**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** **Contact: Rachelle Kniffen**

 **Leader Dogs for the Blind**

 **(248) 659-5013**

**rkniffen@leaderdog.org**

**Explore New Leader Dog Puppy Raising Options**

**“Make a Dream Come True” Event at Leader Dog’s campus on December 9 from 3:30‒5:30 p.m.**

Rochester Hills, Mich., November 17, 2023 — Leader Dogs for the Blind has made volunteering to raise a Leader Dog puppy possible for more people by adding options to fit a variety of lifestyles. They are currently in need of individuals or families to become volunteer puppy raisers.

As a puppy raiser, you play a critical role in the ability of Leader Dog to provide highly trained guide dogs to people who are blind or visually impaired. You will have access to the Leader Dog method of training puppies from our experts, who provide classes and assistance every step of the way.

The original option of raising a puppy for a year is still available, now with four new choices to provide flexibility for more home environments and lifestyles.

Co-Raising: Two people from separate households share duties for a year. Arrangements can include one week/one week, daytime/nighttime or primary raiser/secondary raiser.

Pass-Along: One person raises the puppy for the first six months while it is smaller; a second person covers the last six months after foundational behaviors have been established.

Corporate: Up to three employees co-raise a puppy while boosting employee engagement, team building and support of social responsibility within the company.

Campus: Available to approved college campuses with students raising either on or off campus with the support of a college-sanctioned puppy club.

“We designed these new opportunities to better fit the lifestyles of today’s families, couples and singles,” said Beverly Ferguson, Leader Dog puppy development manager. “Whether you’ve been a ‘dog person’ for years or have never owned a dog, you can be a puppy raiser. You’ll learn a lot of great skills, meet like-minded people in your community, have a daily walking partner and, most importantly, help someone who is blind experience safety and confidence when traveling independently.”

A “Make a Dream Come True – Explore Puppy Raising Options” event is being held on Leader Dog’s campus in Rochester Hills, Michigan on Saturday, December 9 from 3:30‒5:30 p.m. for people interested in learning more about this fun and unique volunteer opportunity. This interactive, open house-style event gives you the opportunity to experience a puppy skills and training demonstration and find out which option best fits your lifestyle. You will also meet current Leader Dog puppy raisers and staff who provide expert support and guidance.

After “Make a Dream Come True,” stay to enjoy our free Light Up Leader Dog event from 5:30‒8:30 p.m. Get in the holiday spirit with festive music, walk the path of 2,000 luminaries and holiday lights, and patronize our food truck vendors!

If you plan to attend “Make a Dream Come True,” please email LeaderDog@LeaderDog.org so we can plan accordingly. If you are unable to attend, you can sign up for an online info session about becoming a puppy raiser at LeaderDog.org/Volunteer under “Explore Puppy Raising.” Info sessions are held monthly.

All Leader Dogs for the Blind services are provided free to clients thanks to our volunteers and donations from individuals, foundations, corporations and service organizations like Lions Clubs International. Leader Dog receives no government funding or insurance payments.

Go to LeaderDog.org to learn more about Leader Dogs for the Blind.

###

About Leader Dogs for the Blind

Leader Dogs for the Blind is a nonprofit organization providing people who are blind or visually impaired with lifelong skills for safe and independent daily travel using a guide dog or a white cane. All services are provided free of charge. The organization also trains guide dogs for people who are DeafBlind, offers a summer camp for teens, and holds seminars for orientation and mobility (O&M) professionals and university students. Leader Dogs for the Blind partners with agencies and O&M professionals throughout the U.S. to provide their clients with supplemental O&M training. For more information, call (888) 777-5332 or visit LeaderDog.org.

Contact:

Rachelle Kniffen

Leader Dogs for the Blind

rkniffen@leaderdog.org

248-659-5013

Photo Captions:



Leader Dog puppies and their raisers on a group outing to Wolcott Mill Metropark in Ray, Michigan.



Future Leader Dog Kenya and Puppy Raiser Cathy share a warm connection.