



Brodie, SJA TD Oakville

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.... *and so much more!*

Hello Everyone,

This is going to be short and sweet, but you know me! I never miss an opportunity to talk about the program. So here we go!

Wow! It has been an amazing time for our program. One of our teams from British Columbia got to meet some members of the Royal Family, and our very own Smiley brought some cheer to our Prime Minister! We showed our new Lord Prior "Sir Malcolm Ross" what our program is all about with a very special visit and new programs, ideas and venues are popping up all over the place! Subaru has seen the light and has jumped on our band wagon as our sponsor! Life is good!

I was particularly touched

by the mail we received when we asked for submissions about special stories, achievements and successes! The response made me realize that like all of us, our dogs have challenges too. We have some dogs that are blind, some that are deaf and some with three legs. We have dogs that have come back from severe injury, battled cancer and other serious illnesses and done so with a continued sweet disposition and no complaint. We have senior dogs that have been with us for years that continue to make people happy every week and young ones that take up the job with enthusiasm! We have been in movies and met movie stars and through it all no matter what the challenges, each and every one of our dogs

bring joy to those we visit and share the love.

And so I thank all those wonderful, dedicated volunteers on the other end of the leash. Your commitment and passion for the program allows your dog to be exceptional and I think you would all agree, there is not one SJA Therapy dog out there that is not extraordinary! No matter what the background, no matter what the challenges, no matter what each day brings to our dogs, they are amazing creatures that bring miracles into our lives everyday!

Thank you to all those volunteers who took the time to share their stories with us and thank you to Heather Leong our editor, who works tirelessly to get this newsletter to all of us. Enjoy!

Therapy Dog visiting gets the Royal Treatment



As you may have heard, St. John Ambulance Therapy Dogs were among several other organizations that welcomed the Royal Family at a children's party for Military families on September 29, 2016.

We here at WAGZ felt it was important to catch the dog's perspective of the event, and thus interviewed Therapy Dog 'Moose' about his experiences. Join us in congratulating Moose and his handler Jennifer Palmer, who did a fantastic job of representing SJA Therapy Dogs!

It must have been tough to choose just one dog to attend. What criteria do you think your TD coordinator was looking for when reviewing the list of active therapy dogs?

Charm and good looks, obviously! Other than that, any dog wanting to be considered must have their Child Certification. I've been working at an elementary school doing the Paws 4 Sto-

ries Program for three years now, so I am comfortable working with kids and love the energy they bring. I've been working at the BC Cancer Agency for 5 years now, and my mom has always taken me everywhere. I am used to new and chaotic situations. It takes a lot to phase me. I am also a pretty large guy, and easy to spot. My mom has a young family, so I am also used to hanging out with small people. The royalty aspect was new to both of us, but I guess they figured we could adapt!

How did you react to the news when told about being selected?

I had a nap and slept on it. My mom, while excited, wanted to contain her enthusiasm, just in case plans changed. Our family couldn't believe that I was chosen. What an honor!

What process did you and your mom go through prior to the event?

My mom had to participate in a conference call, outlining how the morning would look, as well as various 'dos and don'ts' when meeting the Royal Family. Unfortunately for me, the only thing I had to do to get ready was go to the groomer and have a bath. Ah, the sacrifices a dog has to make.

Take us through the day – preparing, getting there, highlights from the event, how you ended the day!

I had a nice long walk to get my bouncies out and a short nap to replenish my energy. We all met at the St. John Ambulance office and travelled together to Government House. I was happy to meet some new friends and then go for

a car ride with them. Everybody was so excited!

When we arrived at Government House, we were shown where I'd be hanging out at the party. My mom was a bit nervous, because they positioned me beside the 4H kids, and they brought a bunny. She had no need to worry, because I know when I have my scarf and special collar and leash on, it's all business.

It didn't take long for the military children to spot me and zoom in for pets and cuddles. Lucky me! When the royal family arrived, they just blended right in with the other families and played.

Prince William and Prince George came over to say hello and blow bubbles. I showed remarkable self-control, because I love to chase and eat bubbles! I stood there and looked adorable, and Prince George even offered me a drink of the bubble water. His dad told him bubbles would make me sick, so he looked around for another drink for me. What a nice boy!



photo credit @US Weekly
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Our new Lord Prior meets our Therapy Dog Program

by Leslie Jack, Provincial Therapy Dog Advisor

As I waited in the lobby of the Royal York Hotel in Toronto for Sir Malcolm Ross, our newly appointed Lord Prior, I was grateful it was a crisp, sunny day and that Geoff Li from Council was going to drive us to our destination. We were headed for "The Reikai Centre at Wellesley Central Place", a long-term care facility in Toronto. Carl Dixon and Carol Baer, both leaders for Toronto Therapy Dogs, had done a wonderful job in choosing a team and a place where we could demonstrate what we do for Sir Malcolm. I was a bit nervous, but as it turned out, there was no need as Sir Malcolm was a very warm, down-to-earth gentleman who was very excited about this part of his visit to Canada. As we traveled to the Centre I was delighted to share our story with him and to get to know him a little better. Of course, one of the first things I wanted to know was if our Lord Prior was a "dog person"! You can exhale now - indeed he is! Sir Malcolm has two "working spaniels" as he called them, but they certainly were "English Cocker Spaniels" as opposed to their cousin the "American Cocker Spaniel". I will let you do some research to find out the differences and there are quite a few! But back to the Lord Prior!



Not only does Sir Malcolm have two dogs, but his wife has her own dog! I am not quite sure what kind, but I quote "a little tiny thing that she carries everywhere with her"! Hooray! I knew all would be well from that point on.

We arrived at the Reikai Centre to a very warm welcome. Carol, Coordinator from Toronto Central Division was waiting for us and of course Margo McKay and her beautiful flat-coated retriever Demi were front and centre. Demi's tail was already going and didn't stop for the entire time! Barb Michalik - Director of Community Partnerships and Volunteer Service - Reikai Centres and Sue Graham Nutter Executive Director and CEO at Reikai Wellesley were also there to greet us. These ladies were wonderful! It was obvious that this facility was a great place to be, whether you were part of the staff, a resident, or a visitor. It was bright and sunny and so were the smiles of everyone we met. The walls were a soft yellow and each

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Lord Prior Sir Walter Hugh Malcolm Ross, GCVO, OBE

On September 1, 2016, St. John Canada was notified that Her Majesty the Queen had appointed Sir Walter Hugh Malcolm Ross as the new Lord Prior of the Most Venerable Order of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem internationally (Order of St. John, of which its operating arm is St. John Ambulance). The Lord Prior is the highest ranking official in the Order behind members of the Royal family.

Sir Malcolm was educated at Eton and Sandhurst and he served in the Scots Guard from 1964 to 1987. He held the post of Adjutant at the Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst from 1977 to 1979 and he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in 1982. He joined the Royal Household in 1987.

