



# Achieving Success Louder Than any Sound

By Ann Jensis-Dale  
DCMA Public Affairs

*“Winners have the ability to adapt to the terrain. They take responsibility for their own career path.” — Mary Cunningham*

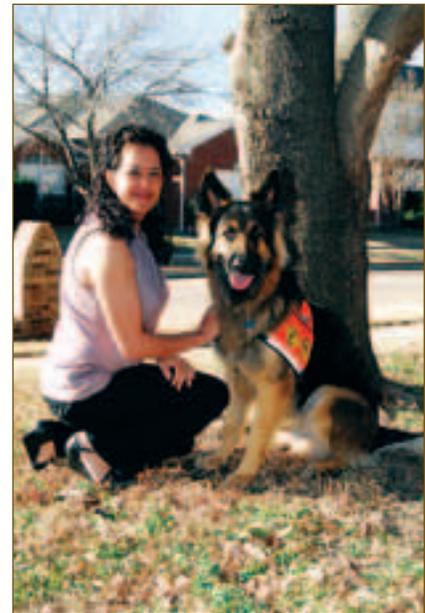
**Y**vonne Brauer, a Defense Contract Management Agency Bell Helicopter Textron administrative contracting officer in Fort Worth, Texas, truly exemplifies this quote in her professional and personal life. According to her friends and coworkers, Brauer’s determination to excel at any task eclipses her hearing loss and serves as motivation for everyone. Through her perseverance, Brauer recently received the prestigious Department of Defense and DCMA Outstanding Employees with Disabilities Award for 2008.

Brauer was born with severe hearing loss in both ears. When she was three years old, her doctors determined she had extreme nerve damage that could not be corrected through surgery. The only way to correct her deafness was through the use of strong hearing aids in

both ears and intensive speech and lip-reading therapy. Doctors determined Brauer’s hearing loss was progressing, specifically more in her right ear during the past few years; that’s when Brauer began researching the cochlear implant.

“Tests have shown I began losing my hearing in my right ear in 2005. My otolaryngologist, Dr. Peters, evaluated my case and made the decision that I would be an ideal candidate for the cochlear implant,” Brauer said. “Cochlear implants are better suited to help severely to profoundly deaf adults and children who get little or no benefit from hearing aids. I was so blessed when Dr. Peters agreed to do the procedure on me.”

Brauer received her cochlear implant for her right ear on May 7, 2008, and it was activated on May 29, 2008. Once the cochlear implant is activated, hearing is not



Yvonne Brauer and her therapy dog, Bo, a three-year-old German shepherd. (Photo by Frank Brauer)

automatic and requires specific training that may take up to a year to be fully functional for the recipient. Brauer still attends aural rehabilitation encompassing listening to audio books while reading alongside her therapist and conversing on a variety of subjects. She also works with her audiologist, who activates each of the electrodes and establishes the appropriate levels of electrical stimulation, to work toward her optimal hearing level. When asked

**According to her friends and coworkers, Brauer’s determination to excel at any task eclipses her hearing-loss disability and serves as a motivation for everyone.**

about plans for a cochlear implant for her left ear, Brauer said, “Not until I have gotten my current cochlear implant ‘trained’ to its optimal level.”

Brauer’s disability never got in the way of her athletic pursuits. As a high school junior, she participated in volleyball, basketball, gymnastics, track and soccer. She earned a high school letter in volleyball and basketball and was awarded a four-year athletic scholarship to play volleyball at Texas Wesleyan University.

“I watched people’s expressions, body language, motions and hand signals as these all can tell a lot when you are more visual, compared to another player who has full hearing to work with,” she stated. “It probably helped my concentration and kept distractions to a minimum.” Brauer remains active today, playing volleyball and soccer for both her local YMCA and the North Texas Women’s Soccer Association, of which she has been a member for the past 20 years.

When she is not on the athletic field, Brauer and her husband, Frank, who is also hearing impaired, can be seen working with their therapy dog, Beaugard, or “Bo.” Brauer explained, “Bo is a three-year-old, long-coat German shepherd that my husband trained. He has done tracking for search and rescue, where he was tested and accepted, but we pulled out of search and rescue since it required too much involvement time.” She continued, “Bo is also a certified therapy dog and is in current training with my husband

for certification as a hearing service dog.”

Bo wears a specially-designed vest to alert people around him that he is a working hearing service dog. “Everywhere we go in public takes longer because Bo attracts so many people from all walks of life, and my husband shares him well,” said Brauer. “Having Bo around has been therapeutic for me, especially while I am going through my adjustment period for my cochlear implant.”

Brauer began her career in 1984 with the former Defense Contract Administration Services Region Dallas as a GS-03 pricing clerk typist in a summer hire temporary position. “During that time I was using the typewriter and typed over eight contract price/cost analyst reports,” she said. “Typing

all those reports got me interested and I wanted to know more about contract pricing as well as contracting itself.”

Today, Brauer is a warranted administrative contracting officer and administrative agreement officer for the OH-58D *Kiowa Warrior* program, an acquisition category 1D program, and the OH-58D repair and readiness program. She is also a subject-matter expert on contract closeout, canceling funds and overage contracts.

“My whole career at DCMA has always been a challenge. Yet, I do not let my disabilities get in the way,” said Brauer. “Working on maintaining a positive attitude and keeping faith in God has helped me acquire the skills to do what needs to be done.” 



Yvonne Brauer (Right) on the soccer field. She has always been athletically gifted and has used her hearing loss to her advantage when competing in sports.