

Positive Attitude Prevails!

Some of the most memorable experiences we have as volunteers are when we're with a patient who is hesitant or unenthused about working on their therapy goals with the Chenny Troupe dogs at first, but then through the course of the evening delights in their activities and accomplishments and leaves the session with a big smile. This is not one of those stories. Rather, this is a story about a patient who was enthusiastic and ready for anything from the start, and who was a testimony to the power of a positive attitude.

"Tom" introduced himself to Turner and me by saying "I'm fifty five years old and I've been blind for 47 days." He was in a wheelchair and surrounded by supportive family. It was clear there was no self pity or denial here, he was ready to move forward. Tom had worked with Joe Frey and

Sherman the week prior and had trained Sherman to perform the first known wheelchair blind finish at our program at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Since Turner had no interest in anything as formal as a finish, he dropped the tennis ball at Tom's feet. Tom spent a minute touching Turner's head and exploring his ears, mouth, nose and then was ready to go. He was working on orientation, finding locations through senses other than sight, so we instructed Tom on Turner's location (5 feet out at 10 o'clock). Tom threw the ball and Turner caught it on the fly the first time! We progressed with more ball toss, some heeling and direct feeding. Turner's wet mouth all over his hands and lap made it clear that he was unfazed by Tom's limitations. The most amazing thing was that the following week, we worked

with Tom and two additional patients and despite the increased activity, Turner would plant himself at Tom's feet at any opportunity. There was a bond.

Working with Tom provided one of those volunteer experiences that leaves you certain that you got more out of the evening than the patient did. Tom's enthusiasm put everyone at ease and you could see its influence on his family—they weren't sad or treating him like a victim. Tom's straightforward acceptance of his situation and eagerness to face new challenges was a potent combination. On his last night with us at RIC, Tom graciously told us that the three evenings he worked with the Chenny Troupe dogs were the best days of his rehab experience.

Lisa Wiersma

Smiles Mean Success at Stone Institute

My Belgian Sheepdog, Grace, and I recently began working in Chenny Troupe's program at the Stone Institute of Psychiatry at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Grace passed the Chenny Troupe test last winter, and worked with me (and my other dog, Cobi) at Somerset Place, where we work with adults with mental illness. Somerset is a residential facility providing long-term support and treatment, and at Stone, Chenny Troupe works in a short-term, acute care unit. At Stone, psychiatric inpatients enjoy a variety of different experiences as part of their activity therapy. Lucky for them, Chenny Troupe is one of those experiences!

This Chenny Troupe program is unique in that it is quite small; there are generally only 2 or 3 dogs working with three or four patients in any given session. Because the

sessions are small and intimate, each patient gets plenty of time to work one-on-one with each dog. Unlike Somerset Place where we work with the same clients each week for six weeks, at Stone, there may be a different group of patients each week. Chenny Troupe program leaders John Himmel and Lisa Wiersma alternate leading the sessions. The goals of the program are to help the patients improve their affect, their willingness to communicate and to comply with other therapy modalities. The first step for the Chenny Troupe teams is to help the participants learn how to communicate with the dogs. They learn about hand and verbal commands, the unique and special characteristics about each dog (even the dogs' quirks!) and how take care of and maintain the dog's coat. The participants are able to bond with a furry, nonjudgmental friend

and for an hour or so, forget about his or her diagnosis, medications, and worries. Some participants will remember an especially dear pet and find joy in that reminiscence. Even in one session, participants may experience improved self-esteem, improved socialization and brightening of affect.

Stone is a relatively new program for Chenny Troupe, begun as a pilot in 2003. It is quite interesting and results for the participants seem very promising. After our first session with John and his yellow Lab "Dean", the therapist told us that she had seen one of the patients smile for the very first time since his admission to Stone. This, my friends, was enough to send Gracie and I home smiling that night and insure that we will be back!

Andrea Varol

Celebrate 15 years of extraordinary service at

Healing Hearts

Chenny Troupe's 15th Anniversary Celebration

May 11, 6 - 9 p.m.

Kaleidoscope
800 W. Superior • Chicago

Meet Chenny Troupe Therapy Dogs and Their Clients

Buffet, silent auction, entertainment
and complimentary valet parking

Watch for your invitation and save the date!

TroupeTalk

Vol. 15, No. 1, Spring 2006

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We welcome your thoughts, contributions, and articles. Pertinent addresses and numbers follow.

