

Editor's Note:

This issue of TroupeTalk includes two heart-felt articles written by Chenny Troupe volunteers who do not own dogs. The articles illustrate opportunities available to our volunteers without dogs, and confirms that their involvement is enormously rewarding.

Ed Marks, a high school freshman, assists at La Rabida Children's Hospital and the Illinois Center for Rehabilitation and Education (*see page 4*). **Nancy Duke** works with the program leader's dog at Lincoln Park Hospital (*article below*).

Chenny Troupe Goes to Vegas

For the first time ever, **Animal Assisted Therapy** was a session topic at the 76th Annual Western Veterinary Conference held in February in Las Vegas. An estimated 19,000 vets from all over the world were in attendance.

Thanks to Steve Dale, Chenny Troupe was asked to speak as the experts on AAT, and shared the stage with Dr. Jack Stephens, founder of Veterinary Pet Insurance and the Skeeter Foundation, and Dr. Rebecca Johnson, Professor at the University of Missouri-Columbia, and Mr. Steve Dale, pet media expert. Ms. Judy Keitz and Ms. Lisa Crossett, both Chenny Troupe

board members and Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago volunteers, represented Chenny Troupe.

Judy and Lisa not only discussed the benefits of structured and goal-oriented animal-assisted therapy, they also integrated how veterinarians and vet techs are the perfect sources for AAT programs. With their knowledge of their patients, they are the best source of referrals for dogs to AAT programs, and they are also great sources to start up programs of their own.

Judy and Lisa explained Chenny Troupe's philosophy of working closely with the medical professionals to pro-

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It's All About the Healing

That's the advice given to me by Ann, co-leader at Lincoln Park Hospital when I talked with her before my first night at our group. My experience with Chenny Troupe started in August, when I saw the booth at the Bucktown Arts Festival. I had been thinking about contacting them to inquire about volunteer opportunities, even though I don't presently own a dog. One month later, I was at a Chenny Troupe orientation and two weeks after that, I was to show up at the Thursday night group at Lincoln Park Hospital in Chicago.

The program leader, Ramona, who would be out of town my first week, had me talk with Ann before my first session. Ann suggested I work with her 8 year old bulldog, Duncan, while she was leading the group that night. I was a bit apprehensive, considering I was walking in "cold" to the group my first night. I'll never forget Ann's response, "Nancy, don't worry, all you need to do

is relax and let the dog do his thing. Just remember, it's not about you, it's about the participants, the dogs, and the healing."

Thursday Oct. 9, 2003: My first group. I'm waiting in the lobby for Ann and Duncan. Everyone passing through the lobby smiles when they see the dogs walk in, you can't help it. Duncan appears content to interact with anyone who approaches him. When we walk into the gym where the group is held, I hear one of the participants say, "Boy, is that dog ugly." By the end of the night, that same participant has fallen in love with him.

Thursday nights start to become the highlight of my week. The excitement starts as soon as the dogs are escorted into the hospital. Everyone walking by seems to light up when they see them. It's unknown who and how many participants will show up for our 6:15pm group. Maureen, the Recreational Therapist and Patricia, the Activities



Nancy and Ida at work at Lincoln Park Hospital.

Director, coordinate arrangements ahead of time and are present during the program. Once everyone has arrived, Ramona offers a lively introduction to the dogs and their owners and invites the participants and their visitors to actively enjoy them for the hour we are together. The chemistry between the dogs and their owners, the participants and Ramona's leadership skills makes

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Healing Hearts, Our Annual Spring Benefit

Chenny Troupe provides its own unique brand of animal-assisted therapy. Our programs are interactive and goal directed. Our clients are active participants in the work done in every program so that they continue to work toward recovery. What makes this possible? In large measure, it is because of our partnerships with medical professionals, therapists and activities directors who help insure that the program activities match the therapy goals of the participants. At this year's spring benefit, we are honoring those men and women whose input, expertise and commitment provide a critical element in the success of our programs.



TroupeTalk

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

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We hope that you will join us for **Healing Hearts** on April 29, 2004 at the Chicago Cultural Center at 6 p.m. for what promises to be an exciting evening. You'll enjoy a jazz quartet while perusing the silent auction and buffet tables. Back by popular demand, John Records Landecker will host a therapy dog demonstration, during which you'll learn more about what it takes to become a Chenny Trouper, and the various components needed to run effective and successful programs. You'll meet our very special volunteers and their dogs and hear from some of the therapists who have participated with Chenny Troupe for many years. As if that were not enough, we promise another exciting live auction of fabulous travel opportunities, near and far.

