



October 2009

## Inside this Issue

- 1 Fundrai\$ing at OTD – how, what, when, where?
- 2 News from the Office
- 3 Aide-mémoire for OTD Members
- 5 Tobie does Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT)
- 6 Vigil of the Cemetery Dog
- 7 OTD at World Animal Day
- 7 Greyhound Adoption
- 8 R.E.A.D. is looking for New Teams
- 8 Hug-a-Bubba
- 9 Research Abstract
- 10 In Memoriam

VISIT OUR WEBSITE:  
[www.ottawatherapydogs.ca](http://www.ottawatherapydogs.ca)  
 (613) 261-6834

# Newsletter



## Fundrai\$ing at OTD – how, what, when, where?

*Margot Montgomery*

How are we funded? How am I able to help? Are these questions you have asked yourself? Well, this article might provide some of the background information you are looking for.

The cost of running OTD is about \$24,000 a year, assuming we are dealing with about 70 associate and actively visiting members. The major expenditures are: part-time administrative support, recruitment costs (marketing materials, facility assessment and orientation packages), READ costs (incentive books for readers, start-up costs for new teams) and other membership costs, including insurance, scarves, tags and ID cards.

Currently, our sources of funding (in order of amount) are: donations (in memory of Marilyn Benoit, from individuals via United Way, and from the West Quebec School Board); a Community Foundation of Ottawa grant for READ; the Bark & Fitz photo shoot, raffle and donation; a grant from an Anonymous Donor who has contributed in the past for a total of over \$8,000 to date; member registrations; and T-shirt sales.

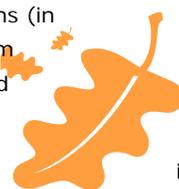
In the past, OTD has received funding from sources such as: Your Credit Union Jeans Day, Minto, garage sales, Royal Canadian Legions, Leimerk Developments Ltd, Mayor's Walk for

Volunteerism 2005, LCBO Eastern region coin box donation program, Ottawa Veterinary Hospital (Bells Corners), Annual Dovercourt dog swim, Bark & Fitz Westboro and Centrum Kanata raffles and Good Dog Chair, Chloe's 8 year old birthday party and the Export Development Corp.

As OTD plans to expand to 100 active teams, which will require more funds, we need to find new sources of funding. While individual donations are our largest source right now, they are not very predictable.

The Community Outreach and Fundraising Committee with help from the Communications Committee are hard at work to increase awareness about OTD and to raise funds from new sources. We are working on projects such as: OTD member business cards, a 'postcard' with team photos to give to clients, a generic power point presentation and other support to help members pitch OTD for donations from your vet, groomer, breeder, banker, broker, etc. We are also exploring grants from various sources such as the May Court Club, sales of OTD supporter T-shirts, exhibiting in good locations such as local shopping malls, charity walks and pet stores so that we can spread the word of our work, encourage new members to join, and solicit donations.

We still need \$9,000 by December 2009 to finance our 2010 plans! If you have ideas, or come across a potential source, or want to help with this challenge, please contact: Margot Montgomery at (613) 232-2463 or [director2@ottawatherapydogs.ca](mailto:director2@ottawatherapydogs.ca).



## T-SHIRTS FOR SUPPORTERS AND MEMBERS

*We now have attractive white 100% cotton T-shirts for OTD supporters – a wonderful way to promote our organization as well as bring in some revenue!*

We have a good selection of sizes including both Youth and Adult.

The price is right: adult @ \$10 and youth @ \$5.

For the same price, most adult sizes are also available in the OTD member T-shirt (which has a bigger logo and is excellent for wearing when working). Contact Kate Miller to place your order today!



*Pearl sells the first supporter t-shirt to her husband Bruce while Maggie is doing her lab thing.*

## News from the Office

*Kate Miller*

Already it feels like summer was an illusion! We have definitely made a leap into fall and it looks as though it will be a very busy season for OTD.

The summer months at the OTD admin office were spent updating the OTD databases, arranging new placements, setting up mentoring visits for our new spring members, visiting and assessing four new facilities, and responding to the never ending flow of calls and e-mail inquiries about dog therapy and volunteering with OTD.

