

Visionary

Edition **55**
November
2024

Ways organisations
have improve
efficiencies

Guide Dogs Victoria's
Campus
redevelopment



International Guide Dog Federation
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First and foremost, membership of the IGDF enables Guide Dog Schools around the world to join a community dedicated to serving the visually impaired. That community needs and wants to share its knowledge and the IGDF facilitates that.

The map below outlines the contributing countries for this edition of Visionary – **Australia, Austria, Japan, New Zealand, USA**



Cover Photo

75 km hike of the Camino Ingles with 8 guide dog teams from Austria, Germany and Spain (Photo by PURINA) Article page 15

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Message From The Chair

Bill Thornton | Chief Executive Officer
BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, Canada

Welcome to our final issue of Visionary for 2024.

Continuing our journey of working in collaboration with Assistance Dogs International (ADI), we jointly launched the [IGDF and ADI Joint Position Statement on Client Services and Ethics](#) in November. This statement has been jointly developed by our two organisations to emphasise our focus on our clients. As we move forward in the new year we very much expect to continue this level of joint work in the best interests of all our members and their clients both ADI and IGDF.

Thank you to everyone who encouraged their clients to complete the ADI and IGDF Access Survey. The survey closed at the beginning of November. We received over 1,200 responses and are now working on a report which we will use to raise awareness about the continuing issues faced by guide and assistance dog clients. This was the first ever international access survey, and we hope that members will find the data useful in your own efforts for access and lobbying. Many thanks to Tamara Searant of Guide Dogs Australia, who designed our survey and is leading the analysis of the results.

As part of our recent strategy review, we have decided the time is right to take the next step in our organisational development and start employing staff directly. From January 2025, David and Clare will be employed directly by IGDF rather than being seconded from

continued

Message From The Chair

Guide Dogs UK. This will give us a clear path and the flexibility to expand our team of professionals to deliver further improved member services. We will keep you informed of the progress of this endeavour. From your membership perspective there will be no interruption in how you presently communicate with our staff. Our registered office and office facilities will be remaining at GDUK's Hillfields office. On this point, I would like to thank GDUK for all the support that they provide to the IGDF. Guide Dogs UK has played a pivotal role in the development and launch of the IGDF since our very first meeting in Reading in 1986. We remain forever indebted for the support that we have all received.

Over the last few months, we welcomed 3 new Development Committee Members and 6 new Assessors. We greatly appreciate the individual commitment and

support of their organisations who give up their valuable time to perform these important IGDF duties. See page 16 for photos and details of the new DC members and Assessors.

Planning is well underway for the 2025 Conference in Warwick, UK, and delegate registrations will soon be open. We have received an excellent selection of abstracts and hope to publish the preliminary programme early in 2025.



Bill Thornton
Chair, International Guide Dog Federation



IGDF Assessments

Update from **IGDF Office, UK**

Congratulations to the following organisations which have passed their 2024 accreditation assessments:

- Fondation romande pour chiens guides d'aveugles, Switzerland
- Verein für Blindenhunde und Mobilitätshilfen (VBM) | Blindenhundeschule Liestal, Switzerland
- Pilot Dogs, USA
- Ecole de Chiens Guides de Paris, France
- See Differently, Australia
- Eyes on Four Paws, Bulgaria
- Hyogo Guide Dogs for the Blind, Japan
- BC & Alberta Guide Dogs, Canada

IGDF Conference Update

The planning for the IGDF Conference 2025 is progressing well. Our hosts, Guide Dogs UK, have established a team who are working hard on organising everything that we need to provide another exceptional conference.

Meanwhile, the Conference Programme Committee has started to review over 60 abstracts that we received from our members. We have been blown away by the enthusiasm and expertise of colleagues working for our member organisations. The challenge will be choosing between some truly inspiring and innovative topics!

The conference website will open very shortly for people to book conference and accommodation on an 'all inclusive' package (attendance at the conference, all meals and accommodation) or 'conference only' (excluding meals and accommodation).



