

# Dog Guides of Canada

from District A-12 Lions Foundation of Canada Chair Lion Les Stevens  
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## Special Skills Dogs of Canada

Megan is a young woman who has cerebral palsy and requires the use of a power wheelchair. Where many have seen her disability as a hindrance, she sees it as a challenge.

After years of obstacles, Megan applied for a Special Skills Dog Guide. These Dog Guides are trained to complete a variety of skills which include picking up dropped items, opening and closing doors, assisting their handler getting in and out of bed, operating light switches and activating alert systems.

Megan's Dog Guide Ice has provided her with safety and independence. Megan lives alone and if her wheelchair were to get stuck, or worse, if she were to fall out, there's now someone close by to call for help. Megan feels that Ice gives her "a unique sense of comfort and stability that I don't think anyone else could even begin to comprehend. Ice just isn't any dog, he's special and he's an extension of me".



## District A-12 Dog Guide Sponsorship

It is stories like this that inspire me to promote the Dog Guides of Canada as much as I can. The benefits go beyond the simple mechanics of the dog's tasks, they alter the lifestyle for the complete family.

District A-12 has sponsored only one dog guide

in the last three years, although individual clubs, including Elmvale Lions and Killarney Beach Lions have sponsored others. We have some donations towards the next sponsorship, so I wish to encourage all clubs to donate towards the completion of a dog guide this year. Send your donation to me, or direct to Lions Foundation of Canada, but ensure that it is marked for "District A-12 Dog Guide Sponsorship".

## Lions Canine Challenge

Dog Guides of Canada does not receive any government contribution towards expenses. All costs are covered by corporate, service group or individual donations and fund raising events. One of the fund-raisers is the Lions Canine Challenge.

This year's Challenge will be held on Saturday January 13th from noon until 4pm at the Lions Foundation of Canada Oakville facility. Lunch will be provided, in fact, it may become part of the challenge.

The challenge is made from one team of 2 – 4 Lions to any other team. Each team member participates individually in the "tests", accruing scores into team totals. The tests include walking through obstacles blindfolded using a white cane, then with a dog guide. The tests are made more interesting by shouting misleading directions to the blindfolded participants in other teams.

This event is entertaining learning (it leaves a much more durable impression) and a fun fund-raiser. Each team must pay a registration fee of \$500 or more. The Tottenham Dodgers, who were a close second last year, challenge all clubs to beat them in this challenge, in terms of funds raised as well as team score. District A-12 provided more than half of the teams last year. Let's see if we can dominate the event this year. Register with Lion Gord Wallen at Oakville (905 842 2891)

## *You can make a difference*

If any club would like information about the Canine Challenge, Walk for Dog Guides, or any other aspect of the Dog Guide program, please contact your LFC Chair, Lion Les Stevens. I would happy to answer your query, arrange a guest speaker at your location, or visit you for a presentation.