In 1988 he was appointed Extra Equerry to The Queen, in 1989 he was appointed Secretary of the Central Chancery of the Orders of Knighthood and in 2006 he was appointed Master of the Household to the Prince of Wales.

He was appointed to the Order of the British Empire in 1988 and the Royal Victorian Order in 1994 as a CVO and he was knighted as a KCVO in 1999 and advanced to GCVO in 2005. Prior to his appointment as Lord Prior, Sir Malcolm served as the Prior of St. John Scotland since 2009.



**LESLIE ...
of "Leslie and Tinker"**

Provincial Therapy Dog Advisor Leslie Jack and her dog Tinker became a TD team this past September. Here we ask Leslie about her experience - look for Tinker's side in this edition of WAGZ!

When did you decide to test Tinker, and how did you prepare in the months before the test?

I think even when I was looking for a rescue to adopt I had the "qualities of a therapy dog" in mind, although I was always aware that it might not work out. It took me a long time, but when I found Tinker I knew she was the one. She was just so sweet and very quiet. I think I have heard her bark twice in the two years she has been part of the family. She was a bit shy at first but her wagging tail showed us she loved people, so we got her out there socializing as much as possible and making sure she was okay around wheelchairs, walkers and canes. She was wandering the streets of Cleveland when she was picked up as a stray, so there is not much that scares her. She has always walked well on a leash and loves attention and she

doesn't startle easily, so I just hoped she wouldn't surprise me (and we all know that can happen!)

Walk us through the day - prep, entering the SJA building as a prospective handler, going through the exam.

I made sure the day of the test that Tinker and I had the whole day to ourselves - not an easy feat! Every morning we talk about what her day will look like, so I told her about the test first thing. She didn't seem worried about it at all! Tinker has gained some weight over the summer. She would not walk at all - even with a cooling jacket on, so I told my chubby little girl that she would be walking a lot that day and indeed she did. I guess she knew I meant business and it was cooler than it had been. We did a good hour before we left for the test and then another fifteen minutes before we went into the building. There were six other teams with just one small dog. I think Tinker would have liked to say "hello" to the others but she stuck with me. I was proud of my girl. During the "dog meet dog" she had to do it twice because of the odd number and she breezed through both greetings! There were two hard parts in



the evaluation. I had to keep waking Tinker when it was her turn. She would just get into a deep sleep when I had to drag her front and centre! During "praise and interaction" Tinker just stood and looked at me, just like she always does when I try to get her to play. No changes there, but I keep hoping one of these days she might actually chase a ball or grab a toy and give it a good shake! I thought with an audience she might feel compelled but it just didn't happen! Her favourite part was definitely when she got a treat. She didn't get chubby just from lack of exercise!

Rumour has it that you are in the process of stepping down from your role. Is this true, and why now?

Oh it's no rumour. I would definitely

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Another 'Karma', from Mississauga division

Good (girl,) Karma!

"What goes around, comes around"

Last month I experienced the truth of that old saying.

I had visited Retirement Homes with my dog, Nick, for many years and we both enjoyed offering company and comfort to everyone we met there. Shortly after Nicky died, my 90 yr. old mother became ill and gradually declined. I visited her often, but I never saw the therapy dog that came to her home occasionally.

After some time, I came to arrange for Mom's move to hospice. I was, naturally, quite upset.

When Mom fell asleep, I left her room to have a few minutes alone. As I got off the elevator, there in front of me was a beautiful Therapy Dog; I burst into tears. All my worries, fears and sadness poured out. The therapy dog moved in closer, looked up at me with big brown eyes and leaned against my knee. Petting and hugging her helped calm me. After a quiet talk with her handler, I was able to go back to help my Mom, feeling more peaceful - and grateful!

It happened that she was the very image of my old dog Nick...and her name was Karma."

- Susan Page, Windsor



From the Evaluator's Corner

This article is dedicated to Archer, our St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog, who crossed over the rainbow bridge on August 27, 2016. He was 9 years old.

It might seem a bit unusual to dedicate an article to a dog, but in fact, it should be dedicated to all SJA Therapy Dogs that have left us too soon.

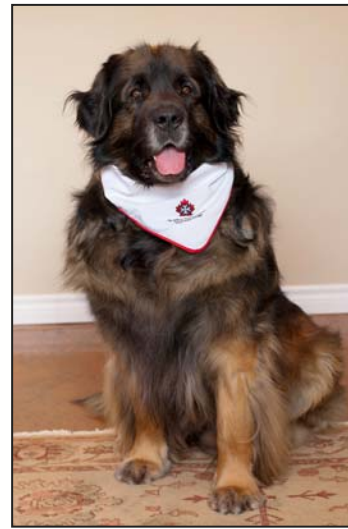
Archer was one of them. He was our dog and, in our eyes, the sun rose and set on him. He was big but he was gentle, he gave of himself unconditionally to all he met and he had a sense of humour that kept us laughing with all of his antics.

Losing a dog is one of the hardest things to deal with.

If it was sudden you try to work through the ifs and the whys to come to terms with the loss. When a St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog is no longer with you, we automatically ask ourselves 'Now what do I do?' You don't have your friend and companion to visit at the nursing home, hospital, school or the many other facilities that need and anxiously await your visit. You feel lost, unsure of the next steps. You have a lot of extra time on your hands. You think to yourself 'If I can't visit anymore perhaps there is something else I can do for the organization, but where would I fit in?'

Trust us, you are needed and wanted. Even though your therapy dog is no longer with you, the SJA Therapy Dog program needs your

help. As Provincial Evaluators and Evaluator Trainers, we know firsthand that your assistance is always welcome at evaluations to help with the exercises and other duties. The expertise you have gleaned from your years of therapy dog visiting makes you an ideal candidate to be a mentor for new dog/handler teams. The op-



portunities abound for therapy dog volunteers, you just have to look beyond the visits. We know how hard it is but the rewards are tenfold.

We miss our boy greatly. He was always up for his therapy dog work – you just had to say the word and he was at your side. He loved every minute of it. We thank him for allowing us to take part in this extraordinary program.

So to all those wonderful 'angels with paws' that have left us too soon, we salute you. To all of those dogs that are still with us, thank you for bringing sunshine, joy and love to all you meet.

Til next time,
Paul and Deb McLay
Provincial Evaluator Trainers,
Greater Toronto Area

Smiley goes to Ottawa!

St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog, Smiley was invited to meet the PM by The Honorable Jane Philpott, Minister of Health, who represents the Stouffville, Ontario riding where Smiley resides with Joanne George. Minister Philpott had previously awarded Smiley and Joanne George the Citizen of the Year award from the SunTribune for their work in the community. Prime Minister Trudeau took time from his busy schedule to meet the whole family and posed for an official photograph on November 1st 2016.



photo credit Adam Scotti

award from the SunTribune for their work in the community. Prime Minister Trudeau took time from his busy schedule to meet the whole family and posed for an official photograph on November 1st 2016.



