



Troupe Talk

Vol. 11, No. 3, Fall 2002 The Newsletter of Chenny Troupe, Inc.

Hard Work Pays Off for Schwab Volunteer Team

I remember the day I first heard about Chenny Troupe. I was at work, having lunch with my coworker Rachael Berman. She showed me some pictures of a group of teenage girls bathing all kinds of different dogs at a do-it-yourself dog wash. I couldn't tell who was having the most fun; the dogs, the kids, or the volunteers. Rachael explained to me that this was a Chenny Troupe program at City Girls, an intervention for troubled inner city teenage girls. Even though she did not have a dog, Rachael worked with the girls and the therapy dogs. I was amazed and fascinated. Each week Rachael would tell me about her Chenny experiences and I grew more and more interested. How could I get involved? I work in medical social work and I adore dogs. What a perfect fit. I had a great dog, I thought, who would be absolutely perfect for this. As Rachael described the rigorous test the dogs must pass, I became slightly deflated. My dog will

never be able to do all that to pass the test, I thought. However, I was bound and determined to become a Chenny Trouper! Cobi and I trained with Kathy McCarthy for 16 weeks and took the Chenny test in October 2001. All of the hard work paid off. Cobi and I passed! I was ecstatic and couldn't wait to start. I joined the Schwab team with program leader Erwin McKone. The first few months were rough. Getting Cobi in "work mode" was harder than I had thought it would be and I felt somewhat discouraged. But there was no way that I was going to give up after all that work. Each week Cobi and I worked with a different client, helping him or her strengthen weakened extremities, practice recall and cognitive functions, and just relax and have fun with the dogs. I learned how to introduce my client to Cobi and then fade into the background while the dog and client worked together. I would like to say that I have one

really memorable experience with Cobi at Schwab but I don't. Looking back on my first year with Chenny Troupe, I realize that there are too many memorable moments to choose from. I remember the first time Cobi really "got it all right." I remember how one client was scared to death of her at the beginning of the session but wanted to take her home with him by the end of the night. I remember Erwin's patience as Cobi and I learned the ropes, and I remember all of the great advice of the other Schwab veterans. Most of all, I remember how happy and satisfied I felt at the end of each Monday night, no matter if it was an easy session or a difficult one.

Cobi and I are starting our second season at Schwab. Although she hasn't said so, I know for a fact she has missed our Monday night adventures and is more than ready to get back to work. See you at Schwab!!

Andrea Varol

Chenny Troupe Launches Heeling Hearts A New Fundraising Campaign

If only our dogs could talk, they would share so many wonderful stories about their experiences as Chenny Troupe therapists. We've decided to help them out, by providing a voice for our hard working friends in our new campaign, Heeling Hearts. Our supporters will have an opportunity to sponsor the work of one or more of our four-footed therapists for a donation to Chenny Troupe of \$40 for the first dog, and \$30 for each additional dog. Sponsors will receive a picture of the dog they choose, informative letters throughout our 2002-2003 sessions with updates about program activities and special breakthroughs by our clients, as well as invitations to special events.

Heeling Hearts is a great way to support Chenny Troupe and get the word out

about our important work. Sponsor a Chenny Troupe dog as a holiday or birthday gift for a friend, neighbor, niece or nephew, children, grandchildren, anyone...even your vet! We'll send them a letter telling them about your generosity, as well as the picture of the dog you chose, program updates, our newsletter and invitations to special events. You'll be helping Chenny Troupe provide innovative, unique and effective animal-assisted therapy at no charge to any client or facility. The recipients of your gift will be touched by your thoughtfulness and will be delighted with his or her "no maintenance" pet! They'll learn more about animal-assisted therapy and the organization that you support. Watch your mail for the campaign brochure, and help us make Heeling Hearts a huge success.



LUNA

I am a white German Shepherd mix, who is really a lucky dog.



Kibbles and Bits

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of two Chenny Troupe dogs.

“**Niki**,” a kind and gentle Shetland Sheep dog, was the cherished companion of Becky Voelker. Niki was certified in 1995 and worked tirelessly at RIC for many years, through the last session in May. Everyone who was lucky enough to know her or work with her will miss her.

“**Jake**” **Pink**, the cherished companion of volunteer and Advisory Council member Bernice Pink, passed away over Labor Day weekend. Jake, a “pure bred generic” dog, was one of the original sixteen Chenny Troupers, and remained active with us and other volunteer

organizations throughout his wonderful life. In spite of his diminutive size, Jake facilitated miracles at the Abraham Lincoln Centre, Schwab and at RIC.

Our condolences go out to Bernice and Becky on the loss of their dear friends.

