



October, 2018 – Belfast mobility team

Welcome to the Belfast mobility team newsletter. As always, we'd love to know what you think and hear any suggestions for improvements!

News

- Staff changes: It's all change here at the Belfast offices, with Matt Kelso, Colin Kerr, Lesley Macaulay, and David Barnes sadly departing us, with new recruit Joan Mitchell joining as Habilitation Specialist. Amy Colvin is now on maternity leave and Jordan Whitefield is covering as Communications Officer. Business Support Coordinator Kirsty Gray has returned from her break abroad and Rebecca Harper has stepped into the My Guide Manager role, with her predecessor Arlene taking up a new position as Customer Experience Lead for volunteers.
- Eight third year Queen's University Belfast medical students visited the Belfast Mobility Team on 7th September. The reason for the visit was for them to better understand some of the support services that are available to blind and partially sighted people. The students were very interactive and following their visit, felt they understood the services that Guide Dogs provide and the needs and wants of people with sight loss much better. The students met with all services in the team in Belfast including: Guide Dogs, Children & Young people, My Guide and Campaigns, as well as a Guide Dog owner.

Campaigns

- Since January 2017, we have been running a responsible parking campaign in partnership with the PSNI and the Cedar Foundation to educate the public. We have been asking motorists to show consideration for other road users by making sure they park in a manner which leaves enough room for pedestrians to pass,

particularly the elderly, pram and wheelchair users and those with sight loss. While it is difficult to assess the 'culture change' we are seeking to achieve, initial statistics from the PSNI are promising.

The latest phase of the campaign was a concerted 'day of action' on Friday, 12 October with service users in attendance to demonstrate the extent of the issue.

Volunteering

- The recruitment drive has begun for more Puppy Walkers in the Bangor and Belfast area. There are over 80 pups in the breeding centre looking for a home, so if you know anyone who might be interested please contact us on 0345 143 0193.
- We are looking for additional My Guide volunteers in Greater Belfast, Enniskillen, Derry/Londonderry, Castlederg and Strabane. If you know of anyone who might be interested, please contact MyGuideNI@guidedogs.org.uk.

Fundraising

- Huge thanks to Jaden Whittall, one of our volunteers from Belfast, who completed a sponsored bungee jump in aid of Guide Dogs NI and raised £150! A brave man indeed.
- Thank you to schoolboy Lewis Johnston, who raised an amazing £1,485 by completing a sponsored walk from Ballymena to Carnlough!
- Susan McCusker from Banbridge presented a cheque for £1,200 to guide dog owner Jill and her four-legged friend Ace. Susan recently celebrated her 90th birthday and asked for donations to Guide Dogs NI in lieu of gifts!

Events

- The Interim Report for our Family Focus project, in partnership with Angel Eyes NI and Sense Northern Ireland has been published and the results show that families are significantly benefiting from the service. Time to Play groups take place across Northern Ireland and if you would like more information, or know

anyone who would like to attend please contact us on 0345 143 0193.

Contacts

Get in touch with us by calling 0345 143 0193 or email belfast@guidedogs.org.uk

Please note that the content of this email can also be heard via a recorded message on the following phone number 0118 337 3801.

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