**Pine Tree Guide Dog Users Committee Reports**

November 1, 2023

**Advocacy & Legislative**

Pauline Lamontagne, Chair

Email: plamontagne@twc.com

•State Legislation

1. LD 988 “Resolve, Directing the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry to Conduct an Accessibility Study of All Maine State Parks and Historic Sites and to develop a Plan to Remove Access Barriers” was carried over to the next legislative session due to lack of funding. The next session begins in January.

•PTGDU Monthly News Updates

The following topics were shared in the Advocacy Matters section of our monthly news updates:

August -- Legislative update on Maine’s LD 988; ADA info regarding college dining; and an announcement about ACB’s Uber presentation

September –info about using air travel service animal forms; how to book Uber without an app; and an announcement about The Seeing Eye’s air travel presentation

October – announcement about The Seeing Eye’s access challenge survey and in the Member Submissions section, a brief article about Maine’s first white cane walk

• PTGDU Facebook page

In October, we featured posts about white cane awareness day and pedestrian safety.

**Fundraising**

Christina Brino, Chair

Email: princessregal@optonline.net

-The committee continues to explore holiday fundraisers for 2023, including healthy dog treats and Maine Made Christmas wreaths. The website accessibility for screenreaders has presented some challenges though.

-A sample thank you letter to individuals who donate to PTGDU was sent to our treasurer for consideration.

-In 2024, the committee will focus on preparing background materials for grant requests

**Public Relations, Publications, and Newsletter**

Ginger Kutsch, Chair

Email: news @PineTreeGuideDogUsers.org

Website: www.PineTreeGuideDogUsers.org

Official Facebook: www.facebook.com/PTGDU

Members & Friends Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/groups/3044240242465295

•Facebook

We currently have 179 likes, and 239 fans following our page. Generally, we average 2 posts per week. In October, we featured several posts about white cane safety day and pedestrian safety.

The top two performing Facebook post in the last 90 days

1. September: It’s National Guide Dog Month! Join us as we honor the work of our specially trained guide dogs, the volunteer families who raise them, the donors who support them, and the guide dog schools that provide them!

Photo description: Two Seeing Eye dogs resting on the right and left of a white grave stone where one of our country’s very first guide dog instructors was laid to rest on a hill overlooking the Damariscotta River in Newcastle, Maine. Adelaide Clifford was instrumental in The first two years of The Seeing Eye’s development. She learned how to train guide dogs in Switzerland at Fortunate Fields, the home of The Seeing Eye's co-founder, Dorothy Eustis. In November 1928, Adelaide returned to the states to begin her ground-breaking work as a Seeing Eye trainer.

Alt text: A yellow Lab and a black Lab guide dog rest on the grass next to the grave site of The Seeing Eye’s first guide dog instructor.

1. August: Welcome to Maine! Whether you spend your days hiking our picturesque mountains, your nights camping under the stars, or every moment enjoying the unmatched beauty of the Maine coast, do it with your guide dog!

Photo Description: PTGDU member with her German shepherd guide dog sitting on a bench at Thunder Hole, a popular attraction in Acadia National Park. This narrow crevice on the coast catches incoming waves and sends them rocketing as high as 40 feet into the air.

• Outreach

-PTGDU hosted a table in October at this year’s White Cane Walk for Awareness in Portland. The display included our retractable banner as well as the poster board and accompanying sample materials from our Guide Dogs in Action Educational Series. Our six-foot banner was carried during the walk.

-Sadie participated in a panel discussion designed to educate medical students about a blind person’s experiences and challenges in health care settings. The event was sponsored by Disability Rights Maine.

• Website

Ginger worked with Steve to get the PTGDU meeting minutes and committee reports posted on our website. The documents can be reached from a link on the membership page.