



**December
2008**



URGENT

***Newsletter Editor
Layout Artist Required
for OTD Newsletter.***

Lisa, our newsletter editor, is on maternity leave until next summer. If you have good writing skills and are comfortable doing basic layout (using Microsoft Word would be fine), maybe you would be interested in trying your hand for the next two issues – March 15 and June 15. (flexible).

The communications committee would be happy to support you in this as to policy, content and past issues.

Please write Claire at communications@ottawatherapydogs.ca

WRITER'S WORKSHOP

PROPOSED for mid-January.

Have you been thinking about creating your 'Member Team' page for the OTD Web site, but haven't gotten around to it? Then ***this is for you!***

In past newsletters, OTD members have been invited to write a short profile for the Member's area of our Web site, but only a few people have responded. So, to ***make it easy***, the Communications Committee is inviting you to a ...

Free two-hour writing workshop

Location and date will be arranged with the participants

The workshop will be lead by our member-page coordinator and newsletter editor, who will take you through some of the common threads in the member profiles, then assist with brain-storming, composition and editing. The communications committee would love to have other members who enjoy writing join us.

If members would like, we will find a dog-friendly location for the workshop, so that we can take digital pictures to accompany the profiles (and enjoy the company of our dogs, of course).

Interested? Write Claire at communications@ottawatherapydogs.ca



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Carole Eldridge

In our last newsletter I wrote 'My Story as an OTD Member' and told you that I had attended my first Board meeting as a Board Member at Large and about the amazing support that I received from OTD members after the loss of my Therapy Dog - Sufur.

My story continues as an Associate Member.

In May 2008 I had the privilege of being nominated to become the Chair of the Board for the next two years. You should know that in all my years of working with Volunteer Boards of Directors and Committees, I have never experienced such a high level of commitment and hands on effort by everyone. Absolutely incredible!

Kate Miller became our part-time Administrator in May. She has been invaluable as she keeps track of the threads that are an integral part of a viable and working organization.

Following an Agenda packed Saturday morning in late October, OTD has an agreed upon a vision for moving forward. We are examining the ways we can ensure that we have an organization that is strong, sustainable, planned and achieving its goals; how to enhance our engagement of those motivated OTD Associates and 'Handler' Members who want to be more active within the organization; how to best enable the organization to grow; and, how to enhance our leadership in the field, our linkages within the community and to document our knowledge.

One of the immediate plans includes expediting the process of application to placement for new Handlers and their dogs while continuing to maintain our high standards of practice. Many of you have been asked to assist us with mentoring our new members – your immediate willingness to work with them. As a result of your efforts, we have not only reduced the time, we have also ensured that they are not feeling isolated. Thank you.

Others of you have assisted in a myriad of ways from working with our Committees, assisting in completion of reference checks for new handlers, proposing new initiatives for OTD to consider; all the while continuing to visit READ is also moving forward and will ideally be expanding. On December 12th there will be an Evaluation of those teams who expressed an interest in the program. We also anticipate that this process will be available on a more frequent basis for qualified applicants.

More initiatives are in the works – so please expect to hear from us soon.

OTD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Carole Eldridge, Chair (chair@ottawatherapydogs.ca)
Susan Roberts, Vice Chair (vicechair@ottawatherapydogs.ca)
Margot Montgomery, Secretary (secretary@ottawatherapydogs.ca)
Tanya Mackin, Treasurer (treasurer@ottawatherapydogs.ca)
Joan Allum, Director (director@ottawatherapydogs.ca)

FIVE YEAR CERTIFICATES

Congratulations to the following who were awarded 5 year certificates at the last AGM meeting.

