

# THE heart



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HOMEWARD BOUND GOLDEN RETRIEVER RESCUE AND SANCTUARY, INC.

## What's Inside

February is the month of love. Love doesn't fade with our companions' passing, but eventually, tears dissolve into gratitude for the time we had together. Read Carolyn's Valentine's letter to Luke – our cover story.

Fosters are the bridge to dogs on their journeys home and it has become a critical part of our program. There are many ways to help. You may even find a great fit for you on page 8.

Considering adding a puppy to your family? A note from one of our surrendering families inspired "Baby vs. Puppy" on page 7.

Medical needs or disability don't need to be obstacles to "forever" love. Read how diabetes and blindness can be managed at home on pages 9 and 10.

And our **Fund of Love** kicks off this month! This fund provides the match for our **Double The Gold Challenge** later in the spring. The funds raised through both campaigns are dedicated to meeting the medical needs of the hundreds of dogs we will support this year. On page 4, read about our first featured dog, Cooper, and the vital difference your gifts make!

## PLEASE PASS ALONG!

You can help us to expand our reach by sharing our newsletter with friends, family and co-workers! Thank you!



## A Valentine's Day Letter to Luke

BY: Carolyn Unger

Luke was a special boy who came to Homeward Bound in 2014 due to divorce. In addition, he had a severe heart murmur caused by a congenital condition called subaortic stenosis or SAS. Subaortic stenosis is a narrowing of the area underneath the aortic valve, causing some degree of obstruction or blockage of the blood flow through the heart. There is no medical or surgical cure, and when severe, like Luke's, sudden death could occur at any time. Although he was only two and a half and cute, he wasn't a dog that adopters were willing to take a chance on. Life expectancy with SAS is five to seven years.

Luke was a happy but untrained boy who needed a family to love, albeit possibly for a short time. I had heart valve replacement surgery four years earlier due to a congenital defect, so his condition hit close to home. Luke came to live with me and Bacchus

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## Our Mission

Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue & Sanctuary, Inc. is an all-volunteer organization which rescues and heals displaced, abandoned, and homeless Golden Retrievers and Golden mixes, regardless of their age or health. Homeward Bound secures safe, loving homes through a comprehensive adoption program, and also provides lifetime sanctuary for Golden Retrievers that cannot be adopted.

Homeward Bound also provides education on proper animal care and on the benefits of, and need for, rescue and sanctuary. In the event of a disaster, Homeward Bound will provide assistance to other rescue groups and the families of dogs impacted by the disaster.

Homeward Bound will continue to serve as a model rescue organization, addressing animal welfare needs throughout California and neighboring states, and strives to be a national leader in rescue, sanctuary and education.

DOGS RESCUED IN 2021  
420

VET EXPENSES IN 2021  
\$350,600



## A Message From Our President

I'm a pragmatic person. Maybe that's how I ended up in this role. But don't confuse my focus on practicality for a lack of passion. This past year has tested all of us – including me – in our ability to respond to the crisis that surrounds us daily without losing hope and faith.

Nearly one hundred more dogs came through our door in 2021 than in 2020 while our resources remained largely unchanged. They were Golden and golden-hearted. We helped as many as we could without concern for breed or pedigree. Some were surrendered by people who never understood the emotional and physical costs of dog ownership including investment of time and money. Others were losing their livelihoods and homes. Sadly, too many were simply abandoned. The dogs don't understand any of this.

*"Animals are more than ever a test of our character, of mankind's capacity for empathy and for decent, honorable conduct and faithful stewardship. We are called to treat them with kindness...because they all stand unequal and powerless before us." — M. Scully*

Most people are desperate to do the right thing: to surrender a dog to safety; to pull every stray and dog in a shelter when we were already at capacity. My job is to balance the desire to save all with our reality. To weigh the emotional and physical toll of this crisis on our volunteers, and to be the voice of reason through the tears.

It is hard work. Emotional work. And still...incredibly rewarding work. Knowing that you are by our side restores my hope and helps me keep the faith through these trying times. Together, we will get through it.

With heartfelt thanks for your support,

Judy Kent, President



**HOMeward  
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# You Filled Our Homeward Bound Giving Tree with Love!

Every Thanksgiving we launch our bare, virtual Giving Tree and ask for your help to light and decorate it. As one of our three major fundraising efforts of the year, its success is vital to our mission.

