



Hearing Dogs
for Deaf People

Favour

Issue 67
SPRING
2023
£1.75 when sold

The magazine from Hearing Dogs for Deaf People

A child's best friend

How we train hearing
dogs especially for
young people

The challenges of hearing loss

The lived experience of
deaf partners – and how
their hearing dogs help

PLUS

You could help a loved
one with hearing loss,
sponsor a puppy, or
even leave a legacy



“I like that I can take
Rudy anywhere. He gives
me confidence”

With hearing dog Rudy around, Alexis has a bright future



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Spring 2023



**VOLUNTEERING
BENEFITS**
How volunteering
can change your life,
as well as the lives
of deaf people
on p20

Welcome!

By supporting Hearing Dogs, you are helping deaf people to leave loneliness behind and reconnect with life.

Deaf people and people with hearing loss can face specific challenges in their everyday lives, which can cut them off from other people and their communities, cause feelings of loneliness and isolation, and make life very difficult.

Our hearing dogs, and Hearing Link Services, provide solutions to many of these challenges. In this issue, you'll find out how.

Your support is so important. It enables these solutions and makes life better for deaf people.

Thank you, and we hope you enjoy this issue.



Favour

magazine is named after Hearing Dogs' very first dog, Favour.

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Newshound

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EVENT



Royal visit for ruby anniversary

This past year, Hearing Dogs has been celebrating its 40th anniversary with supporters, volunteers, staff, and our deaf partners. In March, we had the pleasure of welcoming our Royal Patron, HRH The Princess Royal, to our southern training centre to conclude the celebrations. This was HRH's first visit since before the pandemic. A lot has changed within the Charity since then and we were delighted to show some of these changes to HRH and talk to her about how we are now able to help thousands more people with hearing loss every year through our range of

personalised services.

When lockdowns began, we very quickly had to change how we trained our puppies. Hearing Dogs went 'virtual' with online puppy classes, one-to-one video calls, and an online support hub for volunteers. Many of these practises have remained in place and HRH was interested to see our new and modern ways of working that have enabled us to continue training our pups and help more deaf people.

During her visit, HRH met some of the incredible volunteers who care for and train our pups and help to deliver our

Hearing Link Services.

She saw our amazing dogs demonstrating how they alert deaf people to sounds such as the smoke alarm, Skype calls, and even a baby's cry, and she met some of the Charity's beneficiaries.

HRH then took the opportunity to thank the entire Hearing Dogs family – from donors and puppy sponsors to volunteers and staff, for everything they do to help change deaf people's lives.

We are grateful to HRH for helping us celebrate our 40th anniversary and for her continued support of the Charity.

OUR LATE SUMMER SHOW IS BACK!

When: 10 September
Where: Hearing Dogs southern training centre, The Grange, Saunderton HP27 9NS

We are very pleased to announce that the Hearing Dogs Late Summer Show – our fun day out for the whole family – is back for 2023!

We'll have food and drink, entertainment for all, rides, face painting, doggy demos and more. All situated in a beautiful location, nestled among the idyllic Chiltern hills. It's the perfect way to end the summer! Dogs on leads are welcomed.

More information will be available on our website very soon.

APPEAL UPDATE

Let's catch up with Ruby

Last year in *Favour*, we gave readers the chance to support hearing dog puppy Ruby, chosen especially to celebrate our 40th anniversary.

The latest total for the Ruby Appeal is £29,989.78 (and may even have topped the £30K mark by the time you read this), and the latest update is that she's doing fabulously well! If you donated to Ruby's appeal, thank you.

Dawn is her Volunteer Puppy Trainer, giving Ruby plenty of love while training her. She tells us: "Ruby is a beautiful, bright, priceless gem.

"When Ruby was just eight weeks old, she was the noisiest, most impatient pup in the litter. But over time she has learned to relax, and to be patient.

"She is a regular attraction at my choir rehearsals, and the most popular choir member. There are usually at least seventy people around, but she settles calmly on her mat. She loves the fuss and cuddles at the end of the session. 'She's so calm' is the reaction of many members, especially Spaniel owners!

"We have also been to the seaside several times. Ruby was in seventh heaven – so many new smells on the beach, and such a huge area to run around! She didn't actually go swimming, only paddling. You could see her trying to work out waves. Very confusing, the way water came in and went out.

"For her training, we're going to local towns, where Ruby wears her burgundy 'I'm learning to be a hearing dog' coat – that signal to other people that will one day tell them her partner is deaf. She's very

good at patiently letting me put it on her, and she seems to know that she's 'working' when she's wearing it.

"She looks really magnificent in her 'uniform'. The burgundy colour suits her.

"She's also excellent at recall – which is, coming back when called, by whistle or voice. So, her future deaf partner will know that she'll never leave them on their own, whether playing in the park, walking in the woods or running around on the beach.

"We're also making short visits to garden centres, which we'll build up at her pace, as her confidence grows. We do everything at Ruby's pace, but she's exceptionally quick. I sometimes think she's ahead of me!

"We'll soon start journeys on public transport, so she can be happy wherever her future deaf partner wants to go. So far, we've visited the local railway station so that she can become accustomed to the sounds, sights and smells. Very soon we'll be taking our first bus trip together."

"All these skills must be in place, to give Ruby a foundation on which to build. Her next massive step will be that all-important one: how to alert deaf people to sounds. Rest assured, every time she gets her nose nudge right, she'll also get a fuss, a treat, and an encouraging 'Good girl!'

"I'm amazed at how mature she is becoming. I am so proud of her!"

If you donated to Ruby's appeal, you should be proud too, because she's come this far thanks to your kindness.

You can still donate if you'd like to, just by visiting hearingdogs.org.uk/ruby

THE VIRTUAL GREAT BRITISH DOG WALK IS BACK FOR 2023!

We are moving our Great British Dog Walks back to their regular spring slot for 2024 so there won't be any in person walks this autumn.

Watch this space for news of our 2024 return.

If you still want to take part, then you can. We are holding our Virtual Great British Dog Walk in May.

To get involved, all you have to do is sign up and choose when and where you walk! All participants will receive a free Great British Dog Walk dog bandana, a downloadable walker certificate, and a free activity pack.

For those who choose to get sponsored, the money raised will transform deaf people's lives. Plus by raising £50, we'll send you a limited-edition mug or tea towel as a thank you.

Walk your chosen distance and raise vital funds to help deaf people leave loneliness behind. Sign up now: hearingdogs.org.uk/VGBDW

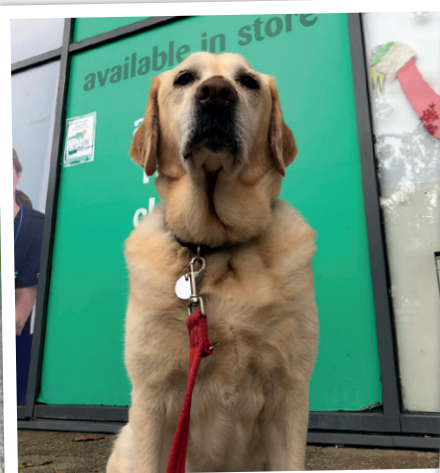
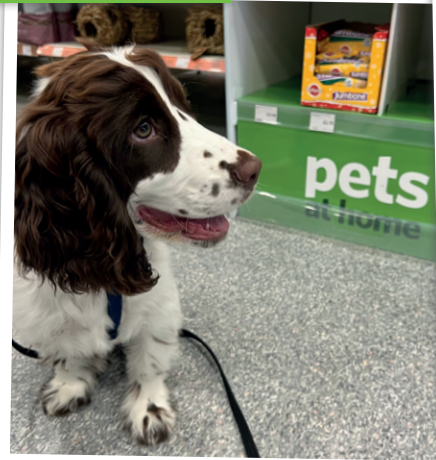


STAY IN TOUCH: twitter.com/hearingdogs facebook.com/hearingdogs hearingdogs.org.uk

Great news: Pets at Home supports Hearing Dogs for a second year

Pets at Home has kindly chosen Hearing Dogs as the beneficiary of their 2023 Summer Fundraiser, for a second year.

FUNDRAISING



Following the success of Pets at Home's Summer Fundraiser for Hearing Dogs last year, which raised a staggering £630,000, we are delighted to have been chosen again – with all money raised helping to train hearing dog puppies that will go on to transform deaf people's lives.

The Summer Fundraiser will take place throughout July, with every area of the business getting involved – from all Pets at Home stores, Groom Rooms, and the Pets at Home Veterinary Group, to their distribution centres and offices – all raising funds to support the training of life-changing hearing dogs.

Steve Heyes, director of communications and fundraising for Hearing Dogs, said: "We are absolutely over the moon to have been chosen as Pets at Home's Summer Fundraiser charity for a second year.

"Our relationship with Pets at Home, a huge national retailer, not only helps to fund the training of our amazing hearing dogs, but it also provides us with a brilliant opportunity to raise awareness of Hearing Dogs with a big, new audience.

"We are really excited to launch the fundraiser in July and to see the many fantastic ways Pets at Home colleagues raise money to help deaf people leave loneliness behind and reconnect with life. A huge thank you to everyone at Pets at Home for choosing us again!"

Amy Wilson, fundraising manager at the

Pets at Home Foundation, said: "We love what the Charity does to change the lives of deaf people through these incredible dogs, and the high level of love and care hearing dogs receive throughout their lives. We are delighted to be supporting the Charity for a second year!"

Many of Hearing Dogs' volunteers and staff played a significant role in the success of the Summer Fundraiser in July last year. For example, they visited stores with dogs-in-training and shared stories and information with them about the Charity and what our clever dogs do. This support was crucial, so on behalf of the Charity, a big thank you to everyone who got involved.

We would also like to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to Pets at Home customers who donated so generously to the Summer Fundraiser last year and who we look forward to talking to more about the Charity this year.

Last year's fundraiser saw the Pets at Home team taking part in cycling challenges, wearing Hearing Dogs branded T-shirts in stores, selling Hearing Dogs merchandise and encouraging customers to make donations – all to help change the lives of deaf people and people with hearing loss.

Keep an eye out on our website and social media channels for more information about this year's Pets at Home Summer Fundraiser, and how you can get involved.



Dog Squad image supplied by the BBC



TELEVISION

CBeebies series stars Hearing Dogs

We think our hearing dogs are heroes and now CBeebies does too!

In November, children's television channel CBeebies launched a brand-new series about superhero assistance dogs called Dog Squad. The programme stars 14-year-old Rayane and his hearing dog Diesel.

The show follows the adventures of Diesel, alongside four other assistance dogs. Together, they are the Dog Squad! Each episode sees one of the dogs complete heart-warming and funny missions to help their owner. The show is based on the lived experiences of assistance dog owners and is a unique way for CBeebies' young audience to understand and recognise the important work of assistance dogs.

Cocker Spaniel Diesel was partnered with Rayane in 2019 and he has made a huge difference to his life. Now, viewers can see how Diesel supports Rayane every day, acting as his ears and best friend.

All episodes are available to watch on BBC iPlayer.



Free hearing loss support groups



Our popular hearing loss support groups, run by Hearing Link Services, are coming to every country of the UK in 2023-24. The residential weekends enable you and a family member or friend to share experiences and explore solutions with others in similar situations. They'll run in Fife (19-21 May), Yorkshire (30 June-2 July), Buckinghamshire (28-30 July), Cardiff (18-20 August) and Cookstown in Northern Ireland (22-24 September). For more information and to register: hearinglink.org/linkups



DOG LOVERS WANTED

Since the pandemic, enquiries about hearing dogs and our other services have increased by 30%. We are committed to helping as many of these people as possible, and are looking for volunteer puppy trainers who can help train our adorable pups. We train Cocker Spaniels, Labradors, Cockapoos and Miniature Poodles, all of whom are excited to come home with their new trainers.

The role of a volunteer puppy trainer is to ensure that the puppy they care for gets an excellent level of training and different experience before they enter the next stage of their life. Our amazing volunteers give our young dogs the confidence to accompany a deaf person everywhere they go when they become a hearing dog.

Becoming a volunteer puppy trainer is a fantastic opportunity for anyone who loves dogs and wants to do something fun while making a real difference to deaf people's lives. You'll also meet like-minded people, make new friends and receive lots of support from Hearing Dogs every step of the way.

Volunteers Margaret and Ken say: "We have met so many amazing people and have the satisfaction of knowing that we are part of an excellent organisation which brings happiness, confidence and independence to deaf people."

