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New graduate scores top role

Deva is a newly graduated Seeing Eye Dog with a highflying job. She works with Sydney based criminal lawyer, Vaughan Roles, 39, and is a regular attendee at Parramatta local court.

“Having the right dog is essential for my job. Seeing Eye Dogs Australia matched me with Deva and she is fitting in beautifully,” says Vaughan. Seeing Eye Dogs Australia were very professional and went above and beyond the call of duty to make sure training fitted around my job and was tailored to my specific needs. Ian Cox, my trainer, continues to provide me with excellent support.”

Vaughan has been totally blind since birth when he and his triplet brothers were born prematurely. Both his brothers are also totally blind.

“For me, it is important that my Seeing Eye Dog is driven. I need to be able to quickly navigate around the court rooms as I meet with between five and 10 clients daily. But it is also important that she fades into the background and is not the centre of attention.”

For the past 12 years, Vaughan has provided legal aid to people who can’t afford representation, first in his private practice and now with Legal Aid NSW. It is something he is very passionate about.

“The most vulnerable in our society have the same right to be represented as the wealthy. That’s why I love doing what I do. My days are never predictable. I never know what legal problems will be presented to me” says Vaughan. “In the past I had my own practice, but now I work with cases from bail applications to assaults; shoplifting to car theft. It can be challenging at times but it is rewarding too.”

According to Vaughan, his Seeing Eye Dogs Australia trainer, Ian Cox, worked closely with him to ensure Deva was able to cope in this challenging environment.

“Generally my clients are great with the dog. Sometimes they ask if they can pat her but I explain to them that she is working and they respect that.”

Vaughan also has two young children and Deva helps him to run them to their weekly activities via public transport.

“Having a Seeing Eye Dog makes things like getting to my daughter’s weekly fitness program much easier. Deva is brilliant with the children and is already an integral part of our family,” he added.

Seeing Eye Dogs Australia is a division of Vision Australia. For more information about Seeing Eye Dogs, find out how to volunteer or make a donation call Seeing Eye Dogs Australia on 1800 03 77 73.