Frances Holmes and Radar,

Chantel Hutter (Moore) and Chelsea,

Natalie Vertefeuille and Okay-Dokey,

Joan Meilke and Katie,

Ann Lambert and Bracken and

Barbara White and Shadow

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP AWARD

An Honorary Membership was awarded to Renée Poirier at the last AGM in order to recognize her many volunteer hours and commitment to OTD. Renée has worked as a Recreation Therapist for many years at the Sisters of Charity (Formerly known as St. Vincent's). Over the years, Renée has mentored a number of new OTD teams; been actively involved with OTD fund raising events; hosted many OTD meetings in her facility; been there for consultation whenever we needed her; is a champion for OTD within her organization and throughout the hospital community; is always available to OTD to make presentations at our meetings and community activities; and, this year, presented OTD with its very own wheelchair to be used during Orientation and Evaluation sessions. Thank you very much, Renée, and congratulations!

OTD VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR 2007

Claire Heistek was named OTD Volunteer of the year. She was the OTD member nominated by Marilyn Benoit for the award. Claire Heistek has contributed to OTD in a myriad of ways for many years. Her contributions have included (though are not limited to): the development of an ATT program with autistic adults at the Loeb Centre, an AAT program in the mental Health Unit at CHEO, a placement at the Rehabilitation Centre, and working with Tobie with the READ program since 2005. Additionally Claire was OTD's Newsletter Editor for three years, and has been the 'interim' Chair of OTD's Communications Committee for the past year (a job she will be continuing for (we hope) a long time.

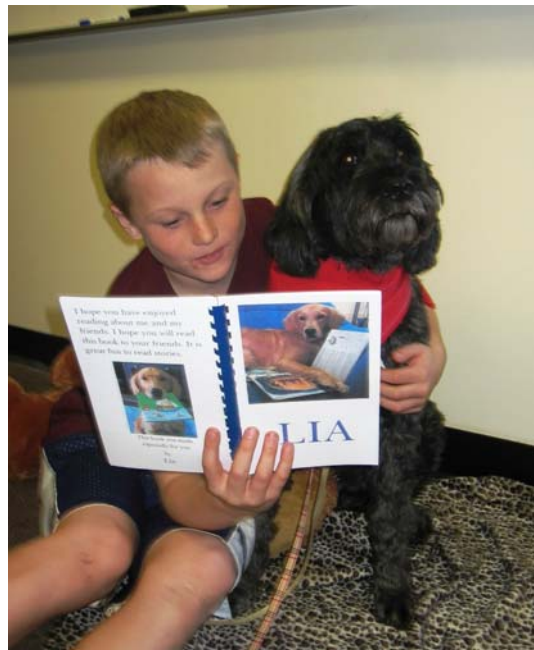
It's Wednesday afternoon and there is a buzz of anticipation at Elgin Street Public School. Everyone knows that Jazz, Margot Montgomery's Portuguese water dog, will be arriving shortly to fulfill her duties as the school's canine therapist. So what is a large, hairy dog doing in a school setting, you may ask? Jazz is one of many dogs that are specially trained to provide reading assistance to children of all ages through a program called R.E.A.D.® or "Reading Education Assistance Dogs".

R.E.A.D. began in 1999 in Salt Lake City, Utah, by Intermountain Therapy Animals, Inc. The mission of the R.E.A.D. program is to improve the literacy skills of children through the assistance of registered therapy teams as literacy mentors. The program aims to improve children's reading and communication skills by employing a powerful method: reading to a non-judgmental, attentive dog. R.E.A.D. dogs are registered therapy animals who volunteer with their owner as a team, going to schools and libraries as reading companions for children.

Today, hundreds of registered R.E.A.D. teams work throughout the United States and Canada. OTD was lucky enough to have an interested member, Chantel Hutter (Moore), to bring the program to the Ottawa area in 2004. Currently, several teams visit area schools, but the program is getting ready to expand. Chantel and R.E.A.D.'s new coordinator, Karen Luker, are training 7 potential new teams.

As these teams prepare to obtain their certification, OTD is firming up its eligibility and evaluation criteria. Interested candidates must have completed one year of other OTD work in the field with a successful record and reliable attendance. They are also assessed by an accredited evaluator using OTD's evaluation criteria, with additional requirements specific to the demands of a child intensive environment. Among the qualities sought in a potential R.E.A.D. dog are:

- ❑ Solid obedience skills;
- ❑ Calm, quiet, attentive and comfortable in low-key setting;
- ❑ Good response to name or other method of showing attentiveness;
- ❑ Neutral to presence of toys crayons, paper, books and lunch remnants in trash baskets;
- ❑ Cool around other animals;
- ❑ Able to deal with close and unexpected encounters with large groups of rambunctious children. Tolerant of tugging, pulling and exuberant handling.



