



BC & ALBERTA GUIDE DOGS

GUIDE DOGS • AUTISM SUPPORT DOGS • PTSD SERVICE DOGS

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Serving those who served

A Division of BC Guide Dogs

January 2019

Hello there! It is me, Gideon. I have grown into my body now and am 18 months old. I am sure you thought I had forgotten about you - but I have not.

You remember last time I sent my update I was hoping I would soon begin advanced training. I want you to know I did settle into advanced training with no problem at all and enjoyed being picked up every morning to spend time training with the BC & Alberta Guide Dog instructors. I was put through formal assessment of my skills and behaviours and they told me I was confident and showed great signs of initiative.

Then I was assessed by our team at Vancouver Island Compassion Dogs who train dogs for veterans with PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) and of course, I passed with flying colors. Now my tail is wagging with excitement as I look forward to what lies ahead.

I am working on the eight required skills for me to advance towards working with a veteran. I have listed them below so that you will know how busy I am.

Required Skills by Vancouver Island Compassion Dogs

1. Stand Stay in four positions: This is designed for a client to ground themselves in a social or public environment.
2. Up Pressure Task: This is designed to help a client bond with their dog in a very personal way as well as help re-orientate someone with PTSD when needed.

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3. Chin Pressure Task: This is designed for clients that may have a physical or mental aversion to the full lap pressure task.
4. Leash walking: This is designed to keep our dogs in the at-heel position beside our client. This is important relationship building and creates a bond between the two vital to the dog learning their client's triggers in public.
5. Automatic Heel/Finish: This task is designed for our dogs to return to the at-heel position on command by walking around their human clockwise and returning to a walking forward or heel-ready position.
6. Present Task: Our dogs learn to sit smartly in front of our clients and to touch them with their nose when they return ready to re-orientate or work with their client in any capacity needed.
7. Turn on a Light: Our dogs will learn to turn on a light prior to placement with a client. This is done to help with the nightmare mitigation that our dogs will work once placed. The light is used to re-orientate a client after their dog has woken them from a nightmare.
8. Leash Retrieval: Our dogs learn to pick up our client's leash when dropped for the purpose of making sure they stay with our clients in the case of the leash being dropped due to dis-association.

As you can see, I am learning lots of new stuff, and loving this entire experience.

I should be matched with my veteran in the next few months. Once that happens, I will be sure to send you a photo of me in my graduation jacket and confirmation that I have begun helping my veteran friend.

Thanks so much for all your support through my journey.

Love and licks,

Gideon

