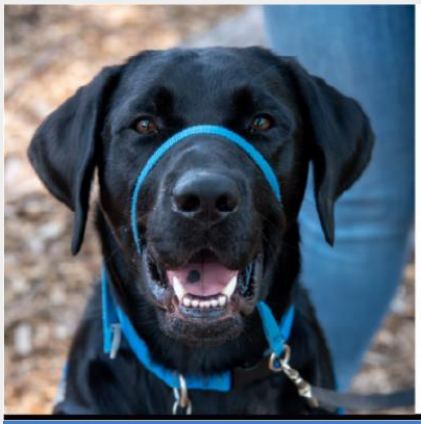


THE CANINE CHRONICLE

News for NEADS Puppy Raisers

May 2025

Dear NEADS Puppy Raiser Community,

As spring turns to summer, we're kicking off the season with fresh ideas, growing momentum, and endless gratitude for all that you do. This month's Canine Chronicle is packed with exciting updates—from our brand-new Monthly Punch Card Challenge to our first-ever off-campus Appreciation Day.

Whether you're joining your first public class, gearing up for a Walk & Talk, or heading out on field trips with your SDiT, we hope you feel the energy of a community that's moving forward—together. Every post, every outing, every hour you dedicate helps build a stronger, more connected NEADS.

We're so glad you're part of this journey. Let's keep the momentum going!

Heather Romanoff
Manager of Raiser Operations

Changes in the Raiser Operations Department



We're excited to announce that Instructor Jen Basinet is currently transitioning to the Training Department as an Apprentice Trainer!

Jen has a long history in our community. She began her experience as our first College Puppy Raiser at Becker College in 2019, where she raised Jettie and helped to form a supportive club at Becker's Leicester location. After working with dogs as a kennel manager and then an obedience dog trainer, she returned to NEADS in late 2022.

Her first question upon meeting was, "When can we look at the College Program?" Her experience, along with research provided from other Service Dog organizations helped us form the program that it is today. Her guidance as an Instructor dedicated to the program has helped it get the solid footing it deserved.

As a Raiser Ops team member, her quick wit and creative thinking (and love of frogs) has brought much-needed levity as we worked through many changes. Here's what the team

had to share:

"Jen has a wonderful patience with people and animals. She is a strong team player. I look forward to watching her development as a trainer." -Susan Nedelman

"Jen is a very strong instructor, and will make an even stronger trainer! I personally have seen her grow more sure of herself, and gain a wealth of confidence. I am so excited to see her blossom even more with this new opportunity. Congrats Jen!" -Brooklyn McDonald

"Jen has been a great addition to the raising team during her almost 3 years in our department. She brought creative ideas, wonderful organizational skills, a passion for dog training, and a variety of frog related items and jokes to our team that we will miss. But I am so excited to see her take this next step at NEADS!" -Bailey Sullivan

"Jen and I began our journey at NEADS together as Raiser Instructors, and it's been incredibly rewarding to work alongside her. I feel so lucky to call her both a colleague and a friend. I can't wait to see all the incredible things she'll accomplish as an Apprentice Trainer. Congratulations, Jen!" -Megan Lupinski

"Jen has come so far during her time as a NEADS Instructor! Jen stepped into her role as an Instructor while also taking part in stabilizing and building our community. Watching her grow has truly been a privilege, and I'm excited to see where her NEADS journey takes her." -Heather Romanoff

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Punch Card Challenges



We're excited to roll out a new initiative: the **NEADS Monthly Punch Card Challenge.**

Each month for the remainder of the year, a training challenge will be posted in the NEADS Puppy Raiser Facebook Group. These challenges are designed to reinforce skills, provide field trip inspiration, and keep our community connected and motivated. Puppy Raisers will have the full month to complete each challenge.

Here's how it works:

- Earn a "punch" on your virtual punch card by sharing a photo or video of your Service Dog in Training (SDiT) completing the monthly challenge. Post directly in the Facebook group or email your submission to **mlupinski@neads.org**.
- Complete **all 8 challenges**, and you'll receive a **prize at the end of the year.**

This month's challenge is all about **Field Trip Fun**: Submit 3 photos of your SDiT on a field trip that reflects their current level. Fill out a field trip form for a bonus punch!

Whether you're a new Puppy Raiser or a seasoned volunteer, this is a great way to stay engaged, showcase your SDiT's progress, and have fun in the process. We're grateful for all that our Puppy Raisers do and look forward to seeing the moments you capture through the rest of the year!

Let the challenges begin!

Supply Return Request

We are gearing up to place quite a few puppies over the spring and summer and are low on some important supplies. If you have larger crates or other supplies that you won't need or are on a hiatus, please consider returning your supplies to your Instructor so we can add them back into our supply pool.

The biggest item we will need is crates, but if you have any reusable supplies, please let us know.

Walk & Talk Update



At NEADS, evaluating our Service Dogs in Training (SDiT) is essential to their development and our program's success. We're introducing a new tool to support this process: the Walk & Talk assessment.

Walk & Talks are based on the Guide Dog and Behavior Assessment Research Test (GDBART), a temperament evaluation used by many ADI-accredited Service and Guide Dog organizations. Unlike the traditional GDBART, which is conducted in a controlled environment, Walk & Talks take place in real-world public settings—adding a valuable layer to our understanding of each dog's progress.

When your SDiT is 4–6 months old, you'll meet with 1–2 members of the Raiser Operations team at a designated public location. An Instructor will walk you through the process, similar to a typical field trip. While you focus on working with your SDiT, a staff member will record the experience so we can later evaluate the dog using the standardized Behavior Checklist (BCL). This tool allows us objectively score responses ranging from "absent" to "severe" across behavioral categories.

There's no "pass" or "fail"—just valuable information that helps us tailor training and support for each individual dog. Using a shared scoring language also ensures consistency across our team and with other organizations.

We're looking forward to Walk & Talks becoming a regular part of our program, helping each SDiT grow into their role with confidence and success.

Paw It Forward

We have two community members to recognize this month. Thank you both for inspiring all of us in every way. From supporting the puppies and dogs to supporting fellow community members, you've inspired us all to be world class.

Kaleigh Gagnon is an amazing Dog Sitter who has travelled across our community's area to pick up



puppies and dogs for anything from scheduled vacations to emergencies.

Instructor Brooklyn McDonald submitted Kaleigh for this special recognition, saying: "*Kaleigh started dog sitting with NEADS about a year ago in April, and was completely new to our organization at that point. It quickly became apparent that her dog knowledge, and dedication to ensuring a safe and happy life for all pups was something that would be an amazing addition to our community. Since starting her volunteer journey with us she has had nearly 10 service dogs in training stay with her for sitting coverage. Of these, she has helped out with spay/neuter recoveries, females in heat, and released dogs awaiting adoption, or puppies awaiting placement in our program - which is usually 2 weeks or more.*

Every time she coordinates with staff, or raisers she is nothing but kind and extremely helpful (even offering to drive up to 2.5 hours to transport dogs!). The work she has done for us is outstanding, and we cannot say thank you enough to Kaleigh. In the everchanging world of NEADS, Kaleigh has been a constant that we love to have around! Thank you so much Kaleigh!"

If the name **Vicki Engelhardt** sounds familiar, it is because you most likely met her at a class or while she's travelling far and wide to provide much needed socialization for our puppies and dogs. When I first met Vicki, she was regularly traveling from southern Connecticut to Worcester and beyond to get Peaches the training and exposure she needed. That commitment certainly stood out to me, and it hasn't been overlooked by our community.

Vicki was nominated by Ambassador and Team Raiser Karen Terry. Here is what Karen had to say: "*We met Vicki when we first started our NEADS experience. She was raising Peaches, who was a very large and strong pup. As any puppy raiser knows, it's not always easy! Vicki took on the task solo, and her devotion to the pup and all the training was always admirable.*

As the journey went on, we were in awe of Vicki for all the traveling she would do just to get whatever pup she had socialized. Since Vicki is from CT, there weren't many people there to connect with NEADS, so Vicki would drive anywhere just to connect. Vicki is such a supporter of NEADS in all the countless hours she commits to the pups. Vicki truly has a heart of gold, with a paw print on it!"

Karen wants you to know that you inspire her to spend more time with the pups.



Save the Date!

Annual Puppy Raiser Appreciation Day

Saturday, September 6, 11:45am - 2:30pm
Kimball Farm, 400 Littleton Road, Westford, MA

We're heading off-campus for our biggest Appreciation Day yet—celebrating YOU with games, field fun, and *Kimball's Legendary Ice Cream Buffet*!

Important Info:

- Only Raiser Ops–approved puppies may attend (busy public venue; no fenced area). Be sure to stay current with field trip levels!
- Have a young pup? Come solo—we'll help with Dog Sitter coverage.
- Space is limited to live-in, immediate family.
- Watch your inbox for the RSVP link.

We can't wait to celebrate all you do for NEADS!

Update on Pulling 4 Paws

After much consideration, NEADS has decided to cancel this year's annual Pulling 4 Paws event on June 1st due to low team sign up.

This annual fundraiser relies on teams that raise money through donations for NEADS with the promise to pull a Polar Beverages 18-wheeler to earn those donations.

While we're all sad that we won't be gathering for this fun event, we do want to make sure that we're making the best financial decisions possible.

We appreciate everyone who had been planning to attend or join our Redemption Rock Raisers team this year. We encourage any of you with older SDiT to consider joining us on June 1 at the Annual Worcester Fire Department 6K at Institute Park in Worcester. If you're not sure whether or not your SDiT is at the right level for this busy event, talk to your Instructor.

Significance of a Name

VICKY - Vicky is named in memory/honor of a high school basketball teammate named Victoria. From the sponsor, "Vicky was an amazing player. More importantly, she was an amazing human being. She was incredibly kind." "After losing Vicky, her family & friends started a basketball tournament in her honor to raise money for a scholarship in her name. I was tremendously honored to be the first recipient of that scholarship."

MURPHY – the name of a pet dog that belonged to one of WFD lost Firefighters.

RILEY - named in honor of a family dog.

DAYBREAK - The name Daybreak is a wish that she could become the first light to end the darkness in someone's life.

REBEL - Named after Albert Bruso, a Vietnam Veteran. The sponsor supports our Service Dog for Veterans program as well as the Name a Puppy program.

MILLER – Favorite dog name of the sponsor.

Welcoming New Puppies & Puppy Raisers

We're excited to announce that for the first time since the launch of the Full-Time Raiser Program, we have more Puppy Raisers than puppies! While this is a good "problem" to have, we want to make sure that we can get puppies into the hands of our newest community members by working with fellow Assistance Dogs International member organizations to bring more puppies to NEADS.

In the meantime, you can look forward to seeing some new faces at public classes while we wait for the arrival of their puppies.

Recent Matches

As of writing this month's edition of the Canine Chronicle, we do not have clients in training. We're looking forward to presenting more matches for you in the June Canine Chronicle.

Reminder:
NEADS Medical Team Updated Hours and Contact Information

A reminder that the NEADS Medical Team has extended hours and updated contact information to improve our accessibility and service to you. The NEADS Medical Team is available from 8am to 8pm.

To ensure efficient communication, we highly recommend reaching out to us via email at medical@neads.org. This email address allows all team members to receive your message, regardless of their location, and ensures a prompt response. For urgent matters, we aim to reply within 2 hours, unless there is an unexpected surge in contacts.

Emergency call number: 978-563-1495.

We hope that by having one number, we can streamline the process of reaching someone in the Medical team more efficiently. During regular business hours, we strive to return emergency calls within 30 minutes. In case of a medical emergency, please take immediate action by visiting your nearest urgent veterinary care facility if it is after hours.

If you are uncertain about the nature of your concern, please refer to the Medical Manual available on the Puppy Raiser Portals. The manual provides a comprehensive list of symptoms to help you determine whether your issue is urgent, an emergency, or a non-emergency.

Non-urgent or non-emergency emails will be responded to within 24 hours.

We appreciate your cooperation and are committed to providing the best care for your needs.

Puppy Raiser Resource Center

Weekend Puppy Raisers enter with password PuppyRaiser
Full Time Puppy Raisers enter with password FTRaiser

Please contact **Audrey Trieschman** with questions, issues, or suggestions about the portal.

NEADS World Class Service Dogs | P.O. Box 1100 | Princeton, MA 01541 US

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