



Fall 2019

Ministering as a Team

Pastor Tim lost his vision in 1995, went through mobility instruction, and learned to use a cane to navigate through his daily life. While the cane was very useful, he had great anxiety about being without it – whether from misplacing it or having it break. He had extra canes under the spare tire in the car, in the garage, and by the doors in his house.

Wanting a guide dog for 25 years, Pastor Tim's extremely busy schedule prevented him from spending three to four weeks of training at a guide dog school and maybe having no contact with home for a while. For some time he was the principal of a Christian boarding school, and he lobbied for audio descriptions for videos so they could be enjoyed by the visually impaired. And he was already comfortable with dogs: his family ran a kennel when he was growing up, he reconditioned dozens of dogs to be good house pets, and he was always meeting the animals of families he visited. Pastor Tim didn't feel he needed an extremely long bonding time that was required at most schools.

Learning of Freedom's Hometown Training™ program, where the guide dog is brought to the client's home and training takes place in their home community, Pastor Tim applied to Freedom and in the spring, April 17th to be exact, Onyx arrived. He finally had his first guide dog!

"I love that he's a smooth coat Collie," Pastor Tim says excitedly. "He's tall and stunning, with a proud stance, and people take notice. Onyx was better than a cane on the first day, and better than any mobility instructor I've ever had. Over the last few months we have learned to communicate with each other almost completely by subtle body language."

Days are busy as the pastor of the Murphy Free Methodist Church, and as the district leader of the New South Conference. Pastor Tim also oversees some churches in North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee.

In their first five months together, he and Onyx have been to those states, as well as Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Georgia, Indianapolis, Illinois and Florida! The pair is in places that are new to Onyx all the time, and Onyx takes it all in stride.



Pastor Tim and Onyx leading services

"We have been visiting parishioners at medical complexes and hospitals, even ICUs," Pastor Tim tells us. "Onyx is wonderful one on one, and loves adults, babies and other dogs. He also does great in large venues and has been by my side at weddings, funerals, and an ordination service. He's with me at our soup kitchen on Tuesdays and goes shopping with me to prepare. I was also the evangelist at a summer camp, where the sanctuary was a pavilion with no walls. There were other dogs present, and Onyx made sure they were quiet and respectful!"

The stories are already endless.

Pastor Tim's son is the administrator of the Christian school where he was once the

principal. His son brings his Great Dane to school, but he has to stay outside. Onyx thinks he's quite superior when he walks by, into the building where the Great Dane wishes he could be.

In a restaurant a little boy was staring at Onyx and his mom told him he had to tell the lady what he wanted to order. He promptly said, "A dog like that!"

And at church a little girl asked if she could walk Onyx. Pastor Tim replied, "What will I do while you're gone? I've never gone anywhere without him but my driveway or garage!"

Onyx seems to be taking his church responsibilities very seriously and has been providing some therapy as only he could know how. He has been working with two young girls who were attacked by dogs and is quietly and gently teaching them not to be afraid. Onyx has also met people who say they were having a bad day – until they met him.

On top of all of their official duties, Pastor Tim and Onyx make it a point to try to go somewhere new every day to keep their training up. They have wandered in the woods and on new trails and Onyx keeps Pastor Tim safe, guiding him back to where they began. The pair tries to walk 3 miles a day and they very slowly began running together, gently communicating a speed each of them is comfortable with.

Pastor Tim says, "I can't imagine going back! I can't do the same things with a cane that Onyx makes possible for me. As soon as I stand up, he's right there waiting to see what we're doing next. And I don't have to look for him, he finds me! This has been a life altering experience, a positive every single day." ♥

Editor's note: Pastor Tim and his wife have two sons and eight grandchildren. He and Onyx minister to about 600 people per month, extending to far more in other states.

Fundraising Friends

Freedom is blessed to have caring clients and volunteers who find ways to help meet the costs associated with training and placing guide dogs.

Rachel and her guide dog Vadar recently organized a fundraiser at a comedy club in their area. Rachel received the news that a detached retina had caused her to lose the rest of her vision and immediately decided to do something to promote the placement of more guide dogs. The evening at The Lou Costello Room was a huge hit, and Rachel and Vadar raised \$500!



The Sunday School at Central Baptist Church in Woodbury, NJ participated in gathering items that are needed for clients when they receive a new Freedom guide dog. Items like shampoo, brushes, bowls, treats and toys were donated by the congregation over the course of a few weeks to create the baskets, and delivered to Freedom by Jess and Jen Levy, whose mom, Julie, is guided by Freedom's Ruby.



Our friends at Port 5 Naval Veterans once again sponsored WienerFest to benefit Freedom and Homes for the Brave. Many thanks to organizer Sean Patrick Griffin and the members of Port 5, who worked tirelessly throughout the long day to be sure everyone had a great time. Thanks, also, to Tito's Vodka for their generous donation! Milo, Opus, Owen, Quila, Sully, Thunder, Turlough, and Vice were on hand to share information about Freedom.