Lake Korte-Moore reading to Jazz

Handlers are also required to adhere to certain standards:

- ❑ Commit to the READ program and make time during the school year, estimated at weekly 1.5 – 2 hour sessions or frequent sessions at a public library;
- ❑ Enjoy children, and a willingness to get to know the children and understand their challenges; be compassionate and sensitive to the hesitant and reticent child; ongoing patience with the overactive child, tolerance with reading the same books, be flexible and have the ability to go with the flow;

- ❑ Love reading, is a competent reader, is willing to discover children's books and discern age-appropriate reading material or related activities and to seek help from teachers, school staff and librarians as needed;
- ❑ Pursue animal assisted therapy (AAT) objectives with structure and rigour and regularly report progress to OTD. Interacts with school staff, seeks information, asks for help where needed;
- ❑ Willing to teach his/her dog a few new commands, like the paw-stay and focused attention (i.e.: look);
- ❑ Commit to a high standard of dog grooming, which is especially important in promoting health and hygienic practices to children, including using Nature's Miracle Dirt and Dander Solution that is required by R.E.A.D.

Handlers are also required to study Intermountain Therapy Animals' (ITA) manual, successfully complete a written test, and join ITA. Once a team is deemed eligible to participate in the program, OTD matches the handler to a suitable facility. Sites undergo an evaluation as with other OTD visits.

Benefits to the children are numerous. In addition to helping to improve their reading fluency and comprehension, there is a positive impact on the student's desire to read aloud and participate in reading activities. Reports of improved self-esteem are numerous. Children have also been known to take more interest and pride in their hygiene practices as a result of the dogs' strict adherence to grooming standards.

So as Jazz approaches the front door of Elgin Street Public School, she and Margot share pride in knowing that they are bringing much more than a simple program to the school. They are helping children in many ways and deriving a great deal of satisfaction from the process!

Elyse Gravel

My name is Elyse and I have been part of Ottawa Therapy dogs with Sophie my Standard poodle for about a year and a half. Let me start by saying that we have both are enjoying every bit of it.

Once every second Wednesdays we visit a centre for senior citizen in Masham, Qué. and the other Wednesday we go to the Wakefield hospital in the Alzheimer ward. On Thursdays, we visit La Lanterne, which is a day care center for about ten mentally deficient persons. Our job there is a bit different because we get to play with a frisbee, fetch the stick, jump over the poll, do tricks or just go around and get petted and socialize. It is lots of fun. In order to be efficient at her job at La Lanterne, Sophie cannot really be on her leash, so I did not think it was a big deal since we have been performing there with success since the beginning.

Then, at the hospital, I was asked by the staff if Sophie could just wander on her own without the leash (of course with my close supervision) in order that it appear as though she belongs there as their pet, so I finally gave in. I knew that it is not in the rules but... I said to myself: *"Sophie is so good and gentle and listens very well to my command so what harm could be done right?."*

That was about one month before the OTD annual general meeting in May. Once there, at the meeting, after listening to everything and how important the standards of practices are, the guilty feeling snuck into in my soul." (*Arghhh... I have to tell... Chut! If I say nothing, it will be fine. No. I should say something. No! Everyone will stare at me. I can not say it now. Pfiou! Meeting is over and no one knows any different.*)

All the way home (an hour and half drive), that guilty feeling reappeared and did not go away. It was poking at me like the devil with a stick, in my rear end! And it was reaching my stomach. So the next day, I got on the e-mail and I confessed.

First, I sent the e-mail to Carole, the chair of the board of director, she let me know that she would summon up the others of the board and to stand fast until she could counsel me. So I took the summer off (I just could not go on with that guilty feeling). (*Just kidding*). Sophie does not perform well in the summer heat. Some people relax when it is hot; she is a bit more dramatic: she lies down everywhere.

