

# MEET YOUR PRESENTER: JEFF HAWKINS AND LEADER DOG GRACIE

Jeff Hawkins has been among the highest profile representatives of Leader Dogs for the Blind since receiving Leader Dog Gracie in July of 2012. Despite being diagnosed with an inherited form of juvenile macular degeneration in his early twenties which ultimately caused his blindness, Jeff enjoyed a successful managerial career in the paramedic industry for more than 20 years. During that time, Jeff spent ten years as an Ambulance Operations Coordinator where he directly oversaw a team of 500 employees, and sat on several Detroit-area Emergency Medical Services committees, including the Medical Control Board, The Communications and Dispatch Advisory Board, and the EMS Quality Control Committee. Additionally, Jeff worked as a Field Training Officer for many years, taught telemetry and communication at the Paramed EMS Academy, and was the President of the Oakland County EMS Association.



As his vision continued to deteriorate, Jeff realized he needed assistance in maintaining his ability to independently navigate throughout his community and the rest of the country. In 2011, Jeff contacted Leader Dogs for the Blind in Rochester Hills, Michigan to begin Orientation & Mobility (white cane) training. A year later, and after becoming proficient with his white cane, Jeff returned to receive and train with his Leader Dog Gracie.

With the help of Gracie, Jeff is today once again living the amazing life he always has. Professionally, he is one of the most prominent representatives of Leader Dog, as he travels the country giving keynote and other addresses to thousands of people, organizations, clubs, and associations. His ability to vividly articulate the correlation between his work with Gracie and the communication skills sighted people need at work and in their personal lives is renowned in the personal development industry, and he looks forward to sharing those lessons with you through a unique and powerful delivery.

In addition to his professional successes, Jeff is an avid snow skier, a passionate ice hockey player, travels extensively, and has most recently discovered a love for wilderness backpacking. Jeff resides in a Michigan lakefront home with his wife, Linda, where they spend summers boating, jet skiing, water skiing, and enjoying other water activities.

Jeff remains continuously passionate regarding public education on topics of visual impairment and blindness. He leads both by words and actions, serving proudly as an example of a person who is blind living an independent, active, successful, and extremely enjoyable life.

Organizations to which Jeff Hawkins has delivered his presentations include:

