



A PERFECT PAIR

Dedicated board member **Dr. Andrew Greller** chairs the **2014 Guide Dogs of Texas Golf Classic** - and you can bet his dog, Eli, will be in attendance.

By: **CHRIS CARMONA**

MOST PEOPLE choose to serve on a charity's board because they are inspired by a person - not so with Andrew Greller, DVM. In his case, it was a golden retriever puppy named Eli that moved him to serve on the board of Guide Dogs of Texas, based in San Antonio.

Greller is a board-certified veterinary ophthalmologist who specializes in eye care for

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animals. As the practice owner of South Texas Veterinary Ophthalmology, he has treated the vision needs of animals of all shapes and sizes, from a 3,000-pound white rhinoceros to a 30-gram mouse. In his career, he has treated and examined more than 10,000 pets and has performed more than 2,500 eye surgeries.

More than three years ago, Greller was examining Eli when he discovered the 3-month-old puppy had a cataract - a common cause of vision impairment in dogs and other species. However, this ailment had particularly significant repercussions because it disqualified the pup from continuing his training as a guide dog, and now, he not only needed continued eye care, but also a home. Luckily for both parties, it qualified him for a wonderful, fun new life - in the Greller household.

"I wasn't sure how my idea of adopting Eli would be received since my wife was more attracted to small inside dogs, so I brought Eli home for a 'site visit.' Within an hour, Eli had wormed his way into her heart - as he had done with mine. Now he is just another member of the family ... only smarter," Greller jokes.

In honor of Eli, Greller now donates his time and services to Guide Dogs of Texas, which provides quality guide dogs for Texans who are visually impaired. Besides giving free eye exams for the guide dog pups annually, he now serves on the board of directors, and this spring, he is leading the efforts as chairman for the 2014 Guide Dogs of Texas Golf Classic fundraiser on May 18 at Canyon Springs Golf Club.

"We are planning to throw one heck of an event," Greller says. "You can expect guide

THE GUIDE DOGS OF TEXAS GOLF CLASSIC

The Guide Dogs of Texas Golf Classic will take place on Sunday, May 18, at Canyon Springs Golf Club with 8 a.m. tee time. Sponsorships are available, and players will receive breakfast, drinks and snacks on the course, a generous buffet lunch, a goody bag, green fees and a cart.

Proceeds from the tournament will fund the programs and services of Guide Dogs of Texas, the only guide dog school in the state and one of only 11 certified guide dog schools in the United States. Guide Dogs of Texas provides quality guide dogs for Texans who are visually impaired to increase their freedom, mobility and independence.



dogs and puppies walking the course, blind golfers, blind golfing contests, amazing catering, some big-name players, a silent auction and much more. And of course, I am bringing Eli to the tournament so I can tell his story to help encourage players to think about becoming volunteer puppy raisers or weekend boarders, or re-homing a retired guide dog."

Those who don't play golf can support the tournament through its online auction, which runs May 1 through 27.

Greller feels very fortunate that his path crossed with Eli's three years ago. "My life has never been the same since that special meeting," he says. "Not only is Eli a best friend to me, my wife and our kids, but he has made me a better veterinary ophthalmologist. I can totally relate to my clients whose pets are going blind and often will introduce them to Eli, who has a great quality of life despite not seeing from one eye. That gives them much relief and hope."

Guide Dogs of Texas is also fortunate that Eli met Greller. As chairman of the board, I can attest that Greller has been a dedicated and energetic board member for us. Even with his incredibly busy professional and personal schedule, he is finding time to take this tournament to a new level. Loving animals is a prerequisite for the veterinary profession, but for Greller, it is more than part of the job - it is a way of life, with Eli by his side.



Chris Carmona is the chairman of the board for Guide Dogs of Texas. Visit <https://guidedogsoftexas.org> for more information on the organization, the tournament or the online auction.

