

# GOOD CITIZENSHIP

## Helping Blind People Attain Greater Independence

(NAPS)—One organization has shown dogged determination in helping blind and visually impaired people lead independent lives and become more active members of their communities.

Training dogs to help blind people travel safely has been the mission of The Seeing Eye, North America's pioneer dog guide school, since it was founded in 1929 by Dorothy H. Eustis.

By the end of that year, Seeing Eye® dogs had helped 17 blind men and women achieve greater independence, dignity and self-confidence.

Since its founding, the organization has matched nearly 13,000 specially bred and trained Seeing Eye dogs with blind people from across the United States and Canada. Graduates of its program live and work around the world.

The Morristown, New Jersey organization breeds and raises their own dogs for the program, instructs blind people in the use and care of the dogs; and educates the public about the role of dog guides and the capabilities of blind people for independent living.

Volunteer families, called puppy raisers, prepare the dogs for their formal training, teaching them basic obedience and exposing them to a variety of social situations. Puppies are placed in these loving homes when they are eight weeks old and return to The Seeing Eye training facility about a year later to begin a four month course of training with a sighted Seeing Eye Instructor.



**The Seeing Eye program helps blind and visually-impaired people achieve independence.**

Instructors, who have completed a thorough, on-site apprenticeship, train eight to ten dogs at a time. Dogs are first taught basic commands, then are taught to perform appropriately in a variety of traffic conditions.

It takes another 20 to 27 days to teach a blind person to work with the dog. Qualified blind individuals spend that time in residence at The Seeing Eye campus.

The Seeing Eye receives no government aid and is supported by contributions from individuals, corporations, and foundations, as well as bequests and other planned gifts. For more information, visit [www.seeingeye.org](http://www.seeingeye.org).