

MGDF appeal for puppy raisers

The Malta Guide Dogs Foundation is appealing for families in Malta and Gozo to come forward to raise a guide dog puppy that will then go on to be trained as a fully-fledged guide dog. The Foundation is also seeking temporary puppy raisers who would be prepared to house a puppy for a short period of time should the puppy raising family need to travel abroad.

There are currently 12 guide dogs in service in Malta and Gozo, enabling their visually-impaired owners to be fully independent in their daily lives, whether in getting from home to their place of work or to help them fulfil their daily errands.

All these guide dogs were once puppies that needed to be raised individually and brought up in a family atmosphere in preparation for their serious guide dog training, which is undertaken at the Helen Keller Regional Centre Guide Dog School of the Italian Blind Union in Messina, Sicily.

“Our appeal is for generous individuals and families to devote a few intense months to helping raise a puppy that will go on to be the perfect partner of a partially sighted person,” Leone Sciberras, Chairman of the MGDF said. “This requires dedication and selflessness – all for an honourable cause.”

The Guide Dogs Association of France is sending Labrador puppies to Malta in September. Two of them will go on to receive training and a third is expected to be brought up for breeding. Prospective puppy raisers must be devoted dog lovers who will take a puppy into their home and raise it for a period of nine to 10 months.

Working with the MGDF’s experienced puppy raiser supervisor, they will be taught basic obedience, domestic and road craft skills. Once they grow up, they will be assessed for suitability to go on for their guide dog training in Sicily.

Those who are interested can download an application from www.blindmalta.eu.pn in which they would give details of their family circumstances and willingness to help. For further details, e-mail info.mgdf@gmail.com, or phone 79273311.

The MGDF is a registered NGO that aims to offer services to visually-impaired persons. The Foundation provides help and training, such as in the use of the long cane, mobility and orientation skills, and guide dogs that will assist visually-impaired persons to interact in their daily environment, enhance their individuality and gain independence in their everyday life.

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Caption:



Two of the puppies that were brought up by dedicated puppy raisers in Malta, Holly and Higgins, now fully trained and in service with their visually impaired Maltese guide dog handlers