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# Hearing dogs for deaf grant independence

"The everyday sounds of ringing doorbells, telephones, alarm clocks or stove timers are commonplace to those of us with hearing," said Norah Stoner, Liberal MPP for Durham West.

"Imagine what it would be like if you couldn't hear those sounds, or the sounds of sirens, a baby crying, someone in distress or a buzzing smoke detector," she added.

Mrs. Stoner said, for a deaf person, sounds hearing people take for granted go unheard. But with the help of hearing ear dogs, they don't go undetected.

In a statement to the Ontario Legislature Feb. 10, Mrs. Stoner introduced in the House two very special people; Jill Johnson, a constituent in Ajax and Jackie Harbour, of Ancaster, the founder of the organization Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada.

Jill is deaf and her hearing ear dog Toby, who was with her during her visit to the Legislature, is her ears. Toby is the first Canadian-registered purebred Ger-

man Shepherd trained as a hearing ear dog and placed in a home. Normally, hearing ear dogs are mutts donated to Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada by the Humane Society for training and placement," Mrs. Stoner said in a press release.

Toby has received obedience training in both voice and sign language.

"I know from Jill that having Toby has enhanced her active life and he is of great assistance to her," the Liberal MPP said.

With Jackie was Corky, one of Canada's first hearing ear dogs.

In 1979 Jackie trained a hearing ear dog for her mother. After an article about that appeared in a local newspaper, Jackie received requests from other deaf people to train dogs for them. This was the beginning of Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada, which was incorporated as a registered charity in 1984.

As a non-profit organization, Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada relies on donations to operate. It costs about \$3,000 to train a hear-

ing ear dog.

"Most of us are familiar with seeing eye dogs and the wonderful work they do to help blind people, but hearing ear dogs are not as well known," Mrs. Stoner said.

She added, "The training of hearing ear dogs to assist the deaf is very worthwhile and necessary. My statement was aimed at increasing public awareness of the service."

Mrs. Stoner said, "I am encouraging the organization to make a submission to the Attorney General's Ministry to have a deaf persons' rights act drafted, which could be along the same lines as the Blind Persons Rights Act."

"One of the benefits of such legislation would be to ensure hearing ear dogs have the same access to facilities as seeing eye dogs."

For more information on Hearing Ear Dogs of Canada, you can write to the organization at P.O. Box 1175, Brantford, Ontario, N3T 5T3. The telephone number is (416) 648-1522.

From page B9

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DAYCARE available in my home. Reliable mother, hot meals and snacks. Call 640-6484 after 6 PM.

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SIX month infant, occasional 4 year old. 2 afternoons per week. Must be flexible. Raymerville / McCowan area. 471-5721.

WANTED - Babysitter to come to home afternoons or early evenings. Call 471-5009.

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