



June 2011

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE:
www.ottawatherapydogs.ca
 (613) 261-6834

Newsletter



Mark your Calendars!

The OTD Community Outreach Committee will be organizing a picnic this summer for OTD members, associate members and their dogs.

WHEN? Mid-August

WHAT? OTD potluck event

WHERE? Still to be determined

WHO? Contact Bob Simpson at Director3@ottawatherapydogs.ca or by phone: 613.225.8649



More events:

- 🐾 Dog Day at the Metcalfe Farmers' Market (on 8th Line Road) on Saturday, June 25th
- 🐾 Wiggle Waggle Walk (Humane Society) Sunday, September 11th

Remember to check your email plus the [OTD website](#) and [Facebook page](#) for more announcements!

In our Corner

Rachelle Pagé

Keynote speaker, CF-18 fighter pilot, OTD member, PTSD foundation starter ... those are but a few of the many facets of Dee Brasseur. We were lucky enough to have her attend our first OTD Members and Supporters Dinner as a keynote speaker.

Along with the traditional ways to donate to OTD, Dee spoke about the [One in A Million Fund](#) – empowering people who serve people. The One in A Million Fund supports the belief that everyone has the power to overcome the challenges of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and go forward to realize the true extent of their personal potential.

How you can make a difference

Buying a coin will make a difference in someone's life. Sales revenue from the One in A Million Limited Edition Challenge Coin will provide annual funding for research, education and treatment to support those who serve and suffer from PTSD.



The goal is to sell one million coins and create a sustainable Community Foundation of Ottawa. With a foundation established, OTD can become a recipient of such funding.

Dee is one great gal to have in our corner!

Letter from the Editor

Rachelle Pagé

The message I was going to write for this Edition was a mirror copy of Carole Eldridge's message from the 2011 Annual General Meeting. For that reason, I decided to skip a Letter from the Editor and just add to her already well-crafted message.

In the last Edition, I spoke of changes – and those have not stopped! Check out the update on our OTD Facebook Group and our new Facebook Page on p.9.



My dog Patches beside me on the couch while I work away on my laptop!

2011 AGM – Report from the Chair

Carole Eldridge

What a year! All of our collective aspirations have come to pass. OTD has many more teams, made up of members with their dogs, visiting institutions as well as associate members consisting of people who do not or, currently do not, have therapy dogs but still want to contribute their time and skills to our great

organization. I believe our total membership, as I write this message, is some 115. This is great news.

We are in many more facilities, and requests from others have increased, both locally and as far away as Perth, an hour west of Ottawa.

Thanks to Associate Member, Guy Mercier, our brilliant and creative webmaster, our website is a delight – and has no doubt contributed to our growth. Check out his update on p.9.

The Newsletter is something we all anticipate with pleasure – engaging and greatly informative. Members want to spread the word about the good deeds that we do and for that reason, we have decided to return to a quarterly newsletter schedule. We will be putting out another newsletter in September. So, if you don't see your submission here, please do not fret – it is coming!

Have you looked at our new [Toolbox](#) section on the website? It is filled with fact sheets that are educational and helpful. See p.9 to find out about new fact sheets.

I am pleased that all of the Directors on the Board have agreed to carry on in their respective duties – this may be the envy of many other Boards of Directors. Why have we - and they - chosen to do this? We see OTD's growth and the expansion of our abilities to meet many of the wishes of the vulnerable sector we serve.

That incredible [First Annual Member and Supporter Dinner](#): a fundraising initiative which not only exceeded our financial expectations, but left us with an incredible spirit of companionship and pride! Non-OTD friends who attended with me all commented on the incredible organization, food, location, MC, speakers, timing, "the" song, auction items, congeniality and FUN!

Those of you who were able to attend know – for the rest of you – you can read the recap and check out the photos on our [website](#). I hope you did not miss the article about our keynote speaker at the event, Dee Brasseur, on p.1. Please make sure to put this not-to-be-missed event on your calendar for next year! (Likely to be in mid-April next year).

