

Notes from Patches and Friends



My Dear Friends,

As we begin a new year, I wanted to share something very close to my heart—the extraordinary partnership between a guide dog and the child who trusts them.

In the world of Sam and Patches, Sam is blind, but he experiences life in powerful ways that don't rely on sight. Like many people who are blind, Sam depends on his other senses to understand what's around him—what he hears, what he feels beneath his feet, the smells in the air, and even the way the world moves around him.

That's where Patches comes in.

Guide dogs like Patches are specially trained to help their person stay safe by recognizing important signs in the environment—stop signs, crosswalks, traffic sounds, hospital buildings, and areas of danger. Patches doesn't just lead Sam forward; he helps Sam interpret our world.

In our upcoming story, *Patches Explores Pagosa Springs, A Guide Dog's Mountain Adventure*, the adventure is told using sensory words so children imagine what Sam experiences:

- The sound of rushing water from the river
- The crunch of gravel beneath their feet
- The smell of pine trees in the mountain air
- The feeling of a cool breeze on Sam's face

These details help young readers understand that people who are blind don't experience less of the world—just a different version of it.

One of my hopes with my stories is to gently teach children empathy and compassion. When children learn how others navigate the world, they become more patient, more curious, and more kind. Patches helps Sam, but he also helps young readers learn how teamwork, trust, and understanding make everyone safer.

You might try this simple activity at home:

Ask your child to close their eyes for a moment and listen.

What do they hear?

Ask your child to keep his/her eyes closed and take a few steps forward, then turn around keeping eyes closed and take a few steps forward.

What do they feel?

What do they notice without using their eyes?

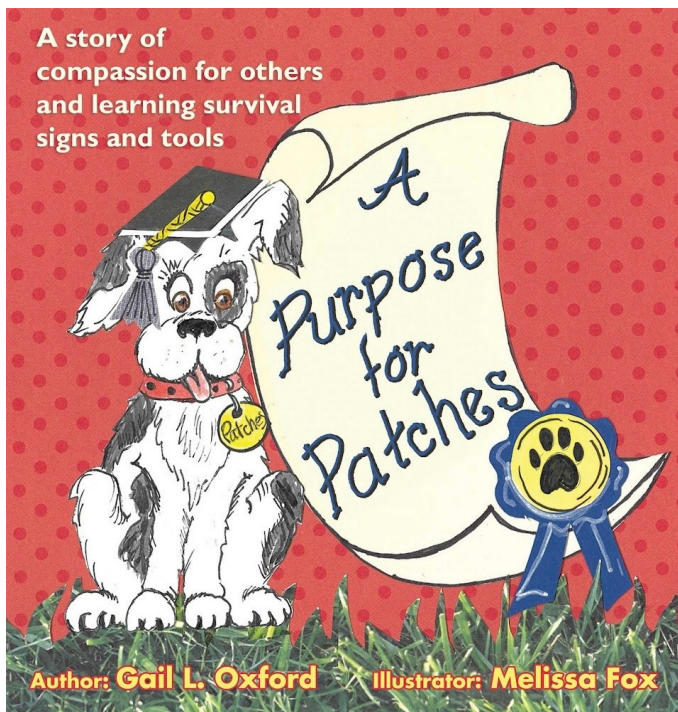
It's a small way to help children appreciate how important our senses are—and how incredible guide dogs like Patches truly are.

Thank you for being part of Sam and Patches' journey. I'm so excited to share more with you very soon.

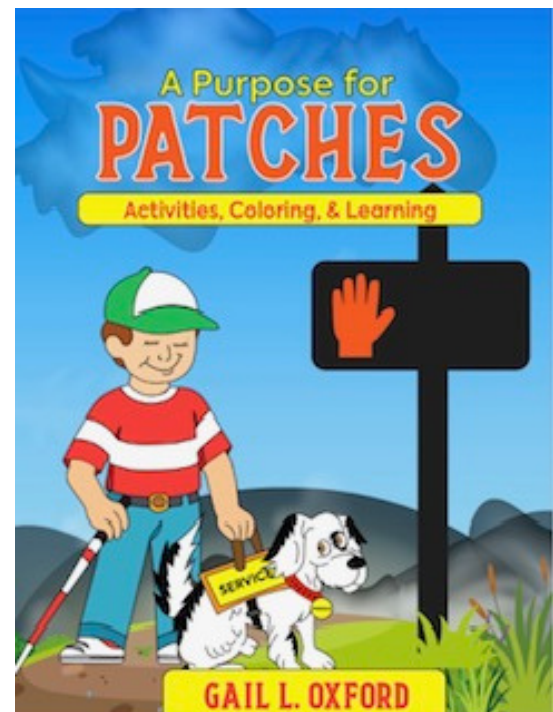
With love and a wag of Patches' tail,
Gail L. Oxford
Children's Author & Former Teacher

P.S. Don't forget to check out my new coloring book on Amazon, A Purpose for Patches Activities, Coloring, and Learning this book correlates with my first book, A Purpose for Patches.

Warmly,
Gail Oxford



Click [HERE](#) to order *A Purpose for Patches*



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