Join us for some English tea and cakes!



Aerial shot of the GDUK National Centre

In addition, Guide Dogs UK is arranging extra events such as visits to the Guide Dog National Centre, walking tours of historic Stratford on Avon and a Trainers 'Practical Skills' Workshop. These additional activities will be on a first come first served basis and may be subject to an additional cost.

We think that the 2025 Conference will be well attended – so don't delay with booking your space!

IWDA Breeders Workshop

The IWDA Breeder's Workshop is on the 23rd and 24th June at the same wonderful Warwick University venue. It will provide attendees with the latest science in canine reproduction and breeding and will include a host of practical learning opportunities using world-class speakers demonstrating technology and techniques to streamline your working dog breeding program and practices. Confirmed speakers include Prof. Gary England and Dr Tom Lewis.

More info and tickets are available here: <https://event.fourwaves.com/iwdc2025>

Cultivating the Community to Enhance Operational Efficiencies

Michelle Barlak
The Seeing Eye, USA



Don with his wife holding their Volunteer of the Year award

The Seeing Eye's volunteer program includes over 140 on-campus and remote volunteers in addition to more than 500 volunteer puppy raisers. Volunteers play a pivotal role in The Seeing Eye's mission, assisting in areas like puppy raising, campus tasks, and remote administrative work. This enables the organization to dedicate more staff resources toward training guide dogs and supporting its students and graduates.

On-campus volunteers assist with tasks such as bathing dogs, filing paperwork, photography, and providing transportation services for dogs requiring veterinary care. While these roles may seem minor, they are vital to the daily operations of the organization, allowing staff to focus on more specialized tasks.

One particularly dedicated volunteer manages the Pennies for Puppies fundraising program, which organizes presentations and fundraisers at local schools and community groups. Over the past 13 years, this effort has educated countless community members about our mission and raised more than \$1.3 million USD for The Seeing Eye. Another volunteer is responsible for maintaining the organization's extensive archival collection, preserving the rich history that dates back to our founding. A gifted group of volunteer presenters host visitors on our campus for public educational programs that are scheduled three times per month for up to 40 people.

Not all volunteers need to be physically present to make a significant impact.

The Seeing Eye provides opportunities for remote volunteering, particularly in administrative roles such as data entry, scheduling guest attendance for public education programs, writing, and research. These tasks can be completed from home, which allows the organization to benefit from volunteer support without additional workspace needs.

Remote volunteering also opens up opportunities for individuals who may not be able to volunteer on-site due to distance, mobility challenges, or time constraints. This flexibility helps The Seeing Eye broaden its volunteer base while still reaping the benefits of their contributions.

One of the main factors behind The Seeing Eye's successful volunteer program is the sense of community it fosters. Volunteers are treated as integral members of the organization, not just temporary helpers. The organization works hard to build lasting relationships with volunteers, which leads to long-term engagement. Many volunteers stay involved for years, which helps The Seeing Eye reduce costs associated with recruitment and training while building a strong and supportive network.

For non-profits looking to adopt a similar model, community-building is essential. The Seeing Eye hosts volunteer appreciation events, offers ongoing training, and maintains regular communication with volunteers about the organization's achievements and challenges. Keeping volunteers informed and engaged helps foster a sense of ownership and loyalty, which is crucial for maintaining long-term volunteer relationships.

A well-structured volunteer management system is also key to success. This includes providing orientation, clear guidelines, and task-specific training to ensure that volunteers are productive, and their time is used efficiently. The Seeing Eye's Human Resources department keeps a well-organized file and communicates regularly with staff members to ascertain their needs and match them with the skillsets available in the pool of volunteer candidates.

By involving community members in meaningful roles, providing clear support, and fostering long-term relationships, The Seeing Eye has created a sustainable volunteer model. This model encompasses hands-on service, administrative support, and remote work, proving that volunteers are an invaluable asset to any non-profit organization.