Justin Trudeau
@JustinTrudeau

Follow

Glad to meet Smiley, the Ontario therapy dog who teaches kids about bullying & acceptance. My thanks to St. John Ambulance for the visit.



photo credit Adam Scotti

SUMMER TIME MEMORIES

“Who let the dogs in?”

For a first event, this one was a soggy, fur-shaking, woofing success, as 23 dogs (and a few owners) took over the Hanover pool for what promises to be the annual “Pooch Plunge” on Saturday, Aug. 20, just before the annual maintenance shut-down.

Some of the larger participants dog-paddled around in the large pool, chasing balls and even jumping off the diving board, while smaller pooches frolicked in the small pool. There were even some St. John Ambulance Therapy Dogs getting in on the fun. To keep everyone safe, lifeguards and Sparky, the fire department mascot, patrolled the pool area. Mayor Sue Paterson and Hanover Police were also on site to provide support at the event.

Similar events have been held in other communities, but this was a first for Hanover and the Therapy Dog program. The

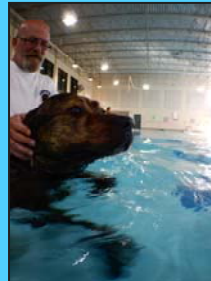


number of participants exceeded all expectations, and plans are already in the works for an even better event next year.

Put on by the Town of Hanover Recreation Department and the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog program, the event raised over \$200 after expenses. Proceeds will go to support and expand the Therapy Dog program.

The event was held with the support of the Town of Hanover, Hanover Police, Hanover Fire Department, Mullen Small Animal Clinic and Hanover Veterinary Hospital. Each canine participant went home with a bag of dog treats and toys from Hanover PetValu.

Article - Pauline Kerr/St. John Ambulance photo



Splash!



Phoenix Paw-casso

The Art of being a Therapy Dog

Back in January of this year my brother’s dog was diagnosed with arthritis of his hips and spine (just between the shoulder blades). I was told about this therapy jacket that people used on dogs with arthritis to help them feel better. I looked into it and they cost over \$300. I really wanted to get one for my brother’s dog but it was way out of my price range. I have a Facebook page that is dedicated to my previous dog Diesel who in 2013 passed away from cancer and now my new pup Phoenix has taken over the page. I decid-

ed to turn to the page for help but I didn't want to just "ask" people for donations, I wanted them to get something in return. That is when I decided to "Paint with Phoenix". I went out and purchased some blank 8x10 painting canvases and went to work painting them, each a different colour. After they were dry it was time for Phoenix to add his magic touch, or in this case paw. I had Phoenix make different designs with his paw prints on each of the paintings and then took pictures of them to post to my



page. I held an auction where people could bid on the paintings for 4 days. I didn't know how it would turn out but within thirty minutes all of the paintings had a

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*Rafaela, Christopher
and Gordo*



Gordo the Therapy Dog was the ring bearer at the wedding of Rafaela Merino and Christopher Gomez.



*Holly and Jordan
Anderson with Nina*

chasing the camp blues away!

by Jodi Barker

So we all know why we do what we do in the Therapy Dog program. However every once in a while you get a real special story that hits home. So tonight Guinness and I take a spot on the grass. We meet a few people as they do their rounds meeting two different therapy dogs. Then this young man sits down and starts to pet Guinness. I could tell right from the start he was upset. He says "what's his name?" I respond by saying "This is Guinness, he's a Golden-doodle and is a year and a half old, one of the youngest pups in the therapy dog program."

The young man starts to tear up. He tells me how much he loves dogs and this is great. The young man then goes on to tell me his name and that he is 12 years old. This is his first time away from home and he misses his parents and



his little sister so much. He doesn't have a dog but he has a couple of cats. As he is telling me this he is petting Guinness the whole time. He told me he will be 13 soon and he hopes he can make it through this tough week. The young man spent an hour and a half cuddling with Guinness. We had many chats throughout this hour and a half. This is truly one of the most touching visits Guinness and I have had in our time with the therapy dog program. This is truly why we do what we do! We make a difference...We make someone's day.....We are therapy dogs!

Jodie Barker and Guinness are both new in the program but are excellent at what they do and very dedicated to the program. This particular visit that Jodie describes took place at the Cadet Camp here in Trenton where we visit twice a week during the summer. The kids range in age from 12 to 18 and for many it is their first time away from home. We sit outside under the trees and the Cadets and Staff come and spend time with the dogs and get to chat about home, their parents, their pets - whatever. I spoke to the Padre and a couple of the counselors during the summer and they told me that the two evenings we were there was like an evening off for them as they never had any Cadets in. They said that every other night of the week their office is full of Cadets with issues of loneliness, wanting to leave and go home, and generally being upset etc. Makes it all worthwhile! We Are There to Care.

Joyce Fowler

September...the dogs go back to school!

Students thank MAUREEN and CHLOE

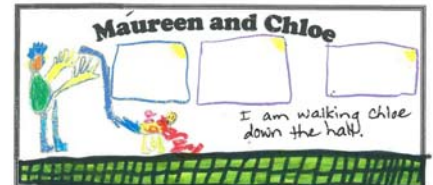
Maureen Batchelor, and her dog Chloe visit Castlebridge Public School in Mrs. Morris' Grade 2 class. Students wrote to say thank you to the therapy dog duo for visiting!

Dear Maureen, It has been a pleasure working with you and Chloe this year. The students have enjoyed and looked forward to

your visits. They have learned a great deal from you and they are proud of this new knowledge. Very few students in my class have dogs. This was a great way for those children to interact up close with a dog and have a positive, lasting experience. I look forward to working with you again. Sincerely, Deanna Morris



Dear Maureen and Chloe I really like the way we get to feed Chloe and her young tickles. I would love to get a dog one day when I grow up! I would love to have a chocolate lab because I love chocolate! Maybe one day we can take a picture together with Chloe and my new dog. I already thought of a name! Cocoa! Because chocolates are made of cocoa beans! Maybe Chloe could be best friends with Cocoa one day! I will miss you Maureen and Chloe too! I hope I can see you again on September!
From: Cathy



Dear Maureen and Chloe, Thank you for teaching me how to walk your dog because I don't have a dog at home. I almost get to see a dog and that was the first I've ever seen a lot of times, as there was my first dog I've ever touched in my whole life. Thanks for teaching me how to make her lay down and sit and thanks for teaching me how to make Chloe stand when she is sitting or laying down. Thank for teaching me to have glue. Chloe leave it so she don't take dirty food because she might get sick. Thank you for teaching me how to feed dog. Thank you for teaching me how to walk her and things like that. how
From: Thomas



Julie Kinkaid and Meadow get the whole story at the local library

It's always a good time to Paws 4 Stories, especially if you are a shy reader who likes to practice reading with the most comfortable audience in the world-an SJA Therapy dog.

A few reading stumbles don't matter, and young

readers can always take a reading break, catch their breath, and hug their listener.

Meadow is a Golden Retriever who appreciates good fiction, although a science book now and again is enjoyed too. Lauren is one of Meadow's

best friends and reads to Meadow and her trainer on Monday afternoons at the library.

We are working our way through a chapter book, and Meadow and Lauren can't wait to find out what happens next.



Saying Goodbye to Lydia

Recently the students at Claude Garton School in Thunder Bay touchingly demonstrated the deep effect our dogs have on those they visit. In memory of "Lydia" and in support of Lorraine her handler, who took part in the primary reading program at the school, the students held an assembly to remember this very special Therapy Dog. Sadly Lydia had recently passed away from cancer.

They had a slide presentation of the team at work and asked Lorraine to speak. She was then presented with a beautiful framed picture of her and Lydia, and the same picture was hung prominently outside the Principal's office. Needless to say, there was not a dry eye in the place. But it didn't stop there. The school also raised over \$700. to donate to the Thunder Bay Therapy Dog Division in honour of Lydia.

So if you ever need to be reminded about why you are visiting with your dog, think about these students and their love for Lydia, who left a legacy that brings a bitter-sweet smile to all our faces. To Lorraine, we say "well done, friend". Your passion to share Lydia truly made a difference. We will remember this story fondly and keep it with others, close to our hearts. They make us proud to be part of it all. Good-bye sweet Lydia and thank you.



Therapy Dogs by Susan L. Foster

Four paws and a wagging tail,
They come in every size
Bringing love and comfort,
Understanding in their eyes.

They approach each human being
In a calm and happy way.
Their whole demeanor saying,
"We've come to make your day!"

So if you're feeling lonely
They're glad to stay a while.
They'll cuddle up or shake a paw
They love to make you smile.

Gently, freely giving
Unconditional love
Therapy Dogs are special -
They're Blessings from Above.

Susan Foster visits several schools and adult facilities with her Therapy Dog Molly.

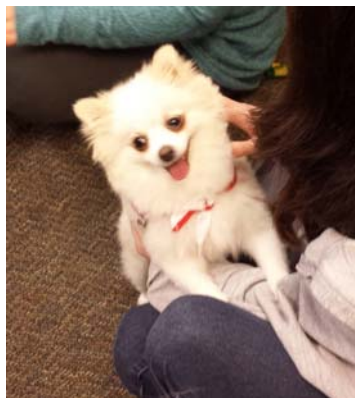
Matilda and Wanda SJA Northumberland

Matilda became a therapy dog in 2008 at just one year of age and remains the youngest ever to join us! Her person is Wanda Corey, a long-time member of ours. Proud owner of the world's calmest Jack Russell. Wanda and Matilda visit a regional hospital where Matilda is well known for her Hallowe'en costumes and how much she enjoys a tummy rub. Ma-

tilda is also certified to visit with children and those with special needs. Her favourite things include liver treats, picnics, and chasing chipmunks".



SJA TDs and St. Clair College, Windsor



Perhaps you don't know where Windsor is, it is at the far south-west end of Ontario, where the 401 West stops. And along that 401 is a progressive college named St. Clair College! For three previous semesters at the College, the Student Representative Council invited the TDs to help out during examination periods. The response was overwhelming: nursing students lying down on the floor with our hounds, animation students quietly sitting and patting the hounds, vet tech students, gerontology specialist, you name it: clearly more need than we had body of accumulated dogs!

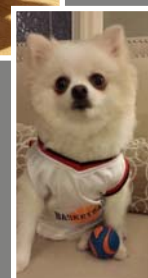
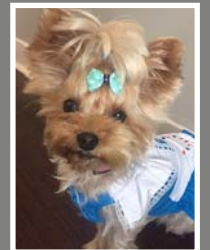
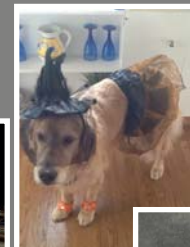
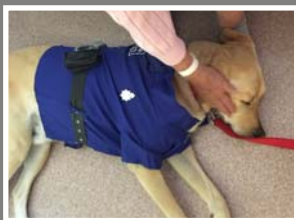
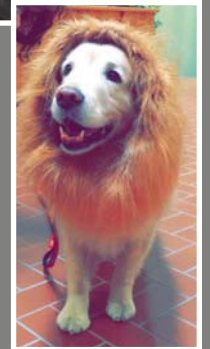
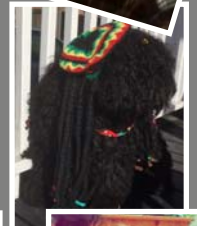
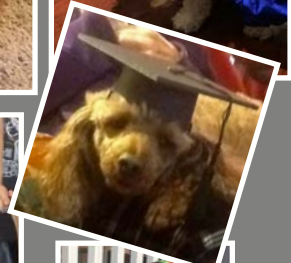
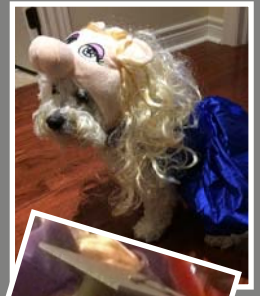
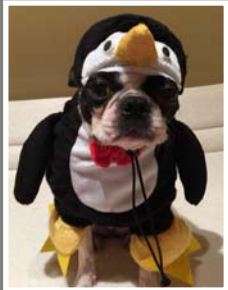
This year, a new initiative has been started with the Student Counseling Office. A number of dogs and handlers attend (truly, we know that no one comes to see us bipeds!) and our routine is this: we head from the parking lot to the second floor classroom. Sometimes we can make this trek in less than ten minutes, but very often we are stopped along the way, and even better, we usually collect students and faculty alike



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OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY

Getting spooky,
and cute!



(Continued from page 2)

Moose's royal visit

"I was even thanked - for not causing an international incident by bucking off the princess, who sat on me!"

When Princess Kate came by to pet me, I couldn't believe how beautiful she was. She was very nice to me and scratched my chin. She called over to Princess Charlotte and asked her if she wanted to 'stroke the dog'. The little princess didn't need to be asked twice. She ran over and started petting me. I was in heaven. That bubble soon burst, as the princess turned around and sat on me! She was bouncing up and down on my back, and her mother quickly reminded her to be gentle. Phew! My mom was so proud of me for not standing up. The Lt. Governor even thanked me for 'not causing an international incident by bucking off the princess'. I know I have to be calm and tolerant

when I'm working. It's all just part of the job.

During the event, I also was lucky enough to play with some children whose parents are in the military. They were all toddlers, so they were full of energy and loved to snuggle. Me, too!

When it was time for everyone to leave, the royal family came over for one last 'stroke' of my fuzzy fur, and then they were off. I was blown away by how lovely and kind they all were. What a wonderful family!

We drove back to the office and then everyone was laughing at how much media attention I was getting. Apparently, I was trending on Twitter! My photos and video with Princess Charlotte have

since been all over the place. They've been in USA Today, People Magazine, the London Times and several other magazines and newspapers. My photo was even on the Tonight Show! Crazy!

