

SPEAK!



Vol. 19, No. 2, Winter 2010 | Canine Therapy Corps newsletter

A Message from the Executive Director

In January 2009, we began working at the Easter Seals Therapeutic School and Center for Autism Research. Over the past two years, we have worked closely with Dan Nilson, the program administrator at Easter Seals and a devoted teacher, as well as a number of teachers, social workers and therapists at the school. We've had in service trainings, a year of assistance from Shelly Gasper, our consulting therapist and input from the volunteers who have worked at the school. Our program has developed and matured. We are very proud of our program at Easter Seals!

In the following pages, we would like to share with you three different perspectives of the Easter Seals program. I hope you will be touched by the authors' energy and affection for our work and for the students.

Janet Rosen Eaton

EASTER SEALS: THE VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE Dogs + Kids = Progress (No matter how you define it)

Charity Simpson

In choosing a program, I knew it had to involve children; they are Dori's absolute favorite kind of people. No amount of fast movement, strange noises, or grabbing hands deter her from interacting with kids. I spoke to several volunteers about the program which interested me the most: Easter Seals Therapeutic School. What I heard were words like "intense" and gentle cautions that some students make relatively little progress, which may discourage some volunteers. Since I grew up going to work with my dad at group homes for the developmentally disabled, this felt like the perfect program for both of us.

Dori amazed me with her resiliency and love for the kids at Easter Seals. Since we work with kids with impulse control and



Dori in the gym at Easter Seals

motor skill issues there were moments that could be described as "intense." No matter what happened, Dori always voluntarily and happily continued to work with every student. She's excited to go into the school each time we arrive.

While I am proud of my dog, it is the kids who impress me. I was touched by a student who asked me my name after only 3 weeks and gave me a hug. We were stunned to hear a student respond verbally to a question asked about Dori. One student

cont. page 3

UNLEASHED: THERAPY DOGS DRIVE THE SUCCESS



Max Zemon takes a break.

On October 15, the Ravenswood Event Center opened its doors for **UNLEASHED! Come Out and Play**. Inside the Showroom, guests were surrounded by a fascinating collection of classic cars and neon that set the stage for a very unique evening. Volunteer Joy Schmoll snapped pictures as guests climbed into the Nash Healy convertible with our therapy dogs, and then watched the big screen for their moment of

fame! Others visited the photo booth and took home their pictures instead. Check our website (www.caninetherapycorps.org) for a look. Others perused the silent auction and bid on work by local artists, vacations and experiences, and other unique items. The food was plentiful, the bar was open, and the band played all night!

The centerpiece of the evening was the introduction of our therapy dogs. Chris Indelli, the mother of a participant in our program at Advocate Lutheran General Children's Hospital, introduced our video, *Dogs That Heal*. Chris told the attentive audience how the dogs help to motivate and empower children with disabilities who face a lifetime of challenges. After the short film, Dan Nilson, Program Administrator at Easter Seals Therapeutic School and Center for Autism Research shared his experience with our program. You will find his comments on page 3 of this newsletter.

By all accounts, the evening was a great success. Even those who were not the high bidders at the silent auction did not go home empty handed. There were delicious Morkes chocolate dogs for everyone and pet owners were able to bring home Pet Steaktopia prime beef treats for their dogs to ease their guilt for leaving their pets at home while they were out partying!

Thank you to the volunteer teams who were at **UNLEASHED!** this year: Denise Bloom and Chuck Postma and Ria, Mary Dellorto and Gemma, Julie and Ken Fixler and Billy, Louie Greenebaum and Rou, Joyce Hansen and Siena, Anne Maxfield and Hampton, Sheryl and Paul Schiff and Fannie and Libby, Marcia Slomowitz and Baguette, Lisa Wiersma and Dubs and David Zemon and Max. Every dog was on his or her best behavior in spite of all the distractions.

cont. page 4

Kibbles and Bits

Congratulations to the new teams who passed the Canine Therapy Corps certification test in June, August and November: **Judy Keitz** and **Lexi**, a Golden Retriever, **Sheryl** and **Paul Schiff** and **Fanny**, a Beagle, **Bill Lennon** and **Scout**, a Golden mix, **Judith Jaffe** and **Willow**, a Collie, **Jerry Kirkpatrick** and **Dude**, a German Shepherd mix, **Birgit Mantilla** and **Olive**, a King Charles Cavalier Spaniel, **Jessica Tartof** and **Piper**, an Australian Shepherd, and **Karen Wiles** and **Hogan**, a Golden Retriever.

Not all of our work is done by our volunteers with dogs. We welcome these volunteers who help us both in and outside of programs: **Stacey Campell**, **Lauren Petersen Edwards**, **Jackie Huxel**, **Naomi Keller**, **Anna Orsini**, **Sujatha Ramakrishna** and **Lindsey Webber**.

In June, Canine Therapy Corps hosted the Annual Volunteer Appreciation party at Market in the West Loop. The nasty weather did not dampen our spirits as we hon-



Fanny and Lexi



Dude, Willow, Hogan, Olive and Piper

ored the many years of service that our volunteers have provided. **Eileen Fitzsimons** was the fourth recipient of the McCarthy Award for Excellence. Eileen has been a volunteer since 2003, and has been a contributor to and the editor of our newsletter, worked as a handler for at least three dogs and is the program leader at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. We also honored these terrific teams for five years of devoted service: **Michelle Gray** and **Jib**, **Meg** and **Tony Kremer** and **Boots**, **Sarah Stewart** and **Gus**, **Bunny Wagner** and **Zoe** and **Cynthia Scazzero** and **Coco Latte**. The following volunteers were honored for an amazing ten years of service: **Wendy Mancini**, **Lisa** and **Michael Sparrow**, and **Jersey**, **Nancy Spokany**, **Lisa Wiersma** and **Turner**,

Sharon Van Den Hende and **Max** (who passed away last spring). We are incredibly proud and grateful that our volunteers remain so deeply committed to our mission and to our work.

Congratulations to **Lisa** and **Michael Sparrow** on the birth of their son, **Eli** who arrived August 18. Given his parents' longevity as volunteers, we expect him at orientation very soon!



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SPEAK!

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Donations

Donations in memory of, or in honor of, a special person or pet 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. Canine Therapy Corps is a 501(c)(3) organization, and your gift is tax exempt to the extent permitted by law.

Donations were made to Canine Therapy Corps:

In memory of Dylan Beck

by Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Ahrenholz

In memory of Faeden Beck by Mr. and Mrs. Glenn

Ahrenholz and Peter and Amy Mills

In memory of Bob by Mrs. Kathy Seidel

In honor of River Coleman

by Mr. and Mrs. Neil Coleman

In honor of Callie Cozzolino and Scotch, Rou and

Swindle by Connie and Kelly Smith

In memory of Sparky Eaton by Mrs. Edith Rosen and

Mrs. and Mrs. Jerome Stemnock

In honor of Debra Hadelman by Mrs. Janet Kaplan,

Mr. and Mrs. Jim Kowalczyk and Ms. Janice Pryce and Mr. Gary Kagan

In memory of Thor and Brutus Hoffman

by Mr. and Mrs. Michael Early and

Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Izbicky

In memory of Mr. Robert Keitz

by Ms. Christine Conway and Mr. David DePue

In honor of Sara Newman's graduation

by Dr. Marjorie Getz and Dr. David Sheftel

In memory of Max Van Den Hende

by Scott Allan Barber

In honor of Dr. Linda Vochavich by Ms. Ellise Steglinski

In memory of Simba Whisner by Ms. Sue Ann Selle

THE VOLUNTEER'S PERSPECTIVE

cont. from page 1

would lay down next to Dori and stroke her so sweetly it broke my heart when his turn was over. The biggest gesture came from a non-verbal and physically-impaired student. We helped with his occupational therapy where he would often resist being touched, avoid eye contact and on bad days would be all around non-compliant. On our last day before break he made us all tear up. He went to the very heavy fire door that he had never opened on his own and he not only opened it, but he motioned for us to go through the door while he held it open. For a brief moment he came out of his world and into ours. It was a lesson on redefining the word "progress."

