



Troupe Talk

Vol. 12, No. 1, Spring 2003

The Newsletter of Chenny Troupe, Inc.

Rice Center Kids and Their Canine Friends:

An Astonishing Relationship

Every dog lover over a certain age probably remembers a certain soft drink commercial with a giggling boy who is the object of affection for what seems like an entire litter of puppies. A happy child and puppy is an almost indelible image. But it's not always a truthful one.

The staff and Chenny Troupe volunteers at Rice Child and Family Center, a residential facility for children from ages five to fourteen with behavior and emotional problems, know this all too well. The children at Rice have a lot to overcome, and the Chenny program there, now in its second year, was established to help them do just that.

Volunteer dogs and their handlers work one-on-one with a child during a seven-week program, teaching children about caring for and training a dog. Those les-

sons are then used to reflect back on the children themselves to help them understand how similar lessons can apply their lives. For instance, brushing is important for a dog's hygiene, and hygiene is also important for people.

Of course, some children don't react to dogs like that giggling boy in the commercial. One ten-year old girl, Mary* who had been sent to Rice after suffering merciless abuse at the hands of both her parents, had been kept with a vicious dog. She was so scared of dogs that when she would take a walk in the neighborhood around Rice she wouldn't even go within a block of one. However, surprisingly, she volunteered to give the Chenny program a try.

But that first session she spent standing on a table across the room from the

**Fictitious name to protect the child's identity*



Cara, Riva, Winnie and Scotchie anxiously anticipate their next command from the children at Rice.

dogs. The volunteers, both canine and human, were patient, though, and Mary slowly came out of her shell. Soon she was able to pet her dog. Ultimately she graduated with the rest of the class, putting her dog through the paces like the

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Come Help Us Celebrate Chicago and Chenny Troupe at This Year's Benefit: *Tails of the City*

The City of Chicago boasts many unique attractions — our wonderful museums, our extraordinary parks, our magnificent lakefront, world class theatre, restaurants and shopping, just to name a few. Of course, many cities can make similar claims. But one thing that is truly unique to Chicago is Chenny Troupe. Chicago is the only city that can claim our wonderful therapy dogs, our devoted volunteers and our extraordinary interactive programs that reach so many people with so many challenges. So this year, we celebrate Chenny Troupe's Chicago at our annual benefit, Tails of the City. Please join us on May 15, 2003, at the Chicago Cultural Center, at 6 PM, for a light buffet supper, our exciting silent

auction, and the ever popular runway show, featuring Chenny Troupe volunteers and their therapy dogs. They'll show you how they work tirelessly, in seven locations across our city, four nights a week, to help bring hope and healing to thousands of Chicagoans.

Did you know that Chenny Troupe programs are provided free of charge? You can help insure that we continue to help some of the most medically underserved people in our community by attending Tails of the City. The spring benefit is our largest single source of income. As our clients are struggling to reach their individual goals, whether that is to walk unassisted or to smile at a stranger, your attendance at the benefit will make sure

Chenny Troupe dogs will be there to help them. You will help us open new programs in Chicago, and help us share our unique style of animal-assisted therapy with medical professionals across the country, so that we can reach thousands more clients. You will contribute to the many small miracles that help hearts and bodies heal.

Please call the office if you would like more information about Tails of the City, have an item or a service to donate for the silent auction, or need an invitation for a friend. (Our new telephone number is 773-404-6467). Be sure to make your reservations — this will be an evening you won't want to miss.



A Warm Welcome to Our President, Nancy Wieboldt

On a Thursday afternoon, incoming President Nancy Wieboldt took time from her job as Vice President at Northern Trust Company's Trust and Investment Department to talk to me about herself and her goals for Chenny Troupe.

"I was born in Evanston, grew up in Northbrook, and now reside in East Lakeview with my husband of 17 years, Larry Doyle, and 2 pets: an 8-year old golden retriever named Baldwin, and a 12-year old Persian Orange Tabby named K2. I've grown up around animals; my grandmother had 5 dogs, 2 cats and a bird.

