

Thursday, July 12, 2007



To DogzDayOut,

Hey it's me, super Seeing Eye Dog Spida and boy have I been busy! Guess where I am living? In sunny Queensland! Well, it seems lovely weather for me, but apparently its winter here.

Uncle Harry and I have been working really hard and I could tell it wouldn't be long before I heard the words I had been longing to hear for so many months, 'we've found you a match!' But instead, when Harry and I were out walking he told me someone in Brisbane had been found that was just perfect for me, so my training would have to continue in our Queensland office. How cool I thought, coz you know what that meant? Yep, I got to go on a plane! What an adventure.

It wasn't much of a holiday adventure though, coz as soon as I arrived my new instructor Phil was waiting for me and put me straight to work! He said he was keen to see exactly what Uncle Harry had taught me so I could meet someone who was eagerly waiting for me.

I spent a little while perfecting my moves with Phil, which was good coz I got to have a chat with some of the Queensland pups that I hadn't seen in ages. Some I hadn't met before at all. They were laughing at me for thinking it was warm with our furry coats and said I was lucky I didn't come in the middle of summer, because then we would have to wear special booties. Can you believe it? Apparently sometimes the road gets so hot that it burns our feet. Great invention I thought, but not very cool for street credit, especially being the new dog on the block. We will just have to wait and see about that!

When Phil was happy I knew all there was to know, he said 'ok we're off now, this is the most important day of your life. Today you've graduated as a Seeing Eye Dog – well done.' I couldn't believe it, I mean I knew I was there because I was ready to pass, but still, hearing the words just made me so happy. I almost whimpered like a puppy!

Phil packed my bed and chew toys and we headed off on the best drive I have ever had. He talked the whole way about the person I would now be living with. I think he could tell I was a little nervous, so he actually really did help. When we arrived, a Man was waiting in the drive way with a big smile on his face and he said 'you must be Spida? You can call me Dad'. Wow, how amazing! I could tell that we were definitely a perfect match. I was so happy, my tail was wagging so hard that my whole body was shaking and Dad was laughing too. Then Phil said it was time to start and Dad put my harness on me and I was ready for the walk of my life.

I had always pictured what the first few steps would be like, but I don't think you really know what it's like until you actually start walking. Other pups that had graduated over the past few months have tried to explain how they felt but always struggled.. I think it probably varies for each person, but I can tell you it feels like walking on air – it's wonderful. Walking with Dad, I really did understand that his life was in my paws and all my training certainly paid off.

It's just Dad and I living together in outer Brisbane, so we get to spend a lot of quality time together. Dad works in the city in an office, so of course now I work there too! Each day we catch public transport into work and I have my own bed under his desk so I'm not in anyone's way. Dad's work buddies are used to having a Seeing Eye Dog around, because Dad had another pup before me. They are really supportive and say the work environment is so different having a dog around. Once a day Dad takes off my harness so everyone can give me big cuddles and say hello!

Dad says he is so lucky to have me by his side and I always say it's with big thanks to all my sponsors that helped me so much, all the way through my training. Things were really hard for Dad when he didn't have a Seeing Eye Dog and because he is young and

active, he depends on me to get him around safely and it's a lot faster than trying to do it on his own too.

I know that you have loved sponsoring me, just as much as I have loved having you by my side through training! It really has made all the difference. Before I left Camp SEDA in Melbourne I met Gina, the newest Seeing Eye Dog pup in training and she told me she was looking for sponsors to help her with her training. I thought you may like to help her now that I won't be able to write to you any more. I will need to spend all my time working with Dad, but Gina will need all the help she can get so one day she will graduate just like me.

I asked Gina to write and put a photo of herself in with my letter so you can get to know each other. I do hope you continue your sponsorship with her and make a real difference to someone else who needs you, just like you have done for my Dad.

Thank you so much for all your help and keep an eye out for a gold Labrador in Brisbane, it might just be me!

Big Hugs and Kisses,

Spida