These are but some of our successes.

Our challenges – we have almost been too successful! Membership and working teams' growth, increasing community recognition and subsequent requests for our services, translate into a need for more organization and coordination. Bottom line – our financial requirements have increased.

Our beloved alleged part-time Administrator/Volunteer Coordinator, Kate Miller, is moving on to spend more well-deserved time enjoying her new grandchildren and other family activities (see her last News from the Office on p.5). We are privileged that two existing OTD Members, Jeannie Stafford (Administrator) and Christiane Charron (Volunteer Coordinator), will carry on her work.

The Board continues to explore ways to enhance volunteer participation in the increasingly complex reality of our growing organization. A current concern is volunteer burn-out: too much is being done by too few. The loss of any of our volunteers is critical.

We hope to engage you, our members and supporters, in advising us about the options to move forward for the next fiscal year 2011-12. How can you do this? Please volunteer to work with any of our existing [Committees](#) or develop your thoughts into a potentially viable plan and send it directly to me at chair@ottawatherapydogs.ca.



Brutus the Saint Bernard

Oh What a Night!

Rachelle Pagé

(Photos courtesy of Brittany Veinot, phodographer.ca)

On April 12, 2011, Ottawa Therapy Dogs held the first Annual Members & Supporters Dinner at Temple Israel. "Good Food to Support Great Dogs" was the tagline and, while the food was good – well, amazing actually, thanks to Buffet Charbonneau – the night was about so much more!

Wonderful food, compassionate and giving people, courageous stories, open sharing of experiences and generosity - all made this night a huge success. We exceeded our expectations in fundraising with over \$7,000 in fellowship, fun and participation! I think our Chair, Carole Eldridge, summed it best when she said "WOW!"



Sarah Dalby



Liam, the Border Terrier



Kate Miller, Dee Brasseur, Kari the Afghan, Carole Eldridge, Margot Montgomery at our Members & Supporters Dinner

For more photos and details of the event, visit our [website](#).

Congratulations and Welcome to New OTD Members and Great!

New Teams:

- ✿ Julie and Cachou
- ✿ Jeanne and Buddy
- ✿ Flo and Abbey
- ✿ Carole and Miss Gypsy
- ✿ Stephanie and Kima
- ✿ Joseph and Seamus
- ✿ Jim and Neesha
- ✿ Jennifer and Jen
- ✿ Melanie and Tess
- ✿ Dana and Coal
- ✿ Sonia and Joey
- ✿ Tara and Seamus
- ✿ Heidi and Mei Ling

New Associate Members:

- ✿ Kate
- ✿ Sarah

AGM 2011 – Recap

Rachelle Pagé

(Photos courtesy of Brittany Veinot, phodographer.ca)

As was the case for the past few years, this year’s AGM required tissues!

Guest Speaker

This year’s keynote speaker was Kathleen Petty from CBC’s “Ottawa Morning” show, accompanied by her German Shepherd, Greta.

Kathleen spoke of her experiences growing up with a German Shepherd and how that affected decisions ranging from where she would live to what kind of car she would buy. Although her dogs suffered from a variety of medical conditions, that did not deter Kathleen from sticking with German Shepherds. She recounted how her dog, Shep, stayed with her when – at age six – she decided to run away from home.

While Kathleen’s dogs never were official therapy dogs, they were for her – providing emotional support when and as needed.



Kathleen Petty and her German Shepherd, Greta, at the AGM.

For this reason, Kathleen understands the need for therapy dogs and is quite supportive of the work that OTD does.