Dori passed the Canine Therapy Corps certification test in March, 2010 on her first attempt!

EASTER SEALS: THE PROGRAM LEADER'S PERSPECTIVE

Jacinda Bauman

I have been lucky enough to have been volunteering at Easter Seals since the program's inception, and I have enjoyed every minute of it. One of the most challenging, and incredible, things about Easter Seals is the wide range of students it serves, from very young, nonverbal and non-communicative students to young adults, some of whom are of pretty remarkable ability, who have aged into the vocational program.

It is our responsibility to continually adjust the Canine Therapy Corps program exercises to the specific needs of the students. I believe that this constant reassessment helps to keep us, as volunteers, particularly engaged. One of the most successful and rewarding group exercises has also been one of the most basic: teaching small groups of the older vocational students to become "dog trainers."

Despite the seeming simplicity, it is difficult, from one week to another, to get the students to remember commands from "sit" to "down" to "stay" and "heel." It can take quite a while to explain the sequencing involved in walking a dog, beginning with putting on a collar and ending with a walk down the halls. But I have seen a number of students transform in a matter of weeks from relatively nonverbal, disengaged, and quite often fearful young people into smiling,

confident animal stewards who are able to give commands both verbally and by use of hand signals. For both the students and the volunteers, slow progress and constant repetition can be frustrating, but it is an essential part of the learning process.

At the end of the session, we have graduation day. I unabashedly love graduation day. Each student demonstrates the skills they have learned, and they never fail to amaze the volunteers, and often their instructors, with their newfound abilities. They are rewarded with certificates of program completion, photographs of themselves with their dogs, and, most importantly, a sense of pride. Seeing the students smile, laugh, and clap for themselves and each other makes all of the hard work well worth it. I couldn't be more proud of what Canine Therapy Corps and the students have accomplished at Easter Seals.

EASTER SEALS: THE EDUCATOR'S PERSPECTIVE

Dan Nilson

When I was given a brochure by our School Administrator, I wasn't sure how our students living with autism would react. I know some of them have pets at home, but do they engage with their family pet? I decided to give Canine Therapy Corps a call and see what this was all about. After speaking with Callie Cozzolino and hearing her excitement of how interactive animal assisted therapy programs developed by Canine Therapy Corps could supplement our academic and vocational programs, I wanted to try to make this work because the program sounded great and the cost was even better! The first day the dogs came into the building, the school was abuzz. Many of the students were really drawn to the dogs, even coming up and laying next to a pit bull (it must have been sweet Rou).

Because so many classes wanted to participate, I had the difficult task of choosing which classes would participate in our pilot program, which was a huge success. Success isn't always measured by numbers or figures, but also by student smiles.

Over the past two years, we have been pleased to see improvements in:

- Appropriate social interaction with the dogs AND volunteers, as well as engag-

ing in social activities with the dogs such as playing games or walking the dog. This also increases sensory exploration, a willingness to pet the dogs.

- Functional communication skills via picture exchange or speech to request a desired interaction with the dog, forming simple sentences such as "I want to pet the dog."
- Fine motor skill development such as opening food or treat containers, feeding the dogs treats utilizing refined grasping patterns.
- Sequencing functional activities such as remembering the steps needed to take a dog for a walk.
- Promoting choices and facilitating leisure activities, empowering students who have difficulty making independent choices by providing opportunities to choose different activities with the dog using a choice board.

On behalf of our students at Easter Seals Therapeutic School and Center for Autism Research, I would like to thank Canine Therapy Corps for the work they have done and hopefully, will continue to do!

