

# Poughkeepsie man, dog complete training at Guiding Eyes for the Blind

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Jimmy Kriz and his black Lab, Pete, were among the April graduates in the Guiding Eyes for the Blind program.(Photo: Submitted)

A Poughkeepsie man and his guide dog recently completed training on how to work together as a team.

Jimmy Kriz and his black Lab, Pete, were among the graduates from across the country that completed training in Yorktown in April. Each of the graduates was paired with a trained guide dog provided at no cost by Guiding Eyes for the Blind, a non-profit organization.

Kriz, a Westchester County native, went to Guiding Eyes for his first guide dog, according to the organization. The father of two has worked in the health and fitness sector for 25 years, and manages a health and fitness store. He said he enjoys working out and staying in shape, and that his dog, Pete, “reminds me of myself — independent and focused.”

Kriz [lost his vision due to Stargardt's disease](#), with which he was diagnosed in 1974. He said while he is accustomed to using a cane, he "feels more comfortable venturing out with his guide dog," being able to walk more naturally and faster — something he hadn't done in nearly 10 years.

As each guide dog team heads to their respective homes, they will establish daily routines and learn new routes and destinations. Guiding Eyes provides guidelines for members of the community to welcome them home and allow them to work safely, including not distracting them and never feeding a working guide dog.

The April class of graduates included 12 participants in the school's Residential Training program at Guiding Eyes headquarters in Yorktown, where they learned to navigate the many types of settings they will encounter upon returning home.

For more information, visit <https://www.guidingeyes.org/>.

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