

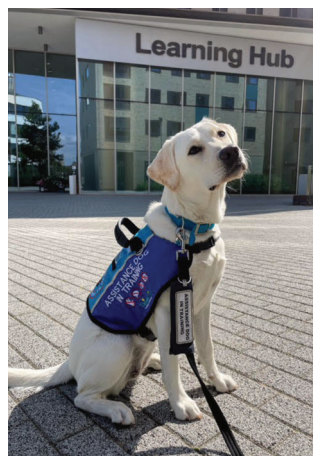
how to respond to what is being asked of them,” Lissy told me. Some of the dogs go to larger charities, where they are placed with a foster family for a year. “Here they learn how to behave around adults and children, how to react as a disability dog in shops or supermarkets. They will then be taken by a handler to finish their final training where it will be decided for which role that particular dog is the most suited. A match is then made with a potential family and for the last couple of months training takes place with the family. As each family differs, the tasks carried out by the dogs will also vary. It may be fetching clothing, opening doors or fridges, or even fetching medication – quite a wide variety of tasks can be asked of them. There are areas where the dogs can be trained to detect changes in certain body levels in humans, and even position themselves to protect a human who may suffer a seizure and fall. But the charities are limited in the numbers that they can take, and we do have private organisations that come to us for the same reason,” said Lissy. I was certainly amazed at the amount of help and protection that these dogs are trained to carry out. I asked about the colour of the dog and if this made a difference to their behavioural pattern? “It isn’t the colour, but more the bloodline that will determine their reaction and behaviour. Where you have a dog that has proved to be able to do the prescribed job, then you have a better chance of that bloodline being passed on to future generations and continue with the same work



ethic,” Lissy explained. If the dog was taken into a private home at eight weeks, then training would start with the family and then to a handler for the final session. Lissy felt that those that did go into private homes would probably bond better as they are with the family from the start, and would have less changes to their environment as they progress. I wondered about the marketing of her business, and how did potential customers come to hear about AGLABS. “I am very lucky in that I have not actually needed to carry out any marketing on a commercial basis. Pretty much the next year is already full, and this has come about mainly by word of mouth. After around eight years it may be required to retire the dog and a replacement could be needed, and we have been only too happy to help again. We do ‘gift’ dogs to charities depending upon our year and the numbers available. We do not have sponsors, are self-funded and because of this we can totally control how we operate,” said Lissy. In addition, you can get advice from Lissy – although not a

nutritionist – on food and diet, which plays a large part in the health and well-being of the dogs. Also, if something did go wrong and for whatever reason the dog couldn’t be kept with the new owner, Lissy would always take them back and find them a new home.

The obvious love and care that Lissy puts into her work comes through in bucket loads. I have only managed to put down in this feature a little of what goes on with AGLABS. Lissy, your enthusiasm is endless, and I do thank you for telling me about your work with such incredible dogs.



Do please visit her website: www.aglabsworkinglabradors.com where you can find more information.