

Audrey White
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Article 4

I chose the topic “hearing dogs” for my article review. After some research, I selected the New York Times article “‘Hearing Dogs’ Helping Deaf People to Easier Life.” I first started my search on the TCU database, but there were no relative articles. So, I began searching on google. I discovered several websites about receiving hearing dog services before finding the article that I chose.

20 programs have been developed in the United States within the last seven years. This has enabled over 2,000 dogs to be trained to assist people with hearing loss, and 500 dogs to be placed with guardians each year. When selecting guardians, preference is given to individuals with severe to profound hearing loss who either live alone or live with other hearing-impaired individuals. Hearing dogs begin training around six to eight months of age. This age is the priority age for training since dogs at this age have a guaranteed ten years of service ahead of them. These dogs then undergo four months of intense training where their intelligence, curiosity, disposition, fitness, and hearing are tested and evaluated. They typically train in a homelike setting since hearing dogs foster independence more in the home than they do outside unlike guide dogs. At Red Acre Farm located in Stow, Massachusetts, the dogs are trained in a homelike setting on a converted farm. At this training center, cats are used to train the dogs to perform even when presented with distractions. The converted farm plays a wide variety of sounds such as doorbells, baby cries, and home security systems to provide the dogs with ample practice. Often, these sounds are taped within the prospective owner’s home to ensure accuracy. The article refers to hearing dogs as “one of the more sophisticated hearing aids available.” They attend to their guardian’s specific needs, which can include, but is not limited to, recognizing a

smoke detector, a telephone, an alarm clock, a doorbell, and possibly the owner's name. The article includes specific details regarding a guardian named Hannah Merker who lives on a houseboat. Her dog, Sheena, has been trained to detect the sound of thunderclouds, a leaky water pump, and the squawking of swans. Hearing dogs communicate with their owners through eye contact, body language, and touch. In addition to alerting their guardians of sounds, hearing dogs provide their guardians with a sense of companionship which has been reported to be "one of the most fantastic benefits seen" by training programs around the county.

Before completing this assignment, I was unaware that hearing dogs existed. I now know much more about them and believe that their services would be highly beneficial for individuals living alone with hearing loss. The detail that stood out the most to me was the companionship that hearing dogs provide for individuals with hearing loss. Now that I have educated myself on this topic, I hope to make recommend individuals in need to seek out the services of hearing dogs.

I just had to include these cute pictures!