Have you checked out the new website? You can still find us at www.chennytroupe.org, but it's a whole new world out there! You can find the latest Chenny Troupe happenings, download the latest newsletter, find links to animal shelters and dog-friendly shops and restaurants, even make secure donations! Please send digital pictures of your Chenny Troupers or Chenny Troupe events to the Webmaster to add to the scrapbook we are building! We are deeply grateful to **Julie Muccillo and Matt Pollack** for the countless hours they have spent creating our exciting new site.

Be sure to stop by the Chenny Troupe booth at Pet Expo, November 2nd and 3rd at Navy Pier. This two-day event will be filled with demonstrations, vendors, and valuable information for pet lovers. In fact, Chenny Troupe will be demonstrating animal-assisted therapy techniques on Saturday at 2:30 pm — come early to get a good seat! If you are interested in helping out at our booth, please call the office. Coupons for \$1 off the admission price are available through the office.

Summer in Chicago wouldn't be complete without an appearance by Troupers at a neighborhood festival. Chenny Troupers met fans at the **Bucktown Arts Fest** on August 24th and 25th. Not to be upstaged by the giant Greyhounds at the booth next door, Troupers of all sizes visited with Fest patrons and explained our important work. Special thanks to *Judy Deogracias, Beth Golub and Jessie, Sue White, Amy Elefante and Dante, Carrie and Jay Hoffman and Thor, Shelly Gasper and Jordan, Peggy and Rick Brennan and Murphy, Jose Cruz and Vickie, and Vic Smith and Chessie* who spent some of their weekend spreading the Chenny Troupe word.

Did you know...that we rely on volunteers in the office to help us send out our mailings and help out at practice and testing sessions? Huge thanks to our behind the scenes heroes: *Wendi Mancini, Nancy Spokany, Lee Seftenberg, Judy Deogracias, Carole Herhold, Teresa Marshall, and Carrie Hoffman*. Give us a call if you can help.

The Board of Directors has established a **Long Range Planning Committee** to review our existing plan for growth, and look into the future for Chenny Troupe. Directors **Ann Rohlen, Barbara Morris, Lisa Rovner**, and new volunteer **Chris Mursau** met over the summer to begin the process. They will be interviewing Board members and shaping a vision statement for the organization. Your input is welcome, so please email or call the office with comments.



TroupeTalk

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A Dog's Bill of Rights

- I have the right to give and receive unconditional love.
- I have the right to a life that is beyond mere survival.
- I have the right to be trained so that I do not become the prisoner of my misbehavior.
- I have the right to adequate food and medical care.
- I have the right to fresh air and green grass.
- I have the right to socialize with people and dogs outside my own family.
- I have the right to special time with my people.
- I have the right to be bred responsibly if at all.
- I have the right to be foolish and silly, and to make my person laugh.
- I have the right to earn my person's trust and to be trusted in return.
- I have the right to be forgiven.
- I have the right to die with dignity.
- I have the right to be remembered well.

Some (Dangerous!) Food for Thought

Many of us enjoy occasionally treating our canine companions to a little treat from the table now and then. There are however some foods that can be enjoyable for us but potentially fatal to dogs.

Grapes and Raisins

Around 1989 the Animal Poison Control Center (APCC) noticed a trend in dogs developing acute renal (kidney) disease following the ingestion of grapes and/or raisins. The ingested amounts reported varied from greater than a pound to as little as a single serving of raisins. Why does this tasteful fruit harm dogs? No one is quite sure. Grapes have been screened for various pesticides, heavy metals (such as zinc and lead) and mycotoxins (fungal contaminates) and so far all results have come back negative. Reported cases of acute renal disease have been identified with the ingested grapes that were purchased fresh from grocery stores and those grown in private yards. There are also no correlations of grapes grown in specific region of the United States.

Clinical signs of grape toxicity are usually seen a few hours after ingestion and include vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy and anorexia (not eating). As the kidney damage develops, the dog produces little to no urine. This damage can occur anywhere from twenty-four hours to several days following ingestion. There is currently no antidote for grape toxicity as we are unsure of its exact mechanism of

action. Current treatment is to provide standard supportive care with intravenous fluids and medication to try and "restart the kidneys".

Onions

Onions are another source of toxicity to dogs. This includes all onion products i.e. raw onion, cooked onion, onion salts and powders. The ingestion amounts that cause toxicity vary, so it is recommended never to feed any amount of onions or onion products to your dog. A chemical in onions cause oxidative damage to the dogs' red blood cell causing hemolysis (rupturing) of the red blood cell. Dogs can quickly become severely anemic following ingestion. Treatment is supportive care sometimes requiring blood transfusions.

Chocolate Toxicity

Chocolate contains a class of drug known as methylxanthine. The two methylxanthine chemicals found in chocolate are theobromine and caffeine. These chemicals are toxic to dogs when ingested in excessive amounts. The lethal dose of methylxanthine is approximately 45-90 mg per pound. Various forms of chocolate contain various levels of methylxanthines. For example one ounce of milk chocolate contains 60 mg of methylxanthines whereas an ounce of semi-sweet chocolate and baking chocolate contain 260 mg and 450 mg per ounce respectively. For example, a forty



pound dog would be in danger if he/she ate 30 ounces (1 3/4 pounds) of milk chocolate or 4 ounces of baking chocolate. Clinical signs include vomiting, diarrhea, hyperactivity, muscle tremors, convulsions, and death. If left untreated, dogs will typically die 12 -36 hours after ingestion. Treatment of chocolate toxicity includes intravenous fluids and medications to help control muscle tremors, convulsions, and cardiac arrhythmias.

If you suspect that your dog has ingested any of the above toxins, immediately induce vomiting using syrup of ipecac or hydrogen peroxide orally (1 teaspoon per 10 pounds of body weight) and call your veterinarian and or the APCC (888)232-8870.

*We would like to thank **Scott M. Rovner, DVM** for this information. He's an associate at **Higgins Animal Clinic, 1705 W. Belmont, Chicago**. If you have any specific questions or medical issues you would like addressed, contact our office with the information.*

Donations

Donations in memory of, or in honor of a special pet or person are always welcome and help us continue to provide our programs free of charge. We even have edible birthday cards for your canine friend's special day!

Dr. John Kasmersky and Broadway Animal Hospital have made contributions to Chenny Troupe in memory of the following pets:

- ✿ Nancy
- ✿ Monty
- ✿ Jake Pink

Donations were made to Chenny Troupe:

- In memory of Wylee P. Coyote:
Scott Allen Barber
- In memory of "Niki" Voelker:
Elizabeth Buchanan
Judy Keitz
Karen Titus
- In memory of "Magill" Troyer:
Judy Deogracias

In memory of "Jake" Pink:
Stanley Brown
Carol Marx
Ann Rohlen

In memory of "Buck" Brown:
Caryl Horn
Cathy Lawler
Teresa Marshall
Ann Rohlen

The Healing Power of Pets

Science has finally documented what we have known for years. Pets improve people's health. Here are eight ways pets help people of all ages live longer healthier lives:

1. Pets provide therapeutic touch.

Tests show that within minutes of petting a dog, the human and dog get a massive release of such beneficial hormones as prolactin, oxytocin, and phenylethylamine.

2. Pets lower blood pressure.

A study of stockbrokers in New York City who were taking medication for hypertension, found that once they brought pets into their homes, their stress levels dropped dramatically. And nearly half of them were able to discontinue their medication entirely.

3. Pets help people survive heart attacks.

A study showed that heart attack victims that own pets have a eight times better chance of surviving one year. Other studies showed that pet owners have shorter hospital stays, fewer doctor visits, take less medication for high blood pressure and cholesterol, and don't have trouble falling asleep at night.

4. Pets improve child reading scores, empathy, and perhaps I.Q.

In Salt Lake City, Intermountain Therapy

Animals offers a program that uses pets to stimulate specific intellectual development in public schools. Children who have trouble reading aloud read to dogs instead. Some children have jumped whole grade levels in just a few months. (We're hoping to add this to our programs.) Some studies are suggesting that children with pets develop higher levels of empathy, responsibility and higher IQ's than children who don't keep companion animals.

5. Pets help blunt pain. Pets can help people relax, elevate their moods and keep them moving. Pets may help people in two major ways. By initiating and maintaining the relaxation response, pets can take people's focus off their pain and elevate their mood. Secondly, through physical contact, they can block transmission of their pain from the periphery to the central nervous system, shutting down pain processing centers.

6. Pets help keep people moving.

Most Americans do not get the recommended amount of exercise. A long-term study of people who adopted dogs found that owning a dog sharply increases the time they spend outdoor. Also elderly people living outside institutions found they scored higher on all activities of daily living.



7. Pets benefit senior health. Seniors who have pets require less doctor visits. Studies show that only 1 month after acquiring a dog or cat, seniors reported 50% fewer minor medical problems, such as joint pain, hay fever, insomnia, anxiety, general tiredness, headaches, back pain and indigestion.

8. Pets help combat allergies. New evidence suggests that exposure to pets early in life helps the body build defenses against allergies and asthma. A study tracked 833 children over seven years and found exposure to two or more dogs or cats at one year of age made children less susceptible to other allergy-inducing substances by the time they turned seven.



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