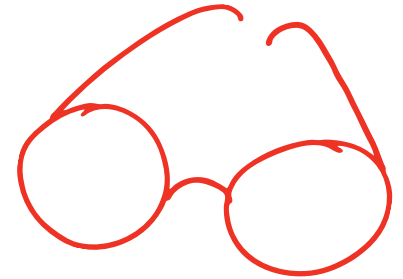


Logicalis keeps an expert eye on the IT infrastructure at Guiding Eyes for the Blind so it can focus on helping blind and special needs individuals become more independent.



Guiding Eyes for the Blind

Guiding Eyes for the Blind is an internationally accredited, nonprofit guide dog school that has been providing blind, visually impaired and special needs individuals with superior Guiding Eyes dogs, training and lifetime support services for more than 50 years. Headquartered in Yorktown Heights, NY, Guiding Eyes employs more than 140 people who raise, care for and train dogs from their own established gene pool and make them available to recipients free of charge. Guiding Eyes depends on donations and a community of more than 1,000 volunteers to provide numerous programs at no cost to all who use them.

The life-changing services that Guiding Eyes provides also depend on an information technology infrastructure that serves as the nervous system for the entire organization—including an on-site veterinary hospital—and its off-site community of volunteers and service dog users. Guiding Eyes looks to managed services from Logicalis to keep the organization's IT infrastructure functioning smoothly so that the IT staff can concentrate on using innovative technology to respond to users' unique demands.

"My predecessor had to spend most of his time in the server room just to keep everything functioning," says Guiding Eyes CIO Ravi Tanikella. "Because of Logicalis, I'm able to spend my time working on software development projects that provide clear value to the organization."

Truly Liberating

Among the projects to which Tanikella has been able to devote time is a video streaming application that helps trainers assign the best dog for each person. The application allows Guiding Eyes' professional training staff to review videos of how each blind applicant lives his or her life: what kind of environment he or she lives in, how fast or slow he or she walks, his or her personality and preferences. The more insight the trainers have into a blind person's life, Tanikella says, the more closely they can pair the person with a dog who suits all his or her needs. The result of this individualized attention has positioned Guiding Eyes as one of the world's top guide dog schools. It is highly respected for creating successful "teams" that are empowered to live independently, travel safely and pursue expanded horizons of opportunity.

One recipient of a Guiding Eyes dog explained to Tanikella that walking with a cane means having to hit things all the time to figure out where you are. Walking with a trained Guiding Eyes dog, by contrast, he said, allows you to concentrate on where you're going. The difference in quality of life is inspirational.

Many of the software applications that the staff of Guiding Eyes have had to rely on daily were developed more than ten years ago and are about as satisfying to use as whacking a cane against obstructions. With Logicalis providing state-of-the-art IT support, Tanikella is free to turn his attention to creating software applications that improve staff efficiencies and allow

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Ravi Tanikella CIO, Guiding Eyes for the Blind

for more precise data management—which will positively impact Guiding Eyes’ clients’ quality of life.

Making a Difference

Tanikella had been CIO for a private law firm and came to Guiding Eyes because he wanted to use his technical skills to make a difference for people. Knowing that Logicalis is keeping a watchful eye on Guiding Eyes’ servers and networks (wired and wireless) allows him and his small staff to look up from day-to-day infrastructure responsibilities and use technology innovation to help more people lead more satisfying lives, which, in turn, has made his life more satisfying in the process.

It’s also helped others within Guiding Eyes appreciate the value of what technology can contribute to their cause. A simple application that made it possible to integrate voicemail with email, for example, liberates every user from at least a half hour of frustration a day just getting their messages. Adding a web front end to applications the employees have to use on a daily basis is metaphorically similar to helping them see where they are going.

Among other innovations, Tanikella has been able to get more for less out of available technology at Guiding Eyes and has reduced costs for his department by 55 percent while providing a better level of service to users.

The savings, for example, helped Guiding Eyes pay for the implementation of a new storage area network (SAN) that

provides both disk and tape backup. The new SAN also made it possible to totally revamp the imaging solution used by the doctors in the veterinary hospital to store X-rays, magnetic resonance images (MRIs) and ultrasounds of the dogs. In addition to not losing images anymore, the SAN makes it possible to retrieve images remotely and provide more immediate response to medical emergencies.

“If it weren’t for Logicalis, I would need at least two other staff members with specialized skills,” Tanikella says. “First I’d have to find them,” he adds, “and then I’d have to pay them.”

Tanikella says “peace of mind” is the benefit he personally appreciates most from having managed services. “There are only a certain number of hours in a day,” he says, “and if I don’t have to spend my time in the server room, I can concentrate on the needs of our staff at Guiding Eyes. Logicalis frees me up to help more people lead full lives. That’s where the real value is for me.”

What can we do for your organization?

Contact Logicalis to learn how we can help you realize the benefits of Unified Communications. Visit us on the web at www.us.logicalis.com or call 866-456-4422 today.

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