The role would be perfect for dog lovers living in a home with a secure garden, and plenty of time to spare every day. Find out more by visiting hearingdogs.org.uk/volunteering

“I’D FEEL LOST
WITHOUT BELLE”



Lorna no longer feels alone thanks to Belle

Belle helped Lorna grow as a person, from lacking in confidence, to being able to live a full, rewarding life

Without Belle, I wouldn’t have a life like I have today. I wouldn’t be confident. I wouldn’t be able to go out and meet people. Life would be flat. Two dimensional. Without any spark.

Awareness: before and after

I was born deaf, but back in the ’70s they couldn’t diagnose what had happened. Eventually it emerged I had Mondini dysplasia. This means my cochleas haven’t formed properly, and today I wear hearing aids.

It’s fair to say that deaf awareness was lacking back then. At primary school, there was a deaf unit that I could go into for some lessons, but as soon as I hit high school, I was put into the mainstream. People just thought I was lazy and would throw things at me. I didn’t have a great time.

Deafness really is an ‘invisible disability’. People just assume you can hear them and get angry or frustrated with you. So, before Belle, I didn’t have that visibility through her burgundy coat. Now, it’s a really strong signal to people and completely changes their attitudes.

From exclusion to inclusion

After my early experiences at school, I became extremely shy. I could not give people eye contact. I ended up having very little social life.

In a social setting, I’d be on the sidelines. I would lose track of the conversation while trying to lipread everyone, so I’d just let the conversation flow, even if I hadn’t understood what was being said. I was too lacking in confidence to ask people to repeat themselves.

I remember one lovely neighbour started talking to me one day and helped bring me out of my shell. She was probably the only person that I really spoke to, apart from my parents and my one friend.

I felt so isolated and anxious, even after I married. I would be at home on my own when my husband, John, was out at work. The hours would just drag by, and I would be left alone with my thoughts and worries about missing sounds.

Now, with Belle I have company. My days aren’t spent just waiting for John to come home – now I am either out and about with Belle or have her to keep me company at home.

Generally I’m much more involved in the world around me, thanks to Belle giving me confidence in myself. I have a lot of friends in the Hearing Dogs community. I’m always volunteering for community walks, fundraising, that sort of thing. I feel more connected.

Confidence to be deaf

I was so lacking in confidence before Belle came into my life. I wouldn’t put myself in a situation where I was with a group of people I didn’t know.

It affected many areas of my life. For example, it would take me a lot of courage to get the bus on my own. I used to borrow books from the library but would dread having to take them back. I always waited until the due day. I’d endure the bus, come back home, and be exhausted with the ordeal.

Now, I’ve grown in confidence so much that I can do more for myself. I love animals, and I like to visit Whipsnade by myself, as a special treat. I can leave Belle at home with my husband, John,

knowing that she’s safe and secure.

I’m also no longer ashamed of my deafness. Belle’s burgundy jacket highlights my ‘invisible disability’. I even wear my hair short now to show off my hearing aids.

“BELLE HAS HELPED ME ESCAPE FROM LONELINESS”

As well as helping me emotionally, there are so many ways Belle helps me practically too.

She tells me about the cooker timer, which is really handy. I could never hear it, and would just forget. When it goes, Belle finds me, gives me a nudge with her nose, and I hold my hands out and say: ‘What is it Belle?’. Then she leads me to the cooker, and I give her a cuddle and a fuss for being such a good girl.

The smoke alarm is a big thing for me too. This is the one alert where Belle hits the deck if she hears it. It’s so clever, because it tells me the alarm is going off, but she’s not going to lead me into danger.

Belle’s helped me from day one, to come out of my shell, and learn to be truly myself. She really did help me escape from loneliness and connect with the world.

It would be wonderful if you could consider donating to my appeal. I’d love to think that, by sharing my story, more amazing dogs like Belle could be trained, and help more deaf people like me. 🐾

PLEASE DONATE

🐾 Please consider donating to Hearing Dogs to help train another hearing dog for a deaf person like Lorna. Thank you.

How to donate

🐾 If this magazine has been mailed to you, please use the donation form enclosed

🐾 Write a cheque to Hearing Dogs for Deaf People and post to: **Freepost RSGX-LSRG-UCGH, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, The Grange, Wycombe Road, Saunderton, Princes Risborough, HP27 9NS**

🐾 Donate online at hearingdogs.org.uk/lorna

Photos by Paul Wilkinson



A child's best friend

The lifestyles and needs of children are different to those of adults, and our training needs to reflect this. Here are some areas where we give specialised training for hearing dogs that work with deaf children

Sometimes we have truly exceptional dogs, who love children – and whom children love right back. We often talk about the ‘magic’ of hearing dogs, but it’s especially so when they interact so brilliantly with deaf children.

To be placed with a child, our dogs must have experience living with children during their training. This ensures they’re used to living around the sounds, sights and smells of a family home.

Here, there, everywhere

It’s important to acknowledge that families tend to spread out. Mum might be in the garden, dad in the lounge, siblings doing homework or playing outside... a lot can be going on. So, if anyone needs to contact the deaf child, it can be challenging.

This is why we teach our dogs ‘the call’. In this, a family member, friend or loved one says ‘call’ plus the child’s name. The dog happily trots off, finds the child, and



gives a gentle but insistent nose nudge. The child says ‘What is it?’, with palms out, and the dog leads the child back. It’s a very useful skill for finding adults too, but especially so for children.



A quick note

There’s a lovely addition to ‘the call’. Sometimes, all that’s needed is for a quick message to be conveyed – ‘dinner’s ready’, ‘time for homework’ or ‘tidy your room!’ We can train a hearing dog to carry a pouch in its mouth to the deaf child, with a message written in it. They get a treat when the pouch is delivered and then another treat when they come back with a return note, so this makes the training fun for the dog and they love it!

Whether the child then actually responds with a return note is another matter, especially if it involves tidying their room!

Bedtime

For many deaf children, getting to sleep can be a real challenge. At nighttime, it can be scary being in the dark and silence, not being able to hear the comforting sounds of family moving around in the house. This can result in many sleepless nights and feeling exhausted during the day. Having a hearing dog sleeping in their bedroom can make deaf children feel safe, reduce their anxiety, and aid their sleep. Then in the morning they get the joy of being woken up by their hearing dog when the alarm clock goes off, with the dog tugging the duvet off at the corner. What better way to start the day than to have your furry best friend waking you up, ready to start the day together?