What advice would you give other Therapy dogs if they were to meet the royal family?

It's worth the bath. It was a lot of fun, and I got to meet some new friends.



Moose, hard at work during Paws 4 Stories visiting

Brutus and Sandra Fazio, SJA Burlington

Brutus has been doing Therapy visits for St. John now for more than 13 of his 15 years. **He earned his '1000 Visits' service tag this year.** "When I brought Brutus home I knew that I had an obligation to him and others to share him in a big way. His calm nature was evident from day one. Nothing seemed to phase him, not even the tumbling metal items from the testing cart. He literally jumped through hoops to entertain and please during his visits. At Maple Villa and the Acclaim Center he still sits up for a cookie, counts to 3, shakes a paw with everyone and welcomes the loving pets and strokes of all. These are his rewards, along with the gratefully received cookies. Even at 15 years he still walks with a proud bounce and perky ears when he goes for his visits."



Dino, SJA Thunder Bay, and his buddy Dana



Dana looks forward to her visits with Dino. Her favorite part is getting lots of cuddles from Dino. Dana likes to tell us what current events she has coming

up. She has a passion for dogs and shares with us pictures of the many dogs she has in her life. As we leave she always says bye to Dino and asks when we are going to be back. She is always looking forward to the next visit.

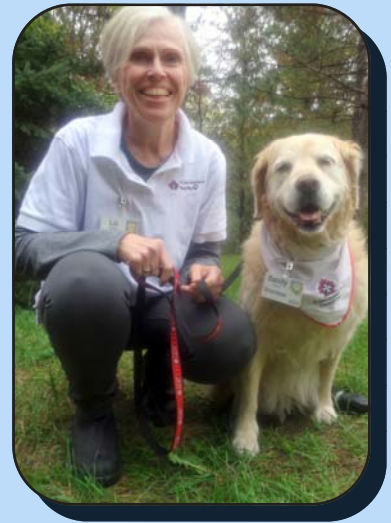
as we walk towards our room! From 11:30am – 12:30pm we arrange ourselves in the room. Some kids just come and sit on the offered chairs and watch. Some sit on the floor and play with the dogs or give them massages. The benefit of having a room like this is that there is no need to worry if the population is dog-friendly: only people who want to be in their proximity come into the room. Two months into this program, we have had many repeat visitors, some like the comfort of knowing our routine. One individual said that she had not left her house in over two years because of PTSD and only came out as she heard the dogs were coming. We have had white-faced gaunt students who were stressing about exams. We have had a student with tears streaming down the face, finally sharing that she had just put her own dog down. Most of the time we have no clue of the reason the visitors have come, the reason is not the important thing, the critical thing is that they came and found solace in our hounds. Luckily for us in the SJA TD program, this initiative is facilitated through one of our own volunteers who is in the faculty of the college as a Counsellor: Laurisa Kapetanov and her wonderful Pomeranian Willow anchor our program and is able to step in with any perceived issue. Students are able to make private appointments to see Laurisa at her office, and on Wednesdays, even Willow will be there! Laurisa counted 400 hands on our dogs on just one Wednesday.

Our teams of handlers and hounds then leaves this office at 12:30pm to proceed to the Student Council office area where we are in an open corridor. Oftentimes we trail students from our Counseling room to the main floor area, but people are always happy to see the dogs. Our dogs happily pose for photos, every person seems to take selfies with our dogs!

My own dog, a greyhound named Bel-

Sandy and Liz, SJA Loyalist Kingston

Liz Shibley and her dog Sandy, one of the first child certified dogs from the Loyalist Kingston Branch had a very special visit in the Pediatric unit of Kingston General Hospital. The young patient they visited had a number of wires attached to his head in order to monitor his brain waves. The little boy was connected to a computer screen which showed brain wave patterns as he talked, watched videos etc. While the boy steadily pet Sandy from her head down her back, the dad remarked "Would you look at that!" The child's brain wave pattern settled right down to a wave of almost imperceptible highs and lows! He was obviously very calm! Liz always believed the influence of dogs to be amazing, but to actually see it revealed on a computer screen was wonderful!



la, is used to public events: we came from the GTA region where we annually worked at events such as the All About Pet Show with thousands of visitors streaming by every hour. But there is something special and unique about the privilege to work with students and faculty at the College. While the handlers only have a vague notion of what de-stressor they are providing to the students, our hounds

are much attuned to every nuance of emotion. At the end of our Wednesday visits, Bella is utterly and completely empty of energy. If I worry about whether it is all too much for her, the next Wednesday she is up and bouncing and cannot wait to get to the room at the College. At the end of the day, our hounds make a difference and it is clear that we ARE THERE TO CARE.

Holly and Nina, SJA Burlington

Every week I visit with the sweetest lady who tells me about her love of the town we live in, walks with her daughter along the water, her poetry and her sweets after dinner! It's always hard to tell if the people with whom you share these special moments will remember you one week to the next. The week of my wedding I told her that I would see her in two weeks due to the fact that I was getting married on Saturday! She wished me well and gave me some advice: "never go to bed angry".



Two weeks following my wedding Nina and I resumed our visiting. We knocked and entered her room to say hello. This time, her eyes lit up and she said: "Wow those two weeks went by fast! You're married now!". She proceeded to ask me how everything went. I would lie if I said a tear didn't come to my eye!

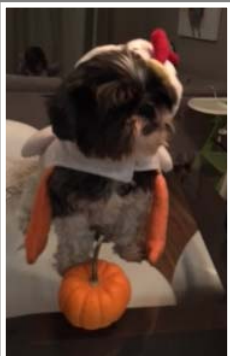
Being newer to the therapy dog program, this was the first situation where I really felt like I was making a difference. There are so many sweet residents who we look forward to visiting every week and I feel so honoured to be part of something so special!



OCTOBER PHOTO GALLERY



Therapy Pumpkins and Spiders!!



uh, guys - lobsters are crustaceans, not spiders!



Tinker's tale

Provincial Therapy Dog Advisor Leslie Jack and her dog Tinker became a TD team this past September. Here we ask Tinker about her experience - look for Leslie's side earlier in this edition of WAGZ!

What did you think of the TD evaluation?

I didn't understand what was going on, but that's okay. I was with my mom and I like to be with my mom no matter what we are doing. I wish I could have met some of the other dogs and smelled the floor and walls a little more but I just had a feeling that I should behave, so I did. I also knew there was pizza in the other room and hoped if I was really good I might get a piece. Unfortunately, that didn't happen.

Did your mom and dad do anything special after you passed?

My mom was so excited that when we got outside the building she danced with me and sang the "Tinker Bell, you're so swell" song. I love it when she sings and we dance. It makes me wag my tail really hard! Then she took me for a long walk and I got to

sniff a whole bunch of new smells! When we got home, dad gave me an extra long belly rub - my favourite.

Your mom hasn't had a dog in the program before, until you! How do you think you'll add to her experience as the provincial therapy dog advisor?