Chenny Troupe programs reach out to adults who are isolated and depressed because of mental illness or age related dementia and touch the lives of

those whose future was irrevocably changed in the split second of a traumatic accident. Our volunteer teams help provide the motivation to reach further with an injured arm, to take an extra step regardless of the pain, to talk to a stranger despite the fear of rejection. Our partnerships with medical professionals make Chenny Troupe dogs an integral part of the recovery of thousands of clients yearly. Your attendance at the benefit will help us continue and expand our important service, still offered without charge to any client or facility that we serve.

Please call the office (773-404-6467) if you would like more information about **Healing Hearts**, have an item or a service to donate for our silent auction, or need an invitation for a friend. Watch our website (www.chennytroupe.org) for a preview of auction items and plan your strategy! We look forward to seeing you in April!

It's All About the Healing... continued from the front page

the hour-long session fly.

I can't begin to put into words what I experience showing up each week to "hang out" with a group of people who, because of unique situations, find themselves in this hospital's inpatient rehabilitative therapy program. It's an hour of "connections" and unconditional interactions. An hour with no agenda or expectations, and hour where who you are, where you live, who your family is, why you're in the hospital, is not a focus or anything that has to be talked about. It's an hour that conversation can flow because of a presence of a dog that's happy to interact and please everyone he comes in contact with.

My first months have flown by. In addition to my weekly group, I've participated in a Chenny Troupe practice session with individuals who are interested in becoming Chenny Troupe volunteers. I've also attended the Chenny Troupe annual meeting and reception where Ann was recognized for her 5-year volunteer work with our group. Ramona's youngest Corgi, Ida, got certified as a Chenny Troupe Therapy dog and I've been offered the opportunity to handle her in our weekly group. Ramona and Sally (Ida's other owner) have patiently been teaching me how to work with Ida, which also included attending a dog training class one night.

Ida, one and a half years old, is a bundle of energy who is eager to please and happy to be a Chenny Troupe therapy dog. She and I have become buddies. And yes, Ann was right: it is all about the healing that the dogs are able to encourage.

Nancy Duke

A Valentine Treat

Phil and Lou's is a very dog friendly restaurant and bar in the West Loop and during the summer, you will always see canine guests lounging outdoors with their humans. In fact, Phil and Lou are dogs, so what would you expect! After participating in Chenny Troupe's **Take Your Dog To Dinner** last summer, proprietors Nick and Madison wanted to do something more for Chenny Troupe and for their many four footed friends. So on Sunday, February 15, Phil and Lou's went to the dogs. Actually, the dogs went to Phil and Lou's, and joined their human companions for a fabulous dinner and silent auction to benefit Chenny Troupe's animal-assisted therapy programs. Humans had their choice of four fantastic entrees and terrific bread pudding for dessert. The canine diners were certainly not forgotten, and received grilled burgers and Frosty Paws (dog friendly ice cream) with cookies for dessert. Some dogs were actually spotted sharing the huge slab of tasty meatloaf and tidbits of roasted chicken. The smallest guests, including dachshunds, several shih tzus, and a Chihuahua sat at booths, while the goldens, bull dogs and the 150 pound



Dakota enjoying his dinner at Phil and Lou's.

malamute lounged comfortably near their humans' tables. Everyone was very well behaved, even the human diners! Silent auction items included a basketball autographed by Tyson Chandler of the Chicago Bulls, a Jack Daniels jacket, several gift baskets and excellent wines. As if their hospitality were not enough, Phil and Lou's also donated dinner for two at the restau-

rant. It was a terrific evening for everyone. Thank you to Michelle Schwartz for her efforts in coordinating the event, and of course, to Nick and Madison for their incredible support of Chenny Troupe's work.



Chenny Troupe Goes to Vegas...continued from the front page

vide goal-directed therapeutic exercises and activities designed for the individual patient, and how we develop programs to meet this standard. The discussion focused on the socialization benefits of the group settings, the importance of self-initiated activities, and then included a lengthy discussion on how to design activities and exercises specific to various deficiencies, both physical and behavioral.

Integrated within their presentation were three video case studies of RIC and La Rabida clients interacting with Chenny Troupe dogs in their respective programs. Narrative from the therapists of these programs explain the thera-

peutic goals for each exercise - for example, socialization skills, language development, rebuilding upper body strength and range of motion, reestablishing dynamic and static balance, and movement initiation.

Following the Chenny Troupe presentation, Dr. Rebecca Johnson reported initial findings of her work of the animal-human bond. Early findings support previous work that humans benefit from interaction with dogs, such as reduction in blood pressure, and take it a step further to show these effects are due to changes in hormones in the human body. Her initial work also shows that dogs enjoy the same bene-

fits when interacting with humans, again through changes in body chemistry.

Steve Dale completed the picture with his recent survey of AAT volunteers in terms of the dog's perspective of AAT. His findings show that 67% of volunteers feel that their dogs get excited about and enjoy their work in AAT, as evidenced primarily by the excitement shown when the special leash or vest comes out of the closet.

