Hadley

I Pick Myself Up

Presented by Douglas Walker

**Douglas:** Hello, and welcome to the Insights and Sound Bites podcast, where people facing vision loss share insights about what has helped them cope and adjust.

**Denise:** I’m constantly losing vision and it’s just painfully slow. You never know what you’re going to wake up to.

**Douglas:** My name is Douglas Walker. You know, with some eye conditions, we slowly lose vision over time. And it can be a real struggle not knowing what we’ll face with the dawn of each day. Today, Denise will share with us how the joy of a furry companion helps lift her up, when she’s feeling down.

**Denise:** My name is Denise Schweitzer, and I am a resident in the southern most tip of Indiana, in the Evansville area.

I still mourn the loss of my vision, because with this disease, Stargardts, there is no stable time in your vision. I'm constantly losing vision, and it's just painfully slow. You never know what you're going to wake up to. Every day, you don't know what you're going to wake up to.

I really started struggling going up and down stairs and feeling safe. Then I knew right away, I'm a dog person, always have been a dog person. I knew once I learned how to use that cane, I wanted to learn what the process was to get a guide dog.

Kia is my guide dog, and she's a wonderful girl. She's so much of a companion, and I live in the rural area, and so it's nice to have her because we don't have sidewalks and stuff. I can teach her a route and just tell her to take me to see my friend or whatever, and she just boom, boom, boom, takes me along. It's a nice peace of mind to have her companionship and also feel safe out here in the country where I'm at.

I think the bad days that I've had, I always pick myself up afterwards. Getting outside, spending time with my guide dog, just breaking up the monotony of the sadness works for me.

**Douglas**: You never know who might need to hear your story. If you’d like to share, you can leave me a voicemail by calling, 847-512-4867. Or, you can email me a recording to podcast@HadleyHelps.org. Again, my name is Douglas Walker. Take care and I’ll see you next time.