Sue and guide dog Braelyn have organized a raffle running through November 13. Raffle tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5 and can be purchased by contacting Sue at Sharden12@tampabay.rr.com. The prize list includes \$200 cash, a quilted throw, a turquoise necklace, a crocheted afghan, a hand turned wooden bowl, a watercolor portrait of your dog, and various other things! Please contact Sue and Braelyn at Sharden12@tampabay.rr.com for tickets and additional prize information today!



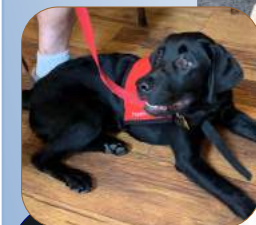
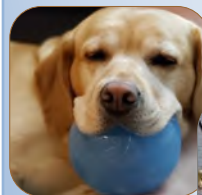
Put Your Creativity to the Test!

You've just read about some fun and interesting ways to help Freedom! Can you think of any others?

Bowling can lead to a small tournament with friends. Keeping your car clean can lead to a car wash. A love of cooking can lead to a bake sale. Cleaning your basement can lead to a tag sale. Think about it...the possibilities are endless!

We are always happy to receive gift cards for Staples, Petco, Pet Supplies Plus and gas. We can also use hotel room discounts and frequent flyer miles. You can help a "Hero in the Making" with one of our donation programs that support breeding, raising and placing a guide dog. See www.freedomguidedogs.org for information about these programs, as well as monetary donations, bequests and planned gifts, naming a puppy, donating your used vehicle, investing in vests for puppies in training, becoming a corporate sponsor, and volunteering!

You can raise a pup to be a fabulous guide dog for someone who needs them! Puppy raisers give pups love, teach them basic obedience, and socialize them in all kinds of situations. For more information about our puppy raising program, please contact alison@freedomguidedogs.org. ♥



Puppy Raising Kokonut

Puppy raising Kokonut, a Lollie (Lab/Collie cross), was our first experience with a Freedom pup. After watching my in-laws, the Mulvihills, raise many puppies, we wanted to try it, too. My work as a therapist at Ironwood, a therapeutic boarding school in Maine, gave me the idea of having the residents there puppy raise. After presenting the idea to Ironwood and Freedom, we determined that Kokonut would spend her days at Ironwood with the kids and her nights and weekends with my family or another therapist's family. Nicole, also a therapist, jumped at the chance to offer Kokonut respite and some different experiences from our family.



Koko as a young pup

With my husband and I, Kokonut spent a lot of time outside with our older dogs, running in the woods during maple syrup season, swimming in the lake in the summer, and time just being a dog.

Shopping, going to restaurants, visiting college campuses, and playing with the Mulvihill puppies were other adventures.

Nicole offered Kokonut time at football games, days at the lake, boat rides to her camp in Maine, and time with her teenage children. Nicole's son, Michael (who has Down's Syndrome), especially loved Kokonut



Koko headed to camp in Maine with Michael

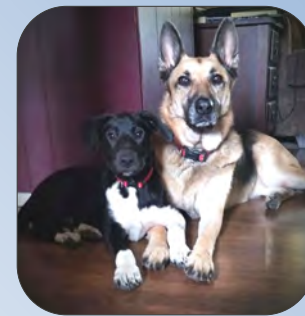
and spent time feeling more comfortable with dogs by taking responsibility for walking her and providing her hugs and attention.

Much of Koko's time was spent at Ironwood. A staff member and Ironwood's dog trainer, Ronanne, took the lead, ensuring Kokonut's raising experience at Ironwood abided by Freedom's expectations. Koko received her name from a vote the kids took after narrowing down "K" names. The residents thought an unusual "K" name would be cute and fun. Before Koko's arrival each resident read the Freedom Guide Dog puppy raising packet in order to be able to handle Kokonut. When she arrived she was greeted by 24 adolescents, two cats, seven horses, as many as five dogs on any given day, and several adults. Koko's daytime home was in what is known as the "Farmhouse," an old, open farmhouse in the midst of Frye mountain. Each week, Kokonut had a resident puppy handler whose responsibility was to take Koko wherever they went. Koko would walk her handler to school each morning, rest in her crate during school hours (often interrupted by staff who allowed her to hang out with them), and spend afternoons participating in group activities with her resident handler. At times she would accompany residents to appointments at the dentist and pediatrician. She would go to both individual and family therapy with residents and meet families during Ironwood's family weekends.

Each Tuesday Kokonut would go to dog training class with anywhere from five to ten dogs, so residents could learn more about the responsibility of being a dog owner. Hundreds of photos were taken of residents with Kokonut! In fact, when residents graduate from Ironwood they have a grad photo taken to be hung in the Farmhouse and, yes, Kokonut made her way into a few grad photos. She bid many residents farewell as they left Ironwood.

Koko had many dog friends at Ironwood as well. June, a basset hound, was close to her age and a dear pal to run and play with. Bruin, a black lab who lives at Ironwood, would teach Kokonut the rules of living at the Farmhouse. Uncle CJ, another black lab, would often walk alongside Kokonut back and forth to school to help her keep pace when walking on a leash. Frankie, a blue-eyed horse, was another friend to

Kokonut and one she often sought out when visiting the barn.

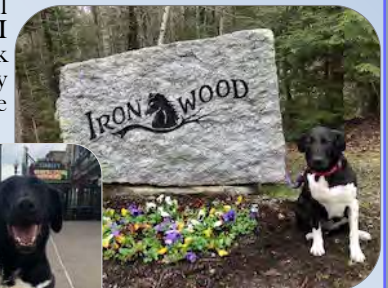


Koko and Jasmine

Kokonut also graduated Ironwood, in May of 2019. She had been with all of us for almost two years and had become a daily dose of love for many. A special slide show and a meal of meat

loaf cupcakes were enjoyed by Koko and her dog friends as a way to celebrate. The day Koko said good-bye was an emotional one. She received many hugs, tears, kisses, and giggles.

As I reflect back on Kokonut's adventures with all of us, I am struck not only by the



Ironwood graduation



In training

rich experiences she provided, but by the love and attention she brought each and every one of the residents she came in contact with. She

was there through laughter and sadness, and her presence was a gift to many. I am grateful to all at Ironwood, especially Ronanne and Nicole, who gave Kokonut this opportunity. We are watching her progress and cannot wait to hear who she is placed with to continue her adventure. In the meantime, the Ironwood adventure in puppy raising is continuing with a Barbet named Umi! ❤️

Editor's note: Article submitted by Nan Simpson.



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Congratulations and safe journeys to spring 2019 graduate teams!

Charles and Hercules, yellow Labrador, FL
Jennifer and Ivory, yellow Labrador, NY
Evelyn and Gemma, yellow Labrador, GA
Joseph and Febe, yellow Labrador, PA
James and Gina, yellow Labrador, NY
Eileen and Izzy, yellow Labrador, NJ
John and Indy, yellow Labrador, CT
Ricardo and Bodie, yellow Labrador, AZ
Elsie and Finleigh, black Labrador, MA
Lori and Ivy, yellow Labrador, NY
Harry and Woz, yellow Labrador, NY
Brianna and Dahlia, black Labrador, SC

Tim and Onyx, smooth Collie, NC
John and Taffy, yellow Lab/Golden mix, FL
Carol and Rae, black Lab/Golden mix, NY
Kim and Georgie, yellow Labrador, NY
Anthony and Ilsa, yellow Labrador, NY
Michael and Abigail, yellow Labrador, FL
Jeraine and Ezekiel, black Labrador, NY
Chris and Gus, yellow Labrador, NY
Jerome and Ian, yellow Labrador, FL
Melissa and Hermes, black Labrador, MD
Anne Marie and Dory, yellow Labrador, SC



New Look

With the generous help of the John Ben Snow Foundation and Freedom's exceptional board of directors, new panels were recently installed in the training kennel. We're loving the refreshing update!



Guide Schools & Latin America

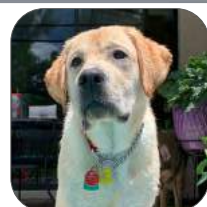
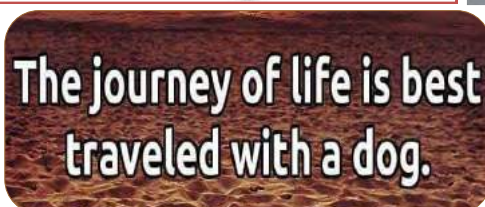
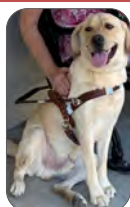
Eric Loori, Executive Director of Freedom Guide Dogs, recently attended the International Forum for Development of Guide Dog Programs, held in Brazil. It was held to share information on breeding improvement, training techniques, matching and working with clients, and building cooperation between Latin American guide dog institutions. ❤



Does this picture make you smile? Think of it the next time you make a purchase online, you'll remember to shop at Amazon Smile, and you'll help Oakley to become a Freedom guide dog! Simply type <http://smile.amazon.com> into your browser, choose Freedom Guide Dogs as your charity, and start shopping. Amazon will donate a portion of your total sale to Freedom!



You can assist Freedom in supplying guide dogs into the distant future by donating appreciated stocks and bonds, funds from your employer's charitable foundations, or monies from your estate to the Freedom Guide Dogs Endowment Fund at the Community Foundation, found at foundationhoc.org. Your donation will go further as part of this plan. Please contact info@freedomguidedogs.org for information! ❤



Did You Know... Freedom is a member of the International Guide Dog Federation and as such must maintain a number of specific standards for client selection, instruction/follow-up; staff development; mobility instruction education; humane handling of our dogs; breeding/puppy raising; vet care; guide dog assessment/training; kennel specifications; administration. We have just successfully completed our forth assessment, and it's good for the next five years!

We have also been named a 2019 Top-Rated Nonprofit, thanks to our clients, donors, volunteers and others sharing the impact of our work. We are so thankful for our extended Freedom family!



The road to independence begins with your gift to Freedom...

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Make checks payable to: Freedom Guide Dogs, 1210 Hardscrabble Rd., Cassville, NY 13318