

Hearing Dogs Empower Canadians with Disabilities to Independence

By Sheila C. Serup, 4 May 2022



Nana, a hearing dog specially trained through the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, provides Evan Hamilton with not only an extra set of ears but confidence and independence to navigate a hearing world.

Evan Hamilton, who has a moderate to severe hearing loss, applied to the Foundation's Hearing Dog program and endured a two year wait before being accepted. He lost his hearing more than 30 years ago.

"After being placed, I travelled to the training facility in Oakville, Ontario for approximately three weeks to be placed with Nana, a black Labrador retriever," said Evan.

"After this time, we both flew back to Calgary to become a team," Evan noted that "she has made a huge difference to me. She provides comfort by alerting me to sounds that I would normally miss, such as doorbells, knocking on doors, my phone ringing and kitchen timer and especially the smoke alarm as well as numerous other sounds."

"We have a common trust with each other," described Evan. Evan notes that the cost to train each dog is \$35,000, which is completely borne by the Lions Foundation.

The Foundation breeds and trains dogs for seven different programs at its Oakville centre and provides a life-time of follow-up services. The Foundation also covers the cost of travel and accommodation for Canadians with disabilities who have been accepted into the program, as well as training and the service dog. There is no government funding. Special matches of service dogs are provided at no cost to the clients.



The program by the Lions Clubs of Canada originated in the early 1980s when they developed a national program to reflect their service to Canadians with visual impairments. Their original Lions Foundation of Canada and first program, Canine Vision Canada, was established in 1985. Since that time, the Foundation has grown to include additional dog guide programs: Hearing, Service, Seizure Response, Autism Assistance, Diabetic Alert, and the newly introduced Facility Support dog program.

The mission of Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides is to empower Canadians with disabilities to navigate their world with confidence and independence by providing Dog Guides at no cost to them and supporting each pair in their journey together.

The Foundation notes that Hearing Dog Guides assist individuals who are 10 years of age or older and who are deaf or hard of hearing to detect sounds they are unable to hear on their own. The hearing dogs have been taught to distinguish sounds, make physical contact with their handlers, and lead them to whatever is making the



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noise; be it someone at the door, an alarm clock, or a ringing telephone.

Since 1988 graduates of the Hearing program have gained an increased sense of security knowing that they will always have a link to the world of sound through their Dog Guide. This allows handlers to be more at ease in their home environment. (Details at <https://www.dogguides.com/hearing.html>)

Evan notes that each year the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides holds a fundraising event on the last Sunday of May in over 300 communities across Canada. In its second year in 2021, the Walk which became a virtual walk for dog guides raised approximately \$818,000. The overall goal of the Walk is to enable participants to collectively walk the length of Canada, 5,514 kilometers from Cape Spear in NL to St. Elias in the Yukon.

The 2022 Walk for Dog Guides will be in various communities around Alberta during May. It will be held May 14 in Medicine Hat, May 29th at Bowness Park in Calgary, and other locations around the province. For details on where it is happening near you, visit: https://www.walkfordogguides.com/about_the_walk/walk-locations

Low Income Bus Passes

The Ride Transit Program was designed to provide greater access to Edmonton Transit Service by reducing financial barriers for individuals and families in Edmonton. Through a partnership with the Government of Alberta, this program provides Adult and Youth monthly passes to eligible low income Edmontonians at a subsidized rate.

The program is intended to not only remove some of the financial barriers low income individuals experience when paying full fare to ride transit, but also to encourage the use of transit for work, appointments, recreation, education or any other activities. If you are not a member of the City's Leisure Access Program, fill out the Leisure Access and Ride Transit Programs Application Form. Completed applications can be sent by mail:



Leisure Access & Ride Transit Program
 PO Box 2359
 Edmonton AB T5J 0J4

Or dropped off in person at the Edmonton Service Centre:
 Leisure Access & Ride Transit Program
 2nd Floor, 10111 104 Avenue NW
 Edmonton AB T5J 0J4
 Monday - Friday (8am-4:30pm)

The normal approval process can take up to 8 weeks, depending on the time of year and number of applications received. Once approved, a letter or email will be sent to inform you and provide further information on the programs.

A one-time conditional pass may be issued based on qualifying criteria (such as completed application and required support documents) at the Edmonton Service Centre (2nd Floor, 10111 104 Avenue). Some conditions may apply. <https://www.edmonton.ca/ets/subsidized-transit.aspx>

Monthly passes for approved participants can be purchased as early as the 15th of each month at:

- Clareview Community Recreation Centre, 3804 139 Avenue, Serviced by ETS route: 182
- Commonwealth Community Recreation Centre, 11000 Stadium Rd NW, Serviced by ETS routes: 2, 120, 125, Capital Line LRT
- Confederation Leisure Centre, 11204 43 Avenue, Serviced by ETS routes: 17, 40, 41, 50, 53, 74
- Edmonton Service Centre, 2 Flr 10111 104 Avenue, Monday - Friday (8am-4:30pm), Serviced by ETS routes: 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 16, 52, 100, 111, 112, 134, 140, 151



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- Grand Trunk Fitness and Leisure Centre, 13025 112 Street NW, Serviced by ETS routes: 12, 151
- Londonderry Fitness and Leisure Centre, 14528 66 Street NW, Serviced by ETS routes: 10, 11, 181, 182, 190 & 312.
- Meadows Community Recreation Centre, 2704 17 Street, Serviced by ETS routes: 67, 95, 370
- Mill Woods Recreation Centre, 7207 28 Avenue, Serviced by ETS routes: 64, 65, 81, 340
- St. Francis Xavier Sports Centre, 9240 163 Street NW, Serviced by ETS routes: 109, 150, 310
- Terwillegar Community Rec Centre, 2051 Leger Rd NW, Serviced by ETS routes: 23, 24, 25, 30, 31, 34, 36, 37

All locations are: wheelchair accessible and serviced by ETS and Free Parking. Recreation centres are open 7 days a week.

The Leisure Access and Ride Transit Program application will also assess your eligibility for Edmonton Transit Service's Ride Transit, our transit program that offers monthly transit passes to eligible low-income Edmontonians at a rate of \$35/month OR \$50/month (approval based on income level). If you have an income below the ETS Ride program's low-income threshold, you will automatically be considered for this program. Learn more about Ride Transit by visiting edmonton.ca/ridetransit.

VAD Newsletter Article Submissions

If you have an article you would like approved for publishing in our monthly newsletter, please send your newsletter articles submissions to Teresa at vad@vadsociety.ca

VAD Podcasts

<https://vadsociety.ca/news-and-events/events>

Check out VAD's growing library of podcasts! Watch for new podcasts in May when we speak start a Membership Series and learn about our organizational members.



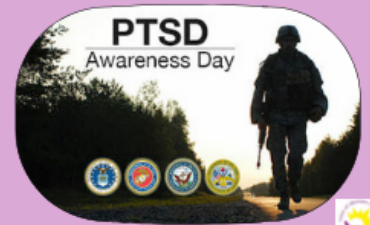
Participate in Tourette Awareness Month

Challenges faced as a result of the condition can be physically and psychologically crippling. Let's make a difference together this Tourette Syndrome Awareness Month, May 15 – June 15, as we create a more universal understanding of the condition, as well as to share successes to inspire our community and beyond.



#MyTourette

PTSD Awareness Day is observed every year on June 27th. PTSD stands for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and is a condition that many veterans and non-veterans alike suffer. PTSD can occur when someone experiences or witnesses a traumatic event. This condition wasn't always understood properly by the medical or military community, and Department of Defense press releases often point to earlier attempts to identify PTSD symptoms in the wake of service in World War 2, Vietnam, and other conflicts.



June 27 of each year is proclaimed as PTSD Awareness Day

Every year, during the month of June, the LGBT community celebrates in a number of different ways. Across the globe, various events are held during this special month as a way of recognising the influence LGBT people have had around the world. Why was June chosen? Because it is when the Stonewall Riots took place, way back in 1969.



#PrideMonth

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Teresa Jackson
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Expressive Arts Adult Day Program



SCHEDULE

10-11 Dance & Movement
11-12 Drama + Group Games
12-1245 Lunch & Social Time
1245-145 Beats & Bops
145-3 Variety Hour

Tuesdays

Evergreen Community Spaces - 1709 8 Ave NE #2
Drop-In or Register
Full Day or 1-Hr Class



Trial A Day or Class for FREE!



*Must attend with a support worker unless fully independent in mobility & following instructions

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More info: www.bloomwell.ca



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