When I think of how my personal experiences with animals have helped prepare me for my role at Chenny, I think of my grandmother. She was a shut-in during her later years, benefiting greatly from the special bonds she enjoyed with her animals; the communication, interdependency and therapeutic value brought by her pets. They were so good at picking up on people. My grandmother would cook fresh fish for her cats, which were also treated to shrimp and crab-meat. Her flock was considered part of the family, proving the synergy between people and their pets. With respect to my grandmother, there is no question they extended her life.

My connection to Chenny Troupe comes through friends and founders, Ann Rohlen and Cathy Lawler. I developed a real interest, and have served on Chenny Troupe's board for the last 3 years. I am also past chairman of Chicago Commons, the National Runaway Switchboard, and a current board member of Children's Home & Aid Society.

Our goals for Chenny Troupe: to be recognized as the premier canine-assisted therapy group, and to provide the excellent therapy services to the people we serve. The spirit and generosity of volunteers is the point at which Chenny Troupe touches clients. They give of

themselves, consistently. If there is an indicated desire or need for Chenny Troupe, the volunteers are there. We can recruit volunteers and find new program sites. Services to autistic children present an interesting opportunity. We may again run a program for substance abusers. At-risk populations need to be identified and served. We can do it and get our message out, by developing resources, expanding and covering budget needs in a challenging economy.

To document the positive impact canine assisted therapy has on patients' rehabilitation, we will be gathering objective data and observing outcomes. Therapists are always present during sessions and can help support the claim that canine-assisted therapy is appropriate.

Finally, I believe that Chenny Troupe has the best volunteers, board members, and staff!"

Nancy Wieboldt's professional and personal experience bring substantial administrative, financial and insightful ability to her role as Chenny Troupe's President. We wish her much luck and success and under Nancy's leadership, look forward to a banner term.

Nancy Wise



TroupeTalk

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Rice Kids continued from the front page

rest of the children. Her fear of dogs was overcome.

Chenny Program Leader Kathy McCarthy, whose dog Riva was the first to coax Mary out of her shell, puts it this way. "In a group of Chenny dogs there's so much variety. Certain clients don't like big dogs or certain breeds. Riva is an English Setter and very calm. She appealed to Mary. But each dog and volunteer, like each client, is unique. When matched, that's when the therapy starts."

But a program like this does far more than just help children overcome their fear of dogs. As Site Manager Mary Krawczyk puts it: "Chenny is a way for the children to come to grips with their abuse: They can confront it in a way that helps them overcome the unfair challenges they have been forced to face."

As for Mary, when she was placed with foster parents, they got her a puppy of her own.

Joe Frey

Demystifying Heartworm Disease

By Dr. Sheldon Rubin

Big dog or small dog, it doesn't matter—all dogs are susceptible to heartworm disease. Heartworm disease is one of the major health problems of dogs in the U.S. and throughout the temperate and tropical areas of the world. This disease is caused by worms (*Dirofilaria immitis*) that may grow to be 14 inch-long adults that live in the right side of the heart and the arteries of the lungs.

Mosquitoes transmit heartworm disease. Wherever and whenever mosquitoes are present, dogs are at risk. It is the female mosquito that bites and hence, spreads the disease. The female mosquito is especially tiny, and can easily slip through cracks around windows, doors or screens; so even pets that stay indoors can be in danger.

The first step toward protecting your dog is

to call your veterinarian and arrange for a simple heartworm blood test. Having your dog tested is important because you can't begin a preventive program until you confirm that your dog is free from heartworms. If your dog already has heartworm disease, treatment can be dangerous for your dog and expensive for you.

Prevention is simple.

There are a variety of options for preventing heartworm infection, including daily and monthly tablets and chewables; a monthly topical and an injectable administered by your veterinarian that provides protection for six months. All these methods are extremely effective, and when administered properly on a timely schedule, heartworm infection is completely prevented. These medications interrupt heart-

worm development before adult worms reach the lungs and heart and cause disease. Heartworm prevention is easy, safe, and inexpensive compared to treating a dog after the worms have matured into adults. Development of infective heartworm larvae within the mosquito is temperature dependent. Thus, in the Chicago area, 12 months of prevention is not required. Discuss product selection and dose timing with your veterinarian.

Heartworm disease is a serious problem and for pennies a day your pet can be protected.