Out and about

Deaf children often tell us that their confidence increases when walking with their canine companions. They’re so proud

of them, smart in their burgundy coats, and love telling people about them.

All our dogs are trained to walk nicely on their leads, which we call ‘heelwork’. However, even small dogs can sometimes seem large and strong to children, which is why hearing dogs for children are trained to walk with dual leads: one attached to the collar, and another to the harness, so that an adult can also walk the dog.

This helps everyone. The child is confident, because they get some responsibility for the dog. The adult has

security and reassurance that, should something unexpected happen, there is a backup. Even the dog gains confidence, knowing that there is a safe, strong guiding hand on one of the leads.

Family life

In order to be placed with a child, our dogs must have experience living with children during their hearing dog training. This ensures the dogs are used to living around the sounds, sights and smells of a family home. We also practice working with

the children, listening to them and taking cues from them, as it can be very different to working with adults.

It’s essential however that the deaf child is the only person who practices soundwork and takes on the main responsibilities of caring for the dog (with supervision from an adult), to ensure the bond is strongest to that one child.

Let’s go!

All of this in one day: the call, the pouch, lovely fresh walks, soundwork... but it all begins with a happy dog waking their partner in the morning.

This is because alarm clocks often do not work for deaf people, even if they’re set to vibrate under the pillow. So, how does this happen?

Not with a jump on the bed, because we don’t want them to get squished! No, a deaf child’s day with a hearing dog starts with the dog tugging the duvet off at the corner. No time for sleepy-heads.

That’s often followed by a lovely big, wet, affectionate lick on the face – a very ‘good morning’ indeed from a fabulous, furry friend, eager to spend another fun day together. 🐾

➡ Turn the page

to read the story of 11-year-old Alexis and hearing dog Rudy, who has been through specialised child training.



Photos by Paul Wilkinson

“OUR DOGS LOVE INTERACTING WITH ALL FAMILY MEMBERS”

A partnership filled with love and laughter

Before Rudy came into Alexis's life, she struggled to talk to people, especially about her deafness



11-year-old Alexis was born with a condition called microtia, which causes hearing loss due to the ear being underdeveloped. Alexis was fitted with Bone Anchored Hearing Aids (BAHAs) at the age of five. Whilst they helped, Alexis still found some things challenging, particularly school.

Early struggles

"Alexis's early school life was a real challenge for her" Alexis's mum, Sam, tells us. "She really struggled with her confidence, despite having additional support from a teacher of the deaf and a speech and language therapist since nursery. She was shy and struggled to talk about her hearing loss. She also found school difficult due to the large class sizes and so much background noise."

School was made even harder for Alexis because of her lack of sleep. Alexis has to take her BAHAs off before going to bed. At nighttime, her world is completely silent, and this scared Alexis. Now, she sleeps soundly at night with hearing dog Rudy by her side.

School now

A confident and happy Alexis tells us: "Before, I couldn't really sleep. I had the light on always and that made me really tired, so I found it hard to concentrate at school. I don't need the light on anymore because Rudy sleeps close to me in my room and makes me feel safe. When I take my hearing aids off, I know that he's listening. I don't worry because I know Rudy will wake me up if there's any danger."

After a good night's sleep, thanks to Rudy, Alexis gets ready for the school day with Rudy's help again.

Sam says: "Alexis loves mornings now because Rudy wakes her up for school with big kisses and morning cuddles when her alarm clock goes off. She looks forward to school now!"

Indeed, since Rudy was partnered

with Alexis in August 2021, she has been excelling at school.

"Having Rudy gave Alexis so much confidence in herself and in her studies" Sam tells us. "She worked hard to pass her 11+ exams and was offered a place at a fantastic school. We truly believe without Rudy she wouldn't have had the confidence to do this."

Alexis continues: "I studied hard because Rudy was there to comfort me. Without him, I probably would have struggled."

Almost unrecognisable

Alexis started secondary school in September, a big step and one she faced with complete confidence – a far cry from the insecure person she once was.

"Having Rudy has transformed Alexis's life at school, in social situations, in her willingness to take part and join in with other children" says Sam. "She is so much more confident communicating with people. She's a different child. She has even joined after school clubs – something she didn't have the confidence to do before. When we go to meet Alexis from school, Rudy knows exactly which door to wait at. He loves seeing all the children, and everybody that meets him loves him too, but it's Alexis he is looking for. They really are best friends."

Sam says there's no longer any sign of the severe anxiety that affected every aspect of Alexis's life before Rudy: "This was always most severe when attending the many hospital appointments at Great Ormond Street Hospital. Rudy helps her feel safe and calm, so attending these appointments is no longer a challenge. We hadn't realised quite how much of a difference Rudy made until the very hot



"ALEXIS WOULD NOT BE WHERE SHE IS NOW IF IT WASN'T FOR RUDY"

weather prevented us from taking him with us to the hospital. Alexis had a very hard time being there without him."


These changes in Alexis were almost instant. When Alexis first got Rudy, her parents heard a sound they'd never really heard before – laughter.

"They bonded straight away. Alexis didn't laugh before Rudy. When we first got Rudy, we could hear her in her bedroom giggling. Now she doesn't stop laughing. It's so lovely to hear."

A bright future

Alexis's parents used to worry what the future had in store for Alexis. They wondered if Alexis would ever find her confidence. Now, having seen the enormous difference Rudy has already made, these feelings of worry have disappeared.

"Alexis has grown so much already. She's joined clubs and made friends. She can talk to people about her hearing loss now and about how Rudy helps her. She's even started taking her hearing aids off. She's finding her deaf identity."

From what Alexis has achieved in such a short space of time, it's clear her future looks bright. Her parents know Alexis is safe with Rudy by her side and that he'll help her achieve anything she wants to accomplish. 



Photos by Paul Wilkinson and Tom Powell

FIVE WAYS HEARING LOSS AFFECTS EVERYDAY LIFE

Hearing loss can bring challenges to every area of a person's life, some obvious, some not so

There is no substitute for lived experience. People with hearing loss navigate challenges every day. To give some insight into these, we asked some of our hearing dog partners what barriers they face, and how their hearing dog helps them.



Sarah and Albert: I DIDN'T HAVE PRIVACY

"I slept through an alarm clock, even with a vibrate pad under my pillow. This meant my mum or dad had to come into my bedroom to wake me up.