CANINE THERAPY CORPS SERVES PATIENTS AT NORTHWESTERN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL

Canine Therapy Corps is proud to announce that we have begun a new program in the Robert H. Lurie Comprehensive Cancer Center at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. Launched in July after the hospital determined that we met its standard of excellence, the program serves inpatients whose average stay is a week to ten days. Unlike our more active programs, the therapy dogs and their handlers visit patients in their rooms. The gentle ambassadors provide comfort, companionship and a distraction from pain, depression or the boredom of hospital routine for patients and their families. The staff benefits from the dogs' presence as well. We hope to bring more dogs and see more patients as the hospital becomes used to seeing dogs on the units!



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SPEAK!

In Memoriam

We have lost some very dear friends this year. Each of them was unique in his or her wonderful way, and brought strength, motivation and hope to every person whose lives they touched. They will all be missed.

Sam Jarvis was a smiling American Bull Dog who suppressed his exuberance just long enough to pass our therapy dog certification test in November, 2004. Until his passing in February, Sam was a favorite of patients at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital and the Hematology - Oncology Department at Advocate Lutheran General

Children's Hospital. Sam was always a favorite at outreach events and was happiest when he could goof around with young people.

Hero Mantilla, an English Mastiff, began his career with Canine Therapy Corps in March, 2009. He wowed the kids at The Heartland Alliance SCİY and at Rice Child and Family Center with his gentle nature, his enormity and his mastery of agility and obedience skills. Hero had a long life for a giant breed; he was 10 ½ years old at his passing.

Libby Dellorto was a member of an illustrious family of Canine Therapy Corps dogs. Mary Dellorto's 6th therapy dog, she was a

yellow Labrador retriever who was certified in January and worked at Swedish Covenant Hospital for her very short career with us. She was a great hit at I Am Me Camp in June. Sadly, Libby died unexpectedly in September.

Dylan Beck was a veteran volunteer who passed his certification test in November 2002. During his long career, Dylan worked at Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital, Keshet, and the Hematology-Oncology Department at Advocate Lutheran General Children's Hospital. He was a hit at I Am Me Camp, at the Advocate Kids Expo, and never missed a chance to help out when there were children involved.

Unleashed

cont. from pg. 1



The vets of Family Pet Animal Hospital and Rou

Special thanks to our incomparable committee: Ginny Beck, Mary Bookman, Carolyn Chandler, Andrea Freedberg, Debra Hadelman, Judy Keitz, Melissa Kelly, Linda Levy, Christine Montet, Barbara Young Morris, Julie Muccillo, Beth Tap and Lisa Wiersma.

Bruce Crown and The Mullooly Carey Foundation; Bark Park Sponsors - Advocate Lutheran General Children's Hospital, Chopper Trading LLC, Debra and Jordan Hadelman, Barbara Young Morris and Winston and Strawn LLP; Puptown - Animal Emergency & Treatment Centers, Barb, Jon & Chiquita Brightman, Family Pet Animal Hospital, Julie & Ken Fixler, Dr. Marjorie Getz & Dr. David Sheftel, Haymarket Center, Judy Keitz, Harlene & Thomas Matyas, Julie Muccillo & Matt Pollack, Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, Swedish Covenant Hospital, Douglas Walker and Lisa Wiersma. Our generous in kind donors included Allen Brothers, Flying Dog Brewery, The Garvey Group, the Romano Family, Roscoe Village Animal Hospital and Sango LLC Public Relations and Marketing Services.

The evening's benefactors included: Wiggly Field Sponsors - Deborah and

HEELING HEARTS FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Send a thoughtful gift at the holidays (or treat yourself) and support Canine Therapy Corps by adopting a therapy dog. Your \$50 gift includes a festive holiday card sent to you, or directly to the lucky recipient, sharing the latest news from Canine Therapy Corps, plus your therapy dog's special "business card." You can choose your favorite dog and complete your shopping through our website, www.caninetherapycorps.org, or by calling our office at 773.404.6467