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**chenny
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New Chenny Troupe Team Members



Left to right: Larry Cohen and Urs, Bunny Wagner and Dakota, Teri Steichen and Lucky, Mike Steichen and Bogey and Mary Dellorto and Gemma



Tony Kremer and Boots and Bunny Wagner and Zoe

From Our Executive Director

Dear Friends:

Do you remember 1991? Operation Desert Storm began, the Soviet Union collapsed and the first web browser came on line. The New York Giants beat the Buffalo Bills by one point in Superbowl XXV. *Dances with Wolves* won the Oscar for Best Picture. And Chenny Troupe began its extraordinary work, thanks to the imagination, commitment and hard work of our founders, Cathy Lawler and Ann Rohlen.

Interesting that *Dances with Wolves* won the Oscar that year. The movie was a story of one man's journey into and acceptance of another culture. It was also the story of a man who found respite from the loneliness of the western frontier in his relationship with Two-Socks, the wolf that was the inspiration for his Sioux name.

Animal-assisted therapy is founded on the ability of animals to reach people in ways that other humans cannot. It is a simple relationship in which few words need to be spoken, a relationship based on unconditional love and trust. For fifteen years, Chenny Troupe volunteers and their

skilled dogs have utilized this relationship to create positive and healing experiences for people recovering from physical and emotional trauma. In those fifteen years, hundreds of dogs and their human companions have worked with thousands of people and provided thousands of hours of assistance to medical professionals. We've developed programs to work with all sorts of special needs populations, including substance dependence recovery, adults with mental illness and physically abused children. We've sponsored research studies, reached out to the medical community and helped other organizations bring the healing power of animals to their constituents - in places as far away as Korea! Like Two Socks, Chenny Troupe dogs bring joy, comfort and companionship, along with the motivation to keep working, keep trying, keep hoping.

Come meet some of our clients and our dogs at our benefit on May 11 (watch for your invitation in the mail). They will amaze you with stories worthy of Oscar recognition for best true story of hope and recovery!

Janet Rosen Eaton, Executive Director

Safeguarding our Seniors

As our canine companions approach their golden years, they face many of the same health issues as we do. They slow down, have aches and pains, experience vision and hearing loss and sprout some gray hairs!

No matter how much you love and care for your companion, you can't prevent the physical changes that come with aging. But, by taking some preventative measures and becoming aware of what to look for, you can help safeguard your senior from the ravages of "Father Time."

Here are some changes to watch for:

Obesity is a common problem and significant concern as a pet ages. The body's metabolism slows down and causes weight gain. In addition, thyroid or hormonal conditions and arthritis, which often accompany aging, can limit the pet's ability to lose weight. Excess weight strains the joints, as well as the heart and circulatory system. To avoid weight gain

and its associated problems, you need to manage your pet's nutrition and exercise regime more carefully than ever.

Gum infections, tooth loss and tumors of the oral cavity become more prevalent as a pet ages. These problems limit the pet's ability to chew, thus affecting nutrition. In addition, oral infections can spread bacteria throughout the body via the blood stream. Professional cleaning, regular exams, diet and daily brushing can help manage oral health issues faced by seniors.

Diseases of the internal organs (such as kidneys, liver and heart) occur more frequently in the older pet. These organs may now work less efficiently, allowing waste products and other toxins to accumulate in the body. Annual blood tests can act as an early warning system and signal disease before it advances.

Skin conditions (such as tumors and changes in pigment or thickness of the skin)

and hair loss can also accompany aging. You can be on the lookout for these changes by carefully inspecting your pet's skin and coat on a regular basis. If a problem occurs, your veterinarian will suggest the best approach for addressing the problem.

Diseases of the eye (such as glaucoma and cataracts) can lead to vision loss. If you notice changes in your pet's eyes or your pet is having trouble navigating familiar territory, consult with your vet, as you do for any other health issue. Be prepared to make adjustments in your pet's environment and routine to accommodate the loss.

Your vigilance and care, along with regular visits to the vet, can stop "Father Time" from robbing our seniors of the golden years they deserve.

We thank Dr. Steve Borowiak for this important information. Dr. Borowiak practices veterinary medicine at Animal Medical Clinic, 414 S. Main Street, Wheaton IL. 630.668.3700

Donations

Donations in memory of, or in honor of, a special pet or person are always welcome and help us continue to provide our programs free of charge. We even have birthday cards for your canine friend's special day!

