

NEWS RELEASE - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Working as a team, each step of the way Annual conference unites guide dog users across Canada



Montreal, QC, June 14, 2008 -- For many Canadians who are blind or who have low vision, a guide dog affords unparalleled independence and mobility to its handler. Even amidst the apparent chaos of the busy downtown core in any urban center, guide dogs and their handlers travel, navigate, and negotiate sidewalks, intersections, busses, subways, and a never-ending flow of pedestrians day in and day out. How do these teams work, why do they work so well, and how can they work even better together? That is the purpose behind the 2008 Guide Dog Users of Canada Conference & AGM, to be held November 1, 2008 at the Days Hotel & Conference Centre in downtown Montreal.

Few people realize that not all guide dogs are trained by a single institution, and there are actually a plethora of guide dog training facilities across North America (such as The Seeing Eye in Morristown, NJ, or La Fondation Mira in Sainte-Madeline, QC). Each school may have only a handful of graduates in any given city or town, and handlers often do not have the opportunity to meet, network, and learn from one another's experiences.

This conference promises to provide boundless networking opportunities, and enable an open discussion among guide dog handlers from across the country on issues relating to access rights, caring for guide dogs, team-building, first-aid care of a guide dog, and in particular, strategies and techniques for safely and effectively responding to encounters with other aggressive (perhaps attacking) dogs. Despite an increase in the prevalence of leash laws across the country, off-leash dogs are a serious and ongoing safety concern for guide dog teams nationwide, and learning advanced strategies for contending with these surprises is extremely important for the safety and well-being of a guide dog team.

Guide Dog Users of Canada/Utilisateurs des chiens guides du Canada invites all guide dog handlers and potential or prospective guide dog handlers to this conference. More information can be obtained online at <http://www.gduc.ca>, or by contacting Joyce Main (President) at 1-877-285-9805, or via email to guidedogs@gduc.ca.

About Guide Dog Users of Canada

Since 1999, Guide Dog Users of Canada/Utilisateurs des chiens-guides du Canada has been dedicated to informing and educating the public as to the social value, training, behaviours, and treatment of guide dogs for persons who are blind and how to be of assistance and support to guide dog teams, and to generally assist those who are blind and who use guide dogs to become contributing members in the community. In addition, GDUC provides training opportunities (such as this one) and offers a "Wellness Fund" to guide dog handlers to help defray significant unexpected or emergency veterinary costs for their guide dogs. GDUC is a registered charitable organization (#869175190 RR0001).

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