

PAWSitive Therapy Troupe Quarterly Meeting and Newsletter

March 31, 2009

	Present:	Absent:
Linda Guhr	Dixie Sherry	Nancy Pignotti
Linda Sechel	Donna Angeleri	Paulette Allan
Debbie Arkin	Susan Avers	Jennifer Voss
Penny Brcich	Barb Kann	Marianne Firlit
Colleen McLachlan	Linda Nemeth	Julie Bereckis
Kristin Ludwig	Lisa Jo Clark	Lisa McCarthy
Laura Dejmek	Diane Lauer	Lisa Delcase
Marge Lauterjung	Kim Muszynski	Wesley Gosselink
Catherine Rupp	Virginia Sensenbrenner	Mary Beth Turek
Kerrilyn Stachowicz	Chris Szubert	Rose Daniels
Becky Jankowsk	Karen Click	Deb Heemskerck
Linda Chiaramonte		

1. The March meeting was held at the Doggie Depot Daycare so that members could bring their dogs for the pet blessing. Thank you so much, Colleen and the Doggie Depot for letting the Troupe use your space!

2. **Welcome to New Members:**
 The Troupe welcomes Linda and Corky (Shih Tzu), Lisa Jo and T-Rex (English Bulldog), Lisa and Sammy (Golden), Linda and Sam (Golden), Kristin and Tinkerbelle (Chihuahua) and Dixie and Dottie (Collie) to the Troupe!

3. **Pet Blessing, Commissioning of New Therapy Teams and Memorial for Departed Therapy Dogs**—all were conducted by our Troupe Chaplain, Laura Dejmek. Thank you so much, Laura for the beautiful services. Dogs remembered included Rosie, Emma, Storm, Buggy, Gracie A, Tofino, Ben, Highstrung, Rhyno and Gracie T

4. **Possible New Visit Locations:**
 - a. **Little Friends in Downers Grove**—Kori Gruber, the Activity Coordinator at Little Friends in Downers Grove, contacted me earlier this month about the possibility of bringing in two therapy dog teams twice a month to visit at Little Friends. This organization serves adults with developmental disabilities such as mental retardation, autism, down syndrome, mental illness, etc. Colleen, Dixie, Debbie, Penny, Virginia, Donna and Linda G all expressed interest in participating in this visit. We need to be able to commit at least two teams twice each month. Since it looks like we have enough interest. I will contact Kori and tell her that this is a visit that we may be able to add to our calendar. I will email everyone with the specifics once I hear from Kori. I will try for an afternoon time frame.
 - b. **Briar Glen School in Wheaton**—Karen has been visiting this school for the past several months on her own. The school is very excited about the possibility of bringing in Troupe READ dogs during the next school year on a regular basis. The opportunity to read to the therapy dogs will be used as an incentive for the students. This visit will be added to the calendar in the fall of 2009. Teams must be READ certified to participate, so if you are interested and have not yet completed READ certification, please let me know.
 - c. **Mooseheart Children's Home in Batavia**—Kristin and Lisa Jo currently visit Mooseheart on their own once each month. Mooseheart would welcome additional teams for the Sunday afternoon visits. Kristin has asked if we would consider adding this visit to our regular calendar. In order to make this one of the regular Troupe visits, we will need to have at least three people who can commit to this visit on a regular basis. It would be a convenient location for those of you who live in the Naperville / Aurora area. **Let me know if you would be interested in doing Mooseheart once each month, so that I can make a decision about whether or not we can staff this visit as part of the Troupe calendar.**