"I constantly worried about the smoke alarm. When I was in the bathroom, I'd have to leave the door unlocked in case my parents needed to get my attention.

I very rarely had a bath because of that.

"Now, hearing dog Albert lets me know if someone's calling me or if the smoke alarm is sounding, so nobody has to come into my bedroom or the bathroom. I have my privacy back. I have longer showers and actually enjoy having a bath now."



Tamara and Zoe: SOCIAL EVENTS WERE EXHAUSTING

"I started turning down invites to social events as it had become impossible to follow conversations in cafés or restaurants. It required so much concentration and was exhausting. I would end up not talking to anyone.

"I think people viewed me as unsociable because I didn't join in the office chat or include myself in meetups.

"Now, my social life revolves around walking Zoe and meeting friends and their dogs. Conversation is easier as I can tell them Zoe is a sound support dog, who helps me with sounds in the home, so they make adjustments to help me. I've also made lots of friends through Hearing Dogs, and they have a greater understanding of my communication needs."



Ralph and Winnie: PEOPLE WEREN'T AWARE

"Winnie has been helpful in raising awareness because of her burgundy jacket. This makes sure people take into consideration my hearing loss.

"Winnie comes to work with me, and we use the London Underground together. The staff at the station are attentive and have offered their assistance on several occasions. Usually a quick 'Everything alright?' or 'Are you okay to get down to the platform?'. I feel reassured that if there was a public announcement, which I wouldn't hear, someone would make sure that I was aware and wasn't left behind."



Nadine and Elvis: TRIPS MADE ME ANXIOUS

"While away on a business trip, the hotel's fire alarm went off and guests were evacuated. I remained in bed, oblivious.

"Thankfully, it was a false alarm. However, I felt anxious about what could have happened.

"For subsequent trips, I had to ask hotel staff if they would alert me should the alarm go off. I felt very insecure that I might get forgotten, and I was uncomfortable asking someone to put themselves at risk to come and get me.

"Elvis has made me more confident and relaxed staying away. Last year, the first time I stayed in a hotel with him, the fire alarm went off. He alerted me and I was able to evacuate independently. I feel safe with Elvis."



Alison and Damson: I FELT INSECURE

"When I lost my hearing, I became incredibly anxious when out at night. I couldn't hear what was going on around me and the darkness restricted what I could see. I started to avoid doing it or would video call family or friends whilst walking anywhere.

"I feel much safer now going out at night, as I have Damson with me, who has been trained to focus on me. I feel protected and trust she would alert me to something going on. She's a naturally friendly dog and her body language changes when she sees people and animals so that is a good indicator of what is going on around me. There is such a strong bond between us."

We're sure you agree – hearing dogs are amazing! However, as the number of people living with deafness grows, we all need to be more deaf-aware.

If you would like to know about communicating and supporting people who are deaf or have hearing loss, there are steps you can take. Visit hearinglink.org/communication-tips for some helpful videos and advice.

How you can watch a cute pup grow up

Sponsor a puppy and follow their journey



Pupdate 1: First puppy steps

In the first Pupdate, we explained how Volunteer Puppy Trainer Lyn would be looking after Josie and giving her basic training.

Lyn told sponsors: "Josie wants a fuss from anyone who will give it to her! She is very friendly with people and dogs, but she especially likes my young grandchildren. She is so gentle with them."

She also explained how Josie adored socks. "When I'm hanging out the washing, she waits until I am not looking then pinches a sock and runs around the garden. She's always very nice at giving it back though."

We also introduced trainer Jess, who oversaw Josie's early training. "Josie is extremely confident and copes very well with new experiences," Jess told sponsors. "Josie's already great with basic cues such as 'sit' and 'wait'."

With a brief visit to a local garden centre for good measure, Lyn and Jess were very pleased with Josie's progress – as was Josie!

Pupdate 2: Growing up (a bit)

A few months later it was back to Lyn and Jess for another Josie Pupdate.

Lyn explained how Josie had lost some of her puppy look. "She still however has a very cute face, with a little white mark on her right cheek that looks like a teardrop. And she also still enjoys having her tummy rubbed!"

Awwww! We love puppies that love having their tummies rubbed! It's all part of getting to know the sponsor puppy – those adorable little quirks of theirs.

Jess was still very impressed with Josie. "She can walk nicely on her lead; come back when called; and generally is a well-behaved pup when near other animals and people."



Pupdate 3: Starting soundwork

As Josie approached her soundwork – that magical skill our dogs have to alert deaf people to sounds – she changed volunteer and trainer to help her along her journey.

Susan took over from Lyn and noticed the 'sock theme' very quickly! She told sponsors: "Josie knows that when I put socks on we are going for a walk. If she's trying to hurry me up, she will go and find them for me."

Meanwhile trainer Ailsa took over from

Jess – and, again was very impressed with Josie. Ailsa said: "Josie is very clever and keen to learn. This makes her really quick to pick things up."

It was then full steam ahead with soundwork. Ailsa explained: "I'm teaching Josie that, when she hears the portable cooker timer, she should come back to me, and give me a gentle but insistent nudge with her nose. I say 'What is it?' with my hands out, and she leads me to it. This is how she'll eventually help her deaf partner, every day."

Pupdate 4: The perfect partnership

Today Josie helps her deaf partner Daniella emotionally and practically. Daniella tells us: "People chat to me about Josie, so she is a social link. She also alerts me to the fire alarm, so I sleep much more restfully, and wake up with a smile. If I were to sum up Josie, it would be LIFE. I can now lead the life I want because of her."

When you sponsor a puppy, you come on a fantastic journey, seeing how a cute, cuddly puppy grows up to become an amazing hearing dog – and changes the life of a deaf person, through your kindness.

For around 24 months, depending on how quickly the puppy progresses, we send you regular Pupdates (see what we did there?), in the online 'Puppy Pen', and in the post, telling you how things are coming along.

Josie is one of our sponsor puppies, and here are some of her highlights, with what her volunteers said in each Pupdate.

SPONSORSHIP: WHAT DO YOU GET?

All sponsors receive a fantastic welcome pack, which includes a certificate, framed photo, car sticker and postcards of their puppy. You'll also receive a cuddly puppy toy, notepad and pen. From then on, we send regular Pupdates on how your puppy is doing.

And what do you give? A deaf person the chance to leave loneliness behind, and reconnect with family, friends, their community... with life.



