

PUPPIES BEHIND BARS



VALERIE SHAFF PHOTOS

TRAINING INMATES TO RAISE PUPPIES TO BE GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND

THE PUPPY PROJECT NEWSLETTER

Fall 1998

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Hoping To Bark Up A New Tree

Following a successful year at the Bedford Hills women's prison — where inmates are training five puppies to graduate to guide-dog work in 1999 — the Puppy Project is making plans to expand to a second site, funding permitted. If funds are raised, ten inmates at the Fishkill Correctional Facility, a men's medium-security facility in lower Dutchess County, will become the second "class" of puppy raisers for the Puppy Project. Beginning in October, the men would take classes on how to raise a puppy to be a guide dog, with four Labrador Retrievers arriving in November. As with the Bedford Hills program, the puppies will have been specially bred for guide-dog work and donated by Guiding Eyes for the Blind, Inc. in Yorktown Heights, New York.

Four men would be "primary" puppy raisers and four would be "alternate" puppy raisers. Two men would act as "floaters", meaning that they would not be assigned to a particular puppy but would take all the classes so that they could step in and care for any of the four pups if need be. All ten inmates would be chosen based on how responsible and trustworthy they have proven themselves since they have been incarcerated, how much time they have left on their sentences, and the nature of their crimes. They would go through a series of interviews and would need to express both in writing and orally why they want to — and should — be chosen for the

program. The puppy raisers would live in a separate wing of a housing unit, with an outside yard dedicated exclusively to the puppies. Once the puppies were housebroken and had



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adjusted to their raisers and their new homes, they would begin accompanying their raisers to different work sites in the prison and spending weekends with families or individuals to further the dogs' socialization.

If you are interested in making a contri-

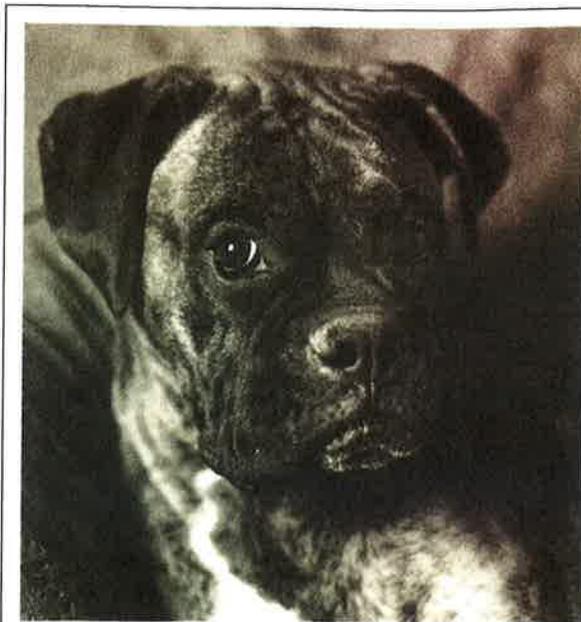
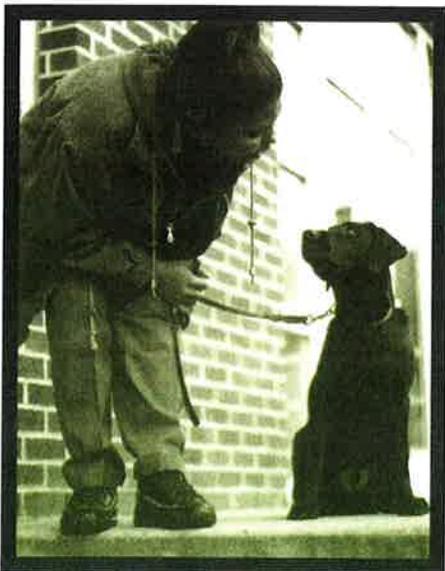
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bution towards the expansion to the Fishkill facility or can introduce Puppies Behind Bars to a corporation or foundation where a grant for expansion might be favorably received, please call 212-750-2073.

We also need weekend puppy sitters who are willing to commit to taking a pup one weekend a month for sixteen months. Anyone interested in puppy sitting should contact us for an interview and information about the required training session.