5. **Possible Community Events / Fundraisers:**
 - a. **Evergreen Park Kids' Health Fair**—Marge, Diane and Kerrilyn all expressed interest in staffing this booth so I will let the Fire Dept know that the Troupe dogs will be there. The date is May 27th, the time is 3:30-7 PM and the location is the Evergreen Park Firehouse at 90th and Kedzie. The contact person for this event is Ed Dunn at 708-334-1164.
 - b. **Happy Dog Barkery Fundraiser:** The Barkery has invited us to staff a booth in front of the store during Heritage Fest—Saturday, June 27th, 2009 from 11 AM-4 PM. I will be asking for volunteers for this event as we get closer to the date. I would like to schedule the dogs for shifts of no more than 2 hours each.
 - c. **Cancer Survivors' Day at Hines:** Both Kristin and Linda G. expressed interest in bringing their therapy dogs to the annual Cancer Survivors' Day sponsored by the Oncology Dept at Hines for cancer patients and their families. The event will be held on August 28, 2009 from 1-3 PM in the Hines Auditorium (next to where the Voluntary Service offices are located).
 - d. **Pampered Chef fundraiser:** Karen will be hosting another Pampered Chef party to benefit the Troupe on Friday, April 17th at her home in Glen Ellyn. Contact Karen if you would like to come to the party. Karen also has catalogs for those who would like to order by phone or online. Make sure that those orders all say "PAWSitive Therapy Troupe".
 - e. **Tastefully Simple fundraiser party:** Kim is planning to hold another Tastefully Simple party later this summer. Check the Announcements page on the website for additional information once the date has been set.

6. **Troupe Orders:** I will be placing orders for the following:
 - a. Name Tags—Ludwig, Guhr, Sherry, Clark, McCarthy, Sechel, Nemeth, Dejmek,
 - b. Polo shirts—Ludwig, Guhr, Sherry, McCarthy, Sechel, Clark—I need your sizes and whether or not you want grey or blue. McLachlan, Heemskerek, Nemeth, Dejmek and Arkin—your polos have been ordered and they will be delivered soon.
 - c. Calling Cards: Delcase, Click, Deb H, Colleen, Linda N, Paulette, Ludwig, McCarthy, Guhr, Sherry, Clark, Sechel. You will all need to send your photos and biographical information to LaGrange Printers at kszubert@comcast.net.
 - d. Bookmarks: Click, Nemeth. If there is anyone else who needs bookmarks, let me know. You must be READ certified (or shortly planning to be) and actively doing READ visits in our Troupe schools.

7. **Website Updates:** The Troupe Members Area tab on the pawsitivetherapy.com website will shortly require a group user ID and password in order to access it. This is to protect our personal information from the general public. I will email everyone with the user ID and password once we figure out what it is...
 - a. Once the user ID and passwords are in place, I will be posting the latest Troupe
 1. documents on the website, including the following:
 2. Troupe Directory—all contact information for members and visits
 3. Troupe General Guidelines—from Orientation Manual
 4. Troupe Requirements—from Orientation Manual
 5. Unit Guidelines—from Orientation Manual—includes all addresses and contact information for visit locations
 6. Interventions—from Orientation Manual
 7. Hospital Policies—Hines, Loyola, Good Samaritan and McNEal
 8. READ Guidelines—from Orientation Manual
 9. Therapy Dog of the Month form—for website "Meet Our Dogs" page
 - b. The "Meet Our Dogs" page is almost ready for posting. If you have not already done so, please email or snail mail your dog's photo and biographical information to our webmaster. Debbie Manning at debmanning1@gmail.com or Debbie Manning, 1582 Leabrook Lane, Wheaton, IL 60189. Debbie will also be adding email addresses for our dogs, so that children can send emails to their favorite dogs.

7. **Next Quarterly Meeting:** The next quarterly meeting will be held at the Jankowski house. It will be a barbecue like we had last year, and a chance to relax and enjoy each other's company. The date will be a Saturday in July—I will be emailing everyone to figure out the best date as we get closer to July.

8. **Group Practice with the Dogs:** The “Weave Through a Circle With a Yarn Leash” exercise was a chance to practice focused attention during heeling when you are near other dogs. Everyone did very well! There were so many dogs in such close quarters, and so many distractions, it was wonderful to see that our therapy dogs behaved as we expect them to behave. The importance of this skill cannot be overemphasized. We all need to be vigilant in keeping our dog’s attention on us no matter what the distraction may be (especially the distraction of other dogs nearby). Practicing and perfecting this skill keeps both our dogs and our clients safe!

9. **Dancing Paws:** The Dancing Paws will be giving three performances in the coming weeks—at Fairview Baptist Home on Friday, April 3 at 6:30 PM; at Hines Inpatient Psychiatry on Sunday, April 5 at 2 PM; and at the Woodridge Library on Friday, May 8 at 7 PM.

Thanks to all of you who made it to the meeting, and I hope that the activities that we planned with the dogs were enjoyable for everyone!

Becky