

## **PAWSitive Therapy Troupe Quarterly Meeting March 28, 2010**

**Present:**

Nancy Pignotti	Diane Lauer
Karen Click	Laura Dejmek
Catherine Rupp	Tiffany Bohn
Lorelei Collins	Linda Chiaramonte
Linda Guhr	Kristin Ludwig
Dixie Sherry	Debbie Arkin
Carol Pisanko	Mary Beth Turek
Penny Breich	Jennifer Voss
Barb Kann	Susan Avers
Becky Jankowski	

1. The meeting was called to order at 2:20 PM.
2. Guest Speaker: Dr Theresa SaLee, an Integrative Medicine veterinarian from Arboretum View Animal Hospital presented an overview of selected holistic veterinary medicine topics, including diet, vaccinations and parasite control. She also discussed infection control issues pertaining to therapy dogs. We all enjoyed Dr. SaLee's presentation very much. She has offered to come again to discuss pet first-aid measures.
3. Website Updates:
  - a. A "Donation" tab has been added to the home page on the website. This tab gives information about the Troupe mission as well as information about how donations are used. At this time, since we have had so few spontaneous donations in the past, I decided not to put a Pay Pal link on the website. Donors can click on the "print form" link to print a donation form that they can include when they mail their check to the Troupe address. The form will give me complete information for thank you letters acknowledging the donations. Donors may also designate an honoree for a donation in memory of, or in honor of a person or pet. In those cases, I will also be sending cards to the honorees information them of the donation in their honor.
  - b. A "Prayers for Pooches" tab will also be added on the Members Corner home page in the near future. This tab will be designed and managed by Laura Dejmek, our Troupe chaplain. Laura will offer prayers for our dogs, for our loved ones, for ourselves upon email request—helping us deal with the challenges that we all sometimes face. Laura will be completing the content for the Prayers tab in the next month or so. Once it is finished, our Webmaster will add it to the Members Corner home page, where you will be able to email Laura directly requesting her assistance.
  - c. The "Meet Our Dogs" tab on the home page is still missing many of our Troupe dogs and their biographical information! Please email your dog's photo and his bio (found on the Forms tab on the Members Corner) to our

Webmaster at [debmanning1@gmail.com](mailto:debmanning1@gmail.com). The following dogs are still missing from the website: Bailey, Abbie, Sadie A., Gracie, Show Low, Shade, Spark, Jasper, Nutmeg, Cinnamon, Wolfy, Andy, Mikey, Grace, Blackjack, Sammy, Mack, Corky, Basil, Tex, Gus

4. Calendar Updates:
  - a. Note that the Loyola annual “Take Your Child to Work Day” event is scheduled for Thursday, April 22. The station for the Troupe dogs will be unchanged since last year—at the entrance to the Fitness Center in the Stritch School of Medicine building. The time is 9 AM-11: 30 AM. You may come for the entire time, or just for an hour or so. Maria Pelc, the Loyola secretary will be emailing those who have signed up with final instructions, as we get closer to the date.
  - b. Note that the Dancing Paws Nutcracker meetings are posted on the calendar as we schedule them. The next meeting will be at Fairview Baptist Home in the TV Lounge on Friday, April 23 at 7 PM.
  - c. Note that our READ visits at local schools will be ending with the May visits. READ opportunities are still available over the summer at library programs, coordinated through Karen. Although not official visits for the Troupe, these library visits are a great way to see if your dog will work effectively as a READ dog in school programs. You do not need to be READ registered to do the summer library visits. Summer visits this year include the libraries in Bridgeview, Broadview, North Riverside and Woodridge.
5. Health / Delta ID’s still needed: Please send me your updated health records and Delta IDs if you have not already done so. This is a Troupe requirement. Records still missing include:
  - i. Lily / Beary (Delta ID’s)
  - ii. Bailey (Delta ID),
  - iii. Gracie / Show Low (fecal tests),
  - iv. T-Rex (rabies / fecal test),
  - v. Sam (Delta ID, fecal test),
  - vi. Andy / Mikey (fecal tests),
  - vii. Sadie M (rabies and fecal test),
  - viii. Otto (fecal test),
  - ix. Tommy (Delta ID, rabies and fecal test),
  - x. Annie and Jenna (fecal tests),
  - xi. Basil (Delta ID, rabies and fecal test),
  - xii. Ripley (fecal test),
  - xiii. Yaz (Delta ID),
  - xiv. Murray (Delta ID, rabies and fecal test),
  - xv. Tex and Gus (fecal tests)
6. Delta Testing: Dogs needed retesting by June include Bailey, Sadie A. Jenna, and Annie. Sadie will be tested next week at Lyons, along with Beary. Linda and I will schedule another Delta test to cover those needing it sometime in early June.
7. 2010 Goal Updates:

- a. Ronald McDonald House visits—the RM House staff would welcome visits from the Troupe dogs. RM House is a “home away from home” for families of children receiving long-term treatment at Loyola or Schreiners hospitals. I talked with Andy Wadas, the Director earlier this month. She prefers a late afternoon/ early evening time slot since families are at the hospital most of the daytime hours. Weekend visits are not possible since there is no staff coverage on weekends. The group decided that a Tuesday or Wednesday around 6 PM would work. I will contact Andy next month to see about starting visits.
  - b. Fisher House visits—Fisher House is the same concept of a “home away from home” for families of patients with long-term stays at Hines hospital. This facility just opened last week. Holly Wright, the director would love to have the Troupe dogs visit families. The time frame is a little different—she would prefer a 10 AM weekday time for the visits. Parking should be easier than it is at the other weekday Hines visits, since Fisher House has its own parking lot and also parking in the circular drive area for volunteers. We will be adding this visit to the calendar in June, once our READ visits at schools are over for the school year.
  - c. DuPage County Courthouse dogs: The Safe Harbor program at the DuPage County Courthouse in Wheaton is designed for children whose parents are testifying in court during the day. Our dogs would visit in the Safe Harbor waiting room area. Tiffany has made the initial contact with courthouse staff to explore the possibility of starting a therapy visit there. She will update us once the Board of Directors makes its final decision.
  - d. Alternative program for emotionally disturbed children in Glen Ellyn / Glendale Heights: After talking at length with the program director, Karen reported that she does not feel that this potential therapy visit would be a good fit for our Troupe teams. Karen talked instead about possibly expanding the Herrick Middle School program that she currently does on her own. Several people expressed interest in this possible visit addition, which may be a possibility for the fall semester of the year.
8. Grooming Reminder: Please be diligent with bathing and grooming your dog before therapy visits, as per Troupe and Delta Society policies. Remember that your dog **MUST** be freshly bathed and groomed within 24 hours of a visit. If you do several visits within a few days, one bath is sufficient if your dog stays clean. However, if you are doing multiple visits each week, the **MINIMUM** should be one bath per week. Our dogs need to be as clean, sweet smelling and “pettable” as it is possible for us to make them. That therapeutic touch is a big part of the comfort that our therapy dogs provide. and its importance cannot be overemphasized.
  9. Recognition: I read a very touching email thank you message from the physical therapist at McNeal hospital. Dixie and her Collie, Dottie had a tremendous impact on a patient who died soon after their visit. Notes like these make us all realize the importance of what we do even if we don’t realize it at the time. Dixie and Dottie—you are a wonderful team!

10. New Products: Karen and Mary Beth demonstrated a dog paw stamp that can be personalized with the dog's name. This would be a great addition for our READ programs. Contact Karen or Mary Beth for further information about where to order this stamp. Karen also demonstrated a different type of hand sanitizer product that does not dry the skin like alcohol-based sanitizers often do. This could not be used in place of the sanitizers that the hospitals provide, but we could carry it for our own use. It is available at Wannamaker's Home and Garden in Downers Grove, or contact Karen for ordering information.
11. New Hines "Non Research Animals in the Hines VA Hospital" policy that was just approved last week. I will make copies for everyone at our next quarterly meeting. The new policy appears to be relatively unchanged from the previous policy, although this time I did not have any input (or even any knowledge) that the policy was being revised (sigh!)
12. Nutcracker Updates:
  - a. Dates—We are reserving three Saturdays—Nov 20, Dec 4 and Dec 11. We have not yet finalized which date or dates, but we will be doing so very soon
  - b. Locations—Glen Crest Middle School in Glen Ellyn is available on any of the above dates, and has excellent facilities for our purposes. Our only cost would be the janitorial by-the-hour fee that we would need to pay for the hours that we would be there. Herrick Middle School in Downers Grove is also a possibility. Our site selection committee will be touring Herrick in early April. We may do performances at one, or both schools, depending on everyone's availability. In addition, we will be doing a performance (dress rehearsal) at Fairview Baptist Home, since they have graciously agreed to let us use their TV Lounge for some of our group practices with dogs.
  - c. Costumes—We are gradually gathering as many of the costumes from the 2004 performance as we can. The costume committee will be supplementing this with as many new costumes as we need. I will reimburse any purchases made—just keep your receipt so that I have a record of what you spent. It looks like at the minimum we will need costumes for the "tumblers" in the Clown dance, two additional soldier and mouse costumes for the fight scene and new costumes for Marie. Jennifer and Deb will provide their own costumes for Bailey and Tex.
  - d. Set—no action yet for this committee. I still have the old set in good condition—we can add to it as necessary.
  - e. Marketing/ Sponsors—Kristin reported that her brother, who is a graphic designer will donate the design of a program / playbill for us—something much more elaborate than what we had for the last performance. Kristin envisions room in the program for biographies of the performing dogs, as well as spots in the program where sponsors can advertise their businesses. Great job, Kristin! The committee will continue to work on marketing strategies in the coming months. I have a possible sponsorship lead that Don will follow up on next month.

- f. Tickets—The Happy Dog Barkery will let us use the front of their store to sell our tickets—probably one weeknight and one Saturday morning. The Barkery will also help us sell any leftover tickets as long as people pay cash.
13. The meeting adjourned at 4:30 PM. The next meeting will be held in late June, and will be our annual Troupe cookout.