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DOG EARS CONTINUED

traits and not every dog makes the cut. Dogs who don't quite fit the bill are quickly found homes as pets. Every hearing dog spends six to eight months undergoing extensive training and socialisation at the centre. Not only must a hearing dog be able to recognise all nine key sounds, and be constantly poised to respond to them, but it must be prepared for a life in the public eye. Hearing dogs must remain calm and obedient in situations (for example, in a crowded supermarket) that many dogs would find overwhelming. Most even learn to "hold it in" for lengthy periods when travelling on planes and public transport.

The real test comes when a hearing dog begins life with its new owner. The association carefully matches dogs to prospective recipients, but it's not until the two meet and start to form a bond together that the compatibility between dog and owner can truly be determined. Only in a few cases in the last 30 years has the match between dog and owner been anything less than successful.

For Elizabeth and Chris, the Hearing Dogs program has enriched their lives beyond all expectations. "Before I received my first hearing dog I was dependent on other people," explains Chris. "A hearing dog gave me the confidence to move out of home and pursue further education. And I've been able to travel all over Australia. People warm to the presence of Ivy [my current hearing dog] and we often become the centre of attention. She's allowed me to interact with a lot more people. Ivy is my best friend."

To find out more about Lions Hearing Dogs or to make a donation, contact the Lions Hearing Dogs Centre or your local Lions Club.

Lions Hearing Dogs Inc

PO Box 164, Hahndorf, SA 5245

<http://www.hearingdogs.asn.au>

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INNER DOG

WITH SAMI LUKIS



Bubbly media personality, Sami Lukis, is probably best known as a presenter on Channel Nine's TODAY show and most recently, as co-host and newsreader for Sydney's Triple M Breakfast show.

Sami is also a devoted dog lover, and her little bundle of white, fluffy joy, Lolli is never far from her side. We wanted to find out a little more about Sami and her Inner Dog.

Where did you find your dog or how did they find you?

I'd always heard the saying "You don't choose the dog. The dog chooses you". And that's exactly what happened with Lolli. The minute I picked her up I just knew she was my dog. It was an instant connection ... love at first sight!

What's the best thing about your dog?

She makes me laugh out loud every single day.

What's the best thing you've taught your dog?

I'm especially proud that I've taught Lolli not to be a food scab. She doesn't beg for food ... ever!

And I've taught her how to be a "model" model. As the Australian ambassador for the COMFORTIS flea treatment range, she's spent more time than the average dog on photo shoots. And she's always very well behaved.

What's the best thing your dog has taught you?

She's shown me what unconditional love is. And she's taught me that a cute white fluffy dog with a pink diamante and pearl collar - is NOT a particularly effective way of attracting (straight) single men.

If she could change one thing about herself what would it be?

I think she would probably like to be a little tougher around the other dogs in the park. She's a bit of a wuss.

What is her most treasured possession?

A raw chicken wing. When she's about to devour one of these little treats, she will guard it with her pretty little life.

If you believe in reincarnation what would she have been in a previous life? What will she be in her next?

Best in Show - in her last life. And Best in Show - in her next.

If she was to describe you in under ten words what would she say?

Sam is my best friend in the whole wide world.

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