Each star, snowflake, toy, package, decoration, and light represents a gift made in honor or in memory of a special someone—two-legged, or four. Each gift makes a life-changing difference to dogs in need.

You filled our tree with love! Your gifts made in honor and memory of your special someones brought our tree to twinkling, sparkling life, helping us to achieve our goals in this challenging year. Your gifts raised over \$135,000 to support the dogs of Homeward Bound.

Thanks to your generosity, we know that we can help hundreds more dogs on their journeys home next year, while those in need of sanctuary will find a place of comfort and care with us. And when we get the call requesting support for dogs with extraordinary needs, we can continue to say 'yes.' You make this possible. Homeward Bound supporters are the very best! Thank You!!



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(Mr. B). He and Bacchus became good buddies until Bacchus crossed the bridge unexpectedly a year later. Bacchus had been my partner at Lend A Heart, a local nonprofit offering pet-assisted therapy. Luke was there to help me through that loss and take on Bacchus' role at Lend A Heart. He helped train Bear into a similar work when he joined our family a couple of years later. This is my Valentine's letter to my sweet Luke.

Dear Luke,

*It has now been three months since you crossed the bridge. Bear and I miss your sweet face and your funny tattletale bark when Bear is counter surfing or doing something he shouldn't do. Luke, you amazed the vets by living almost ten years with a severe heart condition and seldom allowing it to slow you down. I didn't know if you could step into Bacchus' role at Lend A Heart, but you did it and more! You brought smiles and laughter to so many with your happy and funny antics and howls while visiting the severely brain-injured adults at Easter Seals and belly rubbing sessions at the Sacramento Airport.*

*One of your best efforts was helping un-socialized and fearful dogs in playgroups at Homeward Bound. One of your most successful students was Corey.*

*It took Corey five sessions, but he finally learned how to play with other dogs! What a patient teacher and role model you were. Luke, you did everything that I asked of you and more. You happily gave your heart of gold, smile, and wagging tail to everyone you met. You are joyfully remembered by the love and snuggles you shared and not your heart defect. Thank you for sharing your life and love! Happy Valentine's Day, my sweet boy...until we meet again.*







## Help Us Build A Very Special "Fund of Love"



Each year, beginning on Valentine's Day, a group of family foundations, businesses, and generous individuals come together to build a **Fund of Love**. Their donations stand ready to be matched during our spring fundraiser: **Double the Gold Challenge**.

**Fund of Love** and **Double the Gold Challenge** donations provide a large percentage of the funds needed to cover our medical expenses each year. They also help us support more than 70 dogs with ongoing care in permanent foster or sanctuary with us at Homeward Bound.

In 2021, Homeward Bound's intake skyrocketed as dogs adopted or purchased early in the pandemic were abandoned or surrendered. Many families protected during the eviction moratorium lost their homes in addition to their jobs, and had to make the painful decision to say goodbye to longtime family companions. In total, 420 entered our doors – a total not seen since 2013. They were Golden and golden-hearted as we helped wherever we could. Our short-term foster program grew and became a vital component in our ability to say 'yes' to dogs in need.

Many of these dogs had untreated medical conditions. Veterinary expenses



Cooper

exceeded \$350,600 - more than half our total expense. Homeward Bound helps hundreds of dogs on their journeys home each year. Because we are one of the few Golden rescues in the nation with a facility, we can take dogs regardless of their age or health; dogs that might not otherwise be saved.

With your support, we were able to provide each dog with the care it needed, including ear surgeries, tumor removals, heartworm disease treatment, hundreds of spays and neuters, numerous orthopedic and miscellaneous surgeries, and countless treatments for various infections and illnesses. Among them were diabetic dogs, including our 2022 **Fund of Love** poster dog, Cooper, who we will provide lifetime support to. Thanks to you, we were able to meet all of the dogs' needs in 2021. We are asking for your help once again so we can continue our vital rescue efforts.