Upon my return in September, Carole e-mailed me to let me know I would be re-evaluated to see how I was doing the job, I guess. Something to do with insurance liabilities. Soooo, there it went again, that gnawing feeling." *Am I not performing well? Am I not giving lots of good in people's heart? Maybe I should just quit".* Any how, once I contacted the chief evaluator, Catherine, we met at the hospital. It turned out it was not so bad after all. She is very nice. And she gave me tricks to maybe improve on the skills to handle Sophie. Then she made me realize that sometimes the residents don't see what is in front of them, and that it can be dangerous if they fell. Also, on the leash, there is a better control such as not licking the crumbs on the floor and so forth. All the bad behaviour they can develop on their own can be avoided.

The next week we met again but this time to the other facility, La Lanterne. I said to myself how am I going to improve there? Well, it turned out that we did do a good job, so Catherine told me, and I did let Sophie perform loose only to put her back on the leash when wandering around and get petted as she has sometimes an uneasy feeling with some of the participants when they are abrupt or precipitous. With the lead, I can manoeuvre her around better. It is also safer when there are more than three or four participants surrounding her giving her the uneasy feeling and if she loses sight of me. Then she knows I have control and I am there for her. Additionally let's not forget to ask each participant to wash their hands before touching your dog.

The point of this story is to let you know, dear reader that if there are some standards in OTD, they are there for a reason. They are not there to send us to jail or to send the devil after us if we don't apply them. Rules are there to make a better and safer environment for both your clientele and team and a better feeling as well. *Also to send a little angel in your soul (ha! ha!).*

Thank you for bearing with me

HOW CALYPSO MADE ME SHELL OUT \$...

Nyam Bann

So there we were, my favourite - my only, actually – dog and I walking along the path on a very cold and rainy November morning. It was such a miserable day that Calypso did not even want to stop to do her usual sniffing of anything and everything. I decided that enough was enough – having frozen my fingers to the bone – so I turned around to head back home, with visions of a hot, steaming cup of coffee for me and a bone for Calypso.

But Calypso stood fast, squinting against the pelting rain. I tugged on her leash and reminded her of that bone waiting for her (truth be told I was more concerned with my hot coffee, really). But she would not budge. In fact, she kept craning her neck away from me, trying to get me to go in the opposite direction (away from home and coffee but you already know about the coffee, so I won't belabour the point). So she won. What can I say, I'm a soft touch. So on we trudged, when again she stood fast, this time "pointing" as it were. She's not a pointer but something in her stance told me that she was pointing. I'm intuitive that way. So I glanced over to where she was "pointing". And there, among the bushes, was Odysseus. Well he wasn't Odysseus just yet. He was just a little white bunny rabbit, soaked and obviously chilled to the bone.



Come on out for brekkie...

So Calypso and I chased the bunny rabbit around for a bit. He knew that we were his friends but I guess he couldn't quite figure out in what way. He had that look in his eyes as if to say, "What do you two want from me". I eventually snagged him, wrapped him up in my scarf and cuddled him close as I walked home with Calypso trotting beside me, nudging me with her nose and whining all the way. I can still hear the whining but I don't know what it signified. I suppose I'll never know.

Well bunny rabbit is now snugly ensconced in his cage beside me as I write this little article. Mind you this is \$218 later. Who knew that a little fluffy white thing could cost that much in supplies and food. But he is cute. He is called Odysseus of course, as Calypso lured him to our "isle" (to our house as it were, but it sounds more romantic to say, "Isle"). And Calypso, well she acts as the proud Mommy. What can it hurt to let her believe that she is, even if I am the one who feeds Odysseus and cleans his cage and has to ensure that there are no electrical wires of any kind visible at bunny-rabbit-height around the house. But he *is* cute. Good on ya, 'lypso.

Blessing of the Animals September 2008

Julianne Labreche

Amid the splendours of a beautiful fall day in the Gatineau Hills, Ottawa Therapy Dog teams joined the Low United Church community in late September to celebrate a Blessing of the Animals service.