Donations were made to Chenny Troupe:

In memory of "Derby" Keitz:

- Cora Adams
- Molly Calkins
- Chrsitine Conway and David DePue
- Lisa Crossett
- Ann Marie Dlutowski
- Sue Ellen and John Galligan
- Kathy and Jim Jordan
- Judy Keitz
- Judy Meservey
- Tony Ozzauto
- SMI-Alcott
- Lisa Wiersma

In memory of "Baldwin Wieboldt" by Bonnie Hoefler and Jack Trytten, and Ann Rohlen

In memory of "Rudy" Grant by the Abrahams Family

In memory of "Molly" and "Mitchell" Clumber by Jeff Case

In memory of "Toadie" Zelek by Margaret Christie

In memory of "Sampson" Golden by Nancy and Mike Golden

In memory of "Max" McElroy by Broadway Animal Hospital and Dr. John Kasmersky

In memory of "Molson and Friends Little Angels" by Molson and Friends Foundation

In memory of "Bonnie Amanda" Simmons by Wendi Mancini

In memory of "Ozzie" and "Harry" by Richard Shoemaker and Judd Ruud

In memory of "Chessie" Smith by Mary Chambers and Vic Smith

In memory of Henry Erlien by Nancy Erlien

In memory of Dr. Melvin Kuple by Susan Holtzman and David Joel

In memory of Flash Silverman by Michelle and Gregg Schwartz

In memory of Emily Zengri by Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Izbicky

In honor of Barbara Young Morris by Phyllis Ryan, Susan Turner, and William Morris

In honor of Mary Ann Alexander and "Tag" by Ann Alexander and Mrs. Walter Alexander

In honor of Lisa Wiersma and "Turner" by Mr. and Mrs. Tom Finke and Greg and Denise Palmer

In honor of Janet Rosen Eaton by Mareon Arnolds

In honor of Carole Herhold by Timothy Williamson

In honor of Carrie Hoffman by Rebecca Raftery and Russell Marsh

In honor of "Maybel" Weiner by Teresa Eve

In honor of "Otto" Hamilton by Janice Hamilton

In honor of "Jib" Gray by Mr. and Mrs. Jack Gray

In honor of "Jack" Rosenfeld's retirement by Honey and Howard Rosenfeld

In honor of "Star" Rose Orleans by Mr. and Mrs. Anthony Ruggiero

Kibbles and Bits

Congratulations to our newest Chenny Troupers! In November 2005, Tony Kremer and his Papillion mix, Boots, joined five year Troupers and family members Meg and China Bear at work at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago; and Joy "Bunny" Wagner and her Standard Poodle Zoe are working at Schwab. In January, Zoe's buddy Dakota, also a Standard Poodle, passed our test and has joined Zoe at work. Four other dog teams were certified in January: Teri and Mike Steichen and their Golden retriever siblings, Bogey and Lucky; Larry Cohen and Urs, a German Shepherd and Mary Dellorto and Gemma, a Doberman Pinscher. Teri and Mike are already at work at RIC, Urs is working at Schwab and Gemma joins her pal Kali at Lincoln Park Hospital. Gemma is Mary's FIFTH Chenny Troupe dog! We are very proud to have all of these wonderful teams working in Chenny Troupe programs.

We also welcome new volunteers Amber Crain, Emily Fondahn, Blythe Hammett, Melissa Kelly, Katherine Mullins, Marc Peterson, Kimberly Siske and Elynor Williams.

Congratulations to the following who were elected to serve three-year terms as Directors: Judy Keitz, Suzanne Kopp, Barbara Morris, Tony Ozzauto and Lisa Wiersma.

The following people were elected to serve one-year terms:

President	Lisa Crossett
Vice Presidents	Mary Ann Alexander Joe Frey Judy Keitz Suzanne Kopp John Vranicar Lisa Wiersma
Treasurer	Barbara Young Morris
Secretary	John Vranicar

Chenny Troupe volunteers Michelle Gray and Jib, Michelle Schwartz and Prada, Sarah Stewart and Gus and Sharon and Karen Van Den Hende and Max provided support for victims of fire at the seventh annual **Burn Survivor Saturday** on February 11. Hosted by La Rabida Children's Hospital, the Chicago Fire Department and other local area hospitals, this celebration for survivors provides an opportunity to meet with other survivors, find support and resources to help their recovery. As always, the Chenny

Troupe dogs were a special favorite with all the children.



Sarah and Gus with a new friend



Students and Turner

Students at St. Gabriel School were finishing a unit on dogs, and their teacher called to ask if a therapy dog could come visit as a finale to their project. Among other things, the class had been reading *Old Yeller*. Turner and Lisa Wiersma visited St. Gabriel on November 21 and were surprised when they were ushered into the auditorium for a presentation to the entire school! Lisa gave a brief talk about Chenny Troupe and therapy dogs, and with the help of a few students, Turner demonstrated what he does with his clients at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Predictably, Turner was unfazed by the large crowd and all the noise and fully focused on earning a few treats! Turner is shown here with his new fifth grade friends.

Reminder: Please check our website for the latest news on upcoming events and testing dates!

chenny troupe
animal assisted therapy

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