and Eric Gardell are taking on new roles within the organization, leveraging their many years of experience to set the bar even higher for key programs. Lindsay is now Training Department Supervisor, and Eric is Puppy Raising Department Supervisor. We checked in with them both and asked them to reflect on their collective 28 years at Fidelco and to speculate about the future as our 60th anniversary approaches.

What's your favorite part of your new job?



LK: Being able to watch our dogs with their trainers for their blindfold evaluations is my favorite part of my job. I like seeing their similarities and differences, and then helping to match them with our clients. I also enjoy seeing the different handling styles of each trainer which helps me to be a better instructor for the apprentices.



EG: My favorite part of my job has to be my mornings with the three- to eight-week-old puppies. After that, it's the work I do in the classes and the one-on-ones with our volunteer puppy raisers and their puppies.

Where do you see Fidelco in the next 60 years?



LK: In the future, I would like to see Fidelco continue to improve our best practices in every aspect from the breeding program, to training and placements, and fundraising. Focusing on the quality of our dogs, while being innovative and creative, will help us to better serve our clients into the future.



EG: Fidelco will still be placing German Shepherd Dogs throughout the United States and Canada, hopefully placing 50–100 dogs annually.

What do you think people who may not be familiar with guide dog work or our dogs may be surprised to learn?



LK: One of the most popular questions I receive is, "How does the dog know when to cross the street?" Most people don't know our clients are actually responsible for deciding when it's safe to cross the street. It's then the dog's responsibility to refuse the "forward" command if it's not safe to cross. A good way to think of the dog/handler relationship is that the handler is the pilot and the dog is the navigator. It's definitely a team effort!



EG: I think most people would be surprised to learn how different all the guide dog programs are from one another. Because of Fidelco's In-Community Placement model, we can place up to two dogs at a time. Other larger organizations can place 10 to 20 dogs at a time because clients are trained at a residential training facility.

What's your favorite memory of Fidelco in all the years you've been part of the organization?



LK: I would say my favorite memories are when I finish training a dog and we make a good match, and the team becomes very successful. Hearing the client say how much the dog has changed their life makes it all worth it. There is nothing better than training a dog that goes off to do their job to the best of their ability, and improves our clients' lives!



EG: I would have to say my favorite memory is working with our founder, Robbie Kaman, and knowing how well-respected she was in the German Shepherd community. Just knowing how people in the German Shepherd world thought of Robbie made it an honor to work with and learn from her.

The very first dog I trained worked in The Pentagon, and I was able to visit him and see him go right past the security area while I had to go through all the metal detectors and security guards. I was very proud.

IN MEMORIAM

Joyce E. Cannon passed away on May 8, 2019

Her guide dogs:

Kiwi
N-Walter
Quincey
Metoo
Ivan

IN HONOR

Guide dogs who retired over the past five months:

Owen (6/10/19)
Petra (4/22/19)
Phoenix (6/10/19)
Izaac (5/17/19)
Hazel (4/10/19)



9th Annual Ride for Independence

Sunday, October 6

Registration begins 9:30am

Register today at fidelco.org

Rider: \$25

Passenger: \$15



Variety of craft beers and delicious food truck offerings

30 mile police-escorted ride through scenic fall foliage

Live music by the Witch Doctors featuring Fidelco's Puppy Raiser Department Supervisor, Eric Gardell

Corn hole tournament

Car show — new this year!

Learn about and meet Fidelco puppies, dogs-in-training, and guide dogs!

Made possible by our partners — Aetna, People's United Bank, and Trantolo and Trantolo.

AMBASSADOR SPOTLIGHT.

Fidelco ambassadors carry our mission forward by passionately raising awareness in their schools, communities, and beyond. Rising ninth-grader, Meredith D., chose Fidelco Guide Dogs as her "March Madness" charity, part of her school's successful read-a-thon initiative which places books in a "bracket" in the spirit of the NCAA basketball tournament.

In her appeal letter to the March Madness Committee, Meredith wrote: "My grandfather was a front-line soldier in the Korean War. He held a deep appreciation for the power of service dogs after witnessing many injured veterans needing assistance. He saw how dogs could truly lift a person's spirits, and help them live their life again. In his 40s, my grandfather was diagnosed with Type 2 Diabetes and then eye disease at 65, which completely robbed him of his vision by the time he was 84. Though he never had a service dog, my grandfather began to gain an even greater appreciation for them—especially for Fidelco German Shepherd guide dogs.



I chose Fidelco for my March Madness charity because I want to give someone with vision loss the opportunity to live fully with a Fidelco guide dog. Toward the end of my grandfather's life, I witnessed the limitations he felt as he lost his vision, and hope others like him can regain their independence with these incredible dogs."

We are deeply grateful Meredith honored her grandfather's legacy by choosing Fidelco Guide Dogs as her charity of choice.

High school student Meredith D. at her school's "March Madness" charity fundraising event with Fidelco staff member Corrienne Gagliardi and Fidelco guide dog "Ocean." Photo credit: Mary Lou G. (Meredith's Mom)

EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: STANLEY BLACK & DECKER.

