

Sierra Animal Wellness Center

Specializing in Holistic, Integrative Veterinary
Medicine



January 29, 2018



January 29 - A Special Day in the Animal/Human Connection

Sometimes one person - and one dog - can make a profound difference in the lives of others. He may have been blinded by an accident at the age of 16, but Morris Frank (1908 - 1980) had incredible vision that continues to this day to help people with physical challenges. Frank lost the use of one eye in a childhood accident, and lost his other eye as the result of a boxing accident.

In 1927 at the age of 20, his dad read him an [article](#) in *The Saturday Evening Post* about dogs being trained as guides for blinded veterans of World War I. Frustrated by his own lack of mobility as a blind person, he was inspired to write its author, Dorothy Harrison Eustis (1886-1946) for help. In his letter he stated that "Thousands of blind like me abhor being dependent on others. Help me and I will help them. Train me and I will bring back my dog and show people here how a blind man can be absolutely on his own."

Mrs. Eustis was an American training German shepherd police dogs in Switzerland, and when she received Frank's letter, she agreed to help him. He promised he would return to the United States and spread the word about these wonderful dogs.



Morris Frank with Buddy, the nation's first Seeing Eye Dog

Having completed instruction in Switzerland, he arrived in New York City on June 11, 1928. With throngs of reporters observing, he proved the ability of his dog, Buddy, by navigating a dangerous street crossing. Recalling the life-changing

occasion, Frank said: "I shall never forget the next three minutes: 10-ton trucks rocketing past, cabs blowing their horns in our ears, drivers shouting at us. When we finally made it to the other side and I realized what an amazing job she had done, I leaned over and gave Buddy a great big hug and told her what a good, good girl she was."

At the end of that first day, Dorothy Eustis received a single word telegram: "Success". Morris Frank was set on the path that would become his life's mission: to get Seeing Eye Dogs accepted all over the country.



This Morristown, New Jersey statue commemorates the legacy of Morris and Buddy and The Seeing Eye

Frank and Eustis co-founded The Seeing Eye, the oldest existing guide dog school in the world, on January 29, 1929. Their dream was to make the entire world accessible to people who are blind. Frank became a tireless advocate of public accessibility for the blind and their guide dogs. In 1928, he was routinely told that Buddy couldn't ride in the passenger compartment with him. Seven years later, all railroads in the United States had adopted policies allowing guide dogs to remain with their owners while onboard. There was another

barrier Frank wanted to break. He wanted to fly in a commercial airplane with his guide dog. The pair did so in 1938, flying from Chicago to Newark, Buddy curled up at Morris Frank's feet. United Air Lines was the first to adopt the policy, granting "all Seeing Eye dogs the privilege of riding with their masters in the cabins of any of our regularly scheduled planes." By 1956, every state in the Union had passed laws guaranteeing access to public spaces for blind people and their dogs.

The Seeing Eye continues its role as a pioneer in the guide dog movement and has played an integral part in shaping public policy guaranteeing access and accommodation to all people who use service animals.

About Buddy

Buddy was a female German shepherd originally named "Kiss" but, feeling that no 20-year-old man should have a dog named Kiss, Frank called her "Buddy". Buddy and her significant role in history has been remembered in a tome co-authored by her human, *First Lady of the Seeing Eye*, as well as in the children's books *Dog Diaries #2: Buddy and Morris and Buddy: The Story of the First Seeing Eye Dog*. A made-for-TV movie in the 1980s, "Love leads the Way: A True Story", also told their tale, while in the city of Morristown, New Jersey a statue stands which captures the special bond between Morris Frank and Buddy, the dog who gave the gift of self-reliance.

Until next time, be well.

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Tuesday from 9:00 to 3:00

Wednesday from 12:00 to 6:00

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