

Chenny Dogs Motivate Somerset Residents

Somerset Place is a residential rehabilitation center for adults suffering from mental illness. The residents are dealing with a variety of issues, such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and depression, which are often exacerbated by drug or alcohol abuse. Many residents lack self-esteem and struggle to form relationships. The program goals include improving the participants' self-esteem, social skills, and cognitive skills.

The Somerset program is six weeks long with the first session devoted to the volunteers' introducing their dogs and questions and answers with the residents. When it comes to matching teams, residents are allowed to select their two favorite dogs, but Ola Brown, the Somerset program director, has the final say given her knowledge of the residents and



Shelly Gasper (r.) congratulates Mary and Scotch at Somerset graduation

Chenny Troupe teams. Session Two starts the real work as residents start learning and navigating verbal and nonverbal commands, an agility course, and their dogs' special tricks. Initially, residents struggle with the hand signals, the verbal commands, or both, but over the course of six weeks they become more competent and confident. They learn they must be patient or alter their behavior—or both—to gain compliance from the dogs. Ultimately, the residents persevere, and the sixth session is graduation.

To graduate from the Chenny Troupe program, residents must attend every session. This is an enormous commitment for them, but one that is worthwhile. One participant, Luke,* was hospitalized for a couple of weeks during his program and missed some sessions. Because

continued on page 2

Independent Study at ICRE

Michelle,* a tenth-grade student at MICRE-R who uses a motorized wheelchair, is striving to gain physical control over her cerebral palsy and gain independence. She had just completed the obstacle course with Max, one of the Chenny Troupe therapy dogs working at the Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education-Roosevelt in Chicago ("ICRE-R"). She smiled and looked over at Max's owner, Karen, who smiled and gave her an "air" high five from across the room. Michelle decided that Max was thirsty, and verbally told him to "heel" so that she could take Max across the room to the water dish. But Max turned around and looked at Michelle. Max was not in heel position at all and Michelle could not move her electric wheelchair because Max was in the way. Michelle felt a little worried and looked around for Karen, who was still on the other side of the room. Michelle was in

Chenny Troupe's Independent Study program at ICRE-R, a residential facility for children and young adults with severe physical disabilities or other health impairments run by the State of Illinois. Their mission is to foster, promote, develop, and encourage the emotional, mental, social, and physical welfare of young people with disabilities or other special needs.

The Independent Study program was designed by Chenny Troupe for any ICRE student aged eight and older who has attended at least three of Chenny Troupe's regular, eight-week, animal-assisted therapy programs. Once the student has "mastered" the commands and gained the required skills of handling the therapy dogs, the student is given permission to be in the Independent Study program. Participation by the student in Independent Study is exactly what it sounds like—the student and the therapy dog are a team, without the dog's regular handler. No additional



Max kisses a happy ICRE participant

assistance from the regular handler is given to either the student or the therapy dog during the eight-week program while the student completes each week's program.

Independent Study assists the students with everyday problem solving, increased vocalizations, and increased clarity of vocalizations; stresses independent motor and verbal skills; and promotes both increased responsibility and increased self-esteem. The students in Independent

continued on page 3

Chenny Dogs Motivate Somerset Residents...continued from the front page

his absences were due to hospitalization, Luke was allowed to graduate with his class. At graduation, he stood up and told everyone that getting back to his dog was what had motivated him to work hard on his recovery and return to Somerset.

Results at Somerset range from subtle to dramatic. Facility staff tells us that residents who have graduated from the program are readily identifiable in the building. They exude an indescribable confidence that most other residents lack. This past session yielded the most dramatic results I have seen. Ernie* started the session quiet and disheveled. He showed up to

the first two sessions wearing slippers and looking as though he had not taken a shower. While he worked well with my dog Scotch, he struggled to project his voice and enunciate commands. When we showed up for our third session, Ernie was dressed to impress. He was wearing clean, pressed clothes and cologne. Not only had he improved his physical appearance, he also arrived 30 minutes early and spent the evening projecting his voice and using a more confident tone. This behavior continued for the remainder of the program. When I approached Ola for an explanation, I wondered if his medication had been adjusted or if there was some alternate explanation. She

felt strongly that these positive changes were wholly attributable to his work in the program. The Chenny Troupe program at Somerset Place gives the participants an opportunity to feel in control, a welcome change for these adults who spend much of their time being told what they may and may not do. It also provides them with a perfect relationship. The dogs trust and obey them and are always happy to see them. There is no risk of rejection or disappointment . . . other than the feeling of disappointment that accompanies the end of the program.

Callandre Cozzolino

*All residents' names have been changed.

TroupeTalk

Vol. 14, No. 3, Fall 2005

Executive Director

Janet Rosen Eaton

Associate Director

Caryl Horn

Editor

Eileen Fitzsimons

Layout

Lisa Zucker

We welcome your thoughts, contributions, and articles. Pertinent addresses and numbers follow.

TroupeTalk, c/o Chenny Troupe
1700 W Irving Park Road
Chicago IL 60613
Phone: 773-404-6467
Fax: 773-404-6759

E-mail: info@chennytroupe.org
Website: www.chennytroupe.org

TroupeTalk is the official publication of the Chenny Troupe, a not-for-profit organization dedicated to motivating individuals with special challenges through animal-assisted therapy programs using certified therapy dogs. This publication may not be reproduced or copied in whole or in part by any means without the express permission of Chenny Troupe. Chenny Troupe has used its best efforts in collecting and preparing material for inclusion in this newsletter, but cannot warrant that the information contained is complete or accurate. Chenny Troupe does not assume, and hereby disclaims, liability to any person for any loss or damage caused by errors or omission. Submissions may be edited for length, style, and clarity; they become the property of Chenny Troupe.

Copyright © 2005 Chenny Troupe, Inc. All rights reserved.

**chenny
troupe**
animal assisted
therapy

From the President

Fellow Volunteers and Supporters,

Winter is upon us and we will be ringing in the New Year before we know it. Year-end letters often review past accomplishments. This year I would like to focus on the future. As we reported in our previous issue, we've accomplished much in 2005. We will build on this foundation for a 2006 that will again set new precedents.

It is a very exciting time. We are engaging in a major planning effort over the next several months. Although much of the earlier plan has been accomplished, some aspects of that vision continue to challenge us. Our Board of Directors and staff are committed and energized as never before to work together to create a renewed vision for Chenny Troupe's future, together with a practical blueprint for making that vision a reality. We will seek ideas and reactions from all our stakeholders: clients, health care partners, volunteers, and donors. We sense a strong consensus on many core elements of Chenny Troupe's mission. That gives us a head start in organizing workable near-term tasks and budgets to improve our existing programs and develop new ones. It is time to explore new and bigger ideas, reach consensus, integrate these ideas into our existing vision, and outline concrete tasks that will make them happen. The plan will be Chenny Troupe's "North Star," to keep us on course when we might otherwise get lost in day-to-day matters. It will be the standard we

use to measure our success. At the same time, the plan will be practical. We will design it to yield very real, measurable steps that we can begin to take in early 2006.

It is too early to lay out the scope of the plan, let alone the details. But we do know that a core tenet will be "more." More innovation in our existing programs; more new programs; more training; more canine and human volunteers; more research; more documentation of what we do and how we do it; and—most important, more clients whose lives will be changed by working with our certified therapy dogs. Of course, all of these "mores" will require more resources: more recruiting of volunteers; more building of relationships with health care partners; more staff time to coordinate these efforts. And more financial resources—more than we have ever needed before. We need to begin securing these resources now, so when our renewed vision and work plan is complete we can immediately begin to implement it. As many of you will soon be making choices for year-end charitable contributions, please consider Chenny Troupe in your plans.

Finally, I would be remiss if I did not deeply thank each and every one of you for your contributions of time, effort, and funds this past year. It takes a variety of giving from a variety of sources to provide our life-changing services to people in need of them. Thank you to everyone, what we do is impossible without you.

Sincerely,

Lisa Crossett, President

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 birthday cards for your canine friend's special day!

Donations were made to Chenny Troupe:

In memory of "Derby" Keitz by

- Mary Ann Alexander
- Virginia Beck
- Elizabeth Buchanan
- Patty Klink
- Anthony Pacenti
- Mayari Pritzker
- Lin Lyon Santor

- Mary Ann Westell
- Lisa Wiersma

In memory of "One-Eyed Jack" Buchanan by Scott Allen Barber

In memory of "Ted E. Bear" by Stanley Brown

In memory of "all the Golden Dogs" by Nancy and Michael Golden

In memory of Ms. Eda Weiner by Richard and Marcia Metzcus

In honor of Dr. John Kasmersky and the staff at Broadway Animal Hospital by Kay and Jerry Stemnock.

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

- "Mocha" Blair
- "Ginger" Phillips
- "Gabriel" Rafferty
- "Nyssa" Walzak

Obituaries

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

"Derby" was the beloved and constant companion of Judy Keitz. A beautiful golden retriever, Derby was the grande dame of the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago for many years and joined Judy in her office daily. Even tempered, mild mannered, yet always ready to work until arthritis forced her retirement, Derby helped hundreds of clients find their way on the long journey toward restored health. In her later years, when agility work became more difficult, Derby assumed the role of teacher and showed the younger dogs at RIC how to work effectively with clients. Derby enjoyed the

company of older adults when she would visit Judy's parents and always made friends with the neighbors. She also loved her weekend retreats in Michigan, where she could swim, watch the deer, and visit with close canine and human friends on the deck. Even in retirement, Derby continued to contribute to Chenny Troupe, appearing in the Heeling Hearts campaign and as this year's Take Your Dog To Dinner poster dog. Derby's passing came peacefully, exactly ten years to the day after she passed her Chenny Troupe certification test on the first try. Derby will be sorely missed by everyone who had the privilege of knowing this wonderful dog.