Dr. Sheldon Rubin is the chief of staff at Blum Animal Hospital, located at 3219 North Clark St., and the secretary/treasurer of the American Heartworm Society. He is a long-time friend of Chenny Troupe.

It is with great sadness that we report the loss of three beloved Chenny Troupe veterans. **"Molson,"** the cherished companion of Gary Liebovitz, owner of Windy City K-9 Club, died in December after a battle with cancer. Molson passed the Chenny Troupe test in February, 1995 and worked with Gary in the Chenny Troupe substance abuse programs for young men.

"Molly," who also died in December, was the gentle companion of Randy

McGhee and Randy Gordon. A huge Rottweiler with a heart of gold who was certified by Chenny Troupe in August 1993, Molly worked at City Girls, the substance abuse program for teen girls, for many years, and starred on video, on tv and in print for us. Molly's wonderful nature helped many people overcome their fear of this much maligned breed.

"Polar," a shepherd/lab mix with a purple tongue and a kind disposition, volunteered with his companion, Tom Williams, at the

Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago after becoming a Chenny Trouper in April, 2000. Tom and Polar participated in many events to spread the word about our work, including an appearance in the runway show at Paws for Hope in 2002, dressed in Harley denims.

Our deepest sympathy to Gary, Randy, Randy and Tom. These remarkable animals will be missed by all those who were touched by their short but meaningful lives.

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:

- 🐾 McDuff
- 🐾 Heidi
- 🐾 Sophie
- 🐾 Gilly

In memory of "Polar" Williams:
Judy Keitz
Nan Vaile
Elizabeth Buchanan

In memory of Buster Brodie:
Myrna Pedersen

In memory of Comet:
Suzanne Shelton

In honor of: Schnoogleyboogley and Baby Dog's 9th Birthdays, Dukester and the engagement of Steve and Katie, Lillyputian, Champ, Brandy, the

Maltese Falcon, Louie and his family, the Dukester, and Shelpsky:
The Rosenmutter and
"Shadowman"

In memory of "Ginger" Dudley, and
In honor of Ann Dudley:
Mr. and Mrs. Edward Dudley

In memory of Tory:
Mary Jo Fairbanks

In memory of Eileen Gildea, Mother of
Kathy McCarthy:
Staff of Chenny Troupe

Donations were made to Chenny Troupe:

Kibbles and Bits

Three dogs passed the Chenny Troupe therapy dog test on February 1st. We welcome Janice Rose and Star, a miniature French Poodle who are working at ICRE and La Rabida, Marina Miller and Emma, a black lab, who are working at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, and Sophie McCarthy Olshein, a Great Dane/Mastiff mix who joins her roommate Riva at the Rice Center. Congratulations to the dogs and their human companions, who wasted no time getting to work helping people regain health and independence.

Volunteers, please mark your calendars for Sunday, June 1. There will be an exciting appreciation day of games and food for you to share with your dogs at Windy City K-9 Club. Watch the mail for more information.

Troupers and their dogs came out dressed in green to proudly represent Chenny Troupe in Chicago's St. Patrick's Day parade on Saturday, March 15.

The Chenny Troupe Volunteer Committee is planning to compile a volunteer directory. Please make sure your name, address, phone and e-mail is current with the office. We would also like your dog's name, birthday, and program. If you have any pictures to share with us, you



Congratulations and welcome to our 3 new volunteer teams that passed the Chenny Troupe test on February 1. They've already started working in our programs. Marina Miller and Emma are working at RIC, Kathy McCarthy Olshein and Sophie are working at Rice, and Janice Rose and Star have begun working at ICRE/LaRabida.

may send them to the office or give them to John Himmel to scan.

If you haven't heard, we've been spending the last couple of weeks settling into our new office. We are now located at 1700 W. Irving Park Rd., Suite 311, Chicago, 60613. Our phone number at the new office is 773-404-6467, fax, 773-404-6759. You can also reach us by e-mail, info@chennytroupe.org.

The most important work that we do takes place at our programs. This is where we are at our best. This is where miracles truly do happen. We welcome you to come and witness first hand the wonderful things accomplished by our volunteers and their dogs. Please plan to take some time this year to visit a program. Call our office for details.



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