

the BARKER



A Therapy Dog Publication of St. John Ambulance NS/PEI Council

SPRING 2011



Finlay

Proudly owned by volunteer Karen McNeil of Halifax

Letter From the Editor

Happy Spring Everyone! With every spring comes the promise of sunshine, warm weather, BBQ's, and lots of Therapy Dog events!

It's not only the flowers that come back to life in spring. Fleas, intestinal parasites, and ticks reappear in full force creating potential health hazards for dogs. Be sure to provide your dog with plenty of fresh water, and refresh the water daily to keep the water tasting good and free of drool. You should also take preventive measures to protect your dog and home; consult with your veterinarian about keeping your pet healthy as the warm Spring weather starts.

With the bad weather mostly behind us, the Program has been busy setting up evaluation sessions, Volunteer Recognition Socials, and promotional events. If you have any ideas for a volunteer social or know of any promotional events in your region, please contact me! As I will be spending time out of the office travelling to each region of the Program in NS and PEI, it may take a few days for me to respond to any e-mail or phone call inquiries, so please be patient when trying to contact me!

This Spring also marks my second year as the Therapy Dog Program Coordinator. I'd like to thank all of our volunteers, as well as The Health Care Facility staff and clients for making this Program so wonderful and for making these past two years very enjoyable!

I hope you enjoy this spring's edition of the Barker Newsletter!



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jaime Wolfe'.

Therapy Dog Program Coordinator

"I am not your dog, but if every time you saw me, you gave me a backrub, I would run to greet you, too." ~Robert Brault

Stress In Therapy Dogs

Stress in your Therapy dog is a matter for immediate attention on your part. If your Therapy dog is displaying signs of stress it is time to end the visit, even if it is shorter than usual. Do not physically acknowledge or discipline your dog for exhibiting stress. Keep calm, end the visit on a cheerful note, and simply take your dog home to relax. It is important that you learn to read your own dog's particular body language as each dog will show stress in different ways. Some signs that a dog is feeling stressed may include:

- Yawning
- Excessive water drinking
- Excessive panting
- Excessive licking
- Whining/barking
- Willful disobedience
- Tail tucked under
- Clinging to the handler
- Disinterest
- Leaving sweaty paw prints
- Refusing food/treats
- Ears back

Ways to Alleviate Stress in Dogs

If a dog is exhibiting a stress response, try one or more of the following:

1. Stop what you are doing with your dog and take a break.
2. Break the exercise or routine down into smaller, easier steps for your dog.
3. Remove your dog from the environment or situation.
4. Remove anything from the experience or situation you think may be causing stress in the dog (noisy environment, other dogs, clippers, Brushes).
5. Re-think your interaction methods and techniques for your dog.
6. Make all interactions positive for your dog, use treats



After you are home, think through the past few days and try to identify the trigger for your dog's discomfort. Be sure to include your own mood in the analysis - dogs are very much in tune with their humans and could simply be picking up on stress you might be feeling. Include external changes in the dog's home or routine (e.g. New baby in the house, new job, change in work schedule, new house, etc.)

Therapy work unto itself is tiring for your dog. Don't push your dog with long visits, although you'll probably find you can't do a facility visit in much less than 45 minutes. When the visit is over, incorporate some "down time" such as playing, take a walk in the park, a massage, or just hang out if that's what your dog enjoys most.

One stress incident is not a reason to cancel your next visit. If the situation repeats itself, and you cannot think of a good reason for it to have happened, consider the possibility of physical or health changes and consult your veterinarian as appropriate.

DID YOU KNOW??

Most dogs don't like to be left alone so they howl. Leave the radio or television on to keep your dog company when you are away.



What's Going On?

Read on to see what the Program has been up to and where we are headed!

Promotional Events

In February, we attended the Doggie Expo, which is an event put on by Greyhounds Pets of Atlantic Canada (GPAC) each year. This is always an extremely successful event for our Program and this year was no exception as we gained a lot of interest in the Program!

