

## Chenny Dogs Help Kids at Rice Cope

Charlie\* is the kind of kid whose eyes speak as much, or more than, his voice. After watching two of his fellow residents graduate from Chenny Troupe's program at the Rice Child and Family Center at the Children's Home & Aid Society in Evanston, Charlie asked to play with one of the dogs. He spoke softly, but his wide-eyed expression seemed to search for affection, attention, and hope.

As the graduates and their guests enjoyed refreshments, a therapist asked if Charlie could participate in Chenny Troupe's next program at the Rice Center. As Charlie directed one of the dogs to jump over hurdles and run through a tunnel, the therapist remarked that it was the first time he had smiled or showed any interest in play for months.

The children and teens who live at the Rice Center are coping with a variety of behavioral and emotional problems, some that are the



Becky and Louie...see "Finding a New Leash on Love" on page 5

result of abuse and neglect. Some of the kids have depression; others are trying to learn effective ways to manage anger. Low self-esteem is an issue for many of the kids. Some have difficulty focusing on tasks, and many are trying to boost their social skills.

Chenny Troupe's program at the Rice Center attempts to address these issues by showing the kids how to teach a dog basic obedience commands: heel, sit, stay, come, and down. But each six-week session covers more than basic obedience.

Demonstrations on how to keep a dog well groomed also are part of the program. And as the kids become more accomplished in working with the dogs in basic obedience, they move on to agility training with hurdles, a tunnel, and cones. The grand finale is a graduation ceremony in which the kids demonstrate what they've learned for guests and some of their

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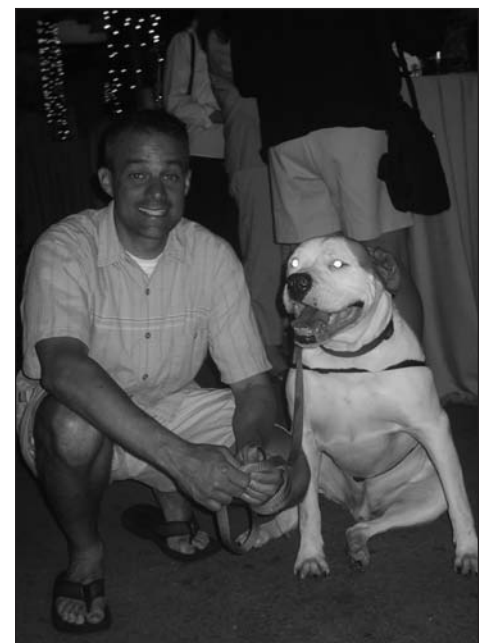
## Dogs Lend a Healing Paw at Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital

The mission of Schwab is to improve the health, functioning, and well-being of persons with disabilities by offering effective and efficient rehabilitation services. Strokes, amputations, brain and spinal cord injuries are just some of the disabilities that the patients at Schwab are diligently working to overcome. Rehabilitation in itself is hard work and just when you think the physical therapists are working you too hard, it is Tuesday evening and in come the dogs with the volunteers.

While many of the patients are struggling to cope with a disability, this is something that the dog doesn't see. The dog just sees a new friend. Depending on the disability, each patient has goals to work on during the hour with the dogs. These goals range from improving speech and memory to regaining use of their limbs.

The physical therapists indicate the goals for each patient. Then Sally Weiner, the program leader for Schwab, has the uncanny ability to match the right dog and volunteer with a patient to be able to make the most of the hour.

"Have you ever owned or trained a dog before" is one of the questions that gets the session started. Basic obedience commands are often the start of the session. Responding to voice and hand signals, these four-legged volunteers get right to work. Tossing a ball or using voice and hand signals help patients to make great strides in their recovery. Simply remembering the name of the dog and which command to use is a giant step forward for many of the patients. Praise, a special treat, or an extra toss of the ball is a great payday for the dog, and as the hour moves on, the patients are delighted to be able to command the dog to go through a



*continued on page 4*

*Sam and Dan*

## Chenny Dogs Help Kids at Rice Cope...*continued from the front page*

fellow residents. The Chenny Troupe diplomas and medals they receive at graduation are esteem boosters and tangible proof of their accomplishments.

In addition to working with the dogs, the kids have an opportunity during each session to talk about their feelings toward the dogs and the program itself. Volunteers encourage them to discuss which parts of the program they like best and to compare the differences and similarities between canine and human behavior.

Hands-on work with the dogs, combined with the discussions, can be a powerful tool in helping children and teens at the Rice Center to develop insights about coping with frustration,

fear, and issues concerning trust. If a dog hesitates to obey the kids' commands at first, volunteers explain that it takes time and patience to gain the dog's trust and cooperation. Volunteers show the kids how to deal with frustration and get positive results by patiently repeating commands and handling the dogs with gentle care.

Some of the kids show marked improvements by the end of the six-week session. Take Laura,\* for example. When she came into the program, she barely said a word. When she did speak, her voice was nearly a whisper. She listened to the discussions, but didn't participate. But each week, as the dogs obeyed her commands, Laura's confidence and voice grew

stronger and she gave commands with greater authority. At graduation, Laura beamed with pride. So did one of her Chennymates, who said, "I feel like I just graduated from college!"

As our next session gets underway, we'll reunite Charlie with the furry friend he made at a recent graduation. In turn, we hope to reunite Charlie with a child's natural ability to smile, laugh, and learn to cope with the world around him.

*Becky Voelker, Program Leader*

\*Children's names have been changed in accordance with confidentiality requirements.

## TroupeTalk

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**chenny  
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## From the President

Fellow Chenny Troupers – Happy August! It's hard to believe 2005 is more than half over, isn't it? I hope you are enjoying your summer and the fun and energy it brings. It has already been a busy year for Chenny Troupe and much more is planned for the remainder of the year.

Of course, the focal point of our organization throughout the year is our core "operations" — the programs in which human and canine volunteers work to support clients in their physical or psychosocial therapy goals. Each week we enable clients to return to their lives more quickly and more capably than perhaps traditional methods alone might allow. Not to mention that most clients have tremendous fun, and all receive incredible unconditional love from our canine companions. I know my dog, Jersey, is always sad to see summer upon us (with the exception of getting to swim in Lake Michigan!). I truly believe he knows what he gives to our clients and is eager to return to the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago in the fall.

While the core of Chenny Troupe is our programs, there is much support work behind the scenes to ensure continued and growing success. Early this year we completed our long-awaited re-imaging project, which includes a new logo and a new layout for *Troupe Talk*. During the second quarter, we wrapped up a review of our canine certification process. A group of individuals from a wide variety of

backgrounds studied our testing procedures to ensure we continue to accept top-quality canine volunteers into our programs so we continue to do our work safely and effectively. Finally, there is our research project with RIC and Northwestern University, which you can read about on page 3. Research will give us hard data for what most of us have known for so long—our therapy programs accelerate, sometimes astoundingly, the recovery of our clients and their return to their lives. We will soon be able to support this.

While our audience is wide, if you are receiving this newsletter it is because you have somehow supported our organization. It is only through your generosity—be it time, money, or any way you participate—that we are able to provide our services.

Enjoy the rest of your summer and thanks again for your continued support.

Sincerely,

*Lisa Crossett, President*



*Turner checks out the benefit (page 4)*

## “Take Your Dog to Dinner” 2005

Chenny Troupe volunteers are gearing up for our third annual “Take Your Dog to Dinner” fundraising event on Monday evening, September 12, 2005 (rain date September 19).

For the past two years, an increasing number of restaurants in the city filled hundreds of tables on a typically slow Monday night in September with well-behaved four- and two-legged diners. People can bring their dogs with them to dine al fresco at local restaurants, providing a small donation in exchange for an opportunity to enjoy a beautiful evening, great food, and the companionship of their pets. The participating restaurants in 2004 included such famous dining establishments as Gibson’s Steakhouse and Bar, Bice, Ranalli’s Lincoln Park, as well as some of the Lettuce Entertain You restaurants, such as Brasserie Jo and Scooz! Virtually all of last year’s dining spots have agreed to participate again this year, including special favorites like Oak Street

Beachstro, Nacional 27, Ben Pao, Phil and Lou’s, Rannalli’s Lincoln Park, and Club Lucky. Some of the restaurants will have special meals or desserts for canine diners, and some are planning entertainment! More restaurants sign on all the time, so be sure to check our website, [www.chennytroupe.org](http://www.chennytroupe.org), for the latest list and make your reservations directly with the participating location.

Our Volunteers will be at each location to present the companions of doggie diners with a “doggie bag” of pet-appropriate gifts, such as our commemorative dog bowl, treats from local dog bakeries, coupons for groomers and boutiques, and more. They’ll be available to answer questions about Chenny Troupe’s work, and keep an eye out for good candidates for our canine certi-

fication program. We raise funds at the “Take Your Dog to Dinner” events to help support our programs and to recruit new volunteers and supporters.

