

PAWSitive Therapy Troupe Quarterly Meeting and Newsletter January 4, 2009

Present:

Linda Chiaramonte	Penny Breich
Deb Heemskerck	Colleen McLachlan
Karen Click	Nancy Pignotti
Marianne Firlit	Rose Daniels
Mary Beth Turek	Jennifer Voss
Kim Muszynski	Susan Avers
Laura Dejmek	Catherine Rupp
Diane Lauer	

1. Welcome to New Members:

- a. The Troupe welcomes Deb Heemskerck and her Lab, Adi, Colleen McLachlan and her Golden, Sadie, and Linda Nemeth and her Lab, Mack to the program.
- b. We also welcome new therapy dogs—Jeanne Tarwater's new Golden, Maggie, Mary Beth Turek's new Golden, Maggie, and Karen Click's new Shelties, Cinnamon and Nutmeg.

2. 2008 Financial Review:

- a. Copies of the 2008 Troupe financial summary were distributed. Note that we have two accounts for Troupe funds—the PAWSitive Therapy Troupe account, where all donations are deposited, and the BZJ account, which still holds the remainder of the money from Hines reimbursements in 2000 and 2001, as well as the 2004 Nutcracker fundraiser monies.
- b. With the purchase of bookmarks, Troupe aprons, Troupe polo shirts and name tags, the BZJ account is now just about gone. I have started to use the Troupe account to pay for items such as website management and READ manual orders.
- c. You will note that our funds in both accounts total \$3781. Donations accounted for \$2397.4 of that amount—the remainder is the money carried over from 2007. Donations in 2007 totaled \$1832.73, so that represents an increase in our fundraising efforts—well done!
- d. Last year, our total debits were \$2641. The monies were spent on bookmarks, calling cards, nametags, Troupe clothing, costumes, and Troupe meeting expenses. In 2007, our expenses were \$3008, as a comparison.

3. 2008 Program Summary:

- a. Copies were distributed of the 2008 Program Summary statistics. Overall, we increased our total number of visits by almost 100 over 2007. That represents a significant increase—we added McNeal hospital PT visits, but lost READ visits in three schools due to scheduling issues.
- b. Remember that to remain a member of the Troupe, you need to make every attempt to do at least 10 visits per year. Only 6 people fell below that minimum number. Most of you did significantly more visits throughout the year—thanks so much!
- c. You will also note that the Troupe meeting attendance is listed. Since we only had three meetings this past year, to be in compliance you needed to have attended at least two meetings. Those of you who joined mid-year are not included in this requirement.
- d. Special Events are also listed separately. Thanks to everyone who helped out with these events during the year.
- e. I neglected to add a column for the Dancing Paws practices, which definitely are Troupe-related, and can count towards your yearly requirement. However, your only participation cannot be the Dancing Paws—your yearly visit requirement is 6 visits, in addition to the Dancing Paws activities. I have attached an amended version of the 2008 Program Summary to include the Dancing Paws practices.

4. Goal Setting for 2009:

- a. Here is a list of some of the possible goals that we identified as a group:
 - i. Possible Saturday library visit—I will need suggestions for locations, as well as contact people
 - ii. Bridgeview library addition to regular calendar—again, I need a contact person in order to plan this
 - iii. Possible addition of evening visits such as after-school programs, Arden Court in Glen Ellyn—let me know if there is a program that would like to invite us.
 - iv. More exposure for Troupe in local news media—suggestions for possible topics for press release? Anyone interested in being interviewed, or anyone interested in writing something for publication?
 - v. Opportunities for individual work with Delta or with St Thomas Hospice (would not count towards Troupe visits, but would be in addition to them)—contact Marianne Firlit or Jennifer Voss if you are interested. Hospice work does require an extensive orientation period. Individual therapy work opportunities through Delta are periodically emailed to Pet Partners in the area.

