



Members of the TLC Puppy Raising Club and their dogs: (left to right) Lanijo Kircher and Edison, Jill Norman and Jamboree, Grant Reid and Ingrid, Susan and Leilani.

## Morgan Library Offers Practice Space for Guide Dogs in Training

Not all students who frequent Morgan Library are of the two-legged variety. This spring, several yellow labs congregated each week in Morgan Library's courtyard for their own variety of group study.

The dogs and their trainers are part of Larimer County's TLC Puppy Raising Club, a local chapter of Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc. Guide Dogs for the Blind places eight-week-old puppies in the homes of volunteer "raisers" who use approved training techniques to teach the dogs basic obedience and to socialize them to the world.

When the dogs are between 13 and 18 months old, they return to Guide Dogs campuses for five months of formal training from licensed instructors. Dogs who successfully complete this training are paired with blind students for a month of team work, followed by a public graduation ceremony in which puppy raisers are invited

to present the dogs to their new partners.

Grant Reid, professor in CSU's Department of Horticulture and Landscape Architecture, and his wife, Judy, have previously raised two puppies for Guide Dogs for the Blind. Their first dog, Ingrid, is paired with a blind woman in California. Their second dog, Missoula, is working with a blind man in Washington.

Reid brings his third dog, also Ingrid, to Morgan Library's courtyard to practice off-leash commands. The enclosed outdoor space is ideal for this kind of training. The library offers the additional advantage of a bustling indoor space where Ingrid and the other dogs can practice working on stairs and among people and other distractions.

CSU students Lanijo Kircher and Jill Norman and their dogs, Edison and Jamboree, regularly join Reid and Ingrid. Meeting as a group helps

the dogs learn to be obedient in the presence of other animals. The group is sometimes accompanied by others from the TLC Puppy Raising Club, which currently has about 15 members.

Reid comments on the benefits of puppy raising: "Puppy raisers enjoy the process of teaching their dogs to be very well behaved companions. An additional benefit of raising is that the handler may take their dog wherever they go. By law a guide dog in training, with their special green vest on, is allowed access to most public and commercial buildings. If the dog graduates (fewer than 50 percent do) it is very rewarding to see it carry out its mission helping a visually impaired person."

Reid continues: "Yes, there is a down side. The raiser is expected to attend regular training sessions and to invest a lot of time into teaching their dog appropriate behavior. The rules are very strict. Perhaps the most difficult part of the process is



Grant Reid rewards Ingrid for a job well done.

giving the dog back after bonding with it for over a year."

Though the dogs are cute and friendly, Reid points out that it is correct etiquette to ask the handler's permission before petting a guide dog in training.

For more information about Guide Dogs for the Blind, Inc., visit the organization's Web site at <http://www.guidedogs.com>. ■