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PRESS RELEASE
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“Life will be so much more rewarding with my mobility scooter and Assistance Dog Nova” says disabled Dog A.I.D. UK supporter Mychaela

Mychaela Green, 55, from Mill Hill in London, lives with multiple disabilities. However, thanks to the support of Dog A.I.D. UK and a TGA mobility scooter, she is enjoying outdoor experiences she never thought possible.

Mychaela is a medically retired carer who used to love her job supporting older people in the community. Due to illness she had to give up her career, however continues to believe it's vital to “keep going and staying strong as mum and nanny”. Living with restricted mobility following a stroke, mental health issues can be a real challenge for her. Mychaela's epilepsy is now manageable however with COPD and weakness on her right side, walking is extremely difficult, so she uses an electric wheelchair to remain mobile. Nevertheless, trying to use her wheelchair outdoors has not been positive at all with battery problems and Mychaela experiencing discomfort, back ache and getting stuck several times – once being rescued by the fire service when it broke down.

With ownership of a new puppy, Nova, Mychaela was desperate to get out in the countryside to train her dog with the support of Dog A.I.D. However, she needed a product that could cope with muddy tracks and trails, especially when regularly visiting the East Sussex and Kent coast – the Vita X mobility scooter from TGA was the answer.

Mychaela is a proud mum of two children in their thirties and has seven grandchildren. She was determined to have good times with her family and be positive, however her wheelchair was holding her back: “I couldn't do what I wanted to do. I massively missed going out with my grandkids, I missed the beach, the countryside, walking a dog. I just wanted to do normal things that able-bodied people do. Being stuck inside was awful and did nothing for my mental health and well-being. When I took on Nova my black Labrador, the vet said she'd make a fantastic Assistance Dog. I approached Dog A.I.D. who accepted me on their programme which is when a trustworthy scooter became vital.”

The charity Dog A.I.D. (Assistance in Disability) helps people with physical disabilities to train their pet dogs for assistance with everyday tasks. In some circumstances trained dogs can also provide life-saving interventions. Training takes up to two years with both dog and owner receiving specialist education from a network of volunteer trainers and attaining fully qualified Assistance Dog status.

This dog training was perfect for Mychaela if she could get mobile on a robust off-road scooter, so she went online to look: “I first came across products that were so expensive I knew I would never be able

to afford them. I also found out about the Disabled Ramblers association that I intend to join next year. I looked at what scooters their members used; I saw one that was not from TGA but didn't like the look of it, then I noticed the cool Vita. I had a nosey around the TGA website and liked the fact they were a family run business. I made contact and an assessor called Danny, who was brilliant by the way, came out to give me a test drive and assess my needs. He even spent time with me going for a walk in the woods! It was a complete revelation to me... what an eye opener. A stable ride and no bumps or bangs to hurt my bad back. I drove through mud and over rough ground with no problem, smooth and steady, it was a joy. I knew my life had suddenly changed for the better."

Now Mychaela is out regularly with her scooter and Nova enjoying the sites of Camber Sands, Seven Sisters Country Park and The South Downs. Nova is being trained to walk alongside Mychaela's scooter with the help of a pole and bungee dog lead which is working well. They are both loving their newfound freedom: "Nova is such a good girl and the places we are now going I simply cannot believe. To sit on the beach after five years and look out to sea is breath taking. Even feeling the wind in your hair is special. I now look at so many more places and say, 'do you know what, I'm going to have a go at getting there'."

"Back in London, my scooter lets me go out in the woods with my family or to places like Hampstead Heath, even in the winter when its muddy. I purposely drive through puddles to see if my Vita can do it and it does. Having a box on my scooter to store dog stuff is also really handy, especially when we are out shopping together. So many people have commented that my Vita looks nothing like a scooter and how bright the LED lights are – I'm going to decorate it with extra Christmas lights to cheer up passers-by."

At home, Nova continues to help Mychaela take off her socks or jumpers, fetch and pick up things off the floor and many other everyday tasks. If Mychaela experiences anxiety, Nova senses this and makes sure she is right by the side of her owner for reassurance. "If someone asked me would I recommend the TGA Vita X I'd say, 'Oh, God yes, absolutely.' It has literally changed my life just like Nova has – I wouldn't be able to leave the house without both of them. Dog A.I.D. have also been amazing, so supportive and I'd encourage everyone to donate to them especially as things are so tough for Charities right now."

Mychaela is very positive about the future as she concludes: "I'm planning to revisit the Lake District next year with my Vita and the support of the outbound activity charity Calvert Trust. I used to love hill walking before my illnesses so when I went with this disability charity in my wheelchair to Northumbria, I had a great time but there were still places I couldn't get to. Exploring and life in general will now be so much more rewarding with my Vita X and Nova."

* ENDS *

Picture caption: New TGA Vita X owner Mychaela Green and trainee assistance dog Nova enjoying their latest day out at Cuckmere Haven Beach.

TGA Mobility Limited

TGA is based in Sudbury, Suffolk and has been a respected supplier of mobility products for over 35 years with a specialty in mobility scooters. TGA is renowned for its high quality, diverse range that includes the Breeze S4 that is the nation's favourite, the revolutionary folding Minimo through to the cutting-edge Vita family, wheelchair Powerpacks and WHILL Model C Powerchair. As a family-run business with a proven manufacturing heritage, TGA is dedicated to quality, innovation and service with all of its products undergoing rigorous testing before delivery ensuring peace of mind and trouble-free ownership. TGA is proud to work with Parkinson's UK.

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Notes to Editors

About Dog A.I.D.

Dog A.I.D. provides assistance dog training to people over fifteen years old with physical disabilities up to Assistance Dog standard where suitable. Where Dog A.I.D. differs from most assistance dog charities, is that the dogs they work with are the client's own pet dogs. Dog A.I.D. is a national voluntary organisation accredited by the National and International umbrella groups, which uphold the high standards required for Assistance Dog training.

Based in Shrewsbury, Shropshire – Dog A.I.D. provides services throughout the UK. And there are currently 117 fully qualified Dog A.I.D. dogs throughout the country, with 121 more in training. Training takes from 18 months to two years with both dog and owner receiving specialist education from a network of trainers. Once trained, the new Assistance Dogs will be able to support their owner to live a more independent life. Assisting with a variety of tasks from emptying the washing machine and finding the telephone, to turning the lights on. These dogs are often their owners' lifeline, supporting them emotionally, as well as physically.

All 130 trainers assist the charity on a voluntary basis and the charity relies solely on fundraising and donations to provide its services. The charity is registered with the Fundraising Regulator.

For further information about fundraising, volunteering or supporting Dog A.I.D. please visit www.dogaid.org.uk

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