### Membership is growing!

As of August 31<sup>st</sup>, we have 29 new teams visiting facilities in the area. All of these teams were evaluated between September 2008 and the present.

Of these 29, three of the handlers were already OTD members who chose to have a second dog tested.

The first OTD Orientation session of the fall was held on September 14<sup>th</sup> and was attended by 14 candidates.

The next Orientation will be held on November 9<sup>th</sup> followed by Evaluations on November 20<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>. If anyone is interested in helping out at either Orientation or at Evaluations, I'd love to hear from you.

### OTD phone tree – keeping in touch

Expect a call from your phone captain filling you in on upcoming events, opportunities to work on or chair a committee, or to announce a new business card for members. We always need new captains, so if you are interested, get in touch with me.

### Upcoming events

We are busily planning our Mentor Workshop which will be held in November (date to be determined).

If you have done some mentoring of new members or would like to contribute your expertise and experience in this very worthy way, please join us. Details will follow when plans are finalized.

Mini-Vet School is coming to Ottawa! This lecture series follows in the footsteps of the very popular Mini-Medical Schools that are offered across North America. Mini-Vet School runs for 5 weeks on Friday evenings from 7-9pm starting October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

*Our eloquent Chair of the Board, Carole Eldridge will be speaking on the topic "Animals in the Community" on November 6<sup>th</sup>.*

For more information, go to: [www.communityveterinaryoutreach.org](http://www.communityveterinaryoutreach.org)

### Gentle reminders

As the new season of visits begins, I would really appreciate knowing if there are any changes in your regular visiting day of the week or time. If you have to take some time off for any reason, please let me and your contact at the facility know about the change.

### Past events

The Humane Society's Wiggle Waggle Walk was held September 13<sup>th</sup> at the Arboretum in the Experimental Farm. Many thanks to the OTD dogs and people who walked the walk – Jill and



*L. to r., Kate & Caleb (Natalie's dog), Jill & Digby, Joan & Bro (Kate's dog) and Murphy*

## HELP WANTED

Ottawa Therapy Dogs is looking for members (and associate members) interested in joining our [Membership Outreach Committee](#).

This committee has traditionally planned and organized educational and social events for OTD members. For example, in past years there have been grooming workshops, seminars, potluck dinners and informal OTD weekend dog walks.

If this sounds like the kind of contribution you would like to make to Ottawa Therapy Dogs, please contact [Joan](#), OTD Board member and the Committee Chair at [director@ottawatherapydogs.ca](mailto:director@ottawatherapydogs.ca) or call at (613) 838-3145.

Digby, Joan and Murphy, Claudia and Jazz, Natalie and Caleb, Laurie and (tiny) Brucie, Karine and Bubba, Kate and Bro.

The walk is a wonderful event and a great opportunity to spread the word about OTD and our excellent work.

**Special thanks**

A special thanks to the extraordinary OTD members that offered help in mentoring our new members this past winter, spring and summer- Joan A. Joan C. , Nat, Heather, Carole, Tanya G., Tanja M., Donna, Claire, Chantel, Pearl, Karen, Margot, Kerri, Bob, Karine, Catherine, Claire, Nyam, Claudia, Bud, Lesli, Ann, Andrea, Laurie, Julianne and Marion.

We counted on you and you delivered – Bravo!

## Aide-mémoire for OTD Members

*Susan Roberts*

For many of us our Orientation learnings are far in the distant past. The Board of OTD thought it might be helpful to provide Member Teams with the best practices to which we aspire when visiting our clients.

**Rules for your dog**

- ALWAYS keep your dog on at least one leash. When it is appropriate for a patient to hold the dog's leash, always make sure that you are holding a second leash to ensure that you are in control at all times. If there is ever a situation that you feel might call for the dog to be off-leash in a facility, you must contact OTD before the situation happens. An OTD evaluator will assess the situation and report back with respect to whether an off-leash situation may occur or not.
- For sanitation reasons, make sure that the leash and collar on your dog are exclusive to OTD work and that these items are cleaned on a regular basis.
- The dog must meet the highest standards of cleanliness and grooming. This includes short and buffed nails.
- OTD identification items on you and your dog can only be used for OTD specific activities.

**Appropriate dress and identification**

- Choose shoes and clothes that are both comfortable and presentable.
- Wear comfortable, closed, low-heeled shoes with non-skid soles, if possible.
- Wear clean shoes other than the ones you wear when walking your dog, especially if you walk your dog in parks frequented by dogs.

- Remember that older people may be more conservative in their outlook on dress and manners. (Jeans & shorts are usually inappropriate attire).
- Emphasize moderation in clothes and accessories.
- Some people are very sensitive to perfume and a heavy scent could make them ill.
- Please wear your OTD badge with your picture and your dog's picture when on duty. It helps staff identify you and your dog as belonging on the premises and clients can use it to remind themselves of your name.

**Introduction**

- Always introduce yourself and your four-legged partner. ("Hi, I'm Suzie, a volunteer here and this is my dog, Rover, a therapy dog volunteer.")
- When working with older clients, it is always best to re-introduce yourself, especially if some time has elapsed between visits. ("Hi, Mrs. Smith. It's Suzie and Rover.")
- Always call a client by their last names (Mrs. Smith, Mr. Brown) unless instructed otherwise by them, particularly with older clients.
- Always knock and ask if you may enter someone's room or, if in a public situation, ask if a person would like to meet your partner before walking up to them. ("Would you like to meet Rover?")
- Some people like to see your dog but do not wish to pet him/her. Be sure to ask, "Would you like to pet Rover?"
- Remember to maintain eye contact at the same level as the person being visited by kneeling, sitting on a chair or whatever position facilitates level eye contact.
- Ask before placing Rover on someone's bed or lap. Do not allow jumping onto the bed. Use a gradual approach by having the dog get onto a chair on the bottom of the bed.

- Use fresh linen for each bed visit. Do NOT transfer linens from bed to bed.
- BE OBSERVANT – Watch for non-verbal cues – Your partner may no longer be welcome, the client may be afraid or may be tired. Do not overstay your welcome or impose your partner on anyone.
- When saying good-bye, do not commit to a certain date for your return in case you can't make it and potentially disappoint the client. Be general by saying you will see them 'next time'.

**Ethics**

- BE DISCREET – Any information you acquire from residents, staff or other volunteers is strictly confidential; if you hear anything unusual or worrisome, report it to your supervisor. Do not discuss it with anyone outside the facility.
- If you are discussing a success with a friend, family member, etc., be sure to change the person's name. Do not describe any characteristics that could lead to identifying the person.
- Individuals have an absolute right to privacy. Anything learned about any individual (e.g., name, birthday, diagnosis, prognosis) is privileged and not to be discussed with anyone at all. It is a violation of the policy of confidentiality to take pictures or videotapes of any individual without release forms signed by the individuals. Facilities may require their own additional release forms.
- Clients have a right to their privacy and dignity. Never repeat a story that is derogatory, condescending or humiliating.
- DO NOT IMPOSE – You should not use your position to distribute literature, sell products or services, or solicit charitable donations.
- DO NOT ACCEPT MONEY – As relationships are established, clients may want to express gratitude for

- your visits by offering money or gifts. These offers should be refused tactfully but firmly.
- Similarly, if a client gives you money to buy something for them (cigarettes, candy, a birthday card for a relative), verify with staff that this is acceptable.
- Gifts of nominal value may be accepted in the right circumstances e.g. a picture drawn by a client, a plaque for Volunteer Appreciation Week. Please let OTD know you have received the gift.
- It is essential that you neither lend nor borrow money from clients.
- Respect the people you work with – residents and staff. Remember you are there to help. It is necessary to be patient with people who may move slowly, have difficulty hearing or understanding you, or who are confused.
- Think of the client's capabilities. Do not pity. Try to understand. Encourage minimum reliance and independence while providing warmth and care.

**What to do if you can't make a visit**

- Be regular and prompt in your attendance.
- If, for any reason, you cannot make a scheduled visit, notify your supervisor immediately. Always have the name and number of a contact person or two for each facility you visit.
- If you work with specific clients and will be away for a longer period of time (summer vacation), mention this to your client on your last visit. (Suggestion: circle your return date on a calendar for them.)
- Keep in mind that visiting may be especially needed during the holiday season or on statutory holidays when many scheduled activities are cancelled. If you can, visit.

