

**Sponsored by Sepulveda Building Materials  
Charity Golf Tournament**

**INTRODUCING**



**A GDA | TLC**

**PUPPY IN TRAINING**

**As told to her Puppy Raisers  
Bob and Kathie Stegemann  
December 2023 - March 2024**







Hi everybody! My name is **CALI**, and I am having SO much fun being a little puppy!

I am a puppy with a purpose, bred by Guide Dogs of America|Tender Loving Canines (GDA|TLC) to ultimately be a guide dog for a visually impaired person, a PTSD dog for a veteran, a service dog for a child with autism, or a facility service dog. I was born at the GDA|TLC campus in Sylmar on 22 December 2023, in a litter of four labs. Merry Christmas! I have one yellow sister and two yellow brothers, I am the only black one in the bunch -- special!! Here are pictures of us in the GDA|TLC nursery, and having fun in the Puppy



**Head Start program in February in our last week before going out to our new homes. Cuteness overload!**

**In mid-February, at eight weeks old, me and my littermates were handed over to our puppy raisers. Us Christmas puppies were now Valentine's puppies! I**

**was matched with Bob and Kathie Stegemann in the Simi Valley group, I hear they have been raising for GDA since 2000 so I am like their gazillionth project puppy. And I already know Bob, 'cuz he played with me almost every day here in Head Start and gave me my going-home bath! They named me **CALI** because I am a California girl.**





**I also met my co-raisers Cathy and Phil from Thousand Oaks. Long-time puppy raisers and breeder keepers, they will be hosting me on a regular basis and will be involved in all my training and public outings/activities.**

**And my folks tell me I am a special girl because I was selected to be sponsored by Sepulveda Building Materials. Lucky me! Thank you all for your sponsorship and your ongoing support of GDA|TLC programs! I look forward to meeting you all once I am old enough to go out and about!**





**My raisers and I got to work right away on a number of basic life skills. Top priority of course was house-breaking, learning that eliminating outside is oh-so-very-good but inside not-so-good. I met my housemates, yellow labs Akira, Abby and Riley, who were also all raised in the GDA program -- I \*love\* playing with them, and am absolutely relentless! I learned to**

**come right away when called and to sleep through the night in my crate and to ride calmly in the car and to wait for my meals (I LIKE my meals!), got accustomed to wearing my snazzy yellow uniform jacket, started on my sit/down/stand positions, and started getting used to walking on a leash.**

**Most fun of all is meeting other families and their dogs! I have had a couple afternoon visits and two three-night and one two-night stay**





with Cathy and Phil and their lab Johnny (retired GDA breeder) and lab/golden cross Nitro, and they are so much fun to romp with! I have also spent a couple full days and a two-day overnighter with raisers Debbie and Larry and their breeder Kepler and puppy-in-training Farah, and have visited or been visited by a few others



as well. So so so much fun! And my folks say it is all good experience for me too, since I can see that the rules they have for good manners at our house actually apply everywhere, helping me generalize my behaviors and skills across environments with different people and dogs and distractions. Every situation is a learning

situation, and I am soaking it all in!

Oh, and I started a weekly puppy kindergarten obedience class with GDA|TLC puppies Delta and Dixie and Doron, yellow labs who are about a week younger than me. Here my raisers learn

how to teach me skills, we practice them in the relative quiet of our own homes/yards, and then practice them in class with lots of distractions. These sessions will continue through April, and then I will start taking regular public obedience classes with a mix of GDA|TLC puppies-in-training and family pets.



In mid-March I was old enough to gradually start making public appearances. Mostly I have been left home for awhile each day when my folks would go out for lunch or to run errands, and I have learned to nap quietly in my crate while they are gone. But now I have started going on occasional neighborhood walks and have strolled a couple of shopping areas, even briefly going into stores! So far I have dipped into JoAnn's



**Fabrics, Auto Zone, and Trader Joe's, and everyone is always so happy to see me! It is so exciting! Once I get my final shots in early April I will be fully street legal, and will be able to accompany my folks to many places and events!**



**As you can tell, I have been having a grand time so far, and things are only going to get better! I am a fearless, smart, outgoing and inquisitive puppy (and cute, too!), and I am looking forward to all kinds of new adventures! I will have almost daily outings to learn how to behave in grocery markets and clothing stores and home warehouses and fast-food places and sit-down restaurants and wherever else my folks take me -- I will be a shopping and**



**dining pro! I will continue with weekly obedience classes, and start attending monthly puppy raiser meetings and periodic group outings, and go to GDA|TLC graduations and the June Open House. And we already have your August 2 golf tournament on our calendar! I will have a grand time learning how the world works!**

**I am looking forward to keeping in touch with you all, and you can expect my April/May/June adventures report later in July.**

**Wiggles and wags and puppy kisses to all!**

**~~ CALI ~~**



**THANK YOU!**



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