For several years, the little Gatineau church community has organized the blessing for local residents and their pets.

This year, OTD teams were asked to attend the event as special guests and their contribution to the community was recognized.

A collection was taken. In total, a gift of \$154.44 was given to OTD.

A memorial service also was held at the church, in part to honour therapy dogs that have passed away.

Rev. Read Sherman, the United Church minister who conducted the service, encouraged OTD handlers to talk about their community work. Dr. Karine Langley spoke about her work with Bubba, her therapy dog, in an Alzheimer's unit. Patricia McElvoy, another OTD handler, opened the blessing with Kayley, her West Highland Terrier, who impressed onlookers with a special trick- to sit and say her prayers.

Local community members provided homemade baking for the handlers, as well as loot bags and certificates of blessing for the animals.

Church members were impressed by the quiet good manners of the therapy dogs and praised the skill of the handlers.

OTD volunteers in the Wakefield and West Quebec region were thanked in particular, as many local residents visit these hospitals and nursing homes.

Our thanks to the Low United Church for remembering OTD in preparations for their service this year.



Patricia and Kayley



Rev. Read Sherman, Kathleen Wilson and her dogs at the Blessing of the Animals

Welcome to our new members

October '08

Janice Cameron-Calouri and Azor

Jill Davies and Bennie

Claudia Ferland and Jazz

Chantal Gervais and Tundra

Claire Larochelle and Max

Joanne Ledger and Bianca

Shirley Stevenson and Abby

Ellie Rock and P.D.

April '08

Sandra Franks and Stryder

Nyam Bann and Calypso

Kelly-Anne Campbell and

Tova

Suzanie Chua and Sybs

Bud (Lorne) Johnston and

Maggie

John MacKinnon and Buster

Shelley MacWhirter and

Kasco

Georgia Tomlin and Spring

Dona Wright and Jesse

March '08

Barbara Taylor and Casey

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

WWW.ottawatherapydogs.ca

THANKS TO OUR SUPPORTERS

AWARDS PRESENTATION- 2008 AGM
 CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION
 Community Foundation of Ottawa
 Leacross Foundation
 Export Development Corporation
 LCBO- Eastern Branch (Laurie Brown)
 Bark and Fitz
 United Way

DONORS

Minto
 Lois Drummond- senior graphic designer-
 Minto
 Leimerk Developments
 Royal Canadian Legion Branch 593
 Sarah Thompson
 Best Friends School of Dog Training
 Julianne Labreche, A Primrose Court
 Publication
 Adup Corporation
 Costco Wholesale
 Hillary's Cleaners, Bank Street
 Independent Linen Service
 Starbucks, Stafford Centre Your Credit Union
 Dr. Paul Benoit
 Royal Canadian Legion, Westboro Branch 480
 Ottawa Veterinary Hospital & Bells Corners
 Animal Hospital
 Saunders Publishing, Collingwood
 Petsmart, Merivale Road
 TD Canada Trust
 Scholar's Choice, Moyer Branch
 Dr. Sandra Lefebvre

FACILITIES

The Rehabilitation Centre, Queensway
 Carleton Hospital, Central Park Lodges,
 Harmer House,
 Perley Rideau Veterans Health Centre, VON
 Day Program at Perley Rideau, Bruyère
 Continuing Care (formerly St. Vincent's
 Hospital, Elizabeth Bruyère Health Centre),
 The Training Hall (Frances Holmes)
 Ottawa Paramedic Service HQ (John Rathier)

MEMBER DISCOUNTS

The following merchants will provide OTD members a discount upon presentation of membership card:

Berry's Pet Food, Glebe Store
 Critter Jungle, Hampton Park Plaza
 TLC Grooming
 Bark & Fitz, Westboro
 Natural Pet Foods
 Kalaidoscope Kids, Glebe bookstore

OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION.

KATE MILLER

OTD Administrator

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Hours: flexible, please leave a message and I'll get back to you ASAP.