

Fidelco News

Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation



Photo by the CT Examiner

In this issue

Committed to Each Other and to Others

Fidelco Through the Decades

Dedicated to Doing More: Lisa Butler

Spotlight: Suburban Subaru

Fidelco clients Honorata and Phil
with "Cari" and "Chloe"

In this issue

1. Committed to Each Other and to Others
6. Fidelco Through the Decades
10. Dedicated to Doing More:
Lisa Butler
13. Spotlight: Suburban Subaru

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](https://www.fidelco.org)



©2023 Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc.

We've started the new fiscal year at Fidelco as a leaner, more effective organization.

During the pandemic, we learned how to keep the mission of Fidelco going, with determination and creativity. We built virtual training classes, worked in shifts to keep our staff, clients, volunteers, and dogs safe. We kept the collaboration going. The result is a streamlined training process that continues to produce the most beautiful, intelligent German Shepherd guide dogs for people who are blind. We also took that resilience to the business side of Fidelco. From the bottom up, we're updating systems, revising processes and bringing even more efficiency to the organization. It's hard to do when there are so many darling distractions—dogs—around, but we want you to know that your investment in Fidelco is being carefully and thoughtfully implemented.

We hope you'll take some time and join us at the Octoberfest Fall Festival and Open House

on Saturday, October 21st to experience the world of Fidelco. If you can't make it in person, video highlights will be available on our website after the event. Come watch the Puppy Olympics, tour our facility, and take a blindfold walk with a fully trained guide dog. Our great friends at Kaman Corporation will be displaying helicopters, including the vintage K-MAX "Otto," the first Kaman helicopter built. There's a super car show, plenty of music and food, and best of all, puppies and dogs.

Octoberfest is a fun and family-friendly day, and it's one of our major fundraising events. Every dollar goes toward the average \$65,000 cost of raising each Fidelco German Shepherd guide dog and changing the life of a person who is blind.

Stay well and safe,

Karen C. Tripp
Chief Executive Officer

Committed to Each Other and to Others

The Stamford, CT train station is an unlikely wedding venue, but it was the perfect site for Fidelco clients Honorata Kazmierczak and Phil Magalnick. They first met in person there after corresponding for several months as members of an online group for people with retinitis pigmentosa (a degenerative eye disease).

In 2016, Phil posted that he was going to receive a Fidelco German Shepherd guide dog. Honorata responded asking him about the process, and their relationship took off. Along with the couple's four adult daughters, Fidelco guide dogs "Chloe" and "Cari," adorned with flower garlands, were prominent members of the wedding party in June 2023.

Individually, and now as a couple, Phil and Honorata have dedicated their lives to helping others. After graduating from the University of Connecticut in 1992, Phil enjoyed careers as an emergency medical technician/fire fighter with a Stamford fire company and later as a safety dispatcher with the

Phil says their guide dogs are also "great ice breakers and conduits in helping us educate the public about guide dogs and advocacy for people who are blind and disabled."



Honorata and Phil with "Cari" and "Chloe"

Stamford, CT Police Department until his retirement.

Following many years as a white cane user, Phil was matched with Chloe in 2017—his choice of a German Shepherd guide dog was a natural fit, as he had a German Shepherd Dog as a child.

Having experienced firsthand the daily challenges encountered by people who are visually impaired, Phil was inspired to become an advocate for people with disabilities. He has worked tirelessly to make all Stamford public walkways accessible to people who are visually impaired and those with other disabilities. He advocates for people who are visually impaired to have the legally protected right to use ride services



Honorata and Phil with "Xen"

with their guide dogs. Phil is a certified Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator and previously held leadership positions in the National Federation of the Blind of CT and the Southwest CT Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind.

In 2013, Phil joined the Stamford ADA Advisory Council which has the mission of maintaining municipal ADA compliance, and he currently serves as co-chair. As Chairman of the CT Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind (BESB) Statewide Rehabilitation Council, Phil and his fellow members (all of whom are appointed by the governor) are responsible for ensuring the state's Department of Aging and Disability Services- BESB Vocational Rehabilitation Program provides optimal services to its Connecticut clients. His advocacy work has also included testifying before the CT General Assembly and Stamford Board of Representatives and lobbying in Washington, D.C.

Phil's work also has an entrepreneurial side; in 2016, he and Honorata co-founded The Blind Voices, an advocacy organization serving both visually impaired and other people who are disabled in southwestern CT. He is currently developing Braille Team 6, an emerging nonprofit organization in Stamford, which will provide technology training and access to a variety of cultural and sports activities for people who are visually impaired. Phil says, "Because many who are visually impaired are financially challenged, there is limited access to such experiences, and I want to broaden these opportunities."

Honorata is a 1995 graduate of the University of Hartford with a Fine Arts degree focusing on sculpting. She was an art teacher in the Bristol, CT school system for sixteen years. She was declared legally blind in 2013 and soon realized she needed accommodations in order to continue to teach.

These accommodations weren't provided, leaving her with no choice but to resign.

After Honorata and Phil met, their discussions about the challenges faced by people with disabilities sparked a passion for advocacy. Honorata began traveling with Phil to participate in conferences, seminars, and lobbying activities. As her commitment deepened, her efforts were recognized, resulting in an appointment to the City of Stamford's ADA Advisory Council where she is now vice-chair. Honorata is a certified ADA coordinator and has recently been offered an ADA coordinator internship with the City of Stamford.

Seeing the bond between Phil and Chloe, Honorata decided to become a Fidelco Volunteer Puppy Raiser. She already loved the breed, and


having two German Shepherd Dogs as pets growing up, she wanted the experience of learning what is involved in helping to raise a guide dog. Fidelco puppy "Xen" came to live and receive early training with Honorata and Phil in 2019. Honorata quickly "fell in love with all of Xen's puppy traits!"

The couple say their guides have given them greater independence and diminished anxiety when traveling through crowded airports, city streets, or venues for their advocacy work.

A white cane traveler for several years, Honorata partnered with Fidelco guide dog, "Cari," in March 2023. Cari has become an integral part of the Kazmierczak-Magalnick household which also includes pet German Shepherd Dog, "Zula."

Phil and Honorata chose Fidelco because they wanted to train where they would be living and working—Fidelco's In-Community Placement training model was perfect

for them. Phil says, "Having Fidelco close by in the event of a concern or need to troubleshoot was also a huge factor." They are extremely grateful for the difference that Chloe and Cari have made in their lives. The couple say that their guides have given them greater independence and diminished anxiety when traveling through crowded airports, city streets, or venues for their advocacy work. Phil says their guides are also "great ice breakers and conduits in helping us educate the public about guide dogs and advocacy for people who are blind and disabled."

With Chloe and Cari, Phil and Honorata will continue to advocate for making their hometown, Connecticut, and beyond more accessible for people who are visually impaired or disabled. 



Honorata and Phil with Phil's guide dog "Chloe"



Scan to listen to Honorata and Phil's recent podcast with Renee DiNino.

The Shepherd Club: Exclusive Access to Fidelco's Kennel Cam!

When you become a monthly donor, you also become a member of Fidelco's Shepherd Club! Your support in any amount helps to ensure Fidelco's sustainability and grants you access to special member perks such as:

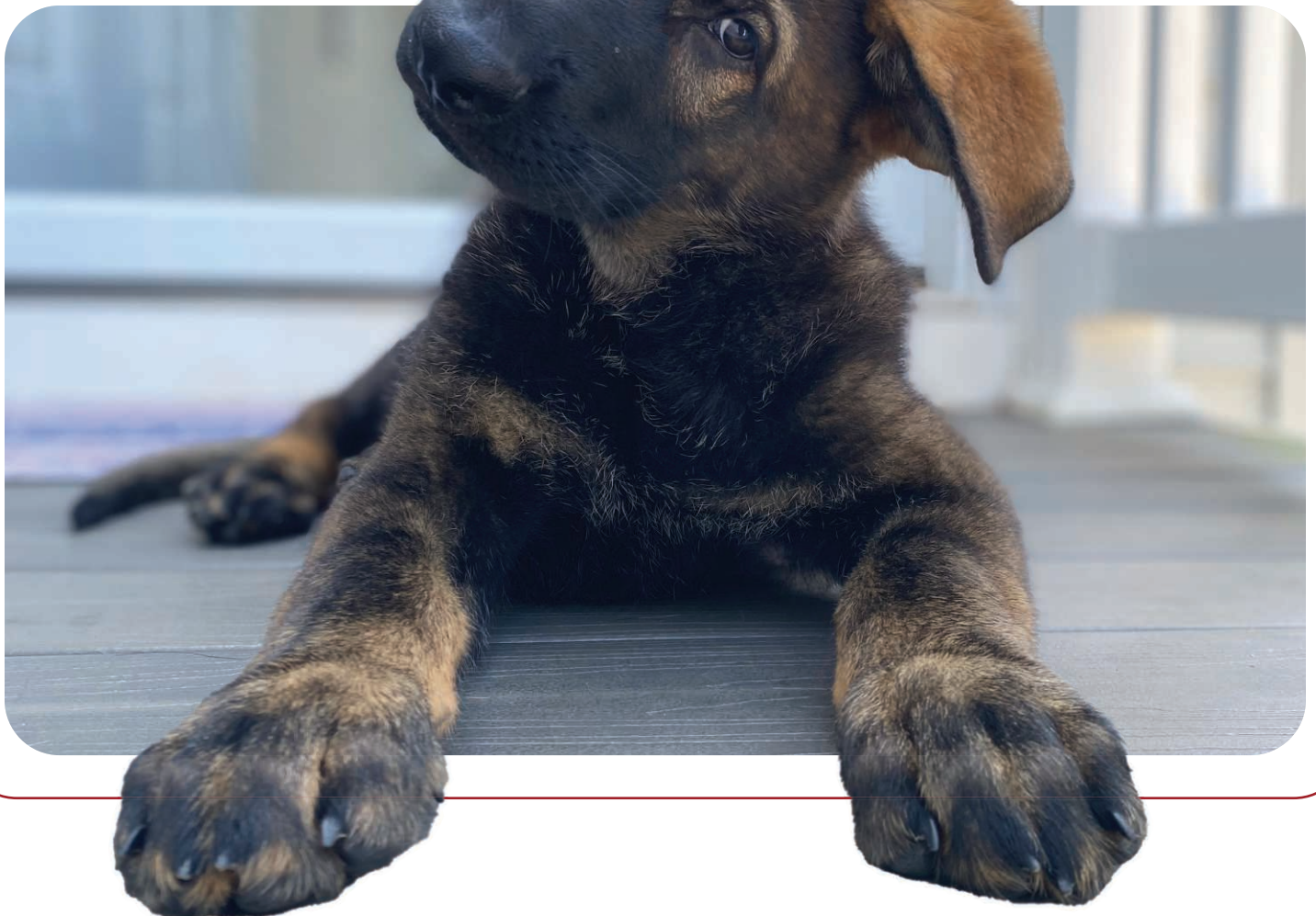
- Exclusive access to the "Kennel Cam." Watch puppies and dogs as they play, train, learn, and grow in Fidelco's Pup House, Kennel, and enrichment areas.
- Quarterly updates detailing how your donations are making a difference.
- Recognition in *FidelcoNews*, our widely distributed newsletter.
- Fun Shepherd Club stickers featuring Fidelco pups and dogs—for you to show or share.

Whether it's \$10, \$100, or more, your monthly support makes possible the incredible guide dog partnerships like those you've read about in this newsletter.

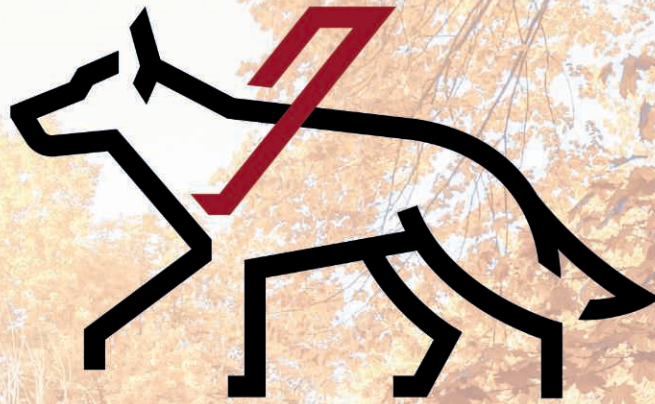
To learn more about how you can become part of The Shepherd Club "pack," contact:
Mark McGrath, Philanthropic Relationship Director
e: mmcgrath@fidelco.org | t: 959.282.2181



Scan to visit The Shepherd Club's Wall of Monthly Donors.



FIDELCO GUIDE DOG FOUNDATION



OCTOBERFEST

FALL FESTIVAL & OPEN HOUSE



WALK FOR FIDELCO



CAR SHOW



PUPPY OLYMPICS

Saturday, October 21 | 10AM

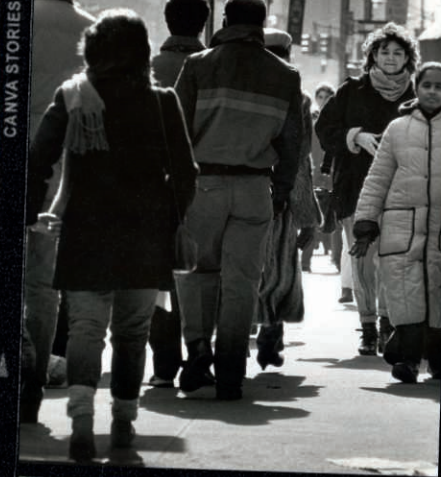
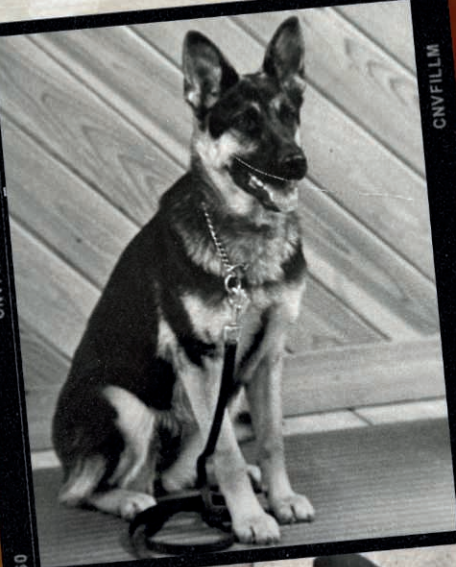
103 Vision Way Bloomfield, CT 06002

WALK FOR FIDELCO, GUIDE DOG DEMOS,
BLINDFOLD WALKS, RAFFLES, FOOD, KIDS
CORNER, TOURS, & MORE!

FIDELCO.ORG/OCTOBERFEST23



1960 - 2000



Fidelco Throug

From the 1960s, when our founders, Robbie and Charlie
to other guide dog schools, to the first Fidelco guide c
more than 1,600 guide dogs matched with our remarka
support of our generous donors and dedicated

2000s - today



Through the Decades


The Kaman, bred German Shepherd Dogs to be donated to people in need, with dogs being trained and placed in 1981, to today, with grateful clients, Fidelco's mission has never wavered. The dedication of our volunteers and staff has made this possible.

Pledging to make a legacy gift is one of the most significant ways you can help to guarantee Fidelco's long-term sustainability while providing measurable financial benefits to you and your loved ones.

Your legacy can become part of Fidelco's future when you name us in your will, create a charitable gift annuity, or charitable remainder trust.

To make things easier, we've partnered with FreeWill, an online tool to help you write your legal will in 20 minutes for free. Creating a will is one of the most significant ways to care for the people and causes you love. If you choose, you can include a gift to Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation.

Visit freewill.com to get started today.

Legacy gifts may reduce estate tax and can be a percentage of your estate or a particular dollar amount. Please be sure to speak with your tax professional. 



Louis Fox with "Tango"



To learn more about how your legacy gift can make a lasting impact, scan the QR code.

For more information, contact:
Richard Pummell, Vice President
e: rpummell@fidelco.org | t: 203.804.3890

"I was always taught by my family that it's important to give something back. A legacy gift to Fidelco helps ensure that Fidelco remains financially strong into the future to continue its vital mission. I encourage everyone who is able to do the same. It's a good way to give significant funds to a deserving organization while also receiving a tax benefit."

—Louis Fox, Fidelco donor, client and member of the Vision Society


Pumpkin Banana Dog Treats

Ingredients:

- **3/4 cup pumpkin**
- **2 ripe bananas**
- **1 egg**
- **2 cups oat flour**
- **1/2 cup oats**
- **Green beans (1-inch pieces)**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mash the pumpkin and banana together and stir in remaining ingredients until well combined. Add more flour if dough is wet.

Shape dough into 1" balls. With a floured fork, press down into dough into a pumpkin shape. Add a green bean to the top as a stem.

Bake for 16-18 mins until edges brown. Let cool. Store in airtight container. 



Donor Spotlight

The E. Matilda Ziegler Foundation for the Blind's support of Fidelco's mission spans more than 25 years and has changed the lives of countless individuals.




The E. Matilda Ziegler Foundation
FOR THE BLIND, INC.

The Foundation's history dates back to 1928 when Electa Matilda Ziegler established the E. Matilda Ziegler Foundation, Inc. for the Blind, Inc. The Foundation was created not only to fund the work of the Matilda Ziegler Publishing Company for the

Blind which she had started in 1907, but to support programs that benefited the blind community.

Since 1998, the Foundation's focus has been on providing medical research grants to outstanding investigators at the early stages of their careers who show innovation and promise in the field of vision research at leading universities.

Fidelco is a longtime recipient of generous funding from the Foundation that continues E. Matilda Ziegler's legacy of enhancing services available to the community of people who are blind. On behalf of our clients, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to the trustees for their significant support. 



Lisa Butler with "Cyprus"

| Dedicated to Doing More: Lisa Butler

Lisa Butler has been part of the earliest beginnings for many Fidelco puppies and dogs. From caring for breed dog mom, "Cyprus," to rolling up her sleeves to help in the Pup House, and in her first volunteer role as a Puppy Raiser for "Sable," Lisa has kept pups and dogs healthy and well loved. This selfless work supports future generations of German Shepherd guide dogs for people who are blind.

Lisa's volunteer story with Fidelco began when a friend and work colleague toured Fidelco's guide dog training center. During his visit, he completed a blindfold walk with a trainer and dog in training. Lisa recalls, "He was so impressed with Fidelco's work raising and training German Shepherd Dogs to

become guide dogs. He said, 'I know how much you like animals and dogs. I think being a Puppy Raiser would be a good fit for you.'"

Lisa and her family soon welcomed Fidelco puppy, "Sable," into their home. As Puppy Raisers, the Butlers provided nurturing care and early training while exposing Sable to a variety of people, pets, and settings. They attended Saturday Puppy Raiser classes, plus additional sessions if a little extra help was needed. Lisa says, "You can totally go into being a Puppy Raiser with no prior experience. If you're willing to learn, Fidelco is willing to teach you and give you all the support you need."

"The first month or two with a puppy are the hardest, but it's not really hard—it's more fulfilling," Lisa shares. "There are many fun, good parts: you get to give them treats as part of their positive training and take them out to public places once they've successfully completed their first evaluation walk and earned their 'red vest,' signifying a Fidelco dog in-training."



Fidelco dogs love having a job—they want to work. And you can see how bonded Fidelco dogs become with their person.

After the Puppy Raiser experience, Lisa wanted to do more. Fidelco staff told her about the need for families to care for breed dogs. These special dogs live with volunteer families, with veterinary care and support provided by Fidelco. "Cyprus" soon settled into her new home with the Butlers.

Cyprus had three litters of puppies. Lisa says, "Fidelco has a great Vet-Med department. They walked us through the process, let us know what would happen, the timeline, and how to keep Cyprus healthy and comfortable throughout the 8- to 9-week gestation period.

Puppies are born at Fidelco's Pup House, with round-the-clock care by staff in the days prior to whelping, and afterward for moms and their new litters. Pups receive continued care and socialization in the Pup House through their first eight weeks, until they are ready to be placed with their Puppy Raisers.

Lisa also volunteers in the Pup House. She helps with cleaning dog beds and kennels, as well as providing early training and socialization to pups, getting them used to being held and touched, interacting with different toys and stimuli, and being comfortable around other dogs. Lisa says the

experience is "all positive." One of her favorite tasks is giving pups their baths before they go home with their Puppy Raisers.

Cyprus recently retired as a Fidelco breed dog and was adopted by the Butlers. As their cherished pet, Cyprus lives with Lisa, her husband, Michael, and their two adopted ginger cats. Cyprus has assigned herself the job of gently separating the two cats during their sibling squabbles. She also goes on 2-mile walks each day and fetches the ball as many times as the Butlers will throw it. "She's in good shape!" notes Lisa.



Michael and Lisa Butler with "Cyprus"

Lisa says people often ask, "Isn't it difficult for the puppies and dogs to train and work so hard?" Lisa tells them, "Fidelco dogs love having a job—they want to work. German Shepherd Dogs get bored quickly if they don't have a job. And you can see how bonded Fidelco dogs become with their person."

Lisa is part of a giving community of volunteers who contribute to Fidelco's mission in immeasurable ways. Fidelco is grateful to be able to count on the people and families who dedicate time and energy in support of guide dog partnerships for people who are blind. 

In Their Own Words: Fidelco *Client Stories* Podcast

Get to know Fidelco's remarkable clients by listening to our monthly podcast series, *Client Stories*. iHeart Radio's Renee DiNino speaks candidly with Fidelco guide dog users about everything from the ways having a guide dog has enhanced their lives to their varied interests, occupations, and dreams.

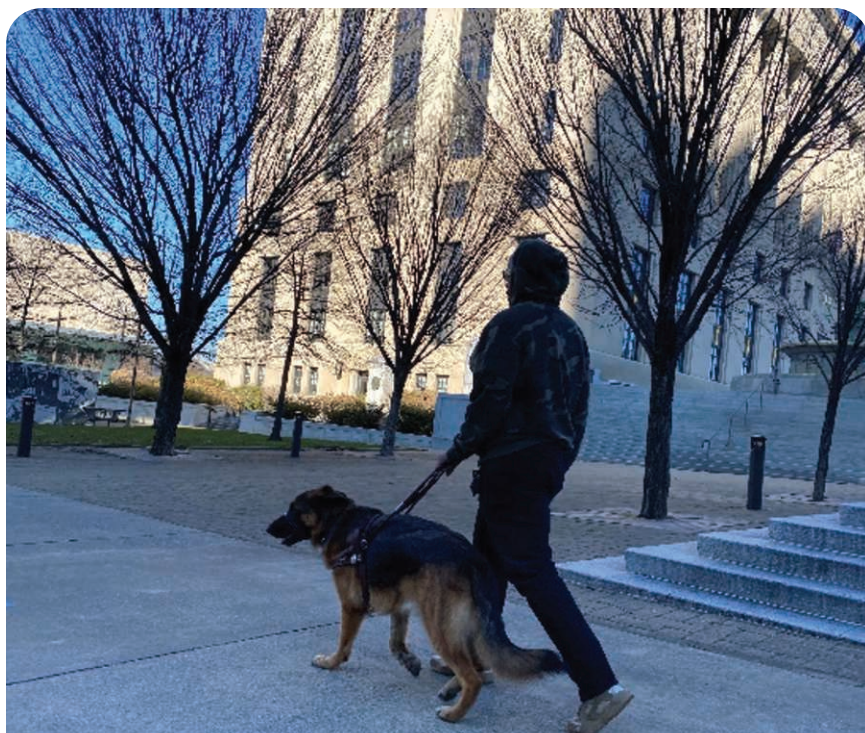


To listen to the current podcast and to hear inspiring past recordings, scan the QR code.

"I travel a lot for work. The fact that I can just get out of an Uber, Lyft, or off a bus, and tell my guide dog a few commands to get to where I want to go... I'm comfortable now. I don't second-guess my steps anymore. There's no way I could imagine my life without Yuri."



Quinn Howard with "Yuri"



Quinn Howard with "Yuri"

Keeva Emojis!

Fidelco Board Member Mark Bertolini takes career change dog, "Keeva," to work at Oscar Health in NYC every day. She is so beloved by the employees that she's even the subject of a series of emojis designed in her honor!






Suburban Subaru presents Fidelco with a check for the annual *Share the Love* Campaign.

| Spotlight: Suburban Subaru

For 11 years running, Fidelco has been selected as Suburban Subaru's hometown charity, this year receiving a gift of \$42,200. "Fidelco's special breed of German Shepherd guide dogs provides immediate independence, positively changing the lives of people who are blind," says Peter Krause, Suburban Subaru president.

Subaru retailers across the country—like Suburban Subaru—give back to their communities throughout the year. The Share the Love Event allows them to support hometown charities that inspire them. Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation is honored to be one of these more than 2,100 charities across the country.

From November 2023 – January 2024 (visit <https://www.suburbansubaru.com/share-the-love.html> for exact dates when they become available), please designate Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation to receive a \$250 donation from Subaru of America, Inc. 



Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, Inc.

103 Vision Way
Bloomfield, CT 06002

27 Cannon Road
Wilton, CT 06897

Fidelco.org

**Their success
starts with you.**

Help create partnerships
that transform lives.

**Please donate
today at Fidelco.org**

