

VisionCorps

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Carol Gifford
PHONE: 717-205-4149 or 215-872-9239 (mobile)
EMAIL: cgifford@visioncorps.net



Family Adopts Dog from Local Partnership with Guiding Eyes for the Blind

(LANCASTER, Penna.) Jan. 7, 2022 – A local family has adopted Wesla, a yellow Labrador Retriever, from Guiding Eyes for the Blind, an organization that trains dog guides for people who are blind or experiencing vision loss.

Chase Musser, a 7-year-old boy in Lititz who is blind, and his family recently adopted Wesla as a new family pet. The adoption was through the PAWSitive Pals partnership program between VisionCorps and Guiding Eyes for the Blind. The program pairs dogs who were not able to complete the training to become dog guides, but were still obedient and loving, with families of children who are vision-impaired.

“Wesla was a dog guide in training, learning how to guide people who are blind or experiencing vision loss,” said Chris Ament, VisionCorps director of rehabilitation services and education. “While Wesla didn’t have enough confidence to become a dog guide, she’s still a fantastic pet.”

“Wesla is well-trained and a great listener,” said Jennifer Musser, Chase’s mother, who added that the family received a list of commands that Wesla knows and she follows those commands. “She’s so quiet and pleasant. She stays close to all of us and is very calm. We haven’t heard her bark!

“She’s so tolerant of Chase. He tries to take her wherever he goes, to his room or to the basement – she’s very gentle. We love having her,” said Jennifer Musser.

Shanon Walsh, Team Lead and Canine Training Manger at Guiding Eyes for the blind said, “Wesla is a sweet, calm dog. Although, she didn’t have the confidence to become a guide dog, we knew she would be an amazing addition to a family in our Youth Program. Seeing Chase and Wesla together only strengthens how this program benefits children who are blind or visually impaired by allowing them to have the companionship of a dog and gain the confidence they need as they grow together.”

“The goal of our program,” said Ament, “is to give a child who is blind (age 5-15) a quality pet dog to instill confidence and a sense of responsibility in caring for a dog.”

The PAWSitive Pals program will help children with low vision become more independent as they learn and share the activities needed to take care of a family pet, said Ament.

“Grooming, feeding, and taking a dog for a walk are all helpful educational and enrichment activities for children with vision-impairments,” said Ament.

Ament said he expects to place more dogs from Guiding Eyes for the Blind with local families.

“We are excited to offer this program to our families,” he said. “Adopting a new dog as a family pet should be exciting and fun but it also presents great learning opportunities.”

“She’s the best dog ever!” said Chase Musser.

About VisionCorps

VisionCorps is a nonprofit with a goal of empowering people who are blind or vision impaired to attain independence by providing them with the tools and training, including employment, to empower them. The organization serves almost 1,900 individuals with rehabilitation services in Lancaster, Lebanon, Chester, York and Adams counties. VisionCorps’ prevention services include KidSight, which screens more than 7,200 children annually for vision loss.

###