

# Breaking Barriers

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## Disabilities no bar to selfless teen's fundraising push

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She may have been born profoundly deaf and now have problems with her vision, but Alice Costen is determined to do something to help others.

The 13-year-old is appealing for people to save their old postage stamps to help charity Hearing Dogs for Deaf People.

Alice is on the list for a multi-assistance dog from the charity, and hopes to get one after Christmas.

She has been fitted with bilateral cochlear implants, which restored some of her hearing, but now her eyesight is beginning to deteriorate.

Mum Susannah Dower said: "She's been going through a tough time at the moment, and for her to want to do something for others is so selfless and kind – she's amazing."

Having lost 50% of her peripheral vision



Alice Costen and mum Susannah Dower

**Alice Costen, Year 9 student, has stood out this year for her selfless efforts to raise money for a charity not only close to her own heart, but those of her peers and her college; and her efforts have got her into the papers!**

Despite her profound deafness and deteriorating sight, Alice is undaunted in her endeavour to raise money for Hearing Dogs for Deaf People by collecting old postage stamps.

Mum, Susannah Dower, said, "She's been going through a tough time at the moment and for her to want to do something for others is so selfless and kind – she's amazing."

Alice has been fitted with a cochlear implant which helps restore some of her hearing; however, Alice's sight is also beginning to deteriorate having currently lost 50% of her peripheral vision and diagnosed with night blindness.

Alice is also a student of Sittingbourne Community College's Deaf Department (DDS) who are also helping Alice achieve her goal having arranged for all SCC's stamps to be passed on to her.

The charity, having collected in the stamps, will sell them on to help fund the training and matching of dogs and owners who have hearing difficulties.

Julie Daynes, Head of the Deaf Department, said, "I think it is amazing and selfless when someone who has such obstacles to overcome in their own life stops and thinks of others. Alice is an outstanding, caring young lady who gets on with life, whatever it throws at her. She is very bubbly and outgoing and does not let the loss of her hearing, or sight, stop her from doing anything. She gave a presentation to her deaf peers about the hearing dogs for the deaf and they are fully supporting her in her fundraising."