# Guiding Eyes for the Blind is putting its best paw forward

**By Avery Martin**
**Contributor**

For an individual who is blind or partially sighted, a guide dog can bring independence and new opportunities.

Guiding Eyes for the Blind raises puppies to become guide dogs, and now students are getting the chance to help.

The university chapter of the Guiding Eyes for the Blind puppy-raising club has recently started holding meetings.

The club aims to raise guide dogs and fundraise for the foundation.

The club president, English major Ella Bernegger, a sophomore, is also the club's founder. Her mother was a handler of a narcotic detection dog who once trained with Guiding Eyes, and Bernegger was inspired to assist the group in raising a puppy.

"I got in contact with the coordinator from Guiding Eyes, and I got this whole process set up starting in January. I finally got it to Southern this semester," Bernegger said.

Bernegger is raising Justice, a puppy who she hopes will eventually become a guide dog for someone who has a visual impairment.

"He is a 6-month-old yellow Labrador retriever. He's super friendly. He loves people; he loves dogs. Super quick learner. He knew everything that he knows already by 4 months old," Bernegger said.

Of the club members, Bernegger is the only one currently raising a puppy.

However, this is not the only way to get involved.

Nursing major Sydney Crockett, a sophomore, is the vice president of the club and helps Bernegger with raising Justice.

"I'm training to be his sitter right now. Anyone in the club or anyone involved can train to watch Justice," Crockett said.

In less than a year, Bernegger and Crockett will send Justice off for further training and placement.

"You have them until they are around 13 to 16 months. From there, they go take their big test up at Guiding Eyes at their location at Yorktown Heights, New York. They will run a series of tests with him, and they will determine if he's good to continue in the Guiding Eye program," Bernegger said.

Dogs who do not pass behavioral tests either become their raisers' family pets or are trained to be working dogs in fields like bomb-sniffing, narcotics detection, or emotional support.

The club aspires to raise awareness for all service dogs while providing an outlet for members to do community service.

"We decided to make a club out of it at Southern because we thought a lot of people would be interested," Bernegger said.

There is also the added benefit of getting to spend time with Justice and other service dogs.

"I decided to join because personally I have family members who work with the Guiding Eyes foundation. Also, I love community service," social work major Grace Huber, a sophomore who is the co-chair of fund-raising, said.

The club plans to expand to more dog raisers and sitters on campus in the coming months and grow their fundraising efforts.



PHOTO |AVERY MARTIN

**Justice enjoying his time at the "Involvement and Resource Fair" on Sep. 4.**



PHOTO | AVERY MARTIN

**Theatre major Dakota Willette, and social work major Grace Huber, sophomores, at the "Involvement and Resource Fair" on Sep. 4.**

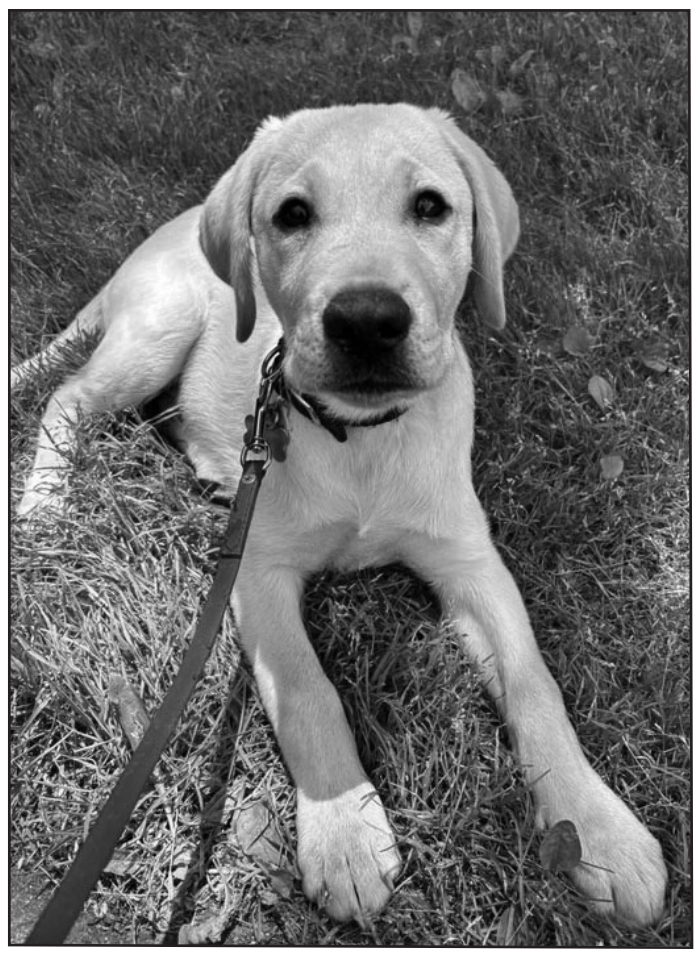

PHOTO | SYDNEY CROCKETT

**Justice as a puppy.**

# OSI hosts free breakfast event for commuters

**By Lexi White**
**Features Editor**

Some say the best kind of food is free food, but the commuters on campus think the best free food comes from the "Good Morning Commuters" event!

Commuter services, an organization that is a part of the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development, OSI, hosts a free breakfast event for all commuters.

From 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. every Thursday morning, commuters line up to get their delicious breakfast sandwiches.

This morning, students started waiting at the door 15 minutes early because they were so eager to get their hands on some free food.

Biology major Craig Huydic, a junior, is a commuter assistant who helps organize and host events for the commuters on campus.

"We give out items like toothbrushes, deodorant and hand sanitizer in case you forget it," Huydic said.

Huydic has been a part of commuter services for a year and said that he feels "honored to be able to experience and see the changes be put in motion."

Student development in higher education major Ashley Perez, a graduate intern from OSI, was helping to host this fulfilling event.

"The whole point of this is having that positive impact on students and being able to support them," Perez said.

While noticing that some students grab their food and go, and others stay a while, Huydic said, "We know this is something that people really enjoy, and by the amount of people that stay in the room after the they get their sandwiches, I know we have set up a great environment."

By attending the free breakfast event, commuters can save money and meet other commuters like them.

These students also have an opportunity to figure out potential ways that they can travel to and from campus.

"If you meet another commuter, and they are from the same area, you might be able to carpool and even possibly save money on gas," Huydic said.

Psychology major Alex Cruzelasquez, a junior, was one of the commuters who attended the event.

Cruzelasquez did not have a good breakfast and said this event was a "Godsent."

"I am just so grateful that this was available," Cruzelasquez said. "It makes all the difference because I have three classes straight today."

Another commuter student who attended the event was business administration major Jayden Carty, a freshman.

Carty arrived halfway through the event and was shocked that there was no more food available.

"People must really like the food for it to go so quick, and it makes me think that the school cares about us by doing this," Carty said.

Huydic and the rest of the commuter crew want all commuters to feel welcome while they are here.

"It is great to put a change in our school because so many commuters think that there is no event for them, or they don't want to have to stay too late," Huydic said.



PHOTO| LEXI WHITE

**A student eating the free breakfast provided by commuter services.**




**A student doing homework while eating a meal provided by commuter services.**