ABOUT OUR PUPPY PROGRAM

The beginning steps of having a great well behaved dog comes from the exposure and training they gain as puppies. This involvement comes from volunteers who agree to care and raise a pilot puppy in their own homes for the beginning year of the puppy's life.

Pups are placed into homes at six to ten weeks of age. They will be kept in the raiser's home until they are twelve to fourteen months of age or until requested back by Pilot Dogs, Inc. We will supply a leash and a training collar. We provide heartworm preventative, a Puppy Raiser Manual and a Health Card for each puppy, to be kept updated while the Puppy Raiser has the pup. Pilot Dogs, Inc. will reimburse your veterinarian for the necessary medical services rendered with the pup as well as an obedience course up to $80.00. We ask that the raiser assume the cost of the puppy's food and crate.

The pup is raised in the home as a family pet, much as you would your own dog. This will have a very important effect on the future of the puppy as a dog guide. Housebreaking is normally an easy job at this age. We ask that the pup becomes accustomed to walking on a leash at an early age and that it has frequent opportunities to take walks. The pup should be socialized and exposed to as much as possible. The pup should be exposed to traffic on rural and city streets, neighborhoods and parking lots. Socializing the pup with men, women, and children can be done by having guests in your home, walking around parks and neighborhoods, even going to children’s sporting events. The pup should also be exposed to pets of friends and family after the pup is well vaccinated. Exposure to farm animals when possible can also be helpful. We want the pup to become accustomed to these situations so that it will be controllable around them without any negative reaction as an adult.

At 4-5 months of age, the pup should be enrolled in an obedience course, or as part of the 4-H program start its obedience training. The obedience training the dog receives is very important to develop a well mannered dog which is important for a dog guide. Dog guides are taken to numerous public places and businesses, as well as homes of friends and family.

Pilot pups will not be spayed or neutered until they are returned to Pilot Dogs, Inc.

Upon graduation, Pilot Dogs, Inc. will send a picture of the successful team to the raiser to show the completion of the project.

If you would like more information about how you can get involved with the Puppy Program, please contact us at: pilotpuppies@hotmail.com, tgray@pilotdogs.org, (614) 221-6367 or (614) 449-2136.

Puppy Department

“Every puppy had their own personality that touched my heart in a different way. ...the gratitude of all the blind individuals makes the whole process more than worth it.”

-Kayla Ringhiser, 7-time Puppy Raiser