



## **Client Stories**

### *Dog Guide Success Stories*

#### **Hastings and Manny**

Hastings, a well-spoken, gifted nine-year-old, shocked his parents on a trip to Disney World when they woke to find him in the middle of a seizure on the bed next to them. After tests revealed he was epileptic, Hastings parents, Sandra and Joe, tried a number of different medications to try and help their little boy, but the drugs proved to take too much of a toll on Hastings so they began looking at different alternatives.

After discovering Lions Foundation of Canada, Sandra, Joe and Hastings put in an application for a Seizure Response Dog Guide. Hastings age was a factor in determining his acceptance into the program because of the responsibility involved with having a Dog Guide, but after his interview and in-home assessment, he was accepted. Head trainer Gloria Peckham was amazed at how articulate and aware Hastings was of his condition.

After coming to the school in Oakville and being paired with his new Dog Guide Manny, Hastings won the hearts of everyone he encountered and became known as the little boy with the big dog.

Upon returning home, Hastings began sleeping in his own bedroom again, something he had not done for over a year due to the fear of being alone during a seizure. "The most important thing is that he feels safer now. Before Manny he didn't feel secure enough to sleep alone because that's when his seizures were happening," said Sandra. Seizure Response Dog Guides are trained to recognize and react to the onset of a seizure by barking for help and activating an alert system.

When Hastings and his parents applied for a Dog Guide, their goal was to help Hastings feel safer and they have achieved that and more. Hastings has not had a seizure in more than two weeks. "It is incredible. We had tried the medication and when that didn't help curb the seizures, we figured it was out of our control. We know that we can't cure his epilepsy, but this has certainly given us a new perspective on what Manny has been able to offer Hastings," said Sandra.