We have every reason to believe that this year’s Take Your Dog To Dinner will be even bigger and better than ever! It’s a fun way to

tell people about Chenny Troupe while they are out on the town with their furry best friends, and helps us raise the funds we need to continue to provide our programs for free. If you are interested in helping to plan or staff the event, or if you have suggestions for donations or sponsors, please contact the office.



*Dean and Derby practice their table manners for Take Your Dog to Dinner*

## Research: A New “Pet” Project for Chenny Troupe

Anyone who has ever seen Chenny Troupe dogs in action knows the effect that they can have on those lucky enough to be involved in therapy programs with them. Unfortunately, such anecdotal evidence holds little sway in the science of medicine. In an effort to bridge this gap of understanding, Chenny Troupe has partnered with the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago and Northwestern University in a research study to test quantifiably what Chenny Troupe observers know to be true qualitatively.

As the first project of the Research Committee, this was a harder task than it may have at first seemed. Just getting the study approved was a months-long process. RIC Recreational Therapist Brienne Costa, working with Chenny volunteers Joe Frey, Marcy List, and Research Committee Chair John Vranicar, with the help of RIC Research Liaison Nicole Thorne, secured the services of RIC Senior Research Scientist Dr. Rita K. Bode, Ph.D., to act as principal investigator for the study.

With Dr. Bode on board, we prepared a feasibility-study proposal for the study and submitted it to Northwestern’s Institutional Review Board (IRB), the group that monitors research projects to ensure protection of human research subjects for approval. The project submitted, “The Impact of Animal-Assisted Therapy on Patient Ambulation,” outlined a feasibility study to standardize procedures and collect data on the distance that subjects (RIC patients) walk with and without a Chenny Troupe dog. This study is a preliminary step in the design of a larger-scale study to more rigorously test the hypothesis that Chenny Troupe dogs have a positive effect on patient performance.

On March 25, 2005, Northwestern’s IRB gave its approval, news that the committee greeted with much fanfare.

The first trials of this study were conducted in May, with Chenny Troupe volunteers Dan Jarvis and his dog Sam, Mary Ann Alexander and Tag, and Michelle Gray and Jib. Joe Frey, Caryl Horn, and Sue Ann Selle served as aides.

The preliminary results were very positive and the summer break has given us an opportunity to “fine-tune” the procedures. Further trials will commence again in the fall, after approval of a revised study protocol, and will continue at least into March of 2006. Watch future issues of *TroupeTalk* for further updates.

Research is a long process. However, with this first project, always intended to be expanded into a much larger study, Chenny Troupe is taking steps into uncharted territory: the science of animal-assisted therapy.

If you would like to support Chenny Troupe’s exciting new research project call the office or call Research Committee Chair Joe Frey at 773-477-1952. It will involve two to three consecutive nights at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. You’ll work with a client, a therapist, and your CT dog at RIC. We also need volunteers without dogs. Dates will be scheduled after Labor Day.

*Joe Frey,  
Chair, Research Committee  
and Board Member*

## Funny Bones, Chenny's 2005 Benefit

What other benefit can you attend where Sam, the American Bulldog, barks into a microphone to get the audience's attention? Where Louie the sheltie performs obedience commands on hand signals? Where Maximilian the pug, Jib the Portuguese waterdog, and Callie the pit bull mix share treats with their friends Carly, the lab mix, and Dezi, the blue merle collie, while their humans have their tarot cards read? Where Turner, the yellow lab, and Jersey, the golden retriever, greet you at reception and guide you to the martini bar for a Chenny Tini? Only at Funny Bones, our annual benefit, held on June 23 at Kaleidoscope.

Escaping from summer's first heat wave, our two hundred guests gathered in the clubby space, lit by twinkling candles and filled with cool colors, to celebrate the joy and healing power of animal-assisted therapy. They feasted on a sumptuous buffet from Entertaining Company and enjoyed fine wine from Esser Wines and green apple Chenny Tinis with Fris vodka, made possible by the generosity of sup-

porters Madison Drake and Nick Andrews, proprietors of Phil and Lou's. The silent auction tables were filled with exciting items, including a behind the scenes tour of the Art Institute of Chicago with AIC Director Jim Cuno, weekends on the lake in Paw Paw Michigan, theatre, dining, and entertainment packages, and gift baskets galore. Guests had the opportunity to visit the Party Psychics, Myan and Beth, who looked into the past and the future, as well as to have a tarot card reading by Chenny Troupe friend Bobbie Thomas.

