“When They Say Run....I Run!”

Alice Eaddy is a whirlwind!

Born prematurely, Alice has had limited vision and hearing all her life. She is energetic and passionate about everything, made possible by a Cochlear implant with two processors, a hearing aid, adaptive technology, and a Freedom guide dog named Wanda.

Alice wanted to be an electrical engineer and passed her drafting test but felt that no one would hire a blind engineer, so she became a teacher.

While working for Head Start Alice had a Freedom guide dog named Spirit. Spirit was a yellow lab that had her own name tag, supply cubby and nap mat, just like the students. She loved children and did double duty by tracking down a student who sometimes bolted from class. What she didn’t like was horses! She also didn’t like getting on the bus unless it lowered to the curb and would refuse to move until the driver did it for her!

Alice is a leader regarding technology and policy and calls herself the “guru of adaptive apps.” She tirelessly educates, advocates for and mentors others with vision and hearing loss and improves the skills of the visually impaired youths at EDGE (Employment, Development, Guidance and Engagement). She also speaks out about necessary improvements for the deafblind community. “I get a lot done,” she said, laughing.

Alice did many things. She tried gymnastics, played the snare drum in the marching band, switched to the clarinet, and finally discovered that she can sing, paint, and draw in charcoal….but it turns out that her hidden passion is sports! She works out regularly and participates in competitions, including track and field, both nationally and internationally.

Alice began competing 4 years ago at the age of 58! She throws the shot put, discus and javelin; competes in 100-, 200- and 400-meter runs and marathons; racewalks; bowls, golf, and surf. A member of the Blind Athletes Inc. team, a feeder team to the Paralympics, Alice has been nationally ranked in 6 events for 2 years in a row. How does she do it? She laughs, “When they say run, I run!”

When racewalking Alice uses 2 guide walkers, one to announce her approach to others and the other attached to her for safety. “It’s hard to handle the finishing chute, where everyone is funneled from a wide walking area to a congested area,” Alice says. Her best time is forty minutes, five seconds in a 5K!

On days of events Alice carries her communication cards, necessary electronics, her mobility cane, and guide dog Wanda, who has earned her own medals. “Communication cards are an easy way to educate people,” Alice said. “One of my cards says, ‘She knows she’s cute. She already has a full-time job – it’s me! Please don’t pet, she’s working!’ I have a whole collection!” And while electronics are important for communication, Alice’s cochlear implant and hearing aid can’t be used in bad weather. Even when using the devices, she can’t hear the start gun. A race official alerts her to the race start by tapping her shoulder, and another official alerts her at the finish line.

Wanda is Alice’s second Freedom guide dog. Aside from mentoring at EDGE every day, she loves to go to every sports event. She has especially enjoyed racewalking with Alice but will not walk through puddles and at first wanted Alice to stay on the sidewalk. Wanda is retiring from racewalking as Alice feels Wanda will stay in tune with guiding longer if she doesn’t use up so many steps.

Recently when Alice was qualifying in the long jump, Wanda insisted on bringing the coach over to show her the starting line, then retreated to the sidelines, watching the event closely. “She loves to work,” says Alice, “and she takes it seriously. She’s a trooper! Wanda especially loves children and watching wheelchair races. And when I play cornhole, she tries to retrieve the bags!”

Among their adventures, Alice and Wanda have taken the tour behind Niagara Falls and ridden on the Maid of the Mist together, both appropriately dressed in raincoats. Helen Keller said, “Blindness cuts us off from things, but deafness cuts us off from people.” Alice wants us to know that deafblind people are not custodial; that with the proper place for growing and learning they are valuable, and they can embrace life, jobs, children, family, volunteering, and advocacy. She adds, “People forget what you said and forget what you do, but they never forget how you make them feel.”
Anyone who has been involved with Freedom over the past decade is likely to know Al. Born Snowden Hills Grand Finale on April 26, 2008, the loveable, broad headed guy was destined to be a Freedom breed dog.

Reflecting on the job he’s loved as he nears his 12th birthday, Al has decided it’s time to retire. He attempted to resign in writing, but found in his years of working he neglected to learn how to write or use a keyboard. It may have something to do with his big paws!

It’s been an amazing run. Al has been “Dad” to an astounding ninety-nine pups and “Grandpa” to many others. Al fathered eighty Freedom guide dogs; 8 Freedom breed dogs; 4 Japan Guide Dog Association breed dogs; 5 dogs exchanged with other institutions; and 1 Utica, NY police dog. Al’s very last puppy is a Lollie (Labrador/smooth Collie mix) that is now in training and will soon be placed as a guide.

Not wanting to be bored, and having a questionable retirement fund, Al has taken on a new position as Freedom office mascot and official greeter. It suits his calm, friendly demeanor perfectly and allows for frequent naps!

Donating funds from your estate to Freedom Guide Dogs ensures that pups starting out like Mateo grow up to become guide dogs with people like Ryan!

When you outline your wishes for your assets, you have a say about giving while you’re living. Everyone has an estate; it may include a home, savings account, insurance policy, or retirement fund. All or any portion of these assets can be earmarked for the Freedom Guide Dogs Endowment Fund at the Community Foundation, where your donation will provide a secure future for Freedom and the support of our clients with excellent guide dogs for years to come. You can also easily name Freedom as your beneficiary of a bank account, insurance policy or retirement fund.

Contact Eric@freedomguidedogs.org for more information!
When we last spoke of Kokonut, she had moved from her puppy her family and the folks at Ironwood, the therapeutic boarding school in Maine, to the Freedom kennel for her formal training. Koko learned many things there; wearing her specialized harness; finding curbs, seats, elevators, stairs, cars, home, and other things; crossing intersections; watching for obstacles; riding public transportation; and scores of other things.

In October Koko was placed with Sybil Bowen in Arizona!

Sybil led a very active life. Born in California, she lived in many states including New Mexico, Arkansas, Arizona, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania. She married, raised a family, and held various jobs. Her most rewarding was as a case manager for almost a hundred HIV and AIDS patients.

In 2006 Sybil suffered a life threatening allergic reaction to medication. She was found unconscious on her floor, guarded by her pet Chow. She spent 2 months in the hospital, thirty seven hours of which she was unconscious. At one point an ICU nurse told Sybil that she would turn out the lights so she could rest….and nothing changed. It was then that she realized she was blind.

After a long recuperation, Sybil attended a school for the blind to learn orientation and other skills. Eventually she began researching guide dog schools and, while living on the east coast, chose Freedom because of their Hometown Training™. Her first guide dog, a sweet black Labrador named Pixie, arrived in 2012. Unfortunately, she passed last spring.

Sybil was fortunate to have Freedom come to her with Kokonut because she was already a client. They live together in a large apartment complex comprised of many buildings. It’s not laid out in a grid, and sometimes Koko wanders off their regular route. Their neighbors are happy to help them get back on track. They also visit the office at the complex, where Sybil and Koko can relax in the cool air, chatting with friends.

Continuing, she says, “Koko looks after other dogs when they’re out, she loves people, especially children. I have trained the little ones to ask if it’s okay to visit if they see us out without her harness.”

Sybil tells us, “Koko is more lively than Pixie. While not wanting to deal with her lab was, but is taller and lankier and walks faster. They’re currently working on slowing their pace.

Life has at times been a rocky road for Sybil, but her faith has gotten her through and left her with a great attitude. She told us, “God never gives us more than we can handle.”

We are wishing Sybil and Koko an easy road together from this point and know they’ll have many great adventures!

Recently hospitalized for 3 weeks, Sybil was amazed when she got home. “Koko didn’t miss a beat while I was gone. She hadn’t forgotten a thing and was ready to get back to work.”

Sybil says that Koko is gentler taking treats than her lab was, but is taller and lankier and walks faster.

Many thanks to the Blueberry Hill Elementary School community for their generous contribution to the freedom and independence that Bear will provide to a Freedom client!
Help someone soar! One thing our clients have in common is the feeling of independence that they experience when stepping out with a guide dog. They say it’s life changing.

You can change someone’s life by becoming a puppy raiser—it’s a work of heart! Puppy raisers give our special dogs their foundation by teaching them basic obedience, socializing them and exposing them to all kinds of situations they may encounter as adults.

These adorable pups are from our newest litter and will be ready for placement with puppy raisers in a few weeks. The next litter will be born soon, so you can see we are always in need of puppy raisers!

Over three consecutive Christmas seasons Freedom client Alyssa and her mom tirelessly, gift boxed and sold hundreds of cute dog biscuits for Freedom’s benefit. They used over 25 pounds of wheat flour and five pounds of peanut butter this year!

Sales doubled each year and very soon they’ll need a warehouse! Huge thanks to Alyssa and Danielle for your tireless work and generous donations!

For the second year in a row, Central Baptist Church’s Sunday School in Woodbury, NJ collected dog shampoo, brushes, bowls, treats and toys from their congregation. They were used to create packages for Freedom clients receiving guide dogs in the next few months.

Many thanks to Jen Levy, mom Julie and guide dog Ruby, and Central Baptist Church for the special delivery for our upcoming grads!

Puppies Attack ZooTampa!

With the help of client and puppy raiser Mary Schoch, a group of Freedom guides and pups had the opportunity to visit ZooTampa for a day of socialization. Turns out zoo animals are as curious about pups as the pups are about them! Great job by pups Astro, Ozzy, Reliable, River, Spencer, Thunder, Vale and Vision, and guides Peca and REO!

If you or someone you know would like to change a life and help someone soar independently, please reach out to alison@freedomguidedogs.org today!❤️

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

Name ____________________________________________________________
Address __________________________________________________________
City ___________________________ State ___________ Zip ________________
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Make checks payable to: Freedom Guide Dogs, 1210 Hardscrabble Rd., Cassville, NY 13318

Save time, donate online! www.freedomguidedogs.org