



WK DICKSON COMMUNITY Heroes



Jo Anne Wiles

Practice marketing coordinator, Jo Anne Wiles, is a leading advocate for Guiding Eyes for the Blind (GEB). GEB is dedicated to enriching the lives of blind and visually impaired men and women by providing them with the freedom to travel safely through the use of a guide dog, thereby assuring greater independence, dignity and new horizons of opportunity. Volunteers are the key to raising, training, and socializing guide dogs.

Puppy raisers help potential guide dog puppies develop into well adjusted, mannerly young adults and are just part of the 1,200 GEB volunteers throughout the region.

Jo Anne has been involved with GEB since 2006. She devotes her love and time to raising potential guide dogs from eight weeks to maturity. During this time she teaches manners and safely socializes the puppies with varied situations and everyday experiences. After the dogs complete their formal training, the pups raised are given to those in need and become part of their permanent family. Alternate careers are considered for dogs that have temperament and/or health issues that prevent the dog from becoming a guide dog.

Jo Anne has her 5th GEB puppy at home now. Tosh is a male yellow lab who Jo Anne says is special to her family for several reasons. She states, "Tosh's mother, Irena, was the 3rd dog we raised and we followed her pregnancy and the birth of her first litter. Even without the connection to the mother though, we would have still fallen in love with Tosh; he is sweet, smart, and loving."

The 4th puppy she helped raise, Kayla, a female black lab, is currently completing her harness training and, should hopefully be matched with a blind person in a few months. Her 2nd dog, K-9 Wynett, is a trained and certified Accelerant Detection Canine working for the Fire Department in Manchester, NH. Jo Anne's very first dog, Lota, is a certified service dog through the GEB Heeling Autism program; he was matched with an autistic boy. These dogs, professional training, and follow-up support services are all provided to the blind person or autistic child free of charge.