Known to Chenny Troupers as **"Cody,"** Ch. Lassadia's Cody Collie was the cherished companion of Terry Tauber. Cody

passed the Chenny Troupe certification test on his first try in January 2002 and worked with Terry at Somerset Place. A master of agility and obedience work, this handsome and attentive dog was a favorite with residents. Terry shared many stories about Cody's show career with the residents, who were intrigued by his accomplishments, and showed pictures of the many beautiful puppies he sired. Cody was nominated for the 2nd Annual (2005) Animals Contributing to Society Awards this summer. Cody will be missed by everyone at Chenny Troupe and at Somerset Place as well as by his son, Ranger, who we hope will be a Chenny Troupe dog very soon!

Independent Study at ICRE...continued from the front page

Study learn to overcome simple challenges—such as the dog's being in front of the wheelchair impairing the student's forward movement—while gaining confidence in their abilities. The students are determined to adapt to the ever-changing environment of training therapy dogs, which gives them additional tools for self-sufficiency and increased independence. Their speech and language skills improve because they have to clearly verbally interact with the dog with clear appropriate language; the handler no longer either helps the students with the words or gives the verbal command to the dog.

Michelle thought for a minute, with Max looking up at her, and realized that she knew the correct word to use with Max to get Max to move to her side. Taking a deep breath, Michelle told Max to "finish." Max walked around his wheelchair and sat at his side. Michelle flashed a huge smile and told Max to "heel." When Michelle and Max reached the water dish, Max began to take a drink of water. Michelle beamed with confidence and told another student, "I knew he was thirsty, and I knew I could take care of my best friend Max."

Cathy Lawler

*Name has been changed

Chenny Troupe Makes New Friends at Take Your Dog to Dinner



Deena, Lucky and Nicole

Petunia and Pablo

Kibbles and Bits

Thanks to Our Five-Year Volunteers

Congratulations to the volunteers who have devoted five years of service to Chenny Troupe's work: Judith Jaffe and her collie, Scotchie; Beth Kadow and her golden retriever, Ginger; and Meg Kremer and her Shih Tzu, China Bear, all work at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Roger Lutt and his lab-collie mix, Trievers, work at Somerset Place; Honey Rosenfeld and her Airedale, Jack, work at Lincoln Park Hospital; Sally Weiner and her corgi, Maybel, are currently on leave from Schwab Rehabilitation Hospital; and Karen Van Den Hende and her Cairn terrier, Max, work at ICRE and La Rabida. Karen was honored last year for her five years of service—now Max has caught up! These volunteers and their dogs have made remarkable contributions to Chenny Troupe and to our community, and their efforts have helped make the road to recovery a bit faster and easier for the people they have touched.

REMINDER: Our next practice and test dates are January 21 and January 28, 2006. It's not too early to sign up! We are looking for well-trained dogs and their people who want to participate in one of the most rewarding volunteer experiences in Chicago. If you know of potential candidates, have them contact the office, or let us know and we will send them the information.

Looking for that perfect gift for the person who has everything? Support a Chenny Troupe therapy dog in his or her honor. For a \$40 donation to Chenny Troupe, we'll send your gift recipient a picture of the dog you choose from our Heeling Hearts brochure, and he or she will receive letters from that Chenny Troupe therapy dog throughout the year, explaining our work and sharing heart-warming stories about our clients. It's a great way to remember friends and family during the holidays, and they will be delighted that you are helping others in their honor.

We welcome three new therapy dogs and their people as Chenny Troupe volunteers. On October 4, Andrea Varol and her Belgian sheepdog, Grace, and Donna Petersen and her miniature poodle, Daisy, passed our difficult certification test. Grace will join her pal Cobi, a border collie-chow mix, at Somerset Place. Donna and Daisy will be volunteering at the Rehabilitation Institute (RIC). On October 12, Cynthia Scazzero and Coco Latte, an Italian Spinone, passed. They have also decided to volunteer at RIC.



Jib is only one of the dogs you can support.

We also welcome Sarah Faunce, a new volunteer without a dog, who will be working with Grace at Somerset Place while Andrea continues to work with Cobi.

We welcome Dr. Colette Collins and Joe Frey to the Chenny Troupe Board of Directors. Dr. Collins is a child psychologist interested in program development. Joe has been a volunteer at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago with Stephanie, his wife, and Sherman, their standard poodle, for many years, and he chairs the Research Committee. We are honored to have these qualified and committed individuals on our Board.



*From left to right:
Cynthia Scazzero and Coco Latte,
Grace, Daisy and Donna Petersen*

**chenny
troupe**
animal assisted
therapy

1700 W Irving Park Road, Suite 311
Chicago, IL 60613
www.chennytroupe.org

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chicago, Illinois
Permit No. 6461