

Kids Korner

Sarah Talks About Raising A Seeing Eye Dog

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GLEN ROCK (York Co.) — Sarah Grothe wanted to raise an animal as a 4-H project.

But Sarah does not live on a farm. Her parents had no place to keep a large animal for her to raise and show.

Then a 4-H leader suggested that she consider raising a puppy. Sarah loves dogs. She thought that was a wonderful idea.

This puppy, though, would be a special one. It was bred and born to do a very important job.

Sarah's puppy's name is Arnold. Arnold was born in January 1995, and came to live with Sarah and her parents, Judy and Will Grothe, when he was seven weeks old.

Arnold is a purebred black Labrador Retriever. He and his brothers and sisters in the litter were bred to be trained as Seeing Eye Dogs to help blind people.

But all puppies raised to be trained as seeing eye dogs must first have a chance to be a puppy while they are growing up. Seeing Eye puppies need a "foster home"

where they can run and play with special human friends.

Raising Seeing Eye puppies is an important responsibility. They must have regular veterinarian visits to make sure they are healthy and receive all their shots against dog diseases. They are only allowed to have toys made of special materials that will not break apart into little pieces when they chew on them, so that they do not choke or become sick. Grooming includes brushing and even toenail clipping when they become too long. The Seeing Eye foundation pays almost all the costs involved in the puppy's care, even the puppy's food.

Several commands must be taught to all Seeing Eye puppies by their owners. They learn voice commands which teach them to sit and lie quietly, to stay when their owner walks away and to come when called. When Sarah eats meals with her family, Arnold has been taught to lie quietly at her feet. At night, he sleeps in a kennel near Sarah's bed.

Seeing Eye puppies must also go to "school." They and their



Each dog and owner take a turn demonstrating their progress in working together to learn the obedience commands.

owners attend classes where they learn to be calm around other dogs and people and to obey additional commands.

Sarah and Arnold go to "school" at a monthly training class and 4-H meeting held at the York 4-H Center. About 20 puppies and their owners take part in these meetings. Some of the puppy owners are 4-H members and some are adults who want to help blind people by raising these special dogs.

As part of his training, Arnold goes many other places with Sarah and her family. By going into places like stores, banks and meetings, puppies learn to be comfortable around lots of different people and different situations. Arnold even attends church and Sunday School with Sarah. He does not go to school with her every day, though.

In March, the Grothes took Arnold along to watch a St. Patrick's Day parade. At first, he was afraid of the drums in the bands, but he soon became used to the loud noise.



Sarah knows that she is helping prepare Arnold for a very important job in the Seeing Eye program.



There is more than one way to climb a sliding board.



A training session during a 4-H club meeting helps Arnold become accustomed to other dogs.

When Arnold is about 16 months old, Sarah will return him to the Seeing Eye Foundation. He will be tested to see if he has the behavior and personality of a Seeing Eye dog. If he does, Arnold will then be given very intensive training for four months. For three months, a trainer will work with him. Then for one month, Arnold will be trained together with the blind person that will be his new owner.

If a puppy has not learned to obey commands or does not respond to the training, the Seeing

Eye foundation may give the foster owner the chance to keep it instead. Arnold is well behaved and Sarah believes that he will become a very good Seeing Eye dog.

Sarah and Arnold have become very special friends and she knows it will be hard to say goodbye to him. But she also knows he has an important job to do as an adult dog. And while she prepares to give him up, Sarah is already making plans to adopt another 4-H project Seeing Eye puppy.

Missionary's Son Stricken With Rare Disease

BELLEVILLE (Mifflin Co.) — Nine-year-old Jeremiah Brackbill is struggling for his life in India. While accompanying his mother, Susan, who is a missionary advisor for medical research in India, Jeremiah developed an illness called Guillan-Barre Syndrome, which attacks the muscular system.

Jeremiah is completely paralyzed and on a life support system. He suffers temporary blindness and has had multiple strokes in his brain.

His mother is by his side in the Ludhiana Christian Medical College in India. The family plans to transfer Jeremiah to a local hospital when his condition stabilizes. The expected cost is \$25,000 to \$75,000 to fly him to the United

States since the trip will probably require a medically equipped aircraft. The acute attack of the disease will require lots of therapy for Jeremiah.

Jeremiah's home area of Belleville in Mifflin County has rallied to help him. A 1,200 pound black Angus steer will be auctioned at the Belleville Livestock Market on Wednesday, April 24, at 3 p.m. The steer is donated by Wade Cleck, general manager of Valley Protein, Inc.

The auction is one way to help defray some of the expenses. Other contributions can be forwarded to Jeremiah Fund, c/o Lewistown Trust Company, 100 W. Water St., Lewistown, PA 17044.