Legally Blind Senior

VFTH

11/28/19

A WKU Senior who is legally blind is especially thankful for not one but two additions that have made her journey a bit easier.

Amy Bingham talks with Druevalley Collins and her dad about the grit and determination that have gotten her this far.

 “I have optic nerve hypoplasia, I was born with it. I can only see about ten feet in front of me.”

This is how 23-year-old Druevalley Collin’s explains her visual impairment.

 “Most people’s optic nerves are thick as spaghetti and mine are real thin like dental floss and they just didn’t fully develop.”

But that hasn’t stopped her from excelling at art, music and other various activities her entire life.

 “Druevalley has been a go getter from day one. There’s no doubt about that.”

Before college Druevalley began researching eyewear that would help her live independently. She came across Canadian eyeware called Esight and recently upgraded to Esight 3, which magnifies objects and provides color contrast.

 “It allows you to focus on things better, it allows for like, it’s got a flashlight on it, something cool I just figured out not too long ago.”

And after applying for a service dog in 2016, Druevalley finally was able to welcome her sidekick Tweed back in May.

 “She just makes things so much better. With Western having a lot of steps she’s really helpful for finding steps for me, making sure I don’t run into things or trip on things.”

 “Druevalley is able to walk downtown from Western, been a lot of opening doors for her, people coming up and meeting with her.”

Druevalley doesn’t give much thought to the hurdles she’s had to overcome.

 “It’s had its ups and downs and challenges but you know because I’ve been visually impaired my whole life it’s not that different.”

In 2020 she will join her dad in becoming a WKU alum and is thankful that the sophisticated eyewear and Tweed have helped her along the way.

Sophisticated eyeware and a beloved companion with her every step of the way.

 “Definitely been a game changer and the e-sight 2 definitely a game changer but all this was after high school, (Druevalley says) I can only imagine if I had it in high school,(Chip says ) exactly.”

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

Collins will graduate in May with a major in psychological sciences and a minor in studio art. She plans to go on to graduate school for art therapy and hopes to one day have an art therapy practice.

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