Seeing Eye staff Joan and Chelsea host a Q&A with puppy raisers at Family Day

Harnessing Online to Promote Guide Dogs Efficiently

Shiori Nishida
Japan Guide Dog
Association



The Nationwide Online Simultaneous Guide Dog Class

The Public Relations and Communication Department of JGDA promotes understanding of vision impairment and guide dogs through fund-raising activities, seminars for businesses, classwork at primary and junior high schools, and stage demonstrations at commercial facilities (malls, outlets).

In Japan, where people tend to choose smaller dogs for pets, and few facilities allow people to take their pet dogs with them, social understanding and cooperation for the vision impaired and guide dogs are essential for guide dog users to go out confidently.

Under the Act on Assistance Dogs for Physically Disabled Persons, guide dog users are allowed access to facilities, shops, and public transportation used by various people. However, according

to a survey of guide dog clients of JGDA, 44% of our clients experienced access refusals in 2023.

In 2020, when the pandemic made it impossible to conduct face-to-face promotion activities as much as we would have liked, we started a new online seminar for businesses. Until then, we had visited each business to conduct seminars, but by conducting online seminars for different types of businesses (taxis, accommodation facilities, medical institutions, restaurants, and retail stores), we have made it possible for many companies to participate all at once. In the future, we plan to upload the seminar content on YouTube so that more businesses can learn for themselves.

Even more successful are the guide dog classes for primary and junior high schools: in addition to the “School Caravan,”

in which our PR staff and PR dog visit one school at a time, we launched a nationwide online simultaneous guide dog class in 2021. 7,437 students from 129 schools participated in eight online classes last year. In March, a video website for children, “Nichimo (JGDA in Japanese) Junior” was launched, uploading videos teachers can use in classes and children can use for their research studies.

“With online activities, people can easily participate from afar, and if we leave an archive, they can watch it later at their convenience. The online experience has led to requests for ‘on-site verification,’ and we have even visited

facilities later to conduct site-specific guide dog acceptance simulations. We feel that incorporating the online system has greatly expanded the scope of our promotion and dissemination activities.” says Takumi Kuroda, the Public Relations and Communication Department leader at the Shimane Asahi Training Centre.

As society’s needs evolve, so does our approach. JGDA is committed to adapting and finding more efficient ways to work with society. Our dedication to creating a society where everyone, including guide dog users, can live comfortably is unwavering.



PR demonstration

Redefining Accessibility and Inclusion: Inside Guide Dogs Victoria's Transformative Campus Redevelopment

Aimée Goder
Guide Dogs
Victoria,
Australia



Guide Dogs Victoria official Campus opening

Guide Dogs Victoria (GDV) has a long history of leadership and innovation in the vision sector. The recent completion of its Campus redevelopment marks a significant advancement towards a fully accessible and inclusive environment for people with low vision or blindness. Informed by over five years of meticulous planning and international study, the transformed Campus was officially opened in September 2024 and guarantees to benefit the Victorian blind and low vision community for generations to come.

Central to the redevelopment were mandatory universal design principles, shaped by extensive consultations with Clients, their families, staff, and volunteers to ensure the facility met the community's needs. A key piece of research was an international study tour of eight sensory spaces across three countries, informing the design and showcasing global standards for

accessibility, inclusion, and learning. GDV's research included visits to locations such as the Anchor Center for Blind Children in Denver, Guiding Eyes for the Blind in New York, and Hazelwood School in Glasgow. The insights gained and support received from every institution visited were invaluable to the success of the redevelopment, and GDV extends its heartfelt thanks to all involved.



Guide Dogs Victoria external reception

Leveraging holistic accessibility tools including light, scent, sound, and touch to stimulate the senses, the Campus ensures every visitor, regardless of vision level, feels a deep connection to their surroundings.

