

My Story - Korene Kegg

At the age of 4 I lost my vision as a result of an extremely rare eye condition, Keratoglobus. I attended Western PA School for Blind Children in Pittsburgh where I received a fine education. That, in combination with high expectations from my parents, enabled me to live a full family, social, & working life.

At the age of 25, I began to lose the hearing in my left ear, and after experimenting with several hearing aids, it became clear that a hearing aid was not a solution to my problem. Presently, I have no hearing in my left ear, and I have a mild to moderate loss of hearing in my right ear. Because the hearing in both ears is so off balance, I am unable to localize sounds. At night when I do not wear a hearing aid on my better ear, I am unable to hear such things as the phone, my alarm, or worse, the smoke detector. My hearing loss and my total blindness limit my independence and my social life.

About a year ago in the middle of the night, the smoke detector in my home began chirping due to a low battery. Much to my surprise and delight, my pet dog alerted me to the situation. This event caused me to give some thought to obtaining a Hearing Assistance Dog. I knew that my pet dog was not an option because she is not trained, and was 11 years old at the time. I decided to take some time and compose a list of what a Hearing Assistance Dog could do for me.

A Hearing Assistance Dog could enhance my daily living by:

- *Alerting me to the smoke detector in my home (particularly at night when I do not wear a hearing aid);*
- *Alerting me to a phone call at night, which would allow me to relax and sleep more soundly;*
- *Waking me when my alarm sounds;*
- *Hearing and perhaps retrieving the land phone for answering or location (day or night);*
- *Alerting me to the doorbell at the front entrance or a knock on the back door of my home;*
- *Alerting me when my transportation arrives;*
- *Alerting me when a person addresses me in my home or in public;*
- *Locating and retrieving dropped objects in home or in public;*
- *Locating an inside door or exit in a public place;*
- *Locating an empty chair or returning to my seat in public;*
- *Assisting me to follow another person.*

Persons who are visually impaired have the option of traveling with the use of a guide dog. This is not an option for me due to my partial deafness and my inability to localize sound. I am very excited that a Hearing Assistance Dog will help me to live a safer, more independent life. Thank you for taking the time to read my story.