Now mom finally gets to experience all those fuzzy feelings she tells me about from the other end of my leash. She has been on lots of visits with other teams, but now her very own dog, yours truly, gets to make people smile. She knows that what she does helps others, but now she is doing it from the "trenches" herself and can experience it every week. The stories she gets from other handlers always make her cry happy tears, but now we can make our own stories! Mom always says she admires the people in the trenches the most, so I am happy I could help her get to the trenches, whatever that means. I think she is very proud of me for helping people smile!

How did your mentored visits go, and where are you visiting? Tell us about your

new friends at the home!

We didn't need many mentored visits because apparently mom knows quite a bit about visiting and how we both should behave, but mom was grateful to her mentor Joanna Suan for showing her the ropes around the place we will be visiting. It is called "Hampton Terrace" in Burlington. As soon as we get through the doors there are people in chairs with wheels and they all want to see me. We are supposed to sign in right away, but we always stop to let those people pet me. Sometimes I look at mom because they are not petting me hard enough, but mom tells me I am a good girl so I let them pet me lightly and mom always gives me a good rub before we move on to the next person. There are four hallways and we usually visit in two hallways and then it is time to go. There are lots of smells where I visit. At first I thought all the smells were on the floor, but now I know the smells are even better on the people that want to pet me. We go in the morning, so sometimes they smell like breakfast, which is one of my favourite smells. If they are



snoring we don't wake them up, but if they are in the hall in their chair with wheels, I put my chin on their lap (it is a bit of a stretch!) and they will open their eyes. They smile and talk to mom and me. Sometimes they have no teeth, so I guess they can't have a bone like me, but they all had dogs when they were younger, so they tell us about them. They like my ears the best and that's okay with me, because I like ear rubs. I can't have treats when I visit, so when I get in the car I get a "Skinny Minny" which is a treat for dogs on a diet. Sigh... If I look sad enough sometimes I get two. After that, it doesn't matter how sad I look, I don't get anymore, so I sleep all the way home and dream about getting another treat.

Leslie of "Leslie and Tinker" (continued from page 4) like to step down as the Provincial Advisor and just enjoy visiting with my girl. Just as we need to recognize when it is time to retire our dogs, I think we also have to recognize when it is time for us to make a change. I love doing this job, but it is time for someone new to take over - someone with new ideas, fresh perspective and innovative concepts to keep us healthy and growing!

What are three most important qualities a new PTDA will need?

I believe the new PTDA needs to realize that this is a job that cannot be done alone and it is very important that they gather good people around them and share the work. So they need to be able to delegate. It is way more fun that way and it makes them look

good! I have met some of my dearest friends during my tenure as PTDA and the job has not seemed like work because of all the support I have had. However, I had to learn to ask and it is not always easy, but don't be afraid to do it! There are amazing people out there who will do wonderful things for the program and together the outcomes are always pretty incredible. When I look back at what we have done together over the last seven years it is pretty impressive. The new PTDA needs to be firm, but fair and have broad shoulders. With such a big membership, there are bound to be disagreements, challenges and mistakes and not everyone will agree with you, but let the manual be your guide. Our rules are there for a reason. Be flexible when you can, ask key people for advice,

and be decisive. I always go back to the question "will my decision continue to keep our handlers, dogs and clients as safe as possible and enjoying the experience we offer?" If the answer is yes, then I know I have made the right decision for everyone. And finally, in my humble opinion the new person needs to be able to think differently, unconventionally and from a new perspective. They have to be able to embrace change. It is imperative as we move forward.

What are some future opportunities and challenges that a new leader could get excited about?

Both the excitement and challenges in the future come from one thing alone - growth.

(Continued on page 15)

SUBARU sponsorship

SUBARU to sponsor SJA Therapy Dogs over next 3 years



St. John Ambulance
Therapy Dog 

This fall Subaru became the signature sponsor of the SJA Therapy Dog program for a three year partnership. What a great opportunity to bring visibility and financial support to our program!

SJA Therapy Dogs have already been featured on Driving Television (<http://www.drivingtelevision.com/2017-subaru-forester/>) and appeared in an article in Subaru's Six Stars Magazine (check out the online version - <http://joom.ag/OHHQ>). Therapy Dogs will also be in attendance at the Canadian International Auto Show (CIAS) on February 22, 2017 during Hero Day.

To celebrate the sponsorship Therapy Dog kerchiefs have been redesigned to feature the Subaru logo, and will be sent to your local branch in the new year. They are to be worn for the duration of the three

year partnership. But be sure to keep the white kerchiefs tucked away, as they will be in use again after the three years. Subaru will also highlight their support for St. John Ambulance and the Therapy Dogs with tent cards and pop-up banners at local dealerships.

The Therapy Dog program will also benefit from colouring books referencing St. John Ambulance, to hand out at events or through children's programs, and volunteers will have an opportunity to create and order 'trading cards' featuring their Therapy Dog, through an online portal.

What can you do at the branch level?

The more visibility for Subaru's sponsorship and the SJA Therapy Dog program, the better! Become familiar with the elements of the

sponsorship and tell everyone about it, including through your social media channels! Many more things are in the works over this three year partnership. Any questions can be directed to Clara Wicke, Director of Marketing and Communications St. John Ambulance, National Office at clara.wicke@nhq.sja.ca.

Highlights of the Subaru Sponsorship

- new red kerchiefs with Subaru logo, supplied to all divisions
- Therapy Dogs highlighted through Subaru media and social media channels
- Therapy Dogs attendance at the Canadian Auto Show
- colouring books
- visibility at dealerships
- Therapy Dog trading cards
- ... and more to come!

Leslie of "Leslie and Tinker" (continued from page 14)

We are the fastest growing community service division in Canada, but this growth is not always fast enough to meet the demands of our communities. This will always be a challenge, because we must be certain that as we grow we do it right, making sure our volunteers have the strong support, training and information they need to do the jobs we ask of them. We need to make sure we don't take away from one part of our program to develop something new, while at the same time trying to find a way to be involved and contribute to new situations. We must be loyal to our clients and our core program, while building a strong infrastructure that will support new ideas, requests and situations. It is not easy, but I believe it can be done if we work together, share ideas and forgive ourselves if we have to say "no". This doesn't mean forever, but for now. We need to tap into new demographics, considering the family as a volunteering "unit" and by bringing in a younger volunteers. We know what our dogs can

do, but we need the right volunteer on the other end of the leash and we have to welcome volunteers that don't have a leash at all, not just to help with local administration, which is great, but to step up to bigger leadership challenges and positions. As new strategies are developed, new thinking is required and strong leadership is a must. By recruiting young business people, we can explore more efficient approaches to the tasks ahead of us instead of relying on the standard way of doing things. That, my friends, is why, as passionate as I am about this program, I know it is time for me to step down and make way for that new person who is ready, willing and able to explore the future. Someone who can recognize the things that are working for us, but can also think differently, and work hard to tap the talents within themselves and our volunteers. I know that person is out there! Will the new Provincial Advisor please step forward and choose your working group? Good things await you!





falling in love with November!