Adopted as a puppy in 2016, **Cooper** was returned this year when his medical needs became too much for his family to manage. He had been well-trained and clearly loved, but at five years of age, his untreated diabetes had led to cataracts and near total blindness. The daily testing, insulin injections, exercise and closely monitored diet were more than his family could provide. We were highly mo-

tivated to find the right home for Cooper when our Dr. Codde's evaluation suggested that surgical sight reversal might be possible if we could get his diabetes quickly under control. In these pages, you will find his full story and the outcome.

Cooper is only one of diabetic dogs that we currently support. Over the course of this campaign, we will be sharing the stories of other dogs with other significant medical needs - dogs that most other rescues would turn away.



Our support also extends to dogs currently enrolled in our permanent foster program. Through this program, dogs with ongoing medical needs are permanent members of their new families but remain in our program so we can provide their medical care and special food needs for life. Other dogs, whose extraordinary

Continued on page 5

needs make them unlikely to be adopted, can remain with us in sanctuary. They can live out their lives in the safety and security of their own private residence and yard, surrounded by love. Truth be told, we have a hard time keeping them in this program because amazing people take them home!

We can say 'yes' to dogs like Cooper and those in permanent foster or sanctuary because of the generous donations and huge hearts of people like you. We can't do it without you.

Will you please join us in our mission to continue providing the best care possible for deserving dogs like Cooper by helping us to build our **Fund of Love**?



The minimum donation for this fund is \$250. You can choose to donate a greater amount, or you can endow the entire fund. **Fund of Love**, which runs through February and March, provides the important matching funds for our **Double the Gold Challenge** which is held in April and May. 100% of the proceeds of **Fund of Love** and **Double the Gold Challenge** are dedicated to providing medical care for the hundreds of dogs we rescue each year. Support like yours makes our mission possible.

To receive a **Fund of Love** packet, or for more information, please contact Audrey Farrington at [audrey@homewardbound-goldens.org](mailto:audrey@homewardbound-goldens.org), or visit our website at [www.hbgr.org](http://www.hbgr.org). Thank You!



## Cooper's Story

Cooper was adopted as a nine-month-old puppy in 2016. He was returned in June 2021. At age five, diabetic and almost entirely blind, his family was overwhelmed by his needs, and his blood sugar levels were not being consistently managed.

A series of blood tests determined that insulin adjustments were necessary and regular testing was required. Our Dr. Codde also believed that if we could get Cooper's diabetes under control, he might be a good candidate for cataract surgery, restoring his sight. Enter Peggy and Steve Rollins.

Peggy and Steve have a long history of adoption, fostering, and other volunteer roles with Homeward Bound. In 2015, they took home nine-year-old, hugely obese Mary and successfully reduced her weight, extending her life until she passed

at the age of 13. In early 2020, they adopted 10-year-old Molly, providing safety and permanence to a senior in need. With a single dog, they planned a series of travel adventures, but COVID changed that, and they reached out to offer their support to another foster dog. Shortly after his arrival, Cooper went home with them for short-term medical foster.

It's safe to say that his needs were a little more than they bargained for. The recent passing of a 20-year-old family member from Hypoglycemia inspired them to push forward. His first episode of low blood sugar gave them a scare displaying classic "drunken walk" and dizziness, shaking, rapid heartbeat, weakness, and unresponsiveness, putting his head in the corner. Our president, Judy Kent, instructed them to give Cooper some kibble and let him rest. Within a half-hour, he was better. They learned as they went. With help from Dr. Codde and Judy, they learned the signs of Hypoglycemia (low

### Cherry Creek Veterinary Hospital

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Phone: 916-349-2755 | [www.cherrycreekvvet.com](http://www.cherrycreekvvet.com)  
Justina Codde, DVM, MS

A full-service veterinary medical facility, providing excellent medical, surgical and dental care to our patients while promoting responsible pet ownership, preventative health care and health-related educational opportunities for our clients.





blood sugar) and how to manage it. "We give him a long walk first thing in the morning (to get the blood pumping), prick his ear for his glucose test, feed him, set the timer for 30 minutes, give him insulin, and then we're done until a glucose test and lunch and then a walk or a romp in the park with a ball, home for a 4 PM glucose test, dinner between 5:30-6 PM and another 30-minute wait for the insulin injection. It makes me tired just writing about it!"

