

# Guide dog 'Sahara' ready to work

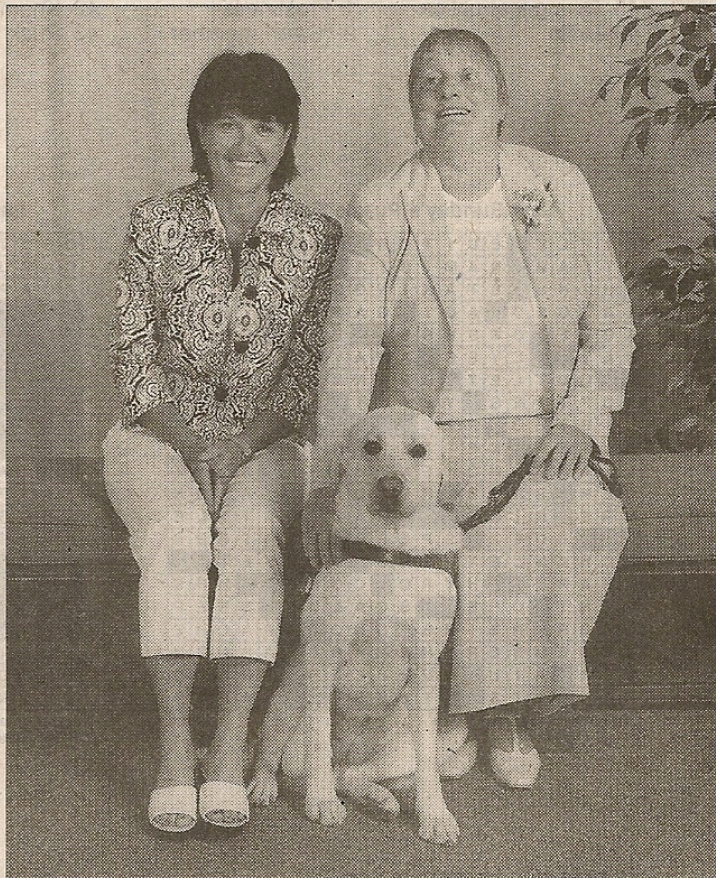
Flagstaff resident Laureen Simpson contributed time and love in raising a puppy for Guide Dogs for the Blind and was proud to see the dog "Sahara" graduate as a guide April 11, in a formal ceremony at the guide dog campus in San Rafael, Calif.

Puppy raiser Simpson is a member of CoCo Pups, the local guide dog puppy raising club, which is led by Tammi Cupp. Club members volunteer in a variety of jobs in Flagstaff and Prescott.

Guide Dogs for the blind uses yellow and black Labrador retrievers, golden retriever and lab/golden crosses as guide dogs. The puppies are born at the guide dog kennels and placed in homes of volunteer puppy raiser when they are about 2 months old.

The volunteers socialize the pups by house-breaking them, teaching them to be good canine citizens and introducing them to new experiences.

"Sahara" spent many hours at the gym, shopping and dining in local restaurant and went to



**VOLUNTEER LAUREEN SIMPSON**, left, presented "Sahara," a lab retriever to graduating student Sue Tussey. (Courtesy photo)

work with Simpson to encounter a number of social and training environments.

The pups are returned to Guide Dogs for the Blind for formal guide-work training when they are 14 to 18 months old.

Following the completion of training, the dogs are matched with blind students enrolled at the school.

To get involved, call guide Dogs for the Blind at (800) 295-4050 or visit [www.guidedogs.com](http://www.guidedogs.com).