Guests were entertained by the comedy stylings of Joe Canale, who poked good-natured fun at the lengths humans will go to in order to please their pets. Lisa Crossett, Chenny Troupe's president, and Lisa Wiersma, Funny Bones chair, assisted by their dogs,

Jersey and Turner, shared information about our programs, while Louie and Becky Voelker demonstrated some of the work they do at the Rice Child and Family Center. Although the evening was intended to be light hearted and entertaining, no one forgot the serious nature of the work done by our volunteer teams. Four nights a week, nine months of the year, Chenny Troupe's volunteers and their remarkable therapy dogs work with people of all ages who are struggling to regain their health and well-being or learning to live with a chronic physical or emotional challenge. It takes an enormous amount of focus to stay on task and face what for some people becomes a lifetime of therapy. Chenny Troupe teams provide the motivation needed to walk an extra step, grasp a little tighter, or speak more clearly. The dogs lighten the mood with a wagging tail and the desire to please. That's the joy and the healing power of Chenny Troupe animal assisted therapy, and it was certainly something to celebrate!

If all this sounds like fun to you, don't miss next year's benefit!



*Funny Bone fun at Kaleidoscope*



### Dogs Lend a Healing Paw...continued from the front page

tunnel or over a jump. The smile on a patient's face when the dog completes the command is an incredible sight that will touch your heart. For a few moments, the patient focuses on something other than his or her disability.

On my first night volunteering with my dog, Nancy, I worked with a woman whom I will call Jane. Jane is a former Chenny Troupe volunteer. I can't begin to describe the array of emotions that went through me as the three of us worked together. Would Nancy and I be able to give

Jane what she needed? At the end of the hour, everyone gathers together, so the patients can show off what they have learned with the dog. While Jane, Nancy, and I were waiting our turn, Nancy sat next to Jane's wheel chair. Jane reached over, hugged Nancy, and simply said, "I love you Nancy." It was at that moment that I knew I had made the right decision to volunteer with the Chenny Troupe.

Sam, an American Bulldog, is an imposing figure, but soon wins over the patients with his

soft heart and willingness to please. Tootsie, a lab mix amazes patients with her puppy push-ups, while Maybel, a Corgi, is always willing to offer a paw in friendship. Zorro, a standard poodle is always ready to fetch a ball.

These furry volunteers offer the patients at Schwab an opportunity to increase their mobility and speech through structured training. But they also offer unconditional love, which is something that no one can ever have enough of.

*Victoria Anderson, Schwab Volunteer*

## 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 "One-Eyed Jack" Buchanan, by Mary Ann Alexander and Judy Keitz

In memory of "Molly" Chevalier by Scott Allen Barber

In memory of "Olivia" Lawler by Scott Allen Barber, Mr. and Mrs. Vic Smith and Judith Jaffe

In memory of "Sampson" Golden by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Rummage and Mr. and Mrs. Sanford Schulert

In memory of "Chessie" Smith by Mr. and Mrs. Vic Smith

In memory of "Nancy" Anderson by Scott Allen Barber

In memory of "Conan" Kasmersky by Scott Allen Barber, Mary Cook, and Mr. and Mrs. Jerome Stemnock

In memory of "Otis" Block by Wendi Mancini

In memory of Mr. Douglas Du Bay by Holly O'Mara

In memory of Mr. Joseph McDermott by Mr. and Mrs. Robert Burns

**Dr. John Kasmersky and Broadway Animal Hospital** have made contributions to Chenny Troupe in memory of the following pets:

- "Baldwin" Wieboldt-Doyle
- "Roodie" McCool
- "Keo" Conlon
- "Q" Holzhall
- "Molly" Pritzker, in whose memory an additional donation was made by Judy Keitz

## Obituaries

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of two Chenny Troupe therapy dogs.

**"One-Eyed Jack"** was the cherished companion of Elizabeth Buchanan. Elizabeth rescued Jack, a collie-shepherd mix, as a young dog and was so named because she had only one eye. This small inconvenience never stopped her, as Jack passed the Chenny Troupe therapy dog test on her first try in April 2000 and worked at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago until illness necessitated her early retirement. A favorite among the clients, Jack was always

ready to retrieve a Frisbee or "play dead," speak, or take a bow on command, hand or voice. Jack also represented RIC on the runway at a Chenny Troupe benefit sporting a diamond tiara. She is missed by all of her friends, especially those at RIC who benefited so much from her delightful disposition and willingness to work.

