

## London Newsletter Summer 2018

Euston almost seems like a distant memory now and Thanet Street really does feel like our home at last. As a part of our wider guide dog family we have over 16,000 volunteers throughout the United Kingdom, over 600 of those are our own capital guide dog volunteers who give up their valuable time to support us and our clients all over the London area. With this in mind the team recently played host to the Annual London Volunteer Awards. It was a wonderful occasion where many of our volunteers and staff came together to celebrate their outstanding achievements and to award the winners of the 6 individual categories ranging from Dedicated to Superior Quality, to Maximising Impact. Congratulations to all and a massive thank you from us all.

### **Could you help us train amazing puppies?**

We'd like to highlight the essential work carried out by our wonderful Puppy Walkers, we couldn't raise our incredible life-changing dogs without them. Puppy Walkers play a crucial part in the early training, socialisation, and education of these dogs that will one day become guide dogs.

Puppy walking is not for everyone; the puppy will live with you 24/7 over a 12-month period but this means you will get the reward of seeing a young pup develop in your home to being a very special animal.

As a puppy walker, you will be given all the support and training you need to succeed by our staff as well as making friends for life with other puppy walkers in your area.

The aim of puppy walking is to produce a puppy that is socially well-behaved, friendly and responsive to the handler. One of our volunteers, Kathryn who is now on puppy number eight says, "I get such an incredible amount out of doing it. I feel as though I'm giving something back and just knowing that somebody vision impaired is going to benefit from what I am doing gives me all the incentive I need to take on another puppy".

Susie, another dedicated puppy walker says "just seeing the puppy I walked wearing a white harness and knowing I had a hand in it fills me with a tremendous sense of pride.

If you would like to find out more about the puppy walking scheme, please contact Desiree Polluk the London Mobility team on 0345 023 1453

## **Guide dogs lead the way around HS2 Hub**

The London Mobility team recently undertook a supported training programme with key members of Costain Skanska's construction site staff working on the new HS2 hub development in London. The training comprised of vision impairment awareness exercises and practical sighted guiding skills. Costain Skanska are the principal developers of the HS2 project and are responsible for the impacting programme of works in and around the NW1 area. Guide dog owners moving through Euston will be assured of a smoother and safer passage with appropriately trained site marshals on hand to support a vision impaired person moving through an extremely challenging environment.

## **What's really going on under your feet**

As part of our commitment to put you firmly in the driving seat of your own mobility, understanding elements of the built environment are essential to good clear orientation. With tactile symbols on the floor of our towns and cities enjoying a prolific growth, familiarising oneself with knowing what they are, what they mean and where they are likely to occur is an essential ingredient toward a blind or partially sighted person's ability to problem solve and glean vital information along their chosen route.

Monthly workshops which offer a fun and interactive learning experience are being rolled out. For more information and to book your place, please contact Dave Kent on (0118) 983 8888 or email [dave.kent@guidedogs.org.uk](mailto:dave.kent@guidedogs.org.uk)