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3 July 2009

Teenagers test-drive RSB Guide Dogs

Most teenagers looking for independence have their minds on test driving a new car. But for one group of teenagers from SA, this weekend will be all about test-driving something quite different.

From Friday (July 3) to Sunday (July 5), six blind or vision impaired teenagers will be test driving a Royal Society for the Blind Guide Dog to see if a four-legged friend can give them the independence they need in adulthood.

Throughout the weekend the teenagers, aged between 15 and 19, will be introduced to an RSB Guide Dog then taken through a number of realistic scenarios from having a meal at Café Primo to negotiating Marion Shopping Centre.

The K94U2C program at Adelaide Shores Holiday Village, has been organised by the RSB in partnership with CanDo4Kids. Its aim is to help vision impaired and blind young people make informed choices about the assistive devices they may need after leaving school.

Chris Muldoon, RSB Guide Dogs Services Manager, said: "Often vision impaired or blind young people receive a lot of support while they are at school so they don't need a dog. But once they leave school and are looking to get around on their own, to work, social engagements etc they need to think more about how to do this.

"By introducing young people to the RSB Guide Dogs early, it gives them the knowledge to make an informed choice about whether an RSB Guide Dog would be right for them."

CanDo4Kids Therapy Services Manager, Ms Alex Crawford, said blind and vision impaired people face a lot of challenges each day and a guide dog can be a great companion.

"The K94U2C weekend is a great opportunity for young people to discover more about Guide Dog mobility and learning about the responsibilities that come with owning a dog," Ms Crawford said.

"CanDo4Kids strives to provide young people with the skills and confidence to become as independent as possible, and investigating the benefits of using a guide dog is an important element in their growth and development," she said.



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Student, Josh Murphy, 19 attended the K94U2C program last year. He now uses an RSB Guide Dog, 2-year-old Victor, to get to his law course at Flinders University.

He said: "The K94U2C program was great, it was what made up my mind to get a RSB Guide Dog.

"I've had Victor for four months now and it's going great, the guys at uni love him."

The K94U2C weekend is made possible thanks to the kind sponsorship of the Morialta Trust.

It costs \$25,000 to train an RSB Guide Dog. If you would be interested in sponsoring an RSB Guide Dog or becoming a puppy educator please contact the RSB Guide Dog Service on 8261 4121.

More information about puppy sponsorship and puppy education can be found on the RSB website: www.rsb.org.au

Notes for editors

The media are invited to film / photograph the K94U2C program anytime throughout the weekend, to arrange please call Lynette Day.

Interviews and photo / film opportunities are also available with one of last year's K94 U2C participants, Josh Murphy.
To arrange please call Lynette Day.

For more information please contact:

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