



BC & Alberta
Guide Dog
Services

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Autism
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Dogs



www.bcguidedog.com | www.autismsupportdogs.org

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Hello there,

It's me Grover, the puppy you are sponsoring to become a life-changing dog. Thank you so much for all your support, I am excited to tell you all about what has been going on with me since I left my mom and arrived at the home of my volunteer Puppy Raisers about 4 months ago.

My Puppy Raisers are great people. I totally appreciate the commitment they have made to raise me - this is a 24/7 volunteer job! My Puppy Raisers picked me up from my birth home when I was 7 weeks old. I was the second pup born in the litter and the biggest of the six. I have to admit, I cried in the car all the way to my new home. Once I arrived though, I realized I was going to be okay.

Right after I arrived, I went outside to play in my new yard and was soon introduced to the dog next door, Jose. I think she's a Yorkshire Terrier and she's about half my size. Jose barked at me and startled me so much that I fell over! Then a gaggle of geese flew over the yard and scared me so much that I ran to take cover with my Puppy Raiser. My first night wasn't the most restful as my tummy was bothering me (probably nerves) so my Puppy Raisers didn't get much sleep. When I did finally fall asleep at about 2:00 am, I kept falling out of my bed (luckily it's only a few inches off the floor) and once I even fell under my Puppy Raiser's bed. It's important that I learn to sleep in my own bed next to my Puppy Raiser because when I become a working dog, I'll need to be close to my blind or autistic partner.

The very next day, I got started on learning some of the basic commands like "getting busy" (bathroom talk) and waiting for the whistle to be blown before I am allowed to start eating. By the way, I LOVE TO EAT! At first I got so excited at breakfast time that I tried to climb into my dog food bin!

I have also started wearing my blue BC Guide Dog Services Puppy in Training jacket when I am out and about. It makes me feel so important and I've been told I look very handsome! One of my very first adventures was to a place called Starbucks and then to the grocery store. At first, my Puppy Raisers had to carry me in their arms because I had not yet had my final vaccination and they didn't want me to pick up any bad germs that would make me sick. Now that I am fully vaccinated, I can walk on leash in public places.

My first real doggie play date was with a German Shepherd named Khela. Compared to me Khela is a big dog! Our play date went like this: I sniffed, played hide and seek with Khela, sniffed, drank water, got stuck in the rose bush, sniffed, drank water, crawled under the deck, sniffed, drank water, toppled into the geranium patch, sniffed, drank water, peed, then fell asleep in my Puppy Raiser's arms. I like those days where I can just be a silly puppy!

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Every two weeks I attend obedience class with all my dog friends who are also part of the training program with BC Guide Dog Services. We all wear our special blue jackets and practice responding to commands like "stay" and "come". We also spend time learning to walk properly (which means not pulling on my leash), sitting and lying down on command. When class is over all the Puppy Raisers and the pups go to lunch. We pups are expected to be on our best behavior during lunch and lay quietly under the tables. Most of us are usually so tuckered out from obedience that we take the opportunity to enjoy a well-deserved nap. Sometimes there are as many as 20 dogs in the restaurant.

I am also learning how to go up and down escalators. My Puppy Raiser and I met up with some other Puppy Raisers who had introduced escalators to their pups already. They were so kind to show us the ropes and even though it was intimidating at first, I summoned up my courage and did really well. After the first couple of times it actually started to be fun!

I have been having so many terrific new experiences with my Puppy Raisers. They have a cottage in the U.S.A. When we cross the border the guards always look in the car and as soon as they see me they get really friendly. Who could resist my cute mug! I like to run on the beach in the early morning and have even gone on a boat. I have also been on an airplane to a place called Prince George. The very nice folks from Westjet let me sit with my Puppy Raisers and even gave me my own space for free. Once again, everybody was so happy to meet me and said I was so cute and well behaved. I also went to church for the first time. Once I got used to the loud piano and organ it was quite nice. I was a good boy and walked very nicely up for communion. The clergyman even gave me a blessing! I have also had the opportunity to meet and play with a 9-month-old baby girl. She crawled right up to me and snuggled in. Then she pulled, poked and even took my bone away. I didn't mind though; I know how important it is to be calm and gentle around small children. My Puppy Raiser said she was extremely proud of how I behaved.

At the start of the summer, Shaw TV interviewed my Puppy Raisers and me. Just before the interview I ate a Rhododendron flower. It seemed like a good idea at the time, but then during the taping it started to make me sick. The TV segment turned out really nicely though as they were kind enough to edit out the yucky stuff. Along with many other guide dogs in training, I attended a barbeque at the RCMP headquarters in Surrey. We all wore our special blue jackets so we had to be on our best behavior. There were lots of people at the event who came up to me, petted me and asked questions about my training. I had fun but boy, was I tired.

As you can read, I'm having a very nice time with my Puppy Raisers. They say I am a very good boy and learn quickly. I did chew something once that I wasn't supposed to – it was the cover of a book called "Smart Puppy – Effective and Easy Puppy Training". My Puppy Raisers actually laughed out loud at that one! I am looking forward to updating you again in four months time. Until then, thank you again for all you are doing to support my training to become a guide dog or autism support dog. I couldn't do it without you!

Love,



Grover