Remembering and Honouring our Heroes



It is so fitting to have our SJA Therapy Dogs respectfully attend Remembrance Day Services! Dogs have a long history of helping during combat. From scouts, sentries and trackers, their uses have been varied and they continue to bravely take on many dangerous tasks in modern military situations. We are proud to honour these selfless canines on Remembrance Day!



Our new Lord Prior... (continued from page 3)

room that had a resident who would like a visit from a dog had a green dog paw right beside the name of the resident and believe me, just about every door had a paw. Our dogs are very popular at the Reikai Centre. The staff has embraced and supported our teams for years and realize the comfort and happiness our teams bring to their residents.

Sir Malcolm moved happily from room to room, chatting with the occupants, asking questions and listening to their stories. Of course Demi was the catalyst and did her job well. It was a very heartwarming visit and it was very easy to feel the enthusiasm, caring and pride each person felt as we moved from person to person. As we ended our time at the Reikai Centre, I knew our Lord Prior had been given a stellar example of our work within the Therapy Dog Program and it would be some time before I could stop smiling. It seems our Lord Prior felt the same way. As we got back into the car he looked at me with a huge grin on his face and said "now that is an experience I shall never forget! It was absolutely wonderful!" We agree Sir Malcolm, we agree.

I would like to thank Carl and Carol from the Toronto Branch Therapy Dog Program for organizing this visit. Your support is always deeply appreciated. I would also like to thank Barb and Sue for sharing their

time and workplace with us. Your dedication and love for the people you serve is evident and we are so grateful for your friendly hospitality and for embracing our Therapy Dog program with such enthusiasm. To the residents who made a little bit of time for us - you are amazing and we thank you for sharing your stories and for loving our dogs! To Geoff Li - what a smooth ride! Thank you so much for tackling the Toronto traffic without a blip and for taking pictures too! It was great to

have you with us. And last, but certainly not least a huge thank you to Margo and Demi! Margo, your warmth and kindness are exemplary and Demi is definitely the epitome of what a Therapy Dog should be. She was a true star for the Lord Prior, but then again, I am sure she is a true star every time she puts on her Therapy Dog scarf! It is evident she has the soul of a St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog!

Evie-Stevie and Janette, SJA Mississauga

Evie-Stevie, a 5 year-old Husky/Labrador Retriever, has only 3 legs but she did very well at the Evaluation last January, in fact you would never know that she was missing her right front leg! She visits at a long term care home with her owner Janette Walker.

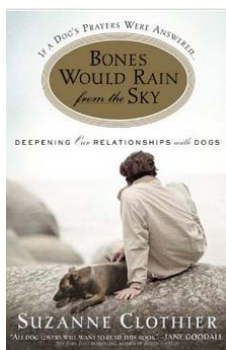
Janette got Evie-Stevie as a rescue. She had been caught in a bear trap at 2.5 years old and had to have her leg amputated. The veterinarian who did the surgery did not want to euthanize this lovely dog, as requested by her owners, as she/he felt that Evie-Stevie was too nice a dog and still young. Six weeks later, Janette took Evie-Stevie into her home. Janette says, "She was fully healed....she runs like a bullet when chasing squirrels, does stairs two or three at a time and has no problem jumping onto the furniture!"



Winter's Here!

time to cuddle up with your pooch and a good book

Book Review: "If a Dog's Prayers Were Answered...Bones Would Rain From the Sky" by Suzanne Clothier



submitted by Susan Hicks, Mississauga

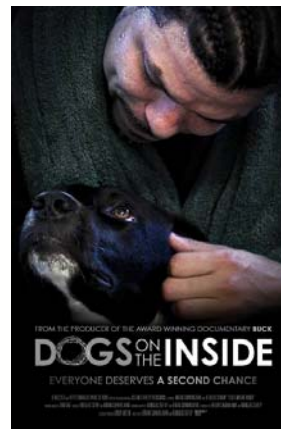
Beginning in early childhood, Suzanne Clothier had a keen interest in exploring the world of animals. In "Bones," she describes her lifelong learning journey, which has amounted to extensive knowledge about how dogs learn & perceive the world. She writes in an easygoing style about her experience with a variety of pets from her early days into her years as a consultant in a variety of cases involving challenges faced by dog owners.

(Continued on page 20)

Karla Tolstoy and Nucky from Oakville SJA TDs loved the documentary "Dogs on the Inside" (Netflix or iTunes)

Dogs on the Inside follows the relationships between abused stray dogs and prison inmates working towards a second chance at a better life. In an attempt to re-build their confidence and

prepare for a new life outside, these prisoners must first learn to handle and

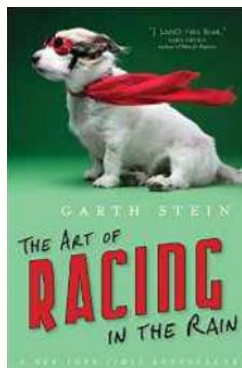


care for a group of neglected strays. It is very inspiring "Dogs on the Inside," as it shows how dogs can help people learn how to love and have compassion and help with rehabilitation behind bars and how prisons can become foster homes for dogs. Worth a watch! *more info at <http://www.dogsontheinside.com/>*

Carol Holmes (Sarnia-Lambton SJA) - "I have 3 doggy book suggestions. Books that I thoroughly enjoyed and I have a copy of each that I'm willing to lend to anyone in our Sarnia chapter, who may be interested."

Art of Racing in the Rain scores two votes (and many tears)

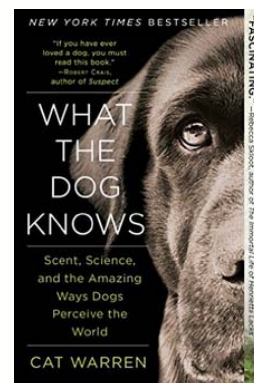
I enjoyed reading The Art of Racing in the Rain by Garth Stein. A book about a family with a father that is a race car driver and the dog takes on the human's life. Very good quick read! Casey Bryant. Burlington SJA



I read "Driving in the Rain" and Cried, Cried Cried, then passed it along to a friend who had just lost her dog, then on to our Vet's office. Don't have the book anymore but it was touching. Sonja

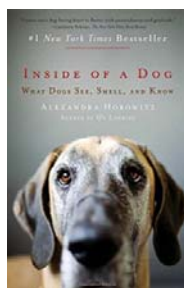
1) "What the Dog Knows" by Cat Warren

An insight into German Shepherds, but mainly Cadaver dogs. Very interesting. It shows the profound partnership between humans and their dogs during their intense, but positive training. Solo, the writer's German Shepherd is amazing and we follow them through the trials and tribulations of his training....very intensive training.

