

Dogs for Diabetics®  
501(c)(3) Nonprofit  
PRESS RELEASE  
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**First Guide Dog To Assist A Person With Both Vision Loss and Type 1 Diabetes**

**Dogs4Diabetics® Graduation  
Saturday, November 9, 2013  
Walnut Creek Christian Academy  
2336 Buena Vista Avenue  
Walnut Creek, California 94597**



A breakthrough achieved by Guide Dogs for the Blind® and Dogs4Diabetics will have a monumental impact on the life of a person with two disabilities. The first dog in the world to be trained by two accredited organizations, both as a Guide Dog and a diabetes hypoglycemic (low blood sugar) alert dog will be presented to Maile George at the Dogs4Diabetics graduation on November 9th.

Maile, a Concord, California resident, was diagnosed with diabetes as a child and also lost her vision as a young adult. Combined, these two conditions present unique challenges for Maile. With her Guide Dog, Jasmine, by her side, Maile enjoys increased mobility and independence. To avoid a dangerous condition called hypoglycemia, Maile must monitor her blood sugar levels every couple of hours. It was a dream come true that she would be paired with an attentive and loving assistance dog capable of helping her with both disabilities.

Diabetes is a leading cause of blindness in the U.S. and this was the impetus for the unique partnership between the two organizations. Guide Dogs for the Blind is well known for training dogs capable of navigating the world on behalf of a visually impaired person, and this pioneering work over many decades was recently leveraged for diabetes management. Maile's Guide Dog, Jasmine, was "cross-trained" by Dogs4Diabetics to recognize the scent of low blood sugar.

Jasmine now alerts Maile when she detects the onset of low blood sugar, prompting Maile to test her blood sugar, and helping Maile to maintain optimal health. The longstanding partnership between Guide Dogs for the Blind and Dogs4Diabetics has resulted in this transformative miracle for Maile and a milestone in the training of assistance dogs. This cross-training culminates nearly fifteen years of research and development of training protocols.

Maile says, "Now that Jasmine has two jobs, she not only helps me get where I need to go, but because of her Dogs4Diabetics training, my fear that I might not wake up in the morning or that I might pass out while out for a full day of activities has almost been completely eliminated. I know that I still have to be vigilant in my diabetes management, but the skill, the love and the companionship she offers so enthusiastically has given me a renewed sense of freedom."

Maile's parents, Marice and Fred George offered, "What Dogs4Diabetics has done for Jasmine and Maile has given us a tremendous sense of security."

Dogs4Diabetics is the first service dog organization in the world to be accredited to train dogs to alert for hypoglycemia associated with type 1 diabetes. The ability of dogs to detect low blood sugar levels was discovered by Mark Ruefenacht in 1999 while training a Guide Dog for the Blind puppy. A scientist by background, Mark conducted a series of tests to confirm this canine scent detection capability, and he subsequently founded Dogs4Diabetics. Following the model of Guide Dogs for the Blind, Dogs4Diabetics is a

non-profit organization that provides its dogs, training, and follow-up services free of charge to its qualified clients.

### **About Dogs4Diabetics**

Dogs4Diabetics, Inc. is the pioneering organization for providing medical-alert assistance dogs to insulin-dependent diabetics through programs of training, placement, and follow-up services. Dogs4Diabetics was founded to support diabetics with a dog to detect and alert to acute low blood sugar on a daily basis. Dogs4Diabetics is internationally recognized for its quality training programs, promotion of standards, and the positive impact it has on the lives of persons living with diabetes. Founder, Mark Ruefenacht, has been recognized for his service in this new frontier of service dogs and is a two-time recipient of the Jefferson Award, which was established by Jacqueline Kennedy to promote volunteerism in America. Dogs4Diabetics has a passion for its mission and service to the community, and for helping people with diabetes to “live relentlessly awesome lives.” Dogs4Diabetics is a 501(c)3 organization based in Concord, California. For more information visit [www.Dogs4Diabetics.com](http://www.Dogs4Diabetics.com)

### **About Guide Dogs for the Blind**

Guide Dogs for the Blind ([www.guidedogs.com](http://www.guidedogs.com)) is more than an industry-leading Guide Dog school; we are a passionate community that serves the visually impaired. With exceptional client services and a robust network of trainers, puppy raisers, donors and volunteers, we prepare highly qualified guide dogs to serve and empower individuals who are blind or have low vision. GDB is a 501 (c)3 organization. All of our services are provided free of charge; we receive no government funding. We are headquartered in San Rafael, California, with a second campus in Boring, Oregon. More than 12,500 teams have graduated since our founding in 1942, and there are approximately 2,100 active teams in the field.