THE Song

We were so lucky to have Sarah Dalby return to sing the song she performed at our Members & Supporters Dinner. The song is about Xecel, the OTD dog that helped her through rehabilitation. This night was special, as Sarah was reunited with Xecel. This is where the tissues came in handy! A video of Sarah singing *I Love that Dog* (a.k.a. OTD’s new theme song) can be viewed on the OTD website. Sarah benefited from OTD services when recovering from Guillain-Barré syndrome and is one of our greatest supporters! Because of her enthusiasm for our organization, Carole E. took an executive decision and made Sarah an honorary OTD member. She is so grateful for OTD’s role in her recovery and keen to spread the word – she has even agreed to do an interview for us for an upcoming newsletter – so stay tuned for that!



Sarah Dalby and Xecel at the AGM.

Volunteer(s) of the Year

He’s often behind the scenes - I think he likes it that way - but this year, Guy

(yes, that Web Guy) was full-on in the spotlight. He was the first Associate Member to receive the Volunteer of the Year award. This was quite fitting, because if it wasn’t for him, OTD would not be getting the attention it is. Guy really believes in the work we do, and, like Kathleen, understands the effect that dogs can have on our lives. For that reason, he continues to encourage others to join and support OTD.



Guy receiving his award from Carole.

The Board also honoured Catherine Mirsky with a Member Volunteer of the Year award. Catherine is the chair of the Standards Committee and works hard at ensuring that OTD teams are adhering to the proper standards and practices. Catherine is reinforced everyday with the volunteering she does with her dog – dogs just get it!



Catherine receiving her award from Margot.

News from the Office

Kate Miller

As always, the time has flown by this winter and spring... and this will be my final "News from the Office" from scenic Almonte.

The high interest in OTD and therapy dog work has gained momentum. Our membership is growing close to the 120 mark and should continue to climb steadily over the coming months.

We expected a huge turnout for the April 11th orientation and we did have standing room only. From that session, we had three full evaluations that ended in early May and now have 13 new teams ready to go.

Realizing that many folks come to the orientation just for information and may plan to pursue membership at a later time, we decided to split things up: there will be a 1-hour Information Session on September 12th at St. Vincent's Hospital followed by a 2-hour Orientation on Sept. 26th, also at SVH. Our hope is that only serious candidates will advance to the Orientation, then on to evaluations. We feel that the candidates will have a more realistic understanding of OTD's expectations and their own potential as a team.

New programs and facilities

We have added several new facilities to our waiting list this spring.

Deakin House (group home for adults with developmental delays) in Perth and CHSLD Gatineau (long term care) are fortunate enough to have new OTD teams beginning their OTD volunteer careers there.

Others on the list are: Glebeview

Residence (home for Schizophrenic, Bipolar clients), In Community (residence for adults with physical disabilities) and St. Stephen's Residence (adults with developmental delays).

As usual, we have vacancies in some of our established programs which I try to fill first, if at all possible.

Extra thanks to ...

- OTD volunteers for offering their time to appear at special events over the year.
- Margot Montgomery, Bob Simpson, Community Outreach Committee members and many others who contributed to the smashing success of our first annual OTD dinner!
- OTD board members and others who made this years' AGM a warm and fun-filled social event.
- All of the wonderful people who help at the orientation and evaluations - couldn't be done without you!
- Those special volunteers who go the extra mile without even being asked (you know who you are!)

The last word

I'm sure that most of you know that I am leaving this position at the end of June in the capable hands of Jeannie Stafford (Administrator) and Chris Charron (Volunteer Coordinator).

I have to say that this wasn't an easy decision for me as I have thoroughly enjoyed the daily challenges and exceptional people (and their dogs) that I have met along the way. The OTD board members and committees have always provided me with total support and sage advice. I will dearly miss

working with them.



However, I will remain an active OTD volunteer so expect me to still pop up in the most unexpected places! My new dog, Gable, will be two next May and I hope we will be evaluated (OH GOD!) next spring. Wish us luck.

It will be great to be back volunteering because that is what it is all about.

Thanks to each and every one of you for your kindness and friendship.

Bye for now.