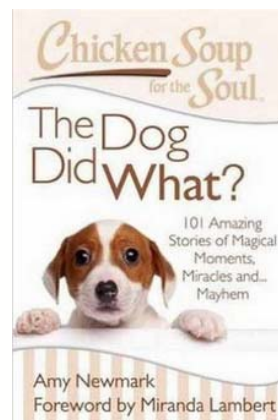


2)"Inside of a Dog" by Alexandra Horowitz.

"This book is as close as you can get to knowing about dogs without being a dog yourself. A dog is a nose followed by a body."

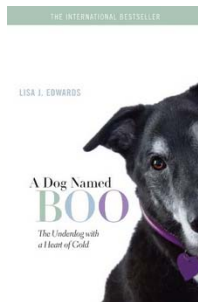


3)"The Dog did What?" by Amy Newmark. (Chicken Soup for the Soul) Amazing stories of Magical Moments, Miracles and Mayhem.



'A Dog Named Boo' by Lisa J. Edwards

The dunce of obedience class with poor eyesight and a clumsy gait, Boo was the least likely of heroes. Yet with his unflappable spirit and boundless love, Boo has changed



countless lives through his work as a therapy dog: helping a mute six-year-old boy to speak, coaxing movement from a paralyzed girl and stirring life in a ninety-four-year old nun with Alzheimer's. But perhaps Boo's greatest miracle is the way he transformed Lisa Edwards's life, giving her the greatest gift of all: faith in herself.

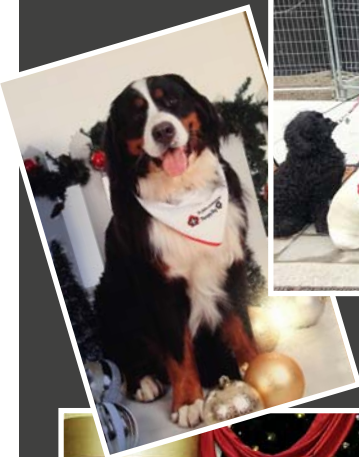
submitted by Marion McLean

HARVEY COACHES HOCKEY



The daughter (young adult) of one of our members plays hockey in the United States. Recently, the team captain told the team that she has cancer resulting in an enormous amount of tears and fears from all the girls.

Since Colette visits at a long term home and a hospital in Mississauga with her Therapy Dog "Harvey", a Black Standard Poodle, she had an idea. After permission was received to allow Harvey to visit the girls, she brought him into the arena and the locker room as a St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog. He did what all our Therapy Dogs do - made the girls feel better in this difficult situation! I wonder if he had a positive affect on the scoring?!! If so, could be another great attribute of our Therapy Dogs!



Therapy Dogs have the holiday spirit!

"Snow Angel"

**Snow and Michelle
SJA Mississauga**

Snow, Chihuahua/Italian Greyhound, is deaf but she did very well at the Evaluation one year ago with Michelle Gautreau. However, she had to undergo radiation for cancer several months ago but has recovered. She is 8 years old now and is back visiting at a long term home.



Bones Would Rain from the Sky (continued from page 18)

I was easily engaged by her compassion, humility, & sense of humour. She balances what she's learned from scientific advances related to animal behaviour & training with practical experience, using plain language ("... even scientists fall in love...") (p44).

Whether you are interested in reading about her life in the company of animals, or relating her experiences as a consultant to your own desire to maintain a wonderful quality of life for your dog, this book is an excellent choice. It has been a stepping stone on my own learning journey.

"The philosophy offered here is mine, but it points the way to a very real place where a dog will meet you gladly. Perhaps you can use this book to help you find your way to dance, joyfully & with heart." (p49)

Charming Therapy Snakes

A lady contacted me and asked if she could get her Snake registered for Pet Therapy as the by-law officer is giving her a hard time. I explained to her about us being Dog Therapy but she continued on and on and on. Finally I said what part of the word "dog" don't you understand! I can't imagine appearing at a nursing home or hospital with a snake in tow. Never a dull moment!

- Joyce, Therapy Dog Coordinator



Eldee and Michael SJA Mississauga

Eldee, the 8 year old Cockapoo that visits with Michael Betty, is on chemo for cancer but he has responded well to the treatment and is gradually getting back to visiting his "fans" at three schools and two adult facilities. Michael says: "The adult facilities are more flexible and in fact say 'Come anytime. We are so grateful to see him.' Michael will not "push" Eldee and is careful that he does not overdo it. He was evaluated 6 years ago.

Phoenix Paw-Casso (continued from page 6)

bid. People loved the idea and all the money raised would go towards buying the vest for my brother's dog. The auction was a huge success and I raised over \$700. I was able to get my brother's dog the therapy vest as well as bunch of cold laser treatments. A few months later people started asking when the next auction would be. I never really thought of painting again and didn't know what else we could paint until a friend showed me a picture of a flower painted with a dog's paw print. Phoenix and I went back to work painting and this time we ended up releasing two spring collections. We nicknamed Phoenix, "Phoenix Paw-Casso" and

it was a hit. We then had a summer love collection and I am now working on a winter collection. I can't believe the demand for our paintings. All the money we make goes towards Phoenix's special food, and the odd time a special treat here and there, after all, he is "Phoenix Paw-Casso".

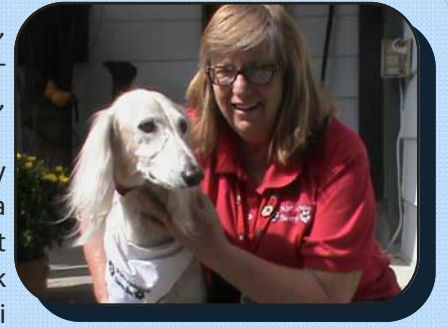
submitted by Laura Watling, SJA Burlington



Vinnie and Janice, New Tecumseh

Cdn Grand Ch., Am. Ch, BISS Windstorm Azad Vindication Cdn/Am. F.Ch., JC, CGN

These are some pretty impressive titles for a dog, but to us, he's just Vinnie. I was gifted pick of the litter of a Saluki



from International Champion bloodline from health tested parents bred by a responsible breeder. When it came time to choose, I picked the smaller of the males, with the biggest personality. It was a wise decision. With a future therapy dog in mind, I knew he would have the confidence and self assurance to be good at his job.

Vinnie was a handful and still is – he has energy that requires daily, off leash, intensive running on his part, and my part is braving the elements and keeping up to him.

As well as a dedicated therapy dog, he is an entertaining family pet and has accumulated many titles along the way. He won a Best in Show at the tender age of 2 and became the top lure-coursing saluki at the age of 3. Vinnie is an "its all about me kind of guy" so showing comes naturally to him. Running the lure is what he's bred to do and would be his favourite sport. He has dabbled in obedience and excels at it, but his owner lacks the dedication to officially get his title. We just enjoy him as he is.

Vinnie visits weekly at the Simcoe Manor and has many favourite residents and knows where they are located. One of the residents was a horse trainer and he fully enjoys the massage that he gets when he visits.