SPONSOR A PUPPY TODAY

You can follow the journey of one of our adorable pups who will one day help a deaf person just like Josie helps Daniella today. From just £5 a month you could sponsor playful Riley, cheeky Willow, or cuddly Oscar.

hearingdogs.org.uk/sponsor

Fundraising partners



We'd like to say a huge 'thank you' to all the organisations helping us change the lives of deaf people. We are so grateful for the support they show us through monthly donations, Charity of the Year partnerships, fundraising events, and sponsoring puppies

MULBERRY

In addition to donating prizes to help Hearing Dogs raise money at fundraising events, Mulberry also very generously named one of our adorable puppies. They chose the name Milo, and staff at Mulberry have been following his journey from an 8-week-old puppy to being placed with his deaf partner, Malcolm. The support from Mulberry enabled our team to train, match and place Milo who is now making such a difference to Malcolm's life.

Rosie Wollacott Phillips, Head of Sustainability said: "Mulberry has a long history of supporting charities that make a difference to people and communities, so our decision to sponsor a hearing dog was an easy one. It's been wonderful seeing Milo progress from a pup to a trained hearing dog who can support Malcom for many years to come." Thank you to everyone at Mulberry!

Mulberry



THE WINDOW FILM COMPANY

Since 2018, The Window Film Company has made monthly donations towards our work and in total have donated over £12,000! Monthly donations, providing regular funding for the Charity, are so important, so we wanted to say a big thank you.



LAKESTORE LEISURE

Based in Devon, Lakeshore Leisure offers luxury holiday accommodation across three parks, including plenty of dog friendly options. They very kindly make a £5 donation to Hearing Dogs for every booking that includes a dog, and their customers have also been supporting us, helping to raise over £3,500 in the first year! Thank you so much!



THANK YOU ALSO TO...

🐾 Specsavers 🐾 Omlet 🐾 DAF Trucks 🐾 Barrett and Coe Ltd 🐾 iLECSYS 🐾 Pets at Home 🐾 Hidden Hearing 🐾 Paperchase

Do you work for an organisation that would like to support Hearing Dogs?
Please get in touch by emailing corporatesupport@hearingdogs.org.uk

Fabulous fundraising

You are great at coming up with creative ideas to fundraise for Hearing Dogs. Here are just two people who took on active challenges, and had lots of fun in the process!



Reaching new heights

In August 2022, David, an audiologist at Hidden Hearing, took on the toughest Everest base camp trek there is in support of Hearing Dogs. David successfully ascended three difficult passes, before climbing to Everest base camp – all in 17 days!

When he reached the astonishing height of 5,364m, David, who is a member of

Brecon Male Voice Choir, celebrated by singing the popular Welsh hymn Calon Lan.

David said: "Why did I sing Calon Lan? Because I am betting that this is the highest Calon Lan ever!"

As a result of his fitness (and musical) achievements, David raised an incredible £2,517 for Hearing Dogs.

David added: "My aim was to raise as much money as possible to help train a hearing dog. I hope in doing so, this positively changes a deaf person's life."



Not a walk in the park

Jenny took on an epic virtual walk from Land's End to John O'Groats (the length of the UK) to raise money for Hearing Dogs. Jenny had one year to complete the 874-mile Land's End to John O'Groats Virtual Challenge but did it in just four months, raising £269.

Jenny said: "Hearing Dogs has made an enormous difference to me. They matched me with my hearing dog, Xander. I started

the challenge on 4 April and finished on 11 August, so I'm pretty impressed I walked 874 miles in just over four months! I did lots of walks in the Lake District to make up the distance and we walked in rain and shine. Xander has probably done a lot more miles than me!"

If you've been inspired and would like to take on a challenge of your own in aid of Hearing Dogs, please visit hearingdogs.org.uk/challenge.

If organising your own challenge isn't for you, don't worry, we've got lots of exciting events you can join, such as the walk across the beautiful sands of Morecambe Bay on Saturday 24 June at 9:30am or the Great North Run – the world's biggest and best half marathon. Please visit hearingdogs.org.uk/support for more information.

Be part of Paws Appeal 2023

Just two hours of your time could change a deaf person's life



Paws Appeal is a series of bucket collections that coincides with Deaf Awareness Week (1-7 May) and runs throughout April and May at supermarkets, garden centres, railway stations and many other venues across the UK. It raises funds and awareness of deafness and hearing loss.

We need you to help make this a huge success. Just two hours of your time at a bucket collection near you will help change a deaf person's life.

Margaret from Stockport has helped train hearing dog pups for several years but had never helped at a collection before.

She said: "I really enjoyed helping with Paws Appeal last year. It's a great chance to get together with other local volunteers and spread the word about this amazing charity! I didn't have to ask for money at all, no bucket shaking is involved, just smiling and chatting with people who were genuinely interested in what Hearing Dogs do. I would recommend getting involved to anyone!"

Lots of support and guidance is provided and you'll always be collecting with other friendly volunteers. You can even sign up to collect with family and friends!

To find your nearest Paws Appeal collection and get involved, visit hearingdogs.org.uk/pawsappeal

We really need your help to make this a success, wearing furry dog ears is optional!

“The love you gain from this community is priceless”

When Fiona began volunteering for Hearing Dogs 17 years ago, she simply wanted to make a difference in her own small way. What she gained from being a volunteer was far more than she or her husband Rob ever expected...

A dog-lover all her life, Fiona admits it was her shyness that attracted her to apply for a volunteering role at Hearing Dogs. With both her children away at university, and Rob working abroad a lot, Fiona wanted to do something useful: “I thought caring for a hearing dog puppy would enable me to make a difference without having to meet a lot of people,” she explains. “Of course, it did quite the opposite! Everyone wants to say hello when you’re with a puppy! But this was so good for me.”



When the Charity began breeding its own puppies, Fiona was invited to care for one of the first ‘hearing dog mums’, Hope: “We had looked after Hope a few times as holiday cover so when it was suggested we could have her full time, I jumped at the chance.

“When Hope was retired, we adopted her. I was training another dog, Ginny, by this time and had just heard she had been chosen to be a hearing dog mum and would be staying with us when I was diagnosed with breast cancer. It was a terrible shock, but when Rob suggested Ginny may need to go to another volunteer, I said no. I needed her now more than ever. I couldn’t face what lay ahead without the dogs.”

A week after Fiona finished chemo, Ginny had her puppies: “I was still not great, but it meant I had something really positive to do in the period between chemo and radiotherapy and Rob helped a lot.

