



“ It’s amazing when you realise what a guide dog does for you. ”

Lian, Bella’s new owner



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# Lian & Bella

A special partnership

Pupdate 6

# Thank you for sponsoring Bella

Hello, I am Lian, Bella's proud new owner. I am happy to share with you that she is quickly becoming part of our family.

I have struggled with atypical migraines for many years and in 2007, I was diagnosed with bilateral cone dystrophy and registered as partially sighted. I currently have 5% vision in my right eye and no peripheral vision.

During my trips in and out of hospital, I had seen guide dogs but never realised that my condition would be suited to one.

I think it's a common misconception that you need to be completely blind to own a guide dog.

In 2012, I was partnered with my first guide dog, Penny, who retired in January this year. It's amazing when you realise what a guide dog does for you. I am deaf in one ear and can struggle with balance, so I didn't even notice that we walked down the road in a certain way. But training with Bella made me realise that Penny automatically picked flat bits of pavement to help me stay steady.



## Partnership training

I had heard that moving from your first guide dog to your second is difficult, because instead of learning from scratch, you have to forget everything you think you knew. However, I found that Bella and I have a special understanding of one another.

Our partnership happened very quickly due to coronavirus, but after just one-week of training together I noticed she was already sensing my needs and adjusting her way of working to suit me.

Despite the differences that I had to adjust to, such as Bella's height and harness structure, Bella was picking up on what worked best for me. She could tell from just my arm movements and body placement what I needed, even if I forgot the correct command! Suddenly everything just clicked into place.

## Settling into home life

Bella is very keen and wants to work, but she is also an affectionate pup. If you sit still, she loves to come over for a fuss and to nibble your ears. You can also tell that she's still a puppy; when she races around the garden, she prances around and is all legs! We like to refer to her as 'Bambi on ice'.

Bella lives at home with me, my daughter and our eight-year-old terrier, Bailey. Bailey has adjusted really well to Bella.

I throw toys for them in the garden and they will often run back to me each holding one end! After tiring themselves out playing, they happily snooze next to each other by the sofa or in their cosy 'Harry Potter'-style nook under the stairs.

Bella loves to go for a free run in the park down the road. It's about a 20-minute walk, which is really great for us to practice. Once we get there Bella enjoys racing around.

## Coming up

As you can imagine, I had to alter our daily routine with Bella due to the social distancing guidelines put in place to help stop the spread of coronavirus. However, we are keeping busy and Bella has been helping us work our way through a to-do list of projects around the house!

In the future, I am really looking forward to taking Bella to Portsmouth. We'd really enjoy having a look around Gunwharf shopping centre and exploring the beach.

I hope you've enjoyed following Bella's journey and watching her grow into an incredible guide dog. Your ongoing support made our partnership possible. Thank you!

(Continued overleaf)



For more photos of Bella, please visit:  
[sponsorapuppy.org.uk/puppy-bella](https://sponsorapuppy.org.uk/puppy-bella)