5. Troupe Logo Items:

- a. Name Tags—Paulette, Deb A, Deb H, Colleen and Linda N all need name tags. Now that I have at least 5, I will place the order. I will mail them out to you when they arrive.

- b. Troupe Polo Shirts—the previous order is now distributed. New people needing polo shirts include Paulette, Deb A, Colleen, Deb H, and Linda N. Laura needs a replacement shirt. I will place this order once I hear from everyone about sizes.
- c. Bookmark / Calling Card Order: Bookmarks—Tommy, Teddy and Mr. Chips. Calling Cards—Adi, Sadie, Cinnamon and Nutmeg. I will wait on placing this order for now. Let me know if there is anyone else who needs cards or bookmarks.

6. Delta Testing:

- a. The next test will be scheduled for late February or early March.
- b. Dogs that need testing include: Blackjack, Sasha, Shade and Teddy. Let me know if there are additional dogs. I will set up a date later this month.

7. Therapy Dog class:

The January Intro to AAT class has been postponed until later this winter. I will have a date on the website when I decide on a start time.

8. Calendar Changes—the only calendar change at this time is the Hines Extended Care visit (ECC). The start time has been moved to 11 AM>

9. Site Leaders Needed—Karen has volunteered to be the site leader for Maplebrook School. We need additional teams for this visit, if anyone can make it. So far, we still have no one for Hines ECC.

10. Troupe Website:

- a. The “Members Area” section of the website will soon become password-protected, so that I can post our Troupe Directory and Orientation manual in the “Files” area, The user ID and password will be the same for everyone. This is a way of protecting our personal information without adding needless complication.
- b. I will also be posting the Troupe Newsletters on the website as soon as this password protection is completed. You all need to promise to read the newsletter once you no longer get a paper copy!
- c. The “Therapy Dog of the Month” page is in progress—remember to send Deb Manning your photo and biographical information. You can find the “Therapy Dog of the Month” form in the current “Files” section in the Member’s Area of the website. A copy is also in every orientation manual. Deb will be designing a page that displays all of our dogs, and is currently figuring out a way for our dogs to get their own emails. I will keep you posted.

- d. **Fundraising Ideas for 2009:**
- e. Pampered Chef party in spring of 2009—Mary Beth will check with Kelly and will figure out a date.
- f. Tastefully Simple party—Kim will check about a date for the fall of 2009.
- g. Candle party—Nancy will check with her friend about the possibility of holding a fundraiser.
- h. Heritage Fest in Downers Grove—the last weekend in June
- i. Happy Dog Barkery fundraiser—sometime over the summer
- j. Ruffin It Event at the Green Valley Forest Preserve in Naperville—Sept of 2009
- k. Barnes and Noble / Borders Gift-Wrapping fundraiser—Mary Beth will check on date availability for a weekend in December of 2009 at Oakbrook.
- l. Oreck fundraiser—Kim will check
- m. Downers Grove wine store event—Mary Beth will check
- n. Dancing Paws performance at the Woodridge library—late February
- o. Photos with the therapy dogs—Kim to check
- p. Raffle with donated items—I forgot who was going to check on this!

11. **Troupe Chaplain proposal:**

Laura offered to serve as the Troupe chaplain. As a pastoral chaplain, services that she could provide include:

- a. Dedication of newly registered therapy teams
- b. Blessing of the Animals services for the group
- c. Grief counseling for those who have lost a beloved dog
- d. Memorial service for deceased therapy dogs

Laura has been such a comfort to me in helping me deal with the loss of my beloved Rosie. She conducted a beautiful memorial service for Rosie two weeks after she died. I wanted some way to acknowledge that Rosie was deeply loved and that her life had made a difference for so many, many people. I am hopeful that I will see her again someday, and that now she is young and happy again, and is waiting for me.

We all agreed that it would be wonderful to have Laura serve as our Troupe chaplain!

The meeting adjourned at 6:15 PM. The next meeting will be scheduled for mid-April.

Becky