Media News

Puppies Behind Bars has gotten some great television coverage over the past few months. The spotlight started with a moving segment on Fox Channel Five in May and continues with an upcoming segment on ABC's "Good Morning America." (At press time, the air date was not available, but a mailing will go out when it is.) In the print media, *Life* magazine is preparing to run an article on P.B.B., featuring photographs by Valerie Shaff, in its December issue. Look for it on the newsstand, not just to see how our pups have grown over these past months, but also to hear from the puppy-raisers what the Puppy Project has meant in their lives.



What does that mean, "expensive shoe"?
I ate it because it smelled like you.

The Sweet Success of "Smelled"

Valerie Shaff, the noted animal photographer whose work has graced both issues of our newsletter, had a book of her dog portraits, with accompanying verse by Ray Blount, Jr., published by Little, Brown this past spring. P.B.B. is proud to be able to share an excerpt, (left), from *If Only You Knew How Much I Smelled You*, which is already in its second printing and is available in bookstores.

Paws to Say Thank You

- Steve Bauer, Grace Singer, and Rosemary Derby of Edward Isaacs and Company, L.L.P. prepared our first financial statement and tax filings, an assignment they undertook pro bono.
- Steve Bufferd of New York Printing & Display spent an inordinate amount of

time working out the right paper and colors to make the newsletter look great, and then printed it at cost.

- Kathleen McGilvery designed and laid out the newsletter, giving it the professional, elegant look that so many of our readers have told us they find alluring and compelling.

The PUPPY PHILOSOPHY Spreads

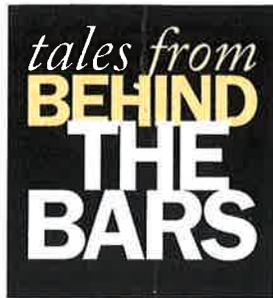
This past July, Gloria Gilbert Stoga, president of Puppies Behind Bars, was the keynote speaker at a luncheon meeting hosted by Guide Dog Users, Inc., at the national annual convention of the American Council of the Blind in Orlando, Florida. Guide Dog Users, Inc., an affiliate of the A.C.B., is the premiere U.S. organization addressing issues that face guide-dog users.

Speaking to about 175 guide-dog users and representatives of some of the leading guide-dog schools in the United States, Mrs. Stoga outlined the philosophy behind Puppies Behind Bars and gave an overview of how the Puppy Project is working at the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. She also answered questions from guide-dog users for whom

the idea of guide dogs raised in prison was novel and, in some cases, a little disconcerting. While the overwhelming majority of the audience was supportive of the concept—many guide-dog users said they thought this was a wonderful way to help both inmates and the blind—they had a number of questions about how the puppies' welfare is monitored, how the dogs are socialized in such a contained environment, how the puppy raisers are chosen, and what the impact will be on the inmates once the puppies leave. This was an excellent opportunity to address concerns some guide-dog users have, and P.B.B. is deeply grateful to Jenine Stanley, president of Guide Dog Users, Inc., who extended the invitation to Mrs. Stoga.

We Love LUCIE

Our puppies affect the lives of virtually everyone with whom they come into contact, and Lucie, the fourth of our pups to enter Bedford Hills, has forged a new bond between two sisters. This spring, Lucie's puppy raiser, Diana, brought Lucie to the visiting room when Diana's sister, Mary, arrived from Michigan for a visit. Blind since 1990, Mary has been using a cane. But after she met Lucie, heard about the special training and breeding that goes into guide dogs, and saw how gentle and well-behaved the five-month-old puppy was, she decided that perhaps it was time for her to get a guide dog of her own. Upon returning to Michigan she contacted a local guide-dog school and applied for a dog. Just a few weeks ago, Diana received a postcard from her sister, saying that she was now the proud owner of a guide dog, who was already providing a new sense of independence, love, and companionship.



Super Super

Elaine Lord, the Superintendent of the Bedford Hills Correctional Facility, has been unwaveringly supportive of the Puppy Project. She has gone out of her way to accommodate the puppies' special needs, allowing them, for instance, to go into as many different areas of the prison as possible and thereby get exposure to a variety of situations. Superintendent Lord has

enabled our pups to spend their days in administrative offices, the prison warehouse, the nursery, the hospital, the school classrooms, and even in the chapel. This means the puppies are, on a daily basis, getting accustomed to lying quietly under an office chair while a puppy raiser is at work, or resting patiently under a church pew during a worship service, or hopping on and off warehouse trucks as they are loaded and unloaded, or being around babies, toys, and strollers. Our puppies still need to go out to private homes on weekends to experience the world at large, but the opportunities they are getting in Bedford Hills go a long way toward ensuring that they will be confident in different situations and that they will touch many lives before they leave.



