



Hamish News Hounds

On Friday 18th November we were lucky enough to have the chance to interview Barbara and Caroline with their cute cocker spaniel dog called Gyn. Barbara and Caroline are from Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, they told us all about the charity. Hearing Dogs is an awesome charity which can literally change the lives of deaf people.

Hearing dogs was founded in 1982 and has doing well ever since. This amazing foundation has so far raised over £10,000,000. Isn't that an incredible achievement? Approximately 100,000 dogs have been in service and right now they have managed to place 200 dogs in deaf peoples' homes. Their brilliant work is focussed mainly the United Kingdom and it will continue.



Puppies go through different stages of learning whilst they are being trained to become hearing dogs, it costs about £45,000 to fully train each dog! Now *that* is a lot of money for a small sweet puppy! If an individual is deaf then it's possible for them to sign up for a hearing dog for free. Sadly, that's not the end and everyone lives happily ever after as it may take years. This could be because a person's name is not very high on a list of deaf people wanting a hearing dog, or someone else's need is greater or maybe because

the dog in question is not yet trained. However, once someone has rightfully claimed their hearing dog it will hopefully be a happily-ever-after for them.

Fantastically all the dogs from the litter get trained to be a hearing dog, the most common breeds the charity train are Poodles, Coker spaniels and Labradors. Once the Mum of the litter has given birth to the adorable puppies, they soon after get trained. The training is usually around 2-3 years but it depends on their personality and if they are willing to do the tasks that are set them. The goal is to get the dog to pass 3 stars (3 levels) to become a fully trained hearing dog.

Training a hearing dog requires hard work, tolerance and consistency. Their trainer needs to teach them life lessons and how to alert their owner to sounds. Sometimes training can be complicated and their trainer must be tolerant and consistent. One of the volunteers we talked to had an unusual experience to tell us. She had been training one of her dogs when she went to get a mattress from a shop. They went in and as they passed through the aisles her dog jumped onto a bed and started jumping from bed to bed, which was very embarrassing! Although some dogs don't make it through training, they all get a job. Some get the job as the charities ambassador. If they don't get any of those jobs, they'll either become a medic dog, police dog or an army dog.

One of the volunteers called Barbara trained 2 dogs, one for 3 years the other for 6 or 7 years. Both dogs she trained from puppies. She became a trainer after she had retired. She had dogs most her life and missed her old dog and saw an advert on a billboard and signed up.

When she got the job, a dog came to live with her as a trainee while the other volunteer, Caroline, has an ambassador dog who goes to fundraisers like schools. Barbara, who trained two dogs, told us that her first puppy stayed with her for 1 year and 10 months and her second stayed with her for 11 months. During Covid, she had a manual that told her how to train a dog. Also, she went to puppy classes on zoom every week.

When training dogs, surprisingly you don't have to pretend to be deaf but they do use sign language because their future deaf owners might use it. Sometimes while training funny things happen, Barbara's dog Megan wanted to be entertained so she jumped onto the counter and grabbed a carving knife!

Barbara said it is hard to say goodbye when the dog has finished training, she told us she tried not to love the dogs too much. When Seamus left her, he didn't even look back so that proves dogs move on easier than humans.

Hearing dogs wear a special jacket so that they're allowed in places like schools or shops. A child with a hearing dog can sometimes take it into school with them depending on the school.



For Hamish's birthday, the school was allowed to dress up as a dog or non-school uniform and we raised just over £365 for the charity.

As we raised so much we can sponsor a dog and also donate to the local branch of the charity. We had a whole school vote and the puppy that we have chosen to sponsor is beautiful Ivy.

We would like to thank Barbara, Caroline and Gyn for coming into our school and answering our questions. We learnt so much about the hearing dogs charity.

Leyton R, Naylah B, Ava A, Blake C, Clem B and Theo I. Hamish News Hounds.