FAREWELL TO OTD FRIENDS

SUZANIE AND SYBS
NANDA AND CALYPSO
JODIE AND PARKER
KARINE AND BUBBA
ANDREA AND MICKEY FRY

(ASSOCIATE MEMBERS):

SARA E.
LESLI F.
MARGARET G.
DONNA C.
MARY H.
SARAH M.
HEIDI V.

**THANKS FOR ALL YOUR HARD
WORK ON BEHALF OF OTD!**

R.E.A.D.ing between the Lines

Julie Davies

After being teased by Carole at the AGM recently about not owning a “real” dog (merely the imaginary kind), I’d like to make it known that the R.E.A.D. program clearly has had an impact on our family. Recently, I found my four-year-old sitting on the floor pretending to read to his stuffed Bernese Mountain dog - a future R.E.A.D. team in training!



News on the R.E.A.D. front

In addition to the CBC’s coverage of our Sunnyside library program in February, a Carleton journalism student, William Burr, wrote a full-page article about OTD’s R.E.A.D. program in the OSCAR and produced an excellent audio piece for his blog. Both are available on our website under “News & Events,” so if you haven’t had a chance to check them out, please do!

Our latest R.E.A.D. Orientation and subsequent Evaluation in March were huge successes thanks to many wonderful OTD (and child) volunteers. The teams were evaluated in the midst of a very noisy and energetic reconstruction of school chaos in the gymnasium at Lady Evelyn Alternative School (which was kind enough to donate the use of the facility). All six teams passed with flying colours. Our newest teams are: Nyam Bann &

Calypto; Heather Dunbar & Max; Claire Laroche & Marcus; Sandra Luken & Maya; Sylvie Laferriere & Bella; and Connie Edlund & Jordy. We are also happy to welcome Rosemary Chisholm & Tara to the R.E.A.D. fold.

Dogs” or “Paws to Read” and I’m looking for suggestions. If you have any ideas, please send me an email at read@ottawatherapydogs.ca



Evaluator, Jeannie Stafford, looks on as Amy Bernier (8) reads to Jordy & Connie Edlund. (Photo courtesy of Jason Rusmiser)

It’s shaping up to be a busy summer with book club visits and library programs in the works for the Chelsea branch of the Ottawa Public Library as well as the newly-renovated Ruth E. Dickenson branch in Barrhaven. We are also testing a 10-week pilot project in one-on-one tutoring this summer with a local student.

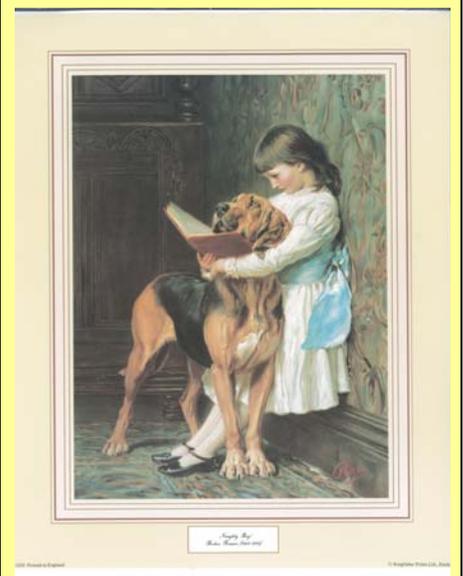
And before school begins in September, Chantel Hutter will be giving a workshop on the logistics behind teaching children how to read, focusing on strategies that R.E.A.D. teams can use to make the most of their canine companions when working with readers who are struggling with the process.

One last note

As demand for our library programs increases, I’ve been trying to come up with a tag or name to use when promoting the program that captures the magic of R.E.A.D. Other therapy dog groups use names such as “Library

R.E.A.D. Therapy Dogs in the 1800s

OTD Member Claire Laroche, found this print at Value Village. Claire recalls coming across in her R.E.A.D. studies that children in the 1800s used to read to their dogs or pets. The print (shown below) is entitled “Naughty Boy.”



