# **Insights Newsletter – Winter Edition 2021**

## **You’ve changed Tallulah’s world**

By helping her to discover new ones.

In May you heard all about an enchanting little seven year old girl who, though living with limited sight, refused to be limited. With your help and support for Blind Low Vision NZ, Tallulah has been able to learn, grow and expand her imagination with a library of Talking Books. Tallulah’s favourite is Thelma the Unicorn – an uplifting story about finding the joy in who you truly are. Something your support helps Tallulah to achieve every day.

Tallulah and her mum, Jess, are so grateful for your kind words and generous responses to their story. Your gifts mean so much, not just to them, but to everybody who accesses Blind Low Vision NZ’s library and other services each day. Only with your help can new Talking Books keep being made, expanding the library and helping every Zealander with vision loss immerse themselves into the magic of storytelling. Thank you.

Thank you for helping Tallulah to continue growing and learning

## **You helped Lance to re-build his life**

Lance has found new direction with the help of technology

Lance’s eyesight deteriorated 14 years ago, costing him his employment as an editor and his livelihood. Then, after a corneal transplant, Lance (now 78) connected with Blind Low Vision NZ.

Powered by your gifts, Lance has received a mix of orientation & mobility assistance, a white cane and a guide dog over the years. Your generosity is helping him to discover a new normal.

In more recent years, your support has let us introduce Lance to a new screen reader called JAWS. Lance can now interact with the world around him in a way that would previously have been impossible.

With this regained ability, Lance has been elected to two terms on New Plymouth’s Council, joined the board of multiple organisations and written articles for local newspapers.

None of this would have been possible without the incredible support of kind souls such as yourself. Thank you for helping low vision people like Lance to rebuild their lives.

Thanks to people like you, Lance is thriving again.

“After losing my vision, it was difficult re-building my life, learning to read and write again, and competing with sighted people. Blind Low Vision NZ were invaluable in creating the foundation for re-building my life”.

## **“Blind Low Vision NZ supporters may have saved my life”**

**Sue’s life transformed completely and it all started with a white cane**

When Sue first connected with Blind Low Vision NZ twelve years ago, her low vision meant she didn’t have the confidence to exercise. Then she was introduced to her white cane. She was hesitant at first, not wanting to admit that she needed help.

But using her white cane, Sue became more confident, mobile and independent. She joined the Blind Low Vision NZ recreation programme and start getting active again – being given the use of a tandem bike and bi-weekly assistance training for the Outward Bound challenge.

Within six months, Sue was feeling much healthier and happier. She says she owes her good health to your support, and hugely advocates white cane use.

Keeping her active now is her new guide dog Yazz. He helps Sue get out of the house at any time day or night.

**“Yazz makes my day every day. He’s just lovely.”**

All of this has been made possible with your kindness. Thank you, from Sue and all other Kiwi’s whose lives you have touched.

Image caption: Sue‘s whole life changed when she started using her white cane

## **You’re helping to get guide dogs ready for the world**

Guide dogs must be calm through pats, parties and paddling

With your support, guide dog in training Vinnie has been to some exciting places lately, to learn how to keep calm.

He was composed and careful around kids, fun sights and smells of a toddler’s birthday party. He was confident around other dogs of all breeds and sizes at the dog park. And he’s proven himself an absolute champ on long car journeys. With the reward of long runs along the beach!

All this training is tiring for Vinnie, but essential for making him the life-changing guide dog he will be when he graduates. And it’s all thanks to you and your support. Thank you.

## **Before, Alison only dreamed of enjoying books again**

Now, your gifts mean Alison can fall asleep lost in the magic of storytelling.

The effort Alison goes to, using a magnifying glass to read her medication packets, bank statements and mail is exhausting for her. But when it comes to Talking Books, she finds them so relaxing that she falls asleep to them at night.

Your support is helping Alison to stay connected to the world around her, even with her macular degeneration. All this through the Blind Low Vision NZ app, powered by your support and set up on her iPad by her grandson.

Alison has also just set up her Alexa, which will allow her to use her voice instead of fiddly buttons to start her books and set a sleep timer for them – so she never misses a second of the story. This technological support seems simple, but it is life-changing. Your generosity makes that happen.

You have helped Alison to fall in love with books all over again.

## **Julie’s tips**

As a voice for the blind, deafblind and low vision community, today I am sharing ways you can help us feel respected and comfortable in conversation. There are a few easy ways to help achieve this:

• Find out their name so they know you are talking to them and not someone else.

• Introduce yourself directly to the person who is blind, deafblind or has low vision so they can then use your name.

.• Look at the person with vision loss when you are speaking to them as they will follow the direction of your voice.

## **Lionel’s legacy**

Lionel made a decision in his life that is keeping his memory alive. He left a Gift in his Will to help the Blind Low Vision NZ Guide Dog training centre become world standard.

His gift will allow the centre to be built again from scratch. And we have big plans for the centre that will help train more guide dogs, more efficiently. (Look out for details in future editions of Insight.)

Thank you to Lionel for this incredible final gift towards a future where every blind, deafblind or low vision person in need may need a guide dog.

For information about including a Gift in your Will, please contact Tony on 09 355 7138 or trobson@blindlowvision.org.nz