



STAGES OF
The Seeing Eye
JOURNEY



STAGE 4:

Career



Where we are in the life stages (4 of 5)



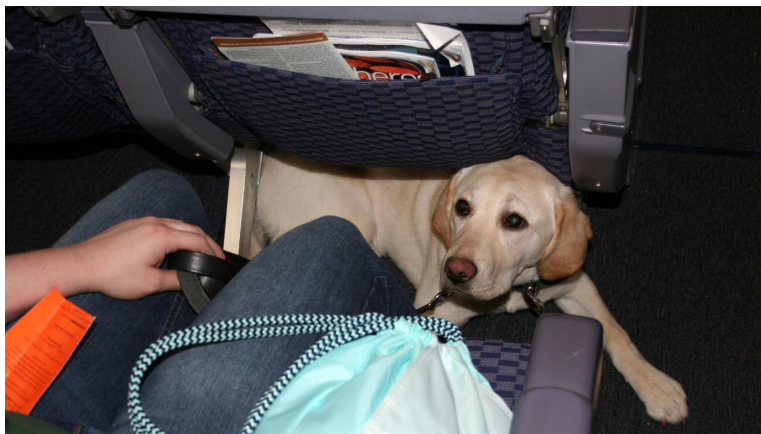
Age range of a dog in this stage
16 months to 8 or 9 years old



Introduction

The Seeing Eye journey involves more than a wonderful dog. It takes an entire village of caring, dedicated professionals, volunteers and donors, as well as a tremendous amount of resources, time, energy and patience to help a puppy become a dog that will transform the life of a person who is blind or visually impaired. Come along with us as we explore each stage of The Seeing Eye journey and the many contributing factors to a working guide dog team's ultimate success.

So long, Doggos!



At the end of their training, graduates and their new Seeing Eye® dog go home, to wherever that may be. If everything goes smoothly, we may not hear from them again except for the occasional holiday card.

Adjusting to a new life

Before the graduates leave, we make sure they are realistically prepared for the journey ahead. We explain it usually takes anywhere from six months to a year to become a smooth, working team. Even if the graduate previously had a Seeing Eye dog, it will take this long. Since this is a new dog, it's a brand new relationship.



Ongoing support for a lifetime

Once the graduates leave campus, we are always there for them. If they have any problems, they can call or email us. If we can't resolve the issue over the phone or by email, we'll send an instructor out to visit.

This service is available to graduates for the rest of the working partnership at no extra cost.





We don't “hound” you

We are often asked if we “check up” on our graduates. We don't and that's intentional. We aren't a paternalistic association. Our view is “this is your life, this is your dog.” Our graduates are adults and we respect that. We don't want to be hovering over them or running around checking up on people to make sure they're doing things “a certain way.”

We always encourage graduates to contact us with requests for help or a follow up. We'll send an instructor to visit and work things out, if necessary.

Did You Know?

-  We have around 1,700 active Seeing Eye teams throughout the U.S. and Canada.
-  We conduct more than 500 visits to new applicants, returning applicants and graduates (if requested) each year.

Frequent fliers



Our instructors log so many air miles that some of them have actually traveled a million miles during their careers! They travel to interview applicants who want to become students. They also visit graduates who have requested assistance.

All airfare costs are covered by donations from generous donors. You can help!

No parties please



Often, some well-meaning friends and family of graduates want to plan a big “Welcome Home!” party for when the dog arrives. We know everyone’s heart is in the right place, but we encourage people not

to have a party. It’s better to keep things calm and let the dog settle in. We advise our graduates to introduce the dog in whatever way works for them, but don’t overwhelm the dog.

Preparing family and friends

We help our graduates prepare their family, friends and co-workers to greet their new partner.

Before the dog ever arrives home, The Seeing Eye has sent introductory materials and video materials for friends and family members.

The graduate may choose to write an introductory letter or article to be sent to their co-workers or classmates. The Seeing Eye provides materials that can be incorporated into the letter or article about proper etiquette around guide dogs.



A range of professional environments

Our graduates work in a wide variety of fields. Among our graduates, there is a high percentage of psychiatrists, psychologists, students, attorneys, medical transcriptionists, stay-at-home moms and dads and financial professionals.

Did You Know?

One of our graduates is an Oceanographer whose dog accompanies her in the field, or, well... you understand.



The impact of a Seeing Eye dog



In our materials we often talk about how a dog empowers a graduate to have a more independent, mobile life. This is certainly true.

In the population of people who are blind, the unemployment rate is 70%. In The Seeing Eye graduate population, it's just the reverse. We are incredibly proud that 70% of our graduates are employed.

Seeing Eye dogs assist with travel, something vital to employment, and individuals with active lifestyles are more likely to seek out a Seeing Eye dog to enhance their independence.

The secondary impact of a Seeing Eye dog

We once placed a dog with a graduate who was a social worker for child services in a big city. He was a big, gruff, somewhat intimidating man. But when you saw him talk about the children he worked with, he really changed. He became a gentle softie. Once he got a Seeing Eye dog, the dog made a huge difference in his life and in the lives of his young clients. In addition to being a Seeing Eye dog, the dog became a default therapy dog because he always helped the children relax.



Working with students of all ages



many of our first-time graduates (who may be as young as 16) come to us prior to college and have a dog that will be with them through

higher education and into the start of their career. The Seeing Eye has no upper age limit for applying for a Seeing Eye dog.

Did You Know?

We have a group of graduates who have been working with dogs for more than 50 years. Unsurprisingly, the name of this group is the Half Century Club.



A member of the Half Century Club

A typical career span



Seeing Eye dogs are 2 years old when they are fully trained and first matched with their person. The average career of a Seeing Eye dog lasts 8 to 10 years.

A long, healthy meaningful career

After what we hope is a long, healthy, productive career, our dogs are ready to begin a whole new phase of life.

That's our fifth and final Stage: Adoption (Retirement)!

1. First Weeks

2. Puppy Raising

3. Training

4. Career



5. Adoption
(Retirement)