

Denver, Guide Dog Puppy-in-Training



My name is Denver, and I am a Guide Dog puppy in training for Guide Dogs of America. I was born on June 23, 2018. I am a yellow Labrador Retriever and I was donated to GDA along with my brother, Doppler, who is also a yellow Lab. I am being sponsored by Sepulveda Building Materials Charity Golf Tournament. This is the first installment of my progress on my journey to become a Guide Dog!

Puppy Pick-up Day is always a very exciting day! I met Collin, one of the members of my puppy raising family on August 24th. The other members of my new family are Janice, David, and Trevor. Janice and David were dropping Trevor off in Syracuse, New York, because it's his first year in college, so Collin picked me up. I got to meet Janice and David (a.k.a. Mom and Dad) a couple of days later when they came home.



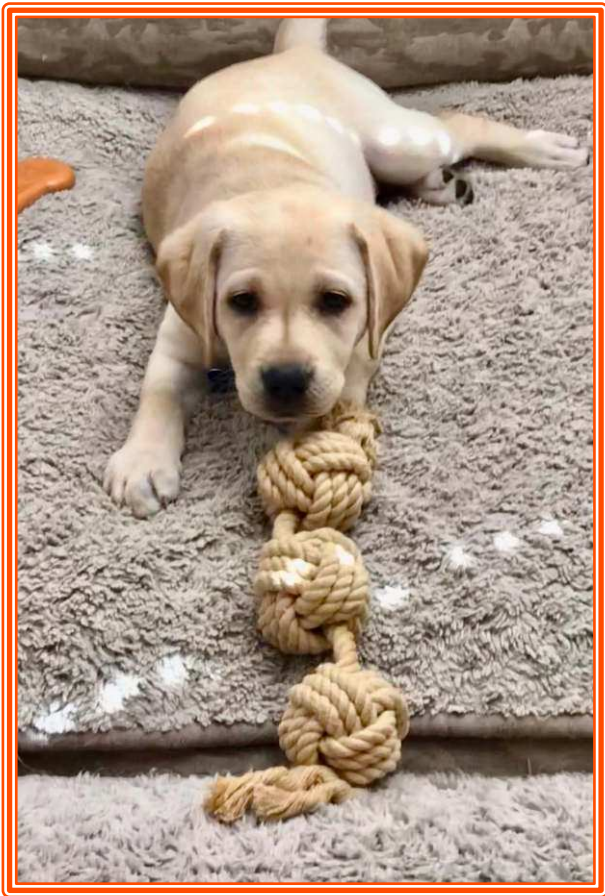
I slept a lot when I got home. It was exciting and overwhelming to move to a new place, and also puppies sleep A LOT because we are growing. When I woke up, Collin made sure I had my dinner and I also got to meet some dog members of my family.



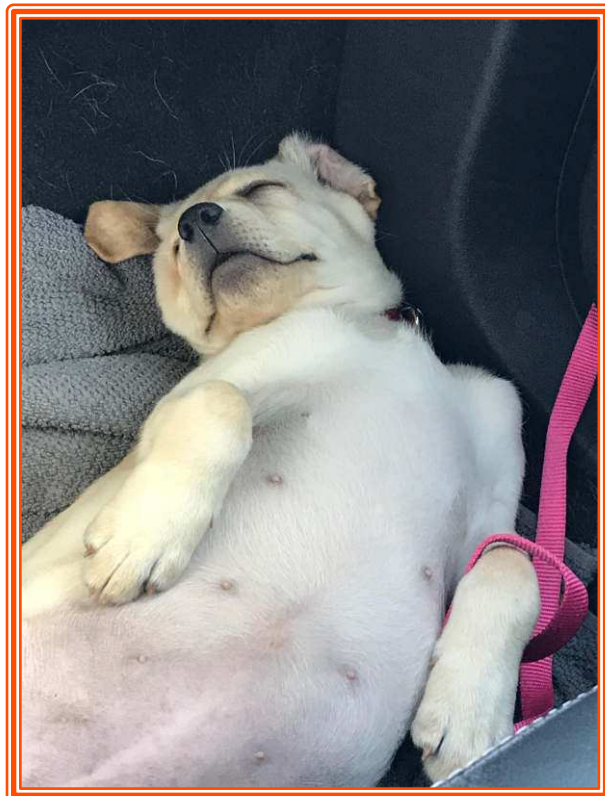
This is me with Wellesley. She is a former guide dog puppy in training for GDA, but she decided that she would rather be home, so my puppy raising family adopted her. She likes to play with me and lets me bite on her. I'm trying to learn not to do that too often. Wellesley lets me know when I shouldn't do that. If I'm nice and don't bite her, she will let me lay down and snuggle with her.



This picture is from the first day that I went to work with Mom. She works as a High School Counselor at Beverly Hills High School. Everyone was very happy to meet me, and I was a good girl in Mom's office. Lots of students came by to see me, and they all commented on how cute I was. Mom showed me where to "get busy" outside, and I was good and didn't have any accidents.



I love to play with toys, and especially love to chew on things. I guess all puppies like to do that. My puppy raisers are teaching me what is okay for me to chew on, and what is not. Sometimes they say, "NO!" or "Leave it!" and that lets me know that what I had in my mouth was not okay to chew on. This is one of my favorite toys that is okay for me to chew on. It's a rope toy and I like the way it feels in my mouth. Mom also says I'm "teething" whatever that means. I think she said that it means my sharp, puppy teeth are going to fall out and I'm going to get big dog teeth. I wonder if the Tooth Fairy visits puppies?



Because we live far from where Mom works, I have a long car ride each morning and afternoon. I use that time to practice riding quietly on the floor (and also to sleep). Mom keeps me safe by attaching me to a leash that is tethered to the door hinge. That way if someone ever opens the door before Mom is ready for me to get out, I can't just run off. I love to sleep on my back in the car. Sometimes the leash gets tangled around my leg but I don't mind.



As I mentioned earlier, my brother, Doppler, and I were donated to GDA from another service dog organization. Because Doppler is being raised by a friend of my Mom's, I get to see him often. I love to play with him. He is bigger than I am, but I can run faster! We love to play together. Sometimes he tackles me and sometimes I tackle him. We bite on each other just like we did when we were younger. But we also know that now that we are GDA guide dog puppies in training, there are new rules that we have to follow.



For example, if we are playing and our Moms call us and tell us to "Come," we have to stop playing with each other and run to our Moms. When we get there, we get a treat, so we like to listen and follow that command. Sometimes we also have to lie quietly on the ground even when we want to play. That's because we're practicing what we'll have to do when we are older and become real Guide Dogs.



I also have to practice lying quietly when I'm at work with Mom. Because Guide Dogs get their person from Point A to Point B and then often have to relax and wait, it's important that I practice this skill a lot. Here's a picture of me asleep on Mom's foot under her desk. That's one of my favorite places to be.

When I wear my special yellow jacket, I get to go special places. As part of my training, I have to go everywhere a blind, or visually impaired, person might go. I am attending Puppy Kindergarten so that I can learn the skills that I will need to know to behave calmly in public. Here I am practicing a sit-stay. The sitting part is easy, but the staying part wasn't so easy at first. But Mom makes sure we practice each day, and I am getting better and better at it.



One of my favorite places to go is Puppy Kindergarten. I learn lots of important things there. I know I have a lot to learn if I'm going to grow up to be a guide dog, so I always pay attention in class. I'll write again in a few months and hope you'll check back in on my journey to be a guide dog. Thanks for reading!
Wags and Licks!
Denver