Glucose testing throughout the day, a strict diet, and daily insulin injections restored Cooper's health enough to be evaluated by Dr. Nick A. Faber, a veterinary ophthalmologist of regional acclaim. This past October, Cooper underwent cataract surgery.

"Surgery meant two weeks with the cone and accompanied potty trips, four weeks of limited activity, four different eye drops, two daily insulin injections, and three daily glucose tests. Judy provided us with a chart so we could remember when to do what!" It was an awful lot of work for what they believed would be a short-term foster. But the reward was waiting.

"While on a walk one week after his surgery, we stopped on a hill, and Cooper spent five minutes gazing all around us at the hills, houses, clouds, planes, etc." Cooper's sighted world was restored. "It was a heartwarming moment."

There have been plenty of moments of doubt, insecurity, worry, and lots of work,



but Peggy and Steve's temporary COVID medical foster has turned into a full-fledged permanent foster and member of their family with Homeward Bound ensuring Cooper's medical care for life.

Molly, now 13, has closely bonded with Cooper. She had been an only dog all her life, and she has found that having a canine sibling is fun and rewarding. However, she can be a little jealous of Cooper's daily "attentions." Cooper has learned to go on command to his floor pillow for testing and insulin shots. Molly accompanies him and wriggles in as far as she can to be part of the process.

Travel plans are back on. Cooper has already been on a couple of camping trips and an adventure to Montana. The road trips are arranged around his medical needs. Now, a trip to Houston is planned with one big difference: Cooper will see the world go by this time!



## Turn KIBBLE INTO CASH for the pups at Homeward Bound!

For every large bag of Nature's Select Premium Pet Food purchased, Nature's Select will donate \$3.00 back to Homeward Bound. Nature's Select provides FREE HOME DELIVERY in the greater Northern California area. It's all-natural, holistic pet food from a local, family-owned and operated company.

*"We love the convenience of having this quality food delivered to us, as well as the generous donations the "Kibble Into Cash" program provides."*

*- Judy Kent, President, Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue & Sanctuary*



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# Puppy Versus Baby

BY: Audrey Farrington

*“This is worse than a newborn baby!”*

These are the words of a family surrendering a three and a half-month old puppy after three weeks of ownership. And they were right. Raising a puppy is as tough – or tougher – than your average newborn baby. Let’s review.

**Cuteness Score:** Both are off-the-chart adorable. They come this way so we will fall in love. That love is meant to give us the fortitude to keep moving forward when the going gets tough.

**Potty:** Both potty at will. One deposits it in diapers...the other on the floor or carpet. If you can be consistent and determined, the puppy will potty outside in a matter of a couple of weeks. Until then, you’ll have to take it out hourly during the day, once or twice in the night, and every time it wakes, eats, plays, and even looks like “I gotta go!”

**Sleep Deprivation:** Babies need feeding during the night. Puppies: See above.

**Nerve-Wracking:** Babies cry. Puppies bark. It’s normal for both and nerve-wracking in different ways. One rips at your heart. The other is a training opportunity that needs to be addressed from the start to ensure a confident, secure dog in the future.

**Household/Human Destruction:** Puppies chew cords, furniture, carpets, and walls. They have razor-sharp teeth that leave humans with battle scars. Babies are toothless.

**Mobility:** It will be nine to 12 months before babies are mobile enough to begin their reign of terror. Puppies are mobile from three weeks. You will be burning some calories!



**Weight at Six Months:** Your healthy baby will weigh in around 16-17 pounds at six months. Still very easy to pick up and carry or remove from dangerous situations. Your puppy will still be very much a puppy, but large breeds will weigh in between 45-70 pounds. At this point, your puppy had better have some pretty good recall which means you have spent the previous months working on training.

**Meltdowns:** Unless they are colicky, baby tantrums generally begin around age one and can go on for several years. (Girls have a tendency to revisit them around age 13!) Puppies have zoomies beginning at about four weeks. These are spurts of wild energy that occur at the most inopportune times like getting ready for work, conference calls, fixing dinner, or just as you settle into your chair in the evening. This energy has to be expended in productive ways. Another dog helps a lot, but be prepared to join in the play. Zoomies are especially pronounced during the first year of puppyhood but a scaled back version can be lifelong.

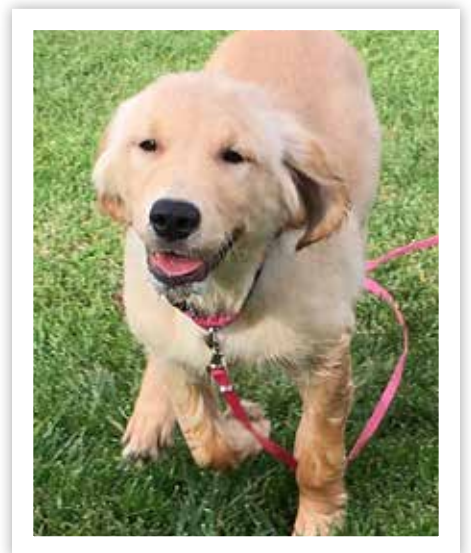
**Eats poop and vomit:** This is all puppies. Refer to cuteness note. It’s a good thing they are adorable!

Throughout 2021, the majority of the dogs coming into our program were adopted or purchased as puppies. Some people stuck it out for a year and then

surrendered a wild child. Others raised the white flag after just a matter of weeks. Before you consider a puppy purchase, please be sure of the following:

- The entire family is on board and committed to help.
- You have the time to devote to daily training and exercise. You get out of a dog what you put in.
- You have the financial resources to care for a puppy.
- That you are truly willing to give up some freedom early on for a great companion for years to come.

The good news: your most intensive effort is in year one, maybe two. With babies, you’re looking at 18 years...or more!





# Foster: Why it is Vital and How You Can Help

Homeward Bound has long benefitted from a robust permanent foster program. This program allows dogs with long-term medical needs to be home. Homeward Bound provides medical care for life. Families offer good food, a safe place to call home, and love. The dogs don't know the difference between 'permanent foster' and 'adopted.' All they know is that they are home.

Short-term foster was not as strong a program. Our co-founder and president, Jody Jones, lived on the property. She would take recovering and special needs dogs to her home until they were ready for adoption. We built a puppy palace where mama dogs could give birth under Jody's watchful eye and where she could step in with early morning or late-night feedings when volunteers were not on site. Jody believed that the dogs and puppies benefitted as much as the volunteers – a teaching/learning opportunity. And it was.

With Jody's passing in 2020, we reevaluated and quickly realized that strengthening our short-term foster program was essential to our mission. It benefits the dogs in many ways:

**Medical foster** allows recovering dogs to be in a quiet home with watchful, round-the-clock monitoring.

**Temporary foster** of dogs that come from a shelter instead of being surrendered by a family allows us to learn more about the dog and how it will behave in a home. This helps us identify any behavior concerns quickly, and it helps us make better adoption matches. Fosters who have dogless homes are incredibly hard to find among our dog-loving volunteers and friends, but they provide critical support to dogs that don't do well with other dogs –



giving them the space and freedom they need outside our "dorm" to decompress and reveal their true personalities.

**Puppy fostering** ensures that youngsters receive the human socialization they need and gets them started down the right training path from a very young age.

**Fostering a mama dog and her litter** also requires a dogless home – or the ability to keep mama and the pups completely separated. Moms can be very protective of their babies. We generally want the mom to give birth in our dedicated Puppy Palace at Homeward Bound and stay with us for the first two to three weeks when she is caring for them herself. But once they are mobile, we can really give mom a hand – and a break – by moving them to a foster home where they receive someone's full attention. It is hard work (and a lot of laundry!) but so rewarding.

Our fosters must live within 50 miles of Homeward Bound. There are two reasons for this. First: proximity to our devoted Dr. Codde and any needed medical care or appointments. Second: Adoption appointments. When the time comes, dogs need to be able to come to Homeward Bound to meet prospective families.

Regardless of the foster role, Homeward Bound supplies all medical care, food, and special needs like crates, pens, potty

pads, blankets, towels, and toys – whatever will be required to provide comfort and safety in the foster's home.

And there is one more type of foster that just about anyone can provide: **Day trips**. Day trips are outings of a few hours, a day, or a weekend. They help us learn more about the dog in various settings like temporary foster. And they are invaluable to long-waiting dogs providing a refreshing break from our "dorm" and a chance to enjoy the outside world.

Fostering is not only rewarding and supportive to the dogs in our program. It allows us to say 'yes' to more dogs in need. Each space that is freed up by a temporary foster saves another life.

If any of these foster opportunities appeal to you, please reach out by completing a foster application on our website. You can also contact us by emailing [fostering@homewardboundgoldens.org](mailto:fostering@homewardboundgoldens.org). Thank you!



# Diabetes in Dogs

There are two types of diabetes in dogs: Diabetes insipidus and diabetes mellitus. Both can be serious if left untreated.

Diabetes insipidus, also known as “water diabetes,” is rare. It affects water metabolism and prevents the body from conserving water which causes increased urination and diluted, almost clear urine.

It's not related to diabetes mellitus – also known as “sugar diabetes.” Diabetes mellitus is a disease of the pancreas that affects the body's ability to convert food into fuel. This article focuses on the more common diabetes mellitus.

Diabetes is most common in dogs ages 4-14, but it can also occur in younger or pregnant dogs. Diabetes occurs in female dogs twice as often as male dogs. The disease is more manageable if it is detected early and managed with the help of your veterinarian. The good news is that with proper monitoring, treatment, diet, and exercise, diabetic pets can lead long and happy lives.

## What is diabetes?

Diabetes is a condition that occurs when the body cannot use glucose (a type of sugar) normally. Glucose is the main source of energy for the body's cells. The levels of glucose in the blood are primarily controlled by a hormone called insulin, which is made by the pancreas.

As food passes through the intestines during digestion, sugars are one of the nutrients absorbed from the food. The sugars are transported into the cells that line the intestines and are converted into simple sugars including glucose. The simple sugars are then absorbed into the bloodstream for circulation and delivery to the whole body's tissues and cells.

Insulin is required to transfer glucose from the bloodstream to the cells. If there is insufficient insulin or the body cannot use the insulin, glucose accumulates in high levels in the blood – a condition called hyperglycemia. When the blood glucose reaches a certain level, the glucose overflows into the urine (glucosuria) and draws large volumes of water with it.

This is why diabetic pets often drink more water and urinate more frequently and in larger amounts.

In diabetics, there is not enough glucose transported into the body's cells which means there is not enough energy for the cells to function normally. As a result, the tissues become starved for energy. This state of metabolic “starvation” causes the body to break down fat and muscle tissue, which is then converted by the liver to sugar.

## Risk Factors

Obesity is a significant risk factor for the development of diabetes. In addition, as dogs age, they may develop other diseases that can result in diabetes or could significantly affect their response to treatment for diabetes, including overactivity of the adrenal gland in dogs (hyperadrenocorticism), pancreatitis, heart disease, kidney disease, urinary tract infections, and skin infections. The long-term use of medications containing corticosteroids is also a risk factor for diabetes.

## Symptoms to Watch For

Noticing the early signs of diabetes is the most important step in taking care of your pet. If you see any of the following symptoms, your pet should be examined by a veterinarian. The earlier the diagnosis, the better chance your pet may have for a longer and healthier life.

- Excessive water drinking and increased urination
- Dehydration
- Weight loss, even though there may be an increased appetite
- Change in appetite
- Lethargy
- Vomiting
- Cloudy eyes
- Chronic or recurring infections (including skin infections and urinary infections)

## Diagnosis and Treatment

After ruling out other medical issues common in older pets or urinary tract infection, the diagnosis of diabetes is confirmed by your veterinarian finding consistent hyperglycemia and glucosuria.

Your veterinarian will prescribe an initial dose and type of insulin for your pet and teach you how to give the insulin injections, which involve a very small needle and are generally well tolerated by the pet. Your veterinarian may periodically need to adjust your pet's treatment regimen based on the results of your daily monitoring. Dietary recommendations are an essential part of treatment, along with regular examinations, blood and urine tests, and monitoring your pet's weight, appetite, drinking, and urination.

## Caring for Diabetic Dogs

Dogs with diabetes usually require lifelong monitoring and treatment with special diets, a consistent feeding schedule, a good fitness regimen, and daily insulin injections. The key to managing diabetic pets is to keep the dog's blood sugar near normal levels and avoid too-high or too-low levels that can be life-threatening. Signs of an insulin overdose can include weakness, tremors or seizures, and loss of appetite. Contact your veterinarian or an emergency clinic immediately if you observe any of these signs. Insulin overdose signs can sometimes be similar to those of an insulin underdose. Therefore, only a veterinarian should change the dosage and frequency of insulin injections. You will also monitor for long-term complications such as cataracts, hind leg weakness, high blood pressure, or lower urinary tract infections.

Treatment is unique for each dog. Patience is important as you and your dog adjust to the new diet and medications. A healthy diet and daily exercise are required. Your vet can recommend an appropriate program, considering factors such as weight, overall health, and age. With proper care and a daily routine, diabetic dogs can live long and healthy lives.

*Source: AMVA.org*

# Guiding a Blind Dog

BY:Debra Farrington

“Do you think he can go for walks?” my husband asked. We were considering adopting a dog who had been born blind, a four-year-old Labrador. Bodhi landed in rescue when his person died unexpectedly and the relatives, not wanting the dog, took him to the vet to be euthanized. The vet, thankfully, had them surrender him instead. Bodhi’s person, like so many others, must have thought that a blind dog’s life was limited because Bodhi had callouses all over his legs from laying around all the time. He hadn’t been walked. He didn’t sniff the ground. He had, as our vet said, clearly lived a life of crushing boredom. But blind dogs can, and do, lead just as rich a life as any other dog. It took very few months of training and taking Bodhi new places for him to discover how rich his world could be.

Blind dogs do have some limitations, but fewer than is sometimes expected, and each dog is different. Dogs born blind may respond differently, and more quickly, than an older dog that loses his sight. If your dog is slowly losing his sight, start using some of the suggestions below sooner than later. Safety and being aware of real limitations are essential, but so is putting aside assumptions about what a dog can and can’t do when sight is gone. Bodhi went through basic obedience class and even Nose Work (Scent work) classes with just a few adjustments. (“Watch me” doesn’t work for blind dogs, but you can get their attention other ways.)

For any blind dog, keeping things stable and stationary is key. Check your home environment for sharp edges at eye level, things they might run into, and soften the edges with padding, tape, or some other substance. Introduce a dog to a new space on leash slowly and let them get to know where things are, and then, don’t move anything! Food, water dishes, dog beds,



and anything else your dog uses regularly should stay in one place all the time. Make sure your dog has a comfortable space to retreat to when it feels overwhelmed – a comfortable dog bed in a safe area that is theirs alone.

Safety concerns need to be addressed as well. For dogs that go blind, a halo – attached by a harness and worn around the head - can be a big help. It prevents them from bumping their head into things as they get used to not having sight. If you have hardwood floors, rubber-backed throw rugs and runners can be very helpful to prevent falls and slipping. Stairs can also be an issue for some, though not all, dogs. Carpeted stairs are generally safer but gating off stairs may be necessary to prevent falls. If your dog will be home alone for periods of time, a gated-off safe area will be essential until you are sure it is safe free in the house. A good harness, one that goes around your dog’s abdomen and chest, also helps a blind dog feel safe when out walking. Remember, when you’re out walking, that you’re the dog’s eyes, so you have to watch for anything they might step on or off or run into and help navigate them away from dangers.

Words, training, and sounds also help blind dogs. Talking to your dog is essential so they know where you are. Use short words or phrases to help them navigate. “Steps” is our word when Bodhi is going outside to potty or walk and needs to go up or down a few steps or a curb. “Want a walk?” is our cue that it is time to go outside. Because a blind dog’s other senses are strong, clicker training works very well for them to learn

basics like sit, stand, down. Jingle bells on your wrist or ankle, depending on your dog’s height, are a fantastic tool for teaching your dog to walk with you by staying near the sound of the bells as you walk. Reward them with treats for staying with the bells and they learn very quickly. Bells can also be your “watch me” signal if you want a blind dog’s attention.

Don’t forget some fun toys and games for your blind dog as well. Bodhi loves Nose Work, which is a great game for these dogs that have a very well-developed sense of smell. Simply scatter some smelly treats in a safe area, free of obstacles, and ask your dog to “go find.” This is great stimulation for the brain and body, as well as fun. Blind dogs often do well with tug toys as an interactive toy with you, and things they can chew as well.

There are more tips for blind dogs online, and lots of videos you can find on the internet. A few are listed below. Some of these ideas, and others you’ll find, will work for your dog; others won’t. Don’t be discouraged. Every dog is different. Just try to avoid underestimating what your dog can do and invest in giving it as full a life as possible. It may just surprise you.

## Resources:

Tips for pet parents: <https://www.blinddogrescue.org/dog-blindness/tips-for-owners/>  
Training tips: <https://be.chewy.com/training-tips-for-blind-dogs/>  
Setting up environment and training: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPlxDATpfl>





## Planned Giving: A Golden Legacy

You know that sharing your life with any dog is a blessing. Sharing your life with a rescued dog is doubly so. Our mission of rescue, adoption and sanctuary changes Golden *and* human lives.

By including Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue and Sanctuary in your estate or planned giving, you create a legacy ensuring that more Golden lives are saved. And don't forget your own pets. Providing for them in your estate plan is an important consideration for all of us.

Examples of estate and planned giving instruments include wills and living trusts, life insurance or retirement beneficiary designations, or gifts of appreciated stock. There are many options from which to choose. Naming us in your will or trust, for example, is one of the easiest ways to ensure that future generations of Golden in need will find a second chance at life.

You can download our **Guide to Giving** to help you determine the right approach for you—providing current or future benefits to yourself, your heirs, and to the Golden in our care. You can also download our **Pet Guardianship** form, entrusting your dogs' care to Homeward Bound in the event that you or your family members can no longer be there for them. You will find both on our website under "How to Help."

## Shop & Donate At No Cost With AmazonSmile

Consider designating Homeward Bound as your charity as you do all your shopping on AmazonSmile.



You get the same great Amazon experience and prices - and the doggies earn 0.5% on each purchase resulting in thousands of donated dollars each year. What a simple way to give at no cost to you! You will find all the details on our website under "How To Help."

## How to Reach Us

Your help and ideas are always welcome! Contact team leaders below if you are interested in helping in any of these areas:

Adoptions and Surrenders &  
Sanctuary Development  
Judy Kent, President  
7495 Natomas Road  
Elverta, CA 95626  
916-655-1410  
[judy@homewardboundgoldens.org](mailto:judy@homewardboundgoldens.org)

Foster Families  
[fostering@homewardboundgoldens.org](mailto:fostering@homewardboundgoldens.org)

Placement Team  
Lynn Pihera, 916-428-2718  
[homevisits@homewardboundgoldens.org](mailto:homevisits@homewardboundgoldens.org)

Golden Taxi (Transport)  
[goldentaxi@homewardboundgoldens.org](mailto:goldentaxi@homewardboundgoldens.org)

Volunteering  
[volunteering@homewardboundgoldens.org](mailto:volunteering@homewardboundgoldens.org)

Newsletter & Marketing  
Audrey Farrington  
[audrey@homewardboundgoldens.org](mailto:audrey@homewardboundgoldens.org)

Training  
Kathryn Baines, 916-300-9415  
[grdogtraining@gmail.com](mailto:grdogtraining@gmail.com)

Kibble & Bids™ Fundraising  
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## Dates To Remember

The Fund of Love Campaign launches this month!

## Help Wanted

**Volunteer Positions Currently in High Demand. We'll Train!**

- **Feeders:** A dog's best friend and so rewarding!
- **Walkers:** Build bonds of trust through walking, playing, training, and grooming. Help prepare the dogs for their forever homes.
- **Adoption Counselors:** Connect dogs to their forever homes!
- **Adoption Office Support:** Keep things in motion so more dogs get home!

## Our Golden Wish List

You can also shop our **Amazon Wish List**. You'll find the link on our website!

### For Our Goldens:

Nature's Select Dog Food (donate with your online purchase)  
Dog Cookies  
Rubber-backed Rugs  
Petco & PetSmart Gift Cards

### Office Supplies

Postage Stamps  
Professional Printing Services

### General Maintenance & Laundry

Paper Towels  
Garbage Bags (heavy duty & extra heavy duty)  
Pooper Scoopers

### Facilities Supplies

Lowes or Home Depot Gift Cards

### For Landscaping & Our Memorial Garden

Green Acres Nursery Gift Certificates  
Shredded Cedar Bark/Mulch