We also had a wonderful opportunity presented by Eastlink TV, who filmed a story on the Therapy Dog Program. This story is going to air for Volunteer Week on April 10th at 7:00pm. Don't forget to mark this date on your calendars so you can watch it!

I'd like to thank everyone that helped out at these events!!

Program Growth

Since the new year we have held 3 evaluations and welcomed 16 new Therapy Dog Teams. These evaluations were held in Metro (2) and in Truro and we have many more evaluations planned for the spring months. I'd like to welcome all of our new Therapy Dog Teams to the Program!!

2011 Spring Celebration Weekend

Annual General Meeting & Dinner

Friday, May 13, 2011

Reception: 5:30-6:15 p.m.

AGM: 6:15-6:45 p.m.

Dinner: 7:00 p.m.

Location: MSVU

*Tickets for the Dinner can be purchased by contacting Jaime Wolfe (ext. 2302)

Cost \$25

Therapy Dog Program Pet Portraits

Saturday, May 14, 2011

Time: 1:30 p.m.

Location: SJA Head Office



Arline's
Enchanting Portraits
Making Your Memories Magical

Investiture & Awards Ceremony

Saturday, May 14, 2011

Time: 2:00 p.m.

Location: Government House

*Invitation only, RSVP required

* Reception to follow



DID YOU KNOW??

Dogs that chase cars have learned that cars run away.
This behavior is reinforced each time he chases one away.

Tasty Treats

Snickerpoodles

- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 cup honey
- 2 eggs
- 3 3/4 cups white flour
- 2 teaspoons cream of tartar
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 cup cornmeal
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon

Mix vegetable oil, shortening, honey with eggs. Beat well. Add flour, soda and cream of tartar. Knead dough until mixed well. Shape dough by rounded teaspoons into balls. Mix cornmeal and cinnamon in bowl and roll balls in mixture. Place 2 inches apart on a greased cookie sheet. Press the balls down with a fork. Bake for 8-10 minutes at 400F. Cool and store in airtight container.

Quips & Quotes



“On my third therapy dog visit, I went to the Aberdeen hospital in New Glasgow. My dogs name is Ivy and this caused a bit of confusion at the facility.

I called the hospital and asked about visiting with Ivy for dog therapy. The nurse said yes. After I arrived the nurses told me that they were trying to figure out what Ivy dog therapy entailed, until one of them who had met Ivy, set them straight. The other nurses thought that Ivy dog therapy was some new sort of therapy using dogs and an I.V. (intravenous)!”

-written and submitted by Nancy Armstrong of New Glasgow

Volunteer Spotlight

written and submitted by Pamela Ditchoff of Liverpool

Christmas is a joyous celebration, as well as a time of regret for those not fortunate to have the financial means for making a joyous Christmas for their families. It can also be a lonely time for those separated from family members by distance, and those in hospital or living in nursing homes who can't join in the festivities.

On Christmas morning, I was especially missing my children who live in New York, California, and Arizona, along with my three grandchildren. My husband and I had skype sessions via computers; we saw our twin two year old grand daughters open their presents from Grammy, and our three year old grandson open his. Skype is grand, but not the same as putting your arms around someone and wishing them a Merry Christmas. However, I knew just the place where I could do this dozens of times. Saturday morning is our regular day, the day Phoebe, my greyhound mix and I visit Queen's Manor. We couldn't miss Christmas morning.

I tied jingle bells on Phoebe's collar, and we took along a basket of small candy canes.

I want to add that the Manor was, all through the month of December, festooned in the season. The staff obviously spent a great deal of time and care decorating the windows, halls, lounges, rooms and lobby. The tree was gorgeous.

During the two hours we spent there on Christmas morning, I was given more gifts than I have even found under my tree: dozens of hugs [for both Phoebe and me], dozens of Merry Christmas, dozens of Bless you, heart warming stories of Christmas's past, dozens of thank-you's, from residents and staff, and when we walked out the front door, my step was lighter, my loneliness had lifted along with my spirit of the season.



Extra! Extra!

We are always looking for material for the Barker. Please send us your favorite dog quotes and jokes, photos for our cover dog, stories about your furry friend and notes on special visits!