

Bancroft is going to the dogs to give Canadians a new leash on life

The Purina Walk for Dog Guides wants to make more life-changing matches possible for Canadians with disabilities, and on May 29th, Bancroft is again hosting one of more than 200 walks taking place across the country this spring.

“Dog Guides make the world more accessible for their handlers, whether it's by navigating city sidewalks or by literally opening a door,” said Bancroft resident Laverne Stapley, who is planning the local event. “This walk is a way for our community to contribute to a cross-Canada success story.”

The annual walk raises funds for Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, a national charity which breeds, trains, and matches service dogs with qualifying applicants. The walk in Bancroft is being hosted by Bancroft Lions Club, where Stapley is a member. The Stapleys have fostered over a dozen guide dogs, taking them as puppies, socializing them, and then turning them over to Dog Guides for their advanced training.

The Purina Walk for Dog Guides has gained steady momentum over the past 30 years, last year raising more than \$1,195,000 nationally. Thanks to lead sponsor Nestle Purina Pet Care, 100 per cent of funds raised go directly to Dog Guide programs, offsetting the cost of breeding, training and placing Dog Guides, and allowing the organization to provide them at no cost. The walk is a family and dog-friendly event, suitable for all ages and abilities.

Lions Foundation dog guides assist people with a variety of disabilities, not just the blind. There are Hearing Ear, Seizure Response, Autism Assistance, and Diabetic Alert dogs as well. All told, it takes about \$25,000 to fully train and place a dog guide – but the assistance given to its owner is priceless. To date, more than 2,000 dogs have been trained and placed across Canada – all without any government funding, making the Walk so vital.

Bancroft Walk details:

- Sunday, May 29
- Registration and sign-in begins at 12:30 p.m., and walk commences at 1 p.m.
- Location: Riverside Park, Bancroft
- To register or donate, visit www.purinawalkfordogguides.com