“After I finished radiotherapy, I remember saying to Rob ‘Ginny and Hope would like me to have another puppy to train!’ He was just pleased that I felt well enough to suggest it, so in January 2012, we welcomed Oliver, a Poodle.”

Rob confesses he wasn’t much of a dog person before but having the dogs to walk every day was really good for him: “With all the negative stuff happening I could see how much the dogs meant to Fiona, but they also made a difference to me. I stepped in to help a lot more and I’ve continued to do so because I enjoy it; now it’s very much a team effort.”

Fiona agrees: “There were times when I was feeling really rubbish, but if I felt well enough, I’d go and do some admin for the breeding team at Hearing Dogs’ southern training centre, The Grange. It made me feel needed, and took my mind away from cancer. Everyone smiles there, it’s just a lovely, friendly place to be and it really helped me.”

One of Ginny’s pups, Chilli, was chosen

to be a charity client support dog and returned to live with them. Chilli was on call for official duties and whenever he was needed to welcome a deaf child or show his skills as a demonstration dog, Fiona would take him to The Grange.

Then, in April 2017, Fiona and Rob received devastating news; their 29-year-old son Christopher was diagnosed with terminal cancer. “Christopher was already quite poorly. It was awful. We didn’t know how long he’d got. He got a special licence to marry his fiancée Lucie and for a while he did really well. The following summer we had a lovely family holiday all together. But seven weeks later we lost him. Quite honestly, I don’t know what I’d have done without Hearing Dogs.”

Rob agrees: “It kept both of us going; especially that last week at the hospice. Chilli was there with us. He’d just snuggle up with whoever needed him, giving comfort right to the end.”

Within a few days of being home, Fiona was back volunteering at The Grange: “People who knew me well weren’t at all surprised to see me. Feeling involved and knowing I was making a difference kept me going.

“That’s when the Hearing Dogs community pulled together really strongly for us. I can’t put into words how valuable that feeling of community is; it’s hugely important.”

A focus during lockdown

In March 2020, the Covid lockdown hit. “Fiona had her pups to keep her busy, and I had my plants to grow,” says Rob. “I noticed



Photos by Paul Wilkinson

there were a lot more people walking past our house so I put a few spare tomato plants and a collecting tin on a table at the end of our drive. On VE Day we sold plants and cakes. This little bit of normality when everywhere else was closed was so popular that we raised £900 for Hearing Dogs. The queue, spaced every two metres with traffic cones, stretched as far as the eye could see!”

As the popularity of Rob and Fiona’s produce stall grew and they were joined by a number of other dedicated volunteers, their sales surpassed all expectation. Rob confesses it has become a bit of a project and is already potting plants for their next

spring sale: “Just like in business, the more successful you are, the higher your goals become! Having achieved a fundraising total of £65,177 as a group over three years, we have set our sights even higher and are going for £100,000!”

Fiona and Rob’s current hearing dog mum, Hebe, gave birth to her fourth litter in February: “This is our twelfth litter in total,” beams Fiona proudly. “We’ve had 79 puppies born in our house altogether, and almost every one has been successfully partnered with a deaf person.”

Rob has seen Fiona’s confidence grow alongside her involvement with the Charity:

THE BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING

- PAW Make a difference and feel useful
- PAW Promotes good mental and physical wellbeing
- PAW Provides opportunities to make new friends
- PAW Helps to build confidence
- PAW Is an excellent way to connect with your community

If you would like to find out more about volunteering please visit hearingdogs.org.uk/volunteer

“Volunteering has done wonders for Fiona. She has come out of her shell to discover talents she didn’t know she had before – like training the dogs.”

Fiona agrees: “I no longer worry about meeting people and not having anything interesting to say because it’s easy talking about the dogs and the difference they make to their deaf partners. I love training the dogs and I’m proud of everything we’ve achieved in our fundraising. Volunteering is so rewarding I’d recommend it to anyone. The love and friendship you gain from being part of this community is priceless.” PAW



More than half of all hearing dogs are paid for by gifts in Wills

With your help we will reach a day when no deaf person feels alone



This is a visual representation of how many hearing dog partnerships are formed thanks to gifts in Wills.

If you choose to leave a gift to Hearing Dogs, you will be helping deaf people to leave loneliness behind and reconnect with life for years to come.

We realise this is an extremely personal decision, so if you'd like to know more about leaving a gift, please contact Zoe Cox on 01844 348130, email legacies@hearingdogs.org.uk, or visit hearingdogs.org.uk/legacies

Help a loved one with hearing loss

If a friend or family member experiences hearing loss, you will likely have a lot of questions. Our Hearing Link Services team is here to help

Deafness is rising. Today, in the UK, one in five of us experiences hearing loss in some form. This means that, even if you don't have hearing loss yourself, you're highly likely to know someone who does.

If you or someone close to you experiences hearing loss, it can be disorientating and worrying. You'll have plenty of questions. Will they be able to hear as before with a hearing aid? Why are they ignoring the fact they can't hear as well as they used to? Will their hearing loss get worse?

This is where our Hearing Link Services can help. They provide a wide range of

personalised support services for people with hearing loss. They work closely with both the person with the hearing difficulty and their family and friends to find the best solution and strategies for their individual needs.

Here are some of the common reasons a loved one reaches out to us for support, and what we can do to help.

I think my relative has hearing loss. How do I get them to seek help?

There are several signs of hearing loss to look out for, such as your loved

one asking you to repeat yourself often, tiring easily, and turning up the television or radio volume.

The thing is, people can sometimes be reluctant to get their hearing checked. They just want to avoid the topic altogether.

Our **Helpdesk** responders are volunteers with lived or professional experience of hearing loss. They can advise on how best to broach what can sometimes be a sensitive subject. The first important step is for your loved one to get their hearing checked sooner rather than later, as hearing loss can lead to other health problems. Visit hearinglink.org/helpdesk for more information.



How can I help my loved one adjust to living with hearing loss?

Loss of hearing is often associated with the five stages of grief – denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance – and it requires a period of adjustment.

Our helpful **website** offers lots of information about adjusting to deafness and living with hearing loss. Take a look at hearinglink.org/living for tips that you can share with your loved one. We have stories and testimonials from people with hearing loss, and from their families and friends,



as we know it can affect the whole family. There is also guidance about how to communicate with someone with hearing loss, and information about eating out, shopping and simply taking time out when you have hearing loss.