Maya's First Day of School

Sandra Luken

Maya was 7 years old when she went to school for the first time. For this special occasion, she was bathed, had her hair combed, her teeth brushed, ears cleaned and nails trimmed. Of course, a new outfit was picked out the night before and put on with such excitement in the morning.

Like most parents, I, too, was excited and nervous, wondering how she would react to the new surroundings, the teachers and other children. I had to be confident in the preparation we had done leading up to this day, knowing that she would be fine as long as I was calm as well.

When we arrived at school we were introduced to the class and immediately made to feel welcome. Since Maya was starting school in May and the others had been together since September, we knew it might be difficult to make new friends. This fear was quickly put to rest as Maya was invited to sit in the circle with the rest of the class as they reviewed the calendar for the day.

Maya then had an opportunity to spend time with each of her new classmates and get to know them. Some of them read their favourite books to Maya, others took her for a walk to show her around the school. Maya was so happy that she was grinning at everyone she met. Her big brown eyes reflected the enjoyment she was feeling and I relaxed, knowing that Maya was going to enjoy her time at school with the children.

Maya is a 7-year-old yellow Labrador Retriever; a rescue dog; and now, an Ottawa Therapy Dog. She just

completed her first school visit at the Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre,

Special thanks to OTD, Best Friends Dog Training, B.A.R.K. and e3Canine for making this possible.



Therapy Dog School

This course will help aspiring therapy dog teams to understand and function in a pet visitation role.

Training exercises will prepare your dog for graduation night and Canine Good Citizen/Canine Good Neighbour testing, a common first step in therapy dog certification. They will be taught ice-breaking behaviours, such as how to put their head in a patient's lap. In addition, dogs will be familiarized with wheelchairs, crutches and walkers.

(Please note, that therapy dog certification is NOT included in this course – it must be sought through therapy organizations such as Ottawa Therapy Dogs.)

Visit www.bfdogtraining.ca for more information.

MEMBER DISCOUNTS 2011

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) - 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 service
- **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 store's HYDRANT program
- **Natural Pet Foods**
Westboro and Carleton Place - 10% discount on dog-related merchandise
- **Kaleidoscope Kids**
Glebe - 15% discount on books for OTD READ members
- **Blair Animal Hospital**
- **A guy, a girl, two dogs and a cat**
10% discount on store items, except food
- **Wag Pet Shop Inc.**
1071 Bank Street - 10% discount on merchandise and food except drinks and sale/discounted items
www.wagpetshop.caH.

Why We Do What We Do!

Our office often receives many stories and tidbits about the work that is happening all around OTD. Below are some snippets of such stories.



I just wanted to share a wonderful experience I had at the Prince of Wales Manor with the organization.

Calypso and I had been visiting a couple in particular there for over 1 year, we would always save half an hour at the end of our Thursday visits to spend just with them in the privacy of their room.

They looked forward to seeing Calypso every week very much.

Recently, the couple were moved to another facility 2 and half hours away and so we had to say our goodbyes.

It was very sad to see them leave, Calypso misses them a lot, but we know they have moved to a better place.

On the last night of our visit, there was a package waiting for us from a family member of the couple.

A thank you card expressed the gratitude they had of Calypso (and me) being in their loved ones lives. She mentioned we were the only other support to this couple and we continuously brightened the couple's day by visiting them.

I had my sister create a card that I can post at the manor and give to some of our regulars there (see picture below). I had given one of the cards to this couple which they were again very grateful for. They now have a reminder

of the moments they spent with Calypso which always brought much joy and many smiles to them.



The family member subsequently decided to make a donation to the Ottawa Therapy Dogs to again express her gratitude for the happiness these dogs bring to people's lives.

Good work to all!

Nanda and Calypso



When I make my rounds at St Vincent there is one lady were Spring can not wait to get into bed with her. I watch as Spring snuggles up against her and the two of them drift off to sleep. They both look so peaceful in dreamland. On one such occasion the doctor arrived and when I went to wake them both, he said No, that spring was doing more for her than he ever could. The patient always wakes up with a smile on her face. I don't know who has the bigger smile me or her.