"The gold standard for accessible buildings, as defined by GDV, starts with the adoption of universal design principles, a co-design process, and involves implementing a range of tools such as tactile surfaces, contrasting colours to define spaces, adaptive lighting, and advanced wayfinding systems," shared GDV CEO, Nicky Long. By integrating these advanced wayfinding systems like BindiMaps within the new build, the needs of the community remain front of mind always.

A standout feature is the updated residential accommodation, where Clients can develop essential life skills in a supportive environment fostering immersive confidence and purpose.



GDV residential accommodation

Featuring seven ensuite bedrooms, a wheelchair-accessible bedroom, a training apartment, sensory breakout spaces, and an accessible communal training kitchen with electric adjustable sink and cooktop, and overhead cabinets that lower for easy access; the spaces are exemplary models of accessible design.

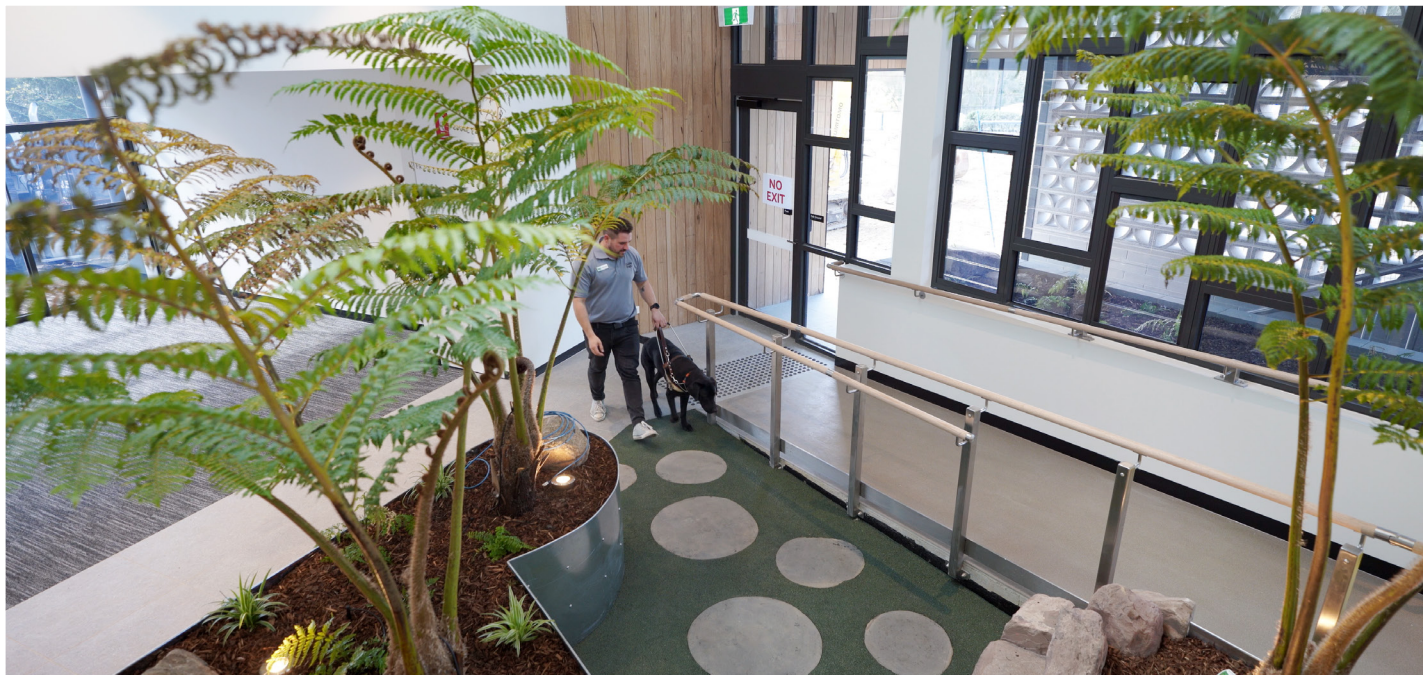


Guide Dogs Victoria Kids Room



Guide Dogs Victoria hallway

The residential accommodation facilities simulate real-life living conditions while maximising accessibility and learning opportunities, with communal areas like the dining space, a Client lounge that community peer groups can utilise, plus sensory rooms crafted to encourage social connections and reduce isolation.