What technology can help my loved one manage their hearing loss?

If someone close to you has hearing loss, you are likely to have lots of questions about hearing aids and technology. Can they get equipment to help watch TV? What are the best hearing aids? What's a cochlear implant?

Everyone is different and there are many options to explore. If you are looking to talk to one of our volunteers or staff in confidence, our **Helpdesk** can help. Contact us online or by telephone and get the answers to your questions and find out more about technology for hearing loss or products that can help. Discover where to access practical support, and information about supporting someone with their hearing loss at hearinglink.org/helpdesk.

I'm struggling. Is there any support out there for me?

When a family member has a hearing loss, treated or untreated, the loss can impact the entire family. You may experience feelings of frustration or loneliness, or even anger at the realities of hearing loss.

Everyone needs support to find a new



way forward. That's why we created **LinkUps** – free support groups, designed by people with lived experience of hearing loss, for others with hearing loss and their families and friends.

They are an opportunity to connect with others who have shared the same experiences, to explore your challenges, and to understand better each other's perspective.

You can join a LinkUp group for in-person support, or LinkUp Online for a smaller virtual group session.

To find out more about Linkups visit hearinglink.org/linkups.



How can I stay up to date with products and services so I can keep helping?

If you are looking to stay in the loop about the latest ways to support a family member or friend, you can keep in touch with us.

Our regular Hearing Link Services **e-newsletter** takes you through the latest news from Hearing Link Services, as well as updates from across the hearing loss and deaf sector. To sign up, just visit hearinglink.org/enews.

You can also sign up to receive **inTouch**, our biannual magazine, for news, to learn about the latest ways to manage hearing loss, and to know more about the lives of those with similar experiences. Just visit hearinglink.org/magazine to receive *inTouch* by post or email.

Paws for coffee...

We asked Hearing Dogs' co-founder, **Dr Bruce Fogle**, to sit down with **Faith Clark**, the Charity's former Chairman, for a chat and a 'trip down memory lane'. Here, Faith opens up about her mother's involvement in setting up the Charity, why Hearing Dogs feels so much like a family, and her most powerful memory of how a hearing dog can transform someone's life...



Bruce: Do you prefer tea or coffee? Faith: You know I hate tea as much as you do! It's odd because all of my family were and are tea drinkers.

Bruce: Have you ever had any problems with your hearing? Faith: My good luck is that I never have, but now you've asked you've reminded me that, as we're both of a certain age, we should book audiology tests at Aston Hearing at Hearing Dogs' site in Saunderton! Shall I book appointments for both of us?

Bruce: What is your favourite thing about dogs? Faith: That's simple. They love you unconditionally, with no strings attached.

Bruce: Could you tell us a little bit about your mother's role in co-founding the Charity? Why was it a cause that was so important to her? Faith: My grandmother was profoundly deaf from childhood, possibly as a result of treatment with excess quinine, so my mother was her ears and her carer from the time she herself was a child. For most of my mother's married life she travelled with my father as his Foreign Service jobs took him around the world. After he retired in 1970 and they were back in London, she became involved with the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) where she was a Vice-President. Then she met you, Bruce.



Bruce: When did you first hear about Hearing Dogs? Faith: Day one! Or it may have been a short time after that. I was living part time in America in 1980 but I recall taking Julia, my parents' rough haired Dachshund, to you. In the summer of 1980 both you and my mother, separately, visited Red Acre Farm in Stow, Massachusetts and saw how dogs were trained to act as ears for deaf people. I remember you telling me, "There's no snooze button on these dogs. They loved being relied on 24 hours a day." If I remember correctly, in 1982 you set up the Charity under the umbrella of the RNID. I would have been happy to get involved

then and there but thought that two similar women from the same family might be a bit much for you!

Bruce: Hearing Dogs feels very much like an extended family for so many people. Why do you think it feels like this? Faith: This is what is so unique about Hearing Dogs. All of us; the staff, volunteers, and families with deaf people, are a large extended family. The training centres in Yorkshire and Buckinghamshire may be far from each other but this feeling of family passes on as if by osmosis, to everyone who becomes involved with the Charity. I don't know how it happens. There's some powerful alchemy that affects the people who are involved, and they pass this on to everyone who joins us. That's perhaps the glue that holds everything we do together, the feeling that we're a wonderfully extended family.

Bruce: From training a dog in a living room back in 1982, the Charity has grown steadily and substantially. How does this make you feel? Faith: Very proud. How can it not? Where there was nothing before, now there is an organisation that helps thousands each year, not just deaf people and people with hearing loss, but their families as well – their parents or children or partners.

Bruce: What did being Chairman of Hearing Dogs mean to you? Faith: It was the most humbling, and rewarding, and at the same time terrifying responsibility of my life.

Bruce: What is your fondest memory of Hearing Dogs? Faith: May I change that to my most powerful memory? It was when I first met a young, deaf woman named Sue, who had two young boys and no peace of mind. She had no peace of mind because she worried so much about how she was caring for her children and how they were worrying constantly about her. When we were able to provide her family with her hearing dog Jas everything changed. I remember you telling me you helped my mother set up Hearing Dogs to train dogs to act as ears for deaf people. What I learned from Sue was that providing her with Jas was so much more than giving her a dog that acted as her ears. To Sue, Jas shared her responsibilities caring for her children while releasing them from feeling they had to care for her. The roles that hearing dogs fulfil are so much deeper and far reaching than any of us first realised. They transform lives in ways we could never have imagined even in our wildest dreams. 🐾



Close-up with...

→ FAITH CLARK

Faith became a Trustee of Hearing Dogs in 2002 and took over as Chairman six years later. She served as Chairman until 2022 when she became Life Vice President. Faith's mother, Lady (Beatrice) Wright, co-founded the Charity with Dr Bruce Fogle in 1982. Being able to continue her mother's work gives an extra-special meaning to Faith's commitment to the future of the Charity, and so the legacy of love, commitment and support for Hearing Dogs goes on.

Faith has two grown-up children, plus three grown-up grandchildren and two great grandchildren.



Paws Appeal



Join a fundraising collection in your local area this April and May.

Make new friends – humans and canine – help raise vital funds for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

The Paws Appeal ... so no one with hearing loss feels alone

hearingdogs.org.uk/pawsappeal