- Keep your supervisor informed of changes to your address and phone number, the times you are available for visits, and your preferences for assignments.

**Commitment**

- Available on a regular basis, for minimum period of 1 year.

**Professionalism**

- After regular visits, you can easily become attached to "favourite" clients. Sometimes clients are transferred to a long-term care facility. While it is understandable that you want to check on their progress, please remember that your responsibility is to the facility and not to individual clients. Keep in mind

**Mentoring Workshop**

We are growing! We need your help! We need new mentors!

**Who?** All members who want to improve their mentoring skills or learn how to mentor new OTD teams

**What?** Protocol of mentoring, guidelines for good 'mentorship' and a review of our 'best practices'

**When?** Depending on the response, at the end of November.

Leadership will be assumed by the Chair of our Standards and Practices Committee (Catherine Mirsky) and our Board Chair (Carole). This will be an interactive meeting with much of the teaching and learning done by the participants themselves.

Interested? Contact Kate at [admin@ottawatherapydogs.ca](mailto:admin@ottawatherapydogs.ca)

that another team may be assigned to the second facility. You'll be missed but the void will be filled with another caring canine.

- If you want to ensure continuity of visits to a 'favourite' client please let OTD know so that we can ensure they are added to the next visiting team's list of clients.

If you have any questions about the above standards and requirements, please do not hesitate to contact Susan Roberts at (613) 264-0978 or by email at: [vicechair@ottawatherapydogs.ca](mailto:vicechair@ottawatherapydogs.ca).

## Tobie does Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT)

*Claire Heistek*

For nearly eight years now, Tobie has been a volunteer therapy dog. She specializes in animal assisted therapy (AAT). That is, she and I work with a health-care professional during our visits.

Want more articles on **Animal Assisted Therapy?**

Go to: <http://scholar.google.ca> and enter in some key words to start your

Her first 'job' was at the Loeb Centre where the client population has varying degrees of developmental delays and/or physical and mental disabilities. The friends that Tobie met were, by and large, individuals with autism. The clients met with us individually or in pairs. The life-skills coach and I reviewed the goals for each person on a quarterly basis. These ranged from simple nurturing (petting and cuddling), improved social skills through proper

dog handling (attentiveness while double leash walking, brushing in the direction of the growth, hugging gently but not kissing...), to systematic desensitization of the fear of a dog's bite. They also learned the control commands: sit, down, come, (oral or signed) to reinforce that eye contact is needed for communication. Change came very slowly but surely. There were many joys and some successes.

One client, who I will call Sean, was so afraid of dogs that he would sometimes scream, turn and hide, terrified at the mere sight of a dog. At other times, despite his fear of dogs, he would grab for visiting dogs' tails to pet them – a situation that could be very dangerous for him. The staff was so concerned about this behaviour that community activities had to be closely supervised or, due to limited staff, curtailed.

Sean agreed to take part in the programme and started visiting with Tobie once a week for 10 to 15 minutes. The first goal was to teach him to stay put and be quiet in the presence of a dog, then, to desensitize him to his fear of dogs, and, finally, to teach him proper dog handling behaviour. It took nearly five years but, in the end, Sean and Tobie had developed an understanding of each other's needs.

Happily, Sean seems to have transferred his sense of comfort with Tobie to his interactions with other dogs. One day, he was walking at the Arboretum with his group. The counsellor had forgotten that this park was often used (at the time) for off-leash dogs and realised his mistake the moment they entered. He quickly went to Sean's side, worried that he might not be able to cope with the dogs. His concern was for naught. Sean just walked quietly with the others. At one point he was separated from the group

while dogs were playing nearby, but he remained un-phased.

Tobie and I have greatly enjoyed our work at the Loeb Centre. We were there for a little more than six years.

Then, for a change of pace, we participated in OTD's R.E.A.D programme at Manor Park Public School. This is also an AAT programme. We did this for two years overlapping with Loeb and CHEO. You can learn more about this programme by looking it up on our web site at [www.ottawatherapydogs.ca](http://www.ottawatherapydogs.ca). R.E.A.D. is under programs.

In the summer of 2007, I got a call from OTD asking me if Tobie and I would be interested in volunteering at CHEO. We would be assisting the occupational therapist in evaluating 5- to 12-year-old children's behaviour through play therapy. I jumped at the chance. Again, goals are set for each child. However, this not being a teaching situation, the therapist simply notes the reactions (verbal and non-verbal) in the context of a broader evaluation. Tobie and I just need to do as we are asked – encourage conversation, try to maintain eye contact, suggest play, etc.



*Claire and Tobie*

Working with children suits both Tobie and me very well. She seems to absorb some of their joyful energy. She might be 'plopping' herself down a bit more often since she is now eleven years old but, at the sight of the next child entering the room, she perks her ears up and gives them the biggest smile ever. Or, is she just reflecting the child's reaction on seeing her? Having a goal to meet also suits my personality. It motivates me to be creative and gives me a feeling of satisfaction that simply visiting didn't seem to provide. I am lucky to have found such interesting placements and that my good 'buddy' Tobie is still willing to humour me and just play along.

**VISIT DOGS IN CANADA**  
Click on the following link and see what our Board Chair, Carole, has to say on the subject!  
<http://www.dogsincanada.com/should-your-dog-be-a-therapy-dog>

## Vigil of the Cemetery Dog

*Excerpted from the book, "Animals as Teachers & Healers", by Susan Chernak McElroy.*

My seventeen-year-old son was killed in a diving accident. Only a parent who has lost a child can understand the personal devastation. The evening before the accident, I happened to drive by our local cemetery. Sitting next to the fence was a stray dog. She sat on a small knoll between two trees, seemingly waiting for someone. She looked like a bedraggled red fox. Little did I know that three days later I would be burying my son on the exact spot where the little dog waited.



On the day of my son's funeral service, I saw the little dog again. She was standing a short distance away from where we gathered at the cemetery. The next morning, just before dawn, I went to visit my son's grave for the first time. And sitting beside the mound of flowers at his graveside was the little red dog. As I approached, she rose and stepped back a few feet, as if in respect. When I sat on the ground by the grave, she came back and sat beside me, not touching me or asking for attention for herself. She seemed to just "be there" for me. Together we watched the sun rise, and I felt a slight touch of peace. I arose and she walked me back to my car, then returned to my son's grave and lay down on it. The next morning was a repeat of the first. There she was, nestled beside the flowers. As she sat beside me, I ran my hand down along her back. She was slightly wet, as if from night dew. "You have been here all night?" I asked. She answered with a slight wag of her tail. "What are you? Some kind of a guardian angel?" She turned toward me and looked at me with eyes that seemed to reach my very soul. I began to cry and tell her of my terrible pain, and she sat and listened.

The next morning, there she was. Beginning to think of someone besides myself, I had brought a bowl of food and some water for her. Apparently someone else had noticed that little dog was doing twenty-four-hour duty, because there was a bowl of water by the grave. Knowing that my son wasn't alone, that he had this small dog with him, began to give me comfort. I remembered that several years before, my son and a friend had rescued a small red dog that had been shot with an arrow. My son named her Callie, and

**FAREWELL TO OTD FRIENDS**  
SHARON AND CAFFREY WHO MOVED TO NEW BRUNSWICK  
SARA AND RILEY WHO ARE OFF TO UNIVERSITY IN GUELPH

she stayed on as a beloved pet until an untimely accident took her life.

After about a week, I took the cemetery dog home with me. Strangely enough, she was quiet and subdued. I couldn't think of a name for her. Then one day, I said, "You know something? You look just like old Callie." It was as if I'd hit a magic switch. "Callie" stood up and, tail wagging furiously, ran over to me and put her paw up on my knee. It was as if she had finally "come home".

Who is this dog who showed me my son's cemetery plot, and then did round-the-clock sentry duty when my son was laid to rest there? Who is this dog who was there to help me through the greatest trauma of my life, who now shares my home and helps fill the lonely moments? Is there such a thing as reincarnation, and are dogs reincarnated? I don't know. I just know that she came into my life in a very mysterious way. My other dogs couldn't give me the comfort that this little red dog did, and still does.

Callie has since become TDI (Therapy Dogs International)-certified. I take her on regular visits to our local nursing home where she has become the "adopted dog". I am very proud of Callie. During the days following the Oklahoma bombing, TDI-certified dogs—including my Callie—were taken

to the rescue center and to the church where victims' families were waiting. Callie, with her gentle way, made many friends. In an especially touching moment, a medical worker sat on the floor with her arms around Callie, petting her and sharing her personal pain. It reminded me of myself as I sat with Callie at my son's grave only last June. I'd never thought one way or another about angels or guardians but now I know there is such a thing.

Note: Many current OTD members were originally TDI members.

## OTD at World Animal Day

*Andrew Haydon Park, October 3, 2009*

This event was an opportunity to chat with colleagues, have our pets blessed and visit with other exhibitors – all good fun. Best of all: we raised just over \$300 in T-shirt sales and donations. Special thanks to Dee for lending us her Canada Tent and table (where she demonstrated for all the perfect way to groom her afghan Kari) and for providing the perfect setting for our banner and hand-outs.



*Claire, Carole and PandaRu*

Thanks to the following members and their dogs for staffing our booth – it was a lovely day! Margot, Sarah and Jazz; Dee and Kari; Pearl and Maggie; Karine and Bubba; Carole and PandaRu; Claire and Tobie; Bob and Kelty; Doreen and Brutus; Sylvie and Sunny & Rusty.

## Greyhound Adoption

*Shelley McWhirther*

When people ask about my two greyhounds, the most common question is, "Are they rescues?" and I always answer, "Well ... they're retired racers." Often, this information is met with a blank look; a lot of people seem to think that greyhounds are "rescued" from a racing life of abuse. The truth is that most trainers (in the United States anyways) are astute enough to know that an abused dog will not run to full potential. A healthy, well fed, and well cared for greyhound is the ticket to earning dollars at the track.

Does this mean that racing greyhounds are treated like pets? The answer to that one is no, absolutely not. Racing greyhounds are a commodity in a world where productivity is essential. They are working dogs who quite literally set their lives on the line every time they set foot on the track, where a misstep, a jostle, or a tumble can result in injury, sometimes serious. If a dog doesn't win, place, or show in those all-important first six races, the maiden races, or if a dog is injured, or starts declining in grade, then that dog becomes a liability.

At this point in a greyhound's "career", he or she is retired. Retirement used to mean euthanasia or being sold for medical research. (The greyhound is considered one of the "soft" breeds, due to a non-territorial and easy-going

nature.) Thankfully, the advent of numerous greyhound advocacy groups and adoption agencies in the past couple of decades has resulted in a decline of those practices. The fact is, however, that in the United States alone, in excess of 10,000 greyhounds are bred in one year.

Those figures are shocking, and the knee-jerk reaction is to decry greyhound racing as cruel and unnecessary. That attitude does nothing to help the dogs. A successful adoption program needs access to the dogs as they come off their track careers, and if we bad-mouth the industry, the individual owners and trainers aren't going to put the effort into developing relationships with the people who work to put greyhounds into their forever homes after their working lives end.

So-called "pity adoptions", where a dog lover decides to save a dog based on the back-story, seldom work out. Greyhounds aren't an ideal dog for everyone, since they have a number of unique characteristics, including their sight hound nature which means that they can not be off leash except in a fenced enclosure. To help explain that, imagine an animal that can hit 45 miles per hour (not kilometres, but miles) by the third leap, an animal that has been both bred and trained to chase prey, and you should start to get the picture. This dog is no Fido who will run to fetch a ball or stick and return to your feet.

If, however, you're looking for a companion, one who represents the most ancient of breeds (Egyptian hieroglyphs depict hounds that are identical to modern greyhounds), and one with an excellent life expectancy for a big dog (12-14 years), then the 45mph couch potato just might be for you. Greyhounds are elegant but tough, gentle but playful, fast beyond belief but laid back. They're often referred to



*Kasco, the Greyhound*

as the “cat in a dog suit” because of their penchant for curling up and sleeping the day away, and many cat people have greyhounds who happily live alongside their feline siblings. (Our two hounds have two Siamese brothers.)

People who are intrigued by this wonderful breed should do their research to discover if the greyhound is right for them. The Dummies book on retired racing greyhounds is an excellent place to start, and part of the journey of discovery should be a visit to any of Ottawa’s PetSmart stores on a Saturday afternoon, between 1:00 and 3:00, to meet retired racers and their humans who volunteer with Adopt-a-Greyhound (AAG) of Central Canada (based in North Gower). AAG hounds come north from Orlando, Florida.

Then there’s the Greyhound Supporters of the National Capital Region (GSNCR), an organization that offers a variety of meet’n’greet to educate the public about greyhounds, as well as an adoption program that is affiliated with a greyhound kennel in Vermont.

In ending, I must mention that the greyhound’s calm and people-oriented

demeanour makes it an excellent candidate for therapy dog work. Our big brindle 7 ½ year old boy is an Ottawa Therapy Dog, and I know that our 9 year old fawn girl could pass the certification tomorrow!

## R.E.A.D. is looking for New Teams

The R.E.A.D. program is expanding and is looking for existing OTD members. The R.E.A.D. program aims to assist struggling readers by allowing students to practice reading aloud to a visiting dog. This reduces the pressure on the child, who is simply reading to a non-threatening canine “listener”. Teams must be available to attend during school hours. A limited number of weekend programs can also be arranged in public libraries. If you are interested in more information about this rewarding program, please contact Karen Luker at [kluker2009@gmail.com](mailto:kluker2009@gmail.com) or (613) 739-4376.

### R.E.A.D. Dogs a Hit in Greenboro!

Children came to the Ottawa Public Library – Greenboro branch in droves on Mondays in July, as Jazz, Sunny,

and Pebbles attended “Dog Day Afternoons”. Parents commented on how excited their children were to sign up for the practice sessions, which are often few and far between during the summer months. The library plans to host this program again next summer.

## Hug-a Bubba!

*Karine Langley*

Bubba and I were visiting our placement and, as we entered one of the locked wards, a nurse came up to us rather quickly and said:

“Oh Bubba thank goodness you are here, Jane\* is having a sad moment”

Jane is a lovely lady with Alzheimer’s who loves dogs. We spent 40 minutes with her including the time she took to brush Bubba. She then felt happy enough to leave the window sill and join the rest for lunch. The nurse on duty was thrilled and exclaimed how great it was that Bubba visits.

Just a little example of what Therapy dogs can do!

*\* To protect the anonymity of those with whom we spend time, “Jane” is a pseudonym.*



*Bubba*

## Research Abstract

INCIDENCE OF ACQUISITION OF METHICILLIN-RESISTANT STAPHYLOCOCCUS AUREUS, CLOSTRIDIUM DIFFICILE, AND OTHER HEALTH-CARE-ASSOCIATED PATHOGENS BY DOGS THAT PARTICIPATE IN ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS.

*Lefebvre, Sandra L. Reid-Smith, Richard J. Waltner-Toews, David. Weese, J Scott.*

Department of Population Medicine, Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph, Guelph, ON N1G 2W1, Canada.

Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association. 234(11):1404-17, 2009 Jun 1.

An interesting piece of research! Dr. Lefebvre is a former member of OTD and an advocate of the benefits of therapy animals in the health care system. Some of our OTD dogs took part in this study.

Note: You can ask for a copy of this study at our office by emailing: [admin@ottawatherapydogs.ca](mailto:admin@ottawatherapydogs.ca)

**OBJECTIVE:** To determine whether dogs that visited human health-care facilities were at greater risk of acquiring certain health-care-associated pathogens, compared with dogs performing animal-assisted interventions in other settings, and to identify specific behaviors of dogs associated with an increased risk of acquiring these pathogens.

**DESIGN:** Prospective cohort and nested case-control studies.

**ANIMALS:** 96 dogs that visited human health-care facilities and 98 dogs

involved in other animal-assisted interventions.

**PROCEDURES:** Fecal samples and nasal swab specimens were collected from dogs at the time of recruitment and every 2 months for 1 year and were tested for methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA), Clostridium difficile, and other selected bacteria. Information was also obtained on facilities visited during animal-assisted interventions, dog diet, dog illnesses, and antimicrobial use within the home. At the end of the study, dog handlers were asked about the behaviour of their dogs during visits to health-care facilities.

**RESULTS:** Rates of acquisition of MRSA and C difficile were 4.7 and 2.4 times as high, respectively, among dogs that visited human health-care facilities, compared with rates among dogs involved in other animal-assisted interventions. Among dogs that visited human health-care facilities, those that licked patients or accepted treats during visits were more likely to be positive for MRSA and C difficile than were dogs that did not lick patients or accept treats.

### CONCLUSIONS AND CLINICAL

**RELEVANCE:** Results suggested that dogs that visited human health-care facilities were at risk of acquiring MRSA and C difficile, particularly when they licked patients or accepted treats during visits.



### Congratulations and Welcome to New OTD Members and Associate Members!

- Heidi Vincent – Associate member (member of the Communications Committee)
- Nicola and Peanut
- Sylvie and Rusty
- Marie and Muchacho
- David and Jasmine
- Kevin and Bowser
- Chantal and Trixi
- Michelle and Rusty

# In Memoriam

## Murphee

Lesli Forrester

Murphee, my female Bernese Mountain dog, was a therapy dog from the first day we brought her home. She came out of the womb a gentle, loving soul that just wanted to be hugged. We spent the last 3 years going every week to the Alta Vista Manor. Every time I got her "Therapy Bag" out of the closet she'd run to the front door and sit down anxiously waiting for me to put her working vest on. She adored kids more than anything in the world (other than ice cream) and would lie on her back, all four paws in the air, tail wagging, and howling until they came across the street to greet her and rub her belly. Because of this, I was hoping to get her involved in the READ program at some point in the future. Unfortunately, we ran out of time when she was diagnosed with Acute Leukemia this last summer.



Murphee

Murphee will forever be in our hearts as the kindest, most docile dog we could ever ask for who ended up teaching me more about the good in people than anyone else.

## Abby

Shirley and her Golden Retriever, Abby, volunteered at Arnprior Villa from December 2008 to August 2009 when she sadly crossed the rainbow bridge.

*Our heartfelt condolences to Lesli and Shirley for the loss of your pet and companion.*

## MEMBER DISCOUNTS 2009

All of the following merchants require proof of current OTD membership (ID badge) and will honor discounts to OTD members.

- **Berry's Food Store,** Glebe Store- 15% discount on general merchandise
- **Critter Jungle,** Hampton Park Plaza- 10% discount on general dog related merchandise
- **TLC Grooming,** Canotek Rd- 5% discount on grooming services
- **Bark & Fitz,** Westboro and Centrum- 10% discount on non-food related merchandise, grooming (not nail clipping or u-bath), OTD members must register with the HYDRANT program at the store and provide contact info for their system
- **Natural Pet Foods,** Westboro and Carleton Place- 10% discount on all dog related merchandise
- **Kaleidoscope Kids,** Glebe- 15% discount on books for OTD READ members
- **Blair Animal Hospital**

## 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  
 Leimerk Developments  
 Royal Canadian Legion Branch 593  
 Adup Corporation  
 Costco Wholesale  
 Hillary's Cleaners, Bank Street  
 Independent Linen Service  
 Starbucks, Stafford Centre  
 Your Credit Union  
 Royal Canadian Legion, Westboro Branch 480  
 Ottawa Veterinary Hospital and Bells Corners Animal Hospital  
 Saunders Book Company  
 Best Friends School of Dog Training  
 West Québec School Board  
 Alta Vista Bayview Animal Hospital  
 Open Hand Group

### FACILITIES

Best Friends School of Dog Training (Kim Cooper)  
 Bruyère Continuing Care  
 Ottawa Paramedic Service HQ (John Rathier)  
 The Training Hall (Frances Holmes)  
 Carolark Centre for Applied Canine  
 Low United Church

### OTD OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

#### KATE MILLER

OTD Administrator

**Tel:** 613-261-6834

**Fax:** 613-256-0077

#### Email:

[admin@ottawatherapydogs.ca](mailto:admin@ottawatherapydogs.ca)

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

### Here's Looking at You!

The Communications Committee wants to hear your thoughts!

- How do you like the OTD Newsletter?
- Do you have an OTD success story that you would like to share?

Send us your thoughts or ideas at:

[newsletter@ottawatherapydogs.ca](mailto:newsletter@ottawatherapydogs.ca)