Guide Dogs Victoria sensory indoor garden

Both puppies and Clients can thrive at the new Campus, with a centrally-located early puppy development courtyard where the public can come and watch potential future Guide Dogs puppies play and learn through enrichment activities.

At GDV, Clients can access a range of Guide Dog training opportunities that can be delivered at their home or on-site utilising the new facilities. Clients opting for residential training stay on-campus for two weeks to bond and train with their Guide Dog match, creating a fantastic opportunity for peer support and to meet with other staff while exploring GDV's diverse services. Clients can also return with their current Guide Dog for long cane refresher programs or can explore developing new skills such as accessing the CBD independently via public transport.



Guide Dogs Victoria training apartment

Client who recently participated in a residential program shared, “The accommodation was premium, with incredible attention to detail that made it feel homely. The rooms were spacious, with plenty of storage, allowing me to fully unpack and feel at home rather than living out of a suitcase.”

GDV also regularly hosts additional upskilling programs such as the ‘Cook to Connect’ occupational therapy program where Clients can learn or enhance basic cooking skills, while building confidence in their independence and safety at home. The on-campus veterinary hospital is another notable addition, offering specialist care to the local community and GDV's dogs directly on-site. Guide Dogs Victoria has partnered with Advanced Vetcare who operate the soon to be 24/7 facility. Guide Dogs Victoria's own veterinary team also works alongside Advanced Vetcare's team in the state-of-the-art facility.

This redevelopment marks a new era for GDV, positioning it as a global leader in providing holistic support for

the community they serve. The new Campus is more than just a facility; it is a vibrant community hub where ability is nurtured, celebrated, and developed in an environment that is as inclusive as it is innovative. By creating a space that maximises learning and social connection, GDV has set a new worldwide benchmark, proving once again the importance of thoughtful design to enhance learning, independence, and wellbeing for the blind and low vision community.



Guide Dogs Victoria community hub

How Funding Support Transformed BLVNZ's Guide Dog Kennels

Peter Hoskin
Blind Low Vision,
New Zealand

At Blind Low Vision NZ, our commitment to providing essential services for the blind and low vision community has been supported by a range of initiatives aimed at reducing costs and improving operational efficiencies. Some examples of this are the successful development of our new Kennels, a new Early Development Programme, and our amazing Corporate Partners.

Expanding Our Guide Dog Kennels:

Guide Dogs' kennels play a pivotal role in their training and care. And thanks to generous supporters of Blind Low Vision NZ, we've been able to expand our kennels, increasing our capacity to train more Guide Dogs each year. This expansion wasn't just about scaling; it was about doing so in a way that made long-term financial sense.

It's been four weeks since we moved into the new kennels, which has helped reduce the need to have our dogs go into boarding. Previously, we were struggling with stressed dogs, skin issues, musculoskeletal issues, but those have reduced dramatically, leading to better training and development. The new kennels have helped future-proof our Guide Dog programme, ensuring we can meet growing demand without increasing operational costs.

A new Early Development Programme:

We've been working on a new early development programme for our guide dogs, where we test puppies using a behavioural checklist. This checklist is backed by IWDA – International Working Dog Association.

In the last 6 or 7 months, we've tested 6 litters and seen some great improvements. The dogs are scored between 1 and 9, with 1 being the lowest and 9 the highest. Before we started this programme, our average score was 3.9, but now it's gone up to 5.5!

To put that into perspective, dogs that score 6 or higher have a really good chance of making it through training. On the other hand, dogs that score 6 or below have about an 80% chance of being withdrawn from the programme. It takes around two years to fully train a guide dog, so these improvements are really encouraging for the future!

Leveraging our Corporate Partnerships:

The new kennels are a great example of how targeted funding and thoughtful design can reduce costs and improve efficiencies. With the support of donors and partners, we've been able to make these projects sustainable in the long term, ensuring that our resources are focused where they matter most: delivering life-changing services to our community.

The support we receive from our corporate partners is noteworthy. Royal Canin provides high-quality dog food for our puppy raisers and guide dog handlers, while our partnership with NZ Post ensures free deliveries of this food to them across New Zealand. Southern Cross Pet Insurance helps cover insurance costs for our guide dogs in training, and Zoetis supplies critical vaccinations, anti-flea, and deworming treatments. Together, these contributions amount to almost \$700,000 worth of support (annually), allowing us to focus on training and developing our guide dogs.

Our 75 km hike of the Camino Ingles with 8 guide dog teams

Ingrid Sweeney
Independence Dogs Austria

From 21st to 29th September, eight (8) guide dog teams met in Santiago de Compostela, to walk the Celtic Camino, also known as Camino Inglés, from the city of A Coruña to Santiago de Compostela, a journey of more than 75 km. The trip was planned and organized for nearly a year by Independence Dogs Austria (IDA), a proud and sole IGDF member school in Austria.

So the guide dog teams wouldn't have to re-orient in a new hostel every day, we stayed at a hotel in Santiago de Compostela, which proved to be a very good idea. Our days started with free running at 6:30 a.m., followed by breakfast, then off we went to our daily adventure. A bus transported us every day to our new point of departure which was either a village or road crossing where we had stopped walking the previous day.

We had 2 knowledgeable Galician guides to support us during our trek. One day we went completely off the marked Camino trail to avoid walking along a busy road for a long stretch.

During the days we spent together, the dogs always had opportunities to run free. However, just as or more important were the many training opportunities. This is a specialty to which IDA is quite dedicated. Every year we offer a continuing education trip to an unfamiliar location for guide dog teams to work on old skills that need refreshing and to develop new skills.

At the end of the trek, we arrive on Plaza de Obradoiro (Workers Square), in front of the Cathedral of Santiago de Compostela.

What a feeling! During the Pilgrim's mass on Saturday at noon, the officiating priest called out our group in front of the many hundreds, perhaps more than a thousand, in attendance.

On the final evening, a concert of thanks was given at the church San Miguel dos Agros, close to the cathedral. The performers included one of the blind participants who is a well-known Austrian pan flute player. The CEO of IDA Ingrid Sweeney, a former concert musician, played on the violin, and two local professional musicians rounded out the chamber group. At the concert, Independence Dogs Austria thanked sponsors ONCE Galicia, Purina Austria, and the Austrian University of Veterinary Medicine for their logistical and financial support.

It was a tremendous experience for all involved and an adventure and continuing education for the guide dog teams wrapped into one.



Camino Group trekking through the forest

Committee Updates: New DC Members

Welcome David Locklin

IGDF welcome David Locklin to the Development Committee. David began his career at Guide Dogs UK in 2000, and over the last two decades has worked at Organizations in Ireland and the USA. As well as being a GDMI he has held various leadership roles, and currently oversee all the operations at the Guide Dog Foundation and America's VetDogs.

David is actively involved with ADI serving on their board of directions, is the vice-chair of the North America council, chair of the membership committee as well as a member of the candidate review committee.

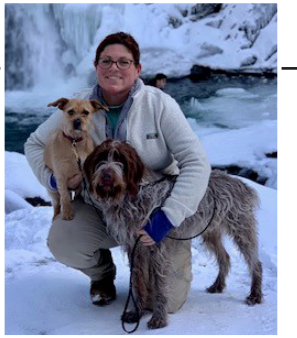


Committee Updates: New IGDF Assessors

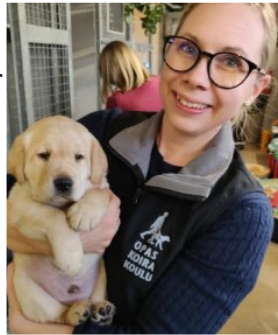
Welcome Miranda Beckmann

Welcome to Miranda Beckmann from Guiding Eyes for the Blind, USA who has recently been appointed as a new IGDF assessor. Miranda has been in the Guide Dog field since 1999 at Guiding Eyes for the Blind. During that time, she has experienced the organization transition from traditional training to using food reward and clickers with our training program. The majority of

her career has been spent overseeing and working with students in the residential training program. Her current role at Guiding Eyes focuses on dog training aspect as the Foundation Manager for the Training Department.



Welcome Hannele Ruukonen



Welcome to Hannele Ruukonen, from the Finnish Federation of the Visually Impaired who has joined the Development Committee. Hannele

has been working as the Puppy Program Coordinator. She has been a member of the organisation's Breeding Committee and their representative in the European Breeding Network since 2018 and Service Dogs Breeders' Fellowship since 2022. Alongside another Finnish colleague, she also represent Finland in the standards work of CEN TC 452.

has worked at the Finish Federation for 17 years and for the past 12 of those years, she



Welcome to Brit Lamberts from KNGF, Netherlands who has recently been appointed as a new IGDF assessor.

Brit was born in Holland and started working for KNGF, Dutch guide dogs school

Welcome Brit Lamberts

in 1999 where she trained to be a GDMI and service dog trainer for children with autism.

Brit has also worked for 2 years in Uruguay and 2 years in Chile in South America, returning to KNGF in 2020.

Brit has been crazy about animals since she was a child and currently owns 3 dogs and 2 cats.

Welcome Tony Harvey

Welcome to Tony Harvey from GDUK who has also just joined the DC. Before beginning his Guide Dog career in 2008 in the UK, Tony worked for SeeAbility, a charity supporting individuals with visual impairments, additional disabilities, and neurodiversity. He initially served as a GDMI before relocating to New Zealand where he transitioned into a rehabilitation

role and also worked with Epilepsy Support Dogs NZ. Tony returned to the UK in 2015 as a GDMI and has since held a variety of management roles. He is now a Regional Academy Manager for Scotland, Northern Ireland, and North East England.



Welcome Roberto Ceribelli

Welcome to Roberto Ceribelli from Guide Dogs UK who has recently been appointed as a new IGDF assessor.

Roberto, is a Guide Dog Mobility Instructor and Technical Learning Specialist with Guide Dogs UK. He began his career in Italy, working in various roles before qualifying as a GDMI in 2013.

Roberto is dedicated to helping people with vision impairments achieve greater independence and to mentoring the next generation of GDMIs. Outside of work, he enjoys running and spending time in nature.



Welcome Ben Francis

Welcome to Ben Francis from CNIIB who has recently been appointed as a new IGDF assessor. Born in the UK, and now living near Ottawa, Canada Ben began a career with Guide Dogs in 2005 as an Apprentice GDMI. Ben was employed by CNIIB Guide Dogs in 2018 during the early development of the program. In 2021, he became the Manager of Guide Dog

Training and earlier this year, took on the new role of Director, Guide Dog Training and Apprenticeships.

Ben is proud to be following in his father's (Brian Francis') footsteps within the Guide Dog world.



Welcome Jennifer Meyer

Welcome to Jennifer Meyer from Foundation Swiss School for Guide Dogs for the Blind

Allschwil, Switzerland, who has recently been appointed as a new IGDF assessor.

Jen has been training guide dogs and their owners for over 20 years, and even after so

many years, it still gives her great joy.

She values the exchanges between other schools when meeting at IGDF conferences and is now looking forward to combining her passion for travel with assessment visits to other schools. Jen believes there is value in the IGDF work and is really looking forward to the new perspectives and experiences.

Welcome Edmund Sullivan

Welcome also to Eddie Sullivan who also joins the IGDF assessor team. Eddie started with Guide Dogs NSW/ACT in 2007 as an O&M Instructor. In 2009, he commenced his training to be a GDMI. From 2013 to 2017, Eddie worked with Guide Dogs Victoria, supervising cadets and developing training and education material. In 2017, Eddie returned to Guide Dogs NSW/ACT as

Guide Dog Training Manager and continued to train and educate new GDMI's and GDTs, as well as assessing and matching dogs in training. Eddie then moved into a Guide Dog Services Manager role and is now the Puppy Raising Manager at NSW/ACT.



IGDF Becoming an Employer

As part of the recent review of our organisational strategy, the IGDF Board has taken the decision to transition to employing staff directly, rather than seconding them through Guide Dogs UK. This is a logical next step for IGDF as we continue to modernise and grow the organisation. Employing staff directly will enable us to reduce the cost of employing staff and give us greater flexibility to expand our professional team. This is essential to build our organisational capacity to deliver the new strategy and develop new & improved member services.

From the perspective of members, you will notice little or no change. The IGDF email address will remain unchanged and Guide Dogs UK have kindly agreed to allow us

to continue to use Hillfields as the IGDF Registered Office address. David Maynard and Clare Pritchett will have new phone numbers and we will publish these once they are set up.

All of us at IGDF would like to echo Bill's words of thanks to Guide Dogs UK, which are in his Chair's Message. IGDF remains extremely grateful to Guide Dogs UK for all their support and generosity over the decades and we look forward to continuing to work closely with them to achieve our shared objectives.

This is the first part of the new strategy to be announced, as we need to move forward with this transition. We look forward to sharing the full details of our new strategy with you in the next issue.

Standards Review

The Standards Committee has completed their review of the current standards and submitted a final draft to IGDF Board for their consideration and approval.

This has been the first time that the whole suite of standards has been reviewed at the same time and we are hugely indebted to the many people who willingly provided their expertise. This is also the first time that we have reviewed a standard with our friends at Assistance Dogs International.

The process of member feedback has been invaluable to help strengthen the final drafts and gave the Standards Committee

(and their review panels of subject matter experts) further food for thought.

We believe that we now have an excellent modern set of standards which maintains IGDF's leadership position as a standards body.

Once we have board approval, we will work with the Communications Committee throughout 2025 to ensure that the standards are understood by the membership and members can adapt to any new requirements prior to the standards being used for self-assessments and accreditations in 2026.

Have you signed up to Moodle yet ?



The IGDF online learning platform (Moodle) is a free library of learning resources generously donated by guide dog organisations including Guide Dogs Australia, Guide Dogs UK, Guide Dogs for the Blind USA, Seeing Eye Inc. and Vision Australia Seeing Eye Dogs to support the training of Guide Dog Mobility Instructors and Trainers.

The platform is intended to supplement existing learning programmes and to provide materials that align as closely as possible with the International Guide Dog Federation Instructor training curriculum. Staff already qualified as Guide Dog Mobility Instructors or Trainers may find content useful for further education or professional development.

All staff from member, applicant and enquiring organisations are eligible to sign up and access the platform and its library of high quality training materials.

Over 400 people have already signed up!

You can register for access at: <https://igdf-education.org/moodle/login/signup.php?> or by scanning the QR code below.

Please use your organisational email address when registering.



Visionary

Next Issue

The deadline for articles for the next issue of Visionary is: **1st February 2025.**

Special Feature:

Eligibility criteria to apply for a guide dog.

Please send any enquiries or articles to the IGDF Office by the above deadline.

In the meantime, if your organisation has any additional stories it would like to

share, it can do so on the new IGDF articles webpage [here](#).

Please supply your articles as a Word file with original images attached as separate jpeg images along with their captions.

Further information can be found on our website at <https://www.igdf.org.uk/>



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