**"Sampson" Golden** passed the Chenny Troupe test in November 1995. The handsome yellow lab, who lived with Nancy and Mike Golden, had a long commute—he lived in Long Grove. But the drive never stopped him from coming into the city to

share his gentle nature with our clients. Simba came in 1996, and the two were an inseparable pair. At their last assignment at Somerset Place, Sampson and Simba would play hide and seek—one of the dogs would hide, and the other would be told to find him. It would delight the clients as well as the observers when one of the big dogs would return to his handler with his brother's leash in mouth. Sampson also joined Nancy at work for many years, and made friends everywhere he went. We know that Simba and the rest of the Golden family will miss Sampson, as will all of his friends at Somerset.

## Finding a New Leash on Love

His name is Louie, but for most of his puppyhood I called him *el Diablo*. He chewed on baseboards and shredded papers in my home office. He wasn't just mischievous; he had a temper, too. He barked angrily every morning if breakfast and a walk weren't timed to his liking.

Louie was a rascal. But his biggest fault was that he wasn't Niki, the dog I volunteered with for seven years at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

When Niki passed away in 2002, I had no second thoughts about choosing another dog to pick up where she left off. Life wouldn't be the same without her, but life wouldn't be the same without volunteer work in animal-assisted therapy, either.

I met Louie when he was five months old. His breeder told me that if ever she had seen a puppy with therapy dog potential, it was him. The night we met, he looked me square in the eye and put his paw on my knee. He seemed to know I had big plans for him.

Louie's alter ego, *el Diablo*, showed up two months later. He exploded into a furry mass of barking, chewing, non-stop motion. Two obedience classes, an agility class, and a year later, Louie was still hard to handle. When he turned two, I realized he might never be therapy dog material.

Help came just when I needed it. At Chenny Troupe's 2004 Summer Recess, I met Thea and John Pfeiffer and their beautiful collie, Dezi, who had recently passed Chenny Troupe's certi-

fication test. We agreed to meet weekly to practice obedience commands. Finally, Louie started to buckle down, grow up, and get serious.

Last November he passed the certification test, and introduced me to a new perspective on animal-assisted therapy. We're working with the kids at Chenny's Rice Center program in Evanston. Louie is energetic and athletic; Niki was a Zen master. Louie's activity level and outgoing personality get me involved with our clients in far more interactive ways than did Niki's more reserved manner.

I'll always miss Niki and her gentle ways. But Louie and the kids at Rice have shown me that love can be wonderful the second time around.

*Becky Voelker*

# Kibbles and Bits

Save Monday, September 12, for the third annual "Take Your Dog to Dinner!!"

Check our Web site, [www.chennytroupe.org](http://www.chennytroupe.org), for participating locations and make your reservations at your favorite outdoor spot early. If you want to help with the event, please call the office. It's a great way to meet other volunteers and have a fabulous time!

Come see us at the **Bucktown Arts Fest on Saturday, August 27, and Sunday, August 28, 11 A.M.–7 P.M.** It's a great festival and we'll be spreading the word about Chenny Troupe and "Take Your Dog to Dinner." If you can help, please call the office.

**REMINDER:** Our next practice and test dates are September 10 and September 17. We are looking for well-trained dogs and their people who want to participate in one of the most rewarding volunteer experiences in Chicago! If you know of potential candidates, have them contact the office, or let us know and we will send them the information.

**The Chenny Troupe, Inc. Volunteer News** is another of Chenny Troupe's new looks this year. It is a colorful, informative e-mail newsletter that gives timely notification of Chenny events. Be sure that the Chenny office has your current e-mail address for the *Volunteer News*.



Michelle Schwartz,  
Caryl Horn,  
Mary Ann Alexander,  
and Janet Eaton



Kim Kubiak and John Himmel

*Even without their dogs, Chenny volunteers have a great time at the volunteer appreciation party.*

**Vet Forms** have been sent out to all volunteers with dogs. Please be sure to have it completed and return it to the office by September 6. Remember, your dog may NOT return to the program if we do not have the completed vet form in the office.

**"Meet the Faces behind the Dogs"** was the theme of this year's volunteer appreciation party at Phil and Lou's restaurant on June 6. A lively group of "humans only" enjoyed a warm summer evening getting to know each other over some great food and cold

beverages. Volunteers received "bones" for their dogs' years of service (to be attached to their vests), and each human volunteer received a Chenny Troupe hat bearing our new logo. Some volunteers tried the new green apple Chenny Tini, developed for us by Phil and Lou's and permanently appearing on their menu! If you are an active volunteer and have not received your bones and hat, please call the office. Don't miss the chance to show off this great looking cap during the summer months!

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