



Guide Dogs needs your support

On Wednesday May 14th Guide Dogs will be holding an event in Banbury to recruit new volunteers and would like to invite anyone who might be interested in supporting us to come along.

Guide Dogs is a national charity supporting people who are blind and partially sighted. It receives no government funding and relies heavily on the activities of its local volunteers to raise money, which pays for the training and support of guide dogs throughout their working life.

The money raised by local fundraising groups helps us to continue to provide life changing guide dogs for people like Fran. She started to lose her sight at the age of 34. Initially, she suffered various eye bleeds and underwent laser treatment. One day, when in work, she noticed that the office appeared really dark and instinctively, went to switch the lights on. However, no amount of light could heal this problem and she attended the eye hospital where this time she was told that there was little more that could be done and that she would have to come to terms with permanent sight loss.

The realisation of what was happening to Fran hit her like a bereavement. Her main concern was not being able to recognise her children's faces. She used to love reading too. Fran also had to give up her driving licence. She felt as though she had lost the 'real' person she used to be. Even though she took to using a white cane to navigate around, she rarely went out alone and she began to lose her independence as her confidence dwindled. Fran began to experience feelings of despair and isolation as the effects of sight loss started to impact upon her everyday life. That is, until the day someone suggested she speak to Guide Dogs. What a good call that turned out to be. After an 18 month wait, she was matched with Asher, her beautiful black Golden Retriever/Labrador and since they met two years ago her life has found new meaning and she is now in acceptance of who she is and what she can do. This has all been made possible by Guide Dogs.

We are looking at increasing our fundraising activity in the Banbury area. As little as a few hours a month would make a huge difference to make more partnerships like Fran and Asher possible.

Penny Hefferan, Volunteer Consultant from Guide Dogs says "Volunteering is fun and rewarding. You know you are helping to make a real difference to



the lives of people who are visually impaired by who rely on using a guide dog to maintain their independence.”

If you would like to find out more about how you can help please join us for a cup of tea or coffee on **Wednesday May 14th 10.00am – 12.00pm at Sainsbury's cafe, Oxford Road, Banbury, OX16 9XA**. You will have the opportunity to learn about our services and what volunteering opportunities there are in your area. Please do spread the word, bring along a friend, family member, neighbour and if you can put any posters out in your local area please let us know.

For further information about the event, please call Penny Hefferan on 07881 269586 or e mail her at penny.hefferan@guidedogs.org.uk

Key facts

- Guide Dogs provide mobility and freedom to blind and partially sighted people. We also campaign for the rights of people with visual impairment, educate the public about eye care and fund eye disease research
- Guide Dogs has over 10,000 volunteers across Great Britain and Northern Ireland
- Guide Dogs currently has around 4,500 working guide dogs, and with each animal averaging a working life of six to seven years
- The guide dog service receives no government funding and depends entirely upon public support
- You can stage your own event for Guide Dogs; visit <https://www.guidedogs.org.uk/supportus/fundraising/fundraise-for-us/> for details
- To find out more about Guide Dogs visit www.guidedogs.org.uk

Notes to editor:

About The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association:

The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association is a British charitable organization founded in 1934 in Wallasey, Merseyside. Guide Dogs provides



independence and freedom to thousands of blind and partially sighted people across the UK through the provision of guide dogs, mobility and other rehabilitation services.

For media enquiries please contact Community Engagement Officer Robert Jinks telephone 01189 838204 or email robert.jinks@guidedogs.org.uk.

Website: <http://www.guidedogs.org.uk/>