Georgia and Spring



It is so true that it is one or two comments from staff, patients, or their family that "make the day". Tucker's very favourite lady to visit is very ill right now and really on palliative care. She woke up though today, to say hello to Tucker and he lies quietly beside her while she, her family and I chat. It is very special "work" for both of us.

Sheldon and Tucker



I went in to the (Richmond Carefor home) today. I am still jetlagged from my trip to the UK, and I spent the morning rushing around trying to catch up with some of the farm paperwork, getting Murphy ready etc. etc. By the way – Labradors know when spring is coming and they are world class shedders. I also muttered frequently under my breath "what possessed me to say I would go and do my therapy visit today – I'm too busy, too jetlagged, not in the mood, and so on". I expect we have all been there – our lives are busy – but when we have promised to go, then that's what we do.

Anyway, I rushed to Richmond, still feeling stressed, rushed and preoccupied with what I "ought" to be doing. As I went on my round, one of the ladies said "Oh Murphy, I'm so glad you came in today, you make my heart feel happy".

Here's to the rest of my Therapy Dog Colleagues – may your hearts also feel happy too.

Joan and Murphy



A Word from that Web Guy

Guy Mercier



Recent Web Update

You may have noticed our website has gone through a few minor changes. The OTD web template has been improved: it will be easier to update our team member dogs in the header, to update the top menu and left column expandable menus and last year's anniversary logo has been replaced.

We also have streamlined the [Home](#), [News & Events](#), [OTD Suppliers](#), and [OTD members](#) sections. As well, there is a new section for [OTD Corporate Documents](#) (they used to be under the OTD Member and OTD Supplier sections). Our OTD Corporate Documents are public documents along with our promo items such as postcards, greeting cards, and calendars, so we have made them accessible for everyone. Wouldn't it be awesome to get an OTD postcard from someone other than an OTD member?

Our Web Statistics

It is with great pleasure that I can tell you that we have had over 23 million hits over the last 12 months! The daily average is almost 5,000 – which works out to be about 125,000 a month. I am impressed by the amount of web traffic we are now generating. I believe it is a combination of the recent CBC coverage, our events and web



content that have contributed to the increase. Congratulations to all of you. You have all contributed to our success!

We hope you like the improvements. If you notice any broken links, please notify our webmaster at webmaster@ottawatherapydogs.ca

Don't Forget to 'Like' Us on Facebook!



Rachelle Pagé

I have to admit, I am only a novice at all of this social media stuff. I peruse Facebook regularly and have a Twitter account that I do not use and I still have a plain old cell phone (no apps!)

I recently attended a workshop on Social Media and Crowdfunding. I was introduced to Facebook Pages and thought it was a genius idea since it can let you track the number of visitors and also allows you to 'Like' things.

Originally, a Facebook Group was started for OTD and it's proving to be quite useful for members.

However, since we are always looking for ways to spread the good word about OTD and garner support, I thought that a Facebook Page would be more fitting.

With a Facebook Page, users can 'Like' our page and therefore receive our updates. There are some handy features for us, like number of new

users, statistics, etc. that make it quite the useful communications tool.

Confused yet? Basically, if you are on Facebook, please go and 'Like' our OTD Page by clicking [here](#).

We will keep the OTD Group that was already started on Facebook as well – since not everyone has had the chance to convert; but this group is now closed to the public and will eventually be opened to members and associate members only – creating a place to communicate internally with each other.

As always, you can contact communications@ottawatherapydogs.ca if you have any questions or concerns.

OTD Toolbox

A few new items were added to our [toolbox](#) since the last newsletter:



- 🐾 Wheelchair Etiquette
- 🐾 Communicating with Someone with Dementia
- 🐾 Grooming your Dog for a Therapy Visit



"Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole."
~ Roger Caras