VALERIE SHARP PHOTOS

An Accomplished VISITOR

Broadening the educational reach of the Puppy Project, a guide-dog user named Mary Beth and Carol, her chocolate Labrador retriever, visited the Bedford Hills women's prison last April to spend an afternoon with the puppies and their raisers. As well as answering the women's questions about how she and Carol work together, how long it took to achieve their harmony, what Mary Beth does if Carol gets sick, and how Carol gets to relax when she is not

working, Mary Beth showed the women how she and Carol work as a team. The women and their puppies watched as Carol led Mary Beth to doors, took her comfortably and confidently down stairs, and guided Mary Beth down the driveway, walking regally in her harness. After two and a half hours of questions and demonstrations, the puppy raisers were in awe of Carol, who embodied the skills they hoped their pups would one day display, and even more in

awe of Mary Beth. As one puppy raiser put it the following day, "She could have let her blindness get her down, but she didn't. She hasn't let it stop her one bit. She's as accomplished and happy and optimistic as anyone could be." Gloria Gilbert Stoga says the group is still talking about Mary Beth and Carol in their classes, for this woman and her guide-dog "presented vivid reminders both of what our puppies can accomplish and what our puppy raisers, beset by serious setbacks in their own lives, might accomplish as well."

Donation Form

I would like to be a **SURROGATE OWNER** of a Fishkill puppy (minimum donation: \$1000.)

Please accept my donation for:

1 puppy's weekend visit to NYC (\$25)

Leashes and bowls for 1 puppy (\$50)

A sleeping crate for 1 puppy (\$85)

Other amount

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State & Zip: _____

Telephone: _____ Fax: _____

Please mail your tax-deductible contribution with this form to: Puppies Behind Bars • 845 Third Avenue, 19th Floor • New York, NY 10022

Virtual Puppies, A Dog Run, and Something to Chew On

VALERIE SHARP

Always wanted a dog but not the responsibility? Would love to have a dog but feel it's unfair to keep one in an apartment in New York? Your kids want a dog but you know who's going to end up doing all the work? Why not sponsor a prison puppy-dog instead? You can name the puppy, visit him, receive regular photos and reports on his progress, and have the option of puppy-sitting on the weekend. Even better, this special puppy will spend his life in service to someone who really needs him. For a minimum donation of \$1,000 you can be the surrogate-owner of a puppy going into the Fishkill Correctional Facility this fall. Or you can give the sponsorship of a pup as a thoughtful and unique gift. The recipient will receive all the updates and photos and will learn in 16 months whether the puppy becomes a guide dog or a companion to an ill child. **Don't delay — there are only four pups to name!** (*All names should be easy to pronounce and worthy of a dog who will spend its life in service to others, please*). Fill out the form



The Puppy Project group at Bedford Hills (Gloria Gilbert Stoga, President, center)

and mail it with your tax-deductible contribution or call P.B.B. at 212 750 2073 with your questions.

Puppies Behind Bars is running the Chicago Marathon on October 11. Well, the puppies aren't running, but Advisory Board member **Bob Denham**, supporter **Mike Johnston**, and president **Gloria Gilbert Stoga** are, and you can support the pups by supporting them. Wearing P.B.B. tee-shirts, the trio will run to raise money for our expansion to Fishkill. Pledge by the mile or on successful completion of the entire race. Useful information, when

you're deciding whom to back and whether to pledge by mile or the whole run, is that Mike has run 40 marathons, Bob just ran his first in London this past April, and Gloria has never run anything approaching 26 miles. We all know on whom we'd place our money.

The great news is that other prisons and guide-dog schools want us to work with them. But we cannot expand further until we have the funds. A donation of \$25.00 will bring one of our puppies

into New York City for a weekend visit to a sitter, \$50 will pay for leashes and bowls for one pup, while \$85 will pay for a crate for a puppy to sleep in at night. A donation of any amount will be greatly appreciated and put to work covering such expenses as supplying educational materials for the puppy raisers, and getting toys into the mouths of the pups so we don't find them chewing on anything they aren't supposed to be chewing on. Please help. **Remember: supporting a puppy today means helping a blind person tomorrow.** (*See donation form inside*).

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