As part of a hands-on "In-Service Day" offered at Fidelco, employees from Stanley Black and Decker visited our Bloomfield campus to create new training tools for Fidelco's Bio-Sensory Program. This program exposes puppies to diverse stimuli beginning at just three days old, to prepare them for the outside world.

The team built a new "puppy bridge," various under footings, and stabilizing bases for airline seats recently donated by Delta Airlines. These airline seats are especially important in training successful guide dogs as exposing pups to travel situations helps ensure they can one day lead their partners wherever life takes them.

If you are interested in learning more about In-Service Days for your company or organization, please email us at events@fidelco.org.

For more information about volunteering and fundraising on behalf of Fidelco, please contact Tricia Rowold at trowold@fidelco.org or 860.243.5200 x4801.



Stanley Black & Decker employees test out the airline seat base they helped to build.

A STORY YOU HAVE TO HEAR.

This past summer, Fidelco Guide Dogs was featured on Connecticut Public Radio's *Where We Live*. Bill D., a Fidelco client recently matched with his second guide dog, "Lyric," was interviewed as part of the three-part episode "Guide Dogs Take the Meaning of 'Man's Best Friend' to a New Level." Listeners were invited into our world, hearing first-hand from clients, puppy raisers, and training staff.

Bill needed a dog that could be unfazed by riding in a plow truck in the winter and later surrounded by hundreds of kids at the summer pool. As the Director of Parks and Recreation in Newington, CT, Bill requires a guide dog that can

keep up and easily transition, like his first guide dog, "Izaak," did for eight years before he retired a few months ago.

Izaak was fittingly trained by Bill's daughter, Laura, and is perhaps

the most profound "gift" a child could give to a parent. Izaak has embarked on the next chapter of his life—enjoying a quiet retirement in the home he shares with Bill and his wife, Susan.



Fidelco client Bill D. kneels in the grass with his retired Fidelco guide dog, "Izaak," (left) and his new guide dog, "Lyric" (right).

Lyric has big shoes to fill, but she's already picking up where Izaac left off. At the time of the *NPR* interview, Bill was just weeks into his new partnership with Lyric. He poignantly reflected, "It's emotional. It's stressful. It's probably the top three hardest things I've ever done in my life. Izaac was just my pal. He stayed within four feet of me almost 24/7, so you build this tremendous bond, and then you have to retire him. You feel like you're betraying your first dog, but I know it's the best thing for him."

This bittersweet journey—from guide dog to beloved retired guide dog—plays out again and again for so many Fidelco clients. It's a transition inherently mixed with sadness and joy. For puppy raisers, too, these emotions intermingle. Lyric was lovingly raised by Fidelco staff member Lauren Booth and her mother, Carol, who recently passed away. She shares, "People always ask, 'How do you give them up?' You meet one client whose life is impacted so positively by having a guide dog, there's no way you wouldn't let the dog you raised go. Because you know the person's life is going to change, and there's nothing greater."

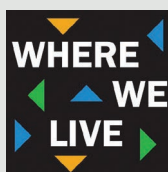


(Top) Bill and daughter, Laura, with "Izaac."
(Below) Lyric's Guide Dog Trainer, Jennifer Caley, and her puppy raiser, Lauren Booth.

Bill echoes the sentiment of countless Fidelco clients when he says, "I tell puppy raisers that they change people's lives. As a Parks and Recreation Director, I can change people's lives for four, six hours, whatever. But you change someone like me for eight years or more. I can't put into words how thankful I am. There's nothing like it."



To listen to the full episode of *Where We Live*, visit:



LUCKY SEVEN: SUBURBAN SUBARU DRIVES FIDELCO'S MISSION.



For the seventh year in a row, Suburban Subaru of Vernon, CT presented Fidelco with a check for nearly \$80,000—the largest gift through this initiative to date—following a successful, “Share the Love, Share the Vision” event last year.

“While there are many great charities, the tireless dedication and work of Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation sets it apart. Their special breed of German Shepherd guide dogs provides immediate independence, positively changing the lives of people who are blind,” remarks Peter Krause, Suburban Subaru President.

From November 2019–January 2020 (please visit <https://www.subaru.com/share-the-love.html> for exact dates when they become available), when you buy or lease a new vehicle from Suburban Subaru, please designate Fidelco Guide Dogs to receive a \$250 donation from Subaru of America, Inc.



MIKE R. AND “SUBI” UPDATE.

In January 2019, Fidelco client Mike R. was partnered with his fifth guide dog, “Subi,” who was named in honor of Fidelco’s longtime partnership with Suburban Subaru.

This past summer, Mike and Subi safely and confidently traveled to Skarnes, Norway, where Mike won the gold medal in the Vision Impaired Men’s Slalom at the 14th Barbara Bolding/Jim Grew Fund Disabled Water Ski World Championships.

Mike is Director of Information Technology Auditing at Anadarko Petroleum Corporation, and has completed over 15 marathons. He is a five-time member of the U.S. Adaptive Water Ski Team, and lives with his wife, daughter, and son in Texas.

Gold medalist and Fidelco client, Mike R., stands for the National Anthem with his guide dog, “Subi.”



WAYS TO GIVE.

Fidelco Guide Dogs participates in a variety of giving programs that offer the opportunity to powerfully enhance the lives of our remarkable clients. Here are a few ways to get involved:

1 Make a monetary donation

- Donate through our website, mail, or by calling 860.243.5200. It is safe, easy, and secure.
- Become a monthly donor through recurring donations. Your monthly support sustains our mission, enabling us to deliver services to our clients. It's easy to sign up and actually saves us money.

2 Host a fundraiser

- Host a birthday fundraiser through Facebook and select Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation as your charity. It's quick and a great way to raise awareness among all your followers!

3 Establishing legacy gifts

- A gift through your will or trust allows us to continue providing programs and services of unsurpassed quality to our clients. 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. For more information please contact Meredith Buono-Dagrossa at mdagrossa@fidelco.org or 203-214-5585.

4 Choose a non-monetary donation

- Shop our Amazon wish list and purchase items we need for our kennels. The items will be delivered directly to us! The wish list can be found under <https://www.Fidelco.org/support-us-in-kind-donations>.
- A donation of time can include office support, weekend dog walking, pup house socialization, and more. Find out ways you can volunteer by contacting Tricia Rowold at trowold@fidelco.org or 860.243.5200 X4801.

5 Giving back to Fidelco

- Sign up for AmazonSmile and every time you shop at Amazon, a donation will automatically be made to Fidelco.
- Remember Fidelco at your next special event! A donation in lieu of wedding or party favors is a gift that keeps on giving! For more information about how you can give your guests the gift of changing lives, please contact Corrienne Gagliardi at cgagliardi@fidelco.org or 860.987.9897.



Chelsea and Chris Cracco Wedding Favors

The Cracco family has raised seven dogs over the past eight years for Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation. In lieu of traditional favors, a contribution has been made to support Fidelco's mission.

HARTFORD MARATHON

Saturday, October 12

Register today using the discount code **CHARITYFIDELCO19** at <https://www.fidelco.org/2019-teamfidelco>

- **Run or Walk!** – Did you know most of Team Fidelco walks the 5K together as a group?
- **Help Fundraise** – Help us fundraise and become eligible to win prizes.
- **Team Fidelco Tent** – Stop by the Team Fidelco tent in Charity Village to mingle with Fidelco dogs!
- **Team Fidelco Portalets** – Team Fidelco has its own portalets for those who are in our group.
- **Live Music, Vendors & More** – The day is filled with live music, vendors, food, beer, and more!



Above: Team Fidelco walkers and runners with Fidelco guide dog puppy "Keating."



Left: Fidelco Apprentice Trainer/Instructor Nate with guide dog puppy "Ziggy."

achtung! 12:30 30%

Fidelco Guide Dogs Foundation added 12 new photos to the album: Fidelco Guide Dogs Foundation
June 4 at 11:28 · 📍

FOLLOW US.

@fidelcoguidedog

@fidelco

@fidelcoguidedogs

Donate today!

Learn More

241 Likes · 12 Comments · 6 Shares

FIDELCO MERCHANDISE



Fidelco's Holiday Store opens November 21st—online and in both the Bloomfield and Wilton campuses—just in time to shop for everyone on your list this holiday season. Your purchase of fun and functional Fidelco-branded gear helps us to carry out our mission. For more information, please visit www.barkerstores.com/fidelco.



- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <p>1. Ceramic Mug
[FGDF-101] \$10.00</p> <hr/> <p>2. Bottle Opener
[FGDF-XXX] \$10.00</p> <hr/> <p>3. Wine Glass Charm
[FGDF-XXX] \$10.00</p> <hr/> <p>4. Fidelco 20oz. Yeti Rambler Tumbler [FGDF-159] \$45.00</p> <hr/> | <p>5. Hot & Cold Tumbler
[FGDF-135] \$20.00</p> <hr/> <p>6. Fidelco 26oz. Yeti Bottle
[FGDF-160] \$55.00</p> <hr/> <p>7. Freezable Can Insulator
[FGDF-144] \$10.00</p> <hr/> <p>8. Fidelco Ladies 3-in-1 Jacket
[FGDF-154] \$130.00</p> <hr/> | <p>9. Fidelco Yeti Dog Bowl
[FGDF-162] \$65.00</p> <hr/> <p>10. Fidelco Inverted Umbrella
[FGDF-147] \$36.00</p> <hr/> <p>11. Large Tote Bag
[FGDF-115] \$4.00</p> <hr/> |
|---|--|--|



Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc.

103 Vision Way
Bloomfield, CT 06002

27 Cannon Road
Wilton, CT 06897

Fidelco.org

NONPROFIT
ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
HARTFORD, CT
PERMIT #1382

Please donate today at Fidelco.org



GUIDE DOGS