Thanks again to Steve Dale for making this possible.

Judy Keitz

Volunteering Adds Perspective to Young Man's Life

Last fall, my dad and I were at a friend's house when they began to talk about a group of volunteers who take their dogs to various hospitals around the city. John told us that he, his wife Kim and their yellow lab Dean volunteered once a week for Chenny Troupe. They work with kids who have severe illnesses like muscular dystrophy, cerebral palsy and multiple sclerosis, and teach them how to handle dogs and to take care of them properly. John asked me to come with him sometime, and I reluctantly agreed. I have to admit I was a little unsure of what I could do to help these kids. But he convinced me, and it was such a great experience that I decided to volunteer on a regular basis with John and the rest of his group.

I met the volunteers who are a very colorful cast of characters, including Marge, the mother hen of the group with a very wry sense of humor, Cathy, the really funny group leader, John, a quiet, mild-mannered all-around nice guy, Janice, a caring mom, and Sharon and Karen, an awesome mother and daughter team. While they teach the kids how to call the dogs and treat them kindly and responsibly, I set up cones, push wheelchairs, and chat with the kids and their golden-hearted nurse, Caroline Pierce.

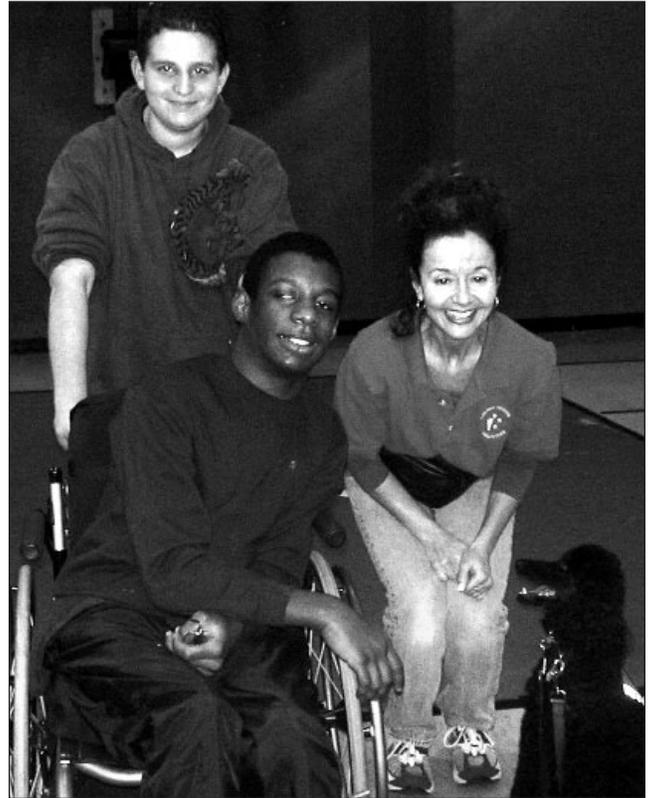
Let me tell you about these amazing kids. Limited by various disabilities, most of the kids are wheelchair-bound and live in this state-run facility. There's one beautiful little girl named Lindsay. She's in a wheelchair, cannot speak, and can barely move her hands. And when she says the only word she can say, "Daddy" it can break your heart. But she is always laughing and smiling and understands every word you say. Another guy that remains unforgettable is a tall, muscular and very gentle teenager named Terrell, who's actually mildly afraid of the dogs, but he's getting over his fear. Then there's Luis. He's the same age and grade as me, and is losing his strength to muscular dystrophy. Luis is a real funny and talk-

ative guy and a talented artist. I see him as a leader of the other kids.

Some of these kids will die young, but I've noticed that they all just live and enjoy life. One thing that I always laugh at is when the kids are lovingly giving each other a hard time and having petty arguments. They come up with little zingers like all kids do. It warms your heart and makes you laugh to see them doing this. A couple of weekends ago, we were at a family wedding in Iowa and people started dancing. I was a little shy, but my cousin Sarah got me up on the dance floor. As I was dancing, I started thinking about these kids and if I've learned anything from them, it is to seize the day and celebrate the beauty of life while you can. Think about how tragic it would be to waste that evening sitting and something terrible happened the next day. That's why you should never waste a moment of life. It is far too precious.

These kids have so little, yet they celebrate what they have. It helps me to keep that in mind when I'm complaining about my girlfriend not calling me back. Average people with lots to live for shouldn't get mad when something minor doesn't go their way.

You know, sometimes I wish I had all the valor of these kids. Everyday they battle the triple-edged-sword of loneliness, serious illness, and the obstacles placed in their way. I don't know if these kids are like angels sent to make our earth a better place or just average people who are tested with challenging obstacles. Either way, they will always be heroes in my mind. I wish I knew



Ed at work with Terrell Davis, Janice Rose and "Star"

more people who had all the guts and human dignity that these guys have. Their hard lives make you cry, their optimism makes you smile, and their courage makes you cheer.

Ed Marks



Send the Gift of Healing...
by supporting Chenny Troupe dogs
as a gift any special occasion.

Kibbles and Bits

We mourn the loss of the following retired therapy dogs, who will be missed by all those who were touched by their short but meaningful lives:

“**Molly**” was a wonderful Labrador retriever who began her work in the early days of Chenny Troupe at RIC and then at Evanston Hospital, where her guardian **Susan Chevalier** and “aunt” **Betsy Murray** were program leaders. Molly lived to the grand old age of 16. “**Mogul**,” the beloved Shih Tzu of **Carole Mychaels**, was one of the first Chenny Troupers, earning his certification in May 1992. Mogul and Carole worked at the Abraham Lincoln Centre, University of Illinois Hospital, Rehabilitation Institute, and Schwab. “**Rosie**” was a beautiful Doberman Pinscher who became a Trouper after retiring from obedience competition. Rosie and her companion, **Mary Dellorto**, worked for five years at Lincoln Park until she became ill. Rosie died last July at the age of 15 1/2. “**Koenig**,” a German Shepard, worked with Chenny Troupe in 1997-98 at Schwab and St. Joseph’s Center until an early retirement with **Kelly Kramer and Tim Brahm** in California.

Congratulations to the dogs who passed the Chenny Troupe therapy dog test on November 8, 2003. They are **Ida**, a Pembroke Welsh Corgi owned by **Sally Weiner**, **Dave**, a black Lab owned by **Nancy Goldstein** and **Maximilian**, a Pug owned by **Allyson Heumann**. Ida works at Schwab, Dave at Rice, and Max at RIC and Schwab.

Five dogs passed the therapy dog test on January 31, 2004. They include **Scotch**, a mix owned by **Callie Cozzolino**, **Giza**, a Pharoah Hound owned by **Gaye Davies**, **Bizmark**, a Rottweiler owned by **Jennifer Jasinski**, **Casey**, a Dalmatian, owned by **Deborah Lerner** and **Barley**, a Labradoodle, owned by **Natalie and Scott Rempala**. Scotch and Barley are working at Somerset Place, Giza is working at RIC, Casey works at Schwab and Barley is doing overtime at Schwab!

At our testing session on March 13, **Thea Pfeiffer** and **Dezi**, a blue merle collie, **Joanna Janger** and **Xuxa**, a mixed breed,



Casey and Deborah, Barley and Natalie, Bizmark and Jennifer, Giza and Gaye, and Scotch and Callie.

and **Helen Fasano** and **Tehya**, a German Shepard became the newest Chenny Troupers.

We welcome **Elizabeth Kuo**, **Sybil Gratz**, **John Pfeiffer** and **Amanda Taylor**, new volunteers without dogs.

Chenny Troupe’s annual meeting and celebration was held on December 4, 2003 in the beautiful Oak Street Branch of the Northern Trust Company. There was a brief business meeting at which **Steve Dale**, **James Dawson** and **John Himmel** were elected to three-year terms on the Board of Directors and **Mary Carr** and **Kathy McCarthy** were elected to the Advisory Council. The following officers were elected to serve for one year: **Nancy Wieboldt**, **President**, **Lisa Crossett**, **John Himmel**, **Ann Rohlen**, **Jack Trytten** and **John Vranicar**, **Vice Presidents**, **Judy Keitz**, **Secretary** and **Tony Ozzauto**, **Treasurer**. Five-year volunteers, **Patrick and Katsuyo Thornton** and **Foxie**, and **Joe and Stephanie Frey** and **Sherman**, who all work at RIC, and **Ann Cort** and **Duncan** who work at Lincoln Park Hospital were honored. All of our supporters and volunteers were thanked for their enormous contribution to



Allyson and Maximilian, Sally and Ida, and Nancy and Dave

our work, after which board members and volunteers shared a glass of wine and a light meal. A very special thank you to **Margaret Izbicky**, who provided beautiful hand-made Christmas stockings adorned with dogs, to **Leigh Peterson and Ann Rohlen** who wrapped HUNDREDS of tennis balls in joyful holiday fabrics for our therapy dogs, and to **Sue Ann Selle** for arranging our use of Northern’s bank branch.

John and “**Dean**” **Himmel**, and **Karen**, **Sharon** and “**Max**” **Van Den Hende** offered an interactive animal assisted therapy demonstration at Burn Survivor Saturday at the Chicago Fire Academy on February 7. They were well received and a good time was had by all.

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!

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

- ✿ Ginger
- ✿ Lucy

Donations were made to Chenny Troupe:

In memory of "Brandy":
