

Lions ramp up support for foundation walk

By Mark Pavilons

The Nobleton Lions Club has been committed to providing dog guides for decades.

For this year's fundraising walk, the club wants to ramp up their support even more.

The Lions Foundation of Canada PurinaWalk for Dog Guides is planned for Sunday, May 25. This walk helps provide funding for six different specialty streams including seeing eye dogs, hearing ear dogs, and special skills dogs to help challenged Canadians overcome a variety of impairments.

Prior to that, the club is hosting an open house April 28 to promote the walk and provide information and demonstrations of what the important roles these animals play in the lives of our citizens.

This subject is near and dear to the hearts of the local club.

The club assisted long-time resident Bev Berger, get her very first dog.

Berger has been totally blind since 1982 and the local Lions helped her obtain her lab Reb in 1989.

The four-time dog recipient is considered the Foundation's best spokesperson and has travelled extensively giving talks on the subject.

Beverly and her current dog Jasper will be at the open house to meet with residents.

The advocate for promoting accessibility for all Canadians is also a member of the King Township Accessibility Advisory Committee. She was named King's Citizen of the Year for 2003.

She's a lifetime member of the Lions Foundation and is the recipient of the Governor General's Caring Canadian Award, and the 2006 provincial Outstanding Achievement Award for Voluntarism.

Lions Foundation of Canada's mission is to assist Canadians with a medical or physical disability by providing them Dog Guides at no cost.

Sponsoring a Dog Guide will cover a portion of the approximately \$25,000 that it costs to raise and train a puppy and ultimately match the Dog Guide with its handler. The entire process takes up to two years and your sponsorship helps provide not only the puppy's complete training but also its veterinary care, transportation, room and board for the handler while in residence at the Oakville school for training, and follow-up services during the life of the team. Your support will help the Dog Guide team be partners for as long as 10 years.

Since 1985, the Lions' facility in Oakville has grown to six programs that train Dog Guides for people with hearing and physical disabilities, vision impairments, epilepsy, autism and diabetes. Each Dog Guide is provided at no cost to qualified applicants and the Lions Foundation does not receive any government funding. Funding comes from generous individuals, organizations, service clubs, Lions clubs, and corporations. The fundraising supports our highest priorities and provides flexibility to seize new opportunities.

As Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides' key fundraiser, the Purina® Walk For Dog Guides continues to grow in leaps and bounds. The walk now takes place in every province including more than 200 locations across Canada. This dog-friendly and family fun event has been inviting communities across the country to participate in an enjoyable 5-kilometre walk.

For more on the local event, contact Paul Olsen, paul.olsen@btn.on.ca or by phone at 905-859-0442 or cell 416-801-4571.

Check out www.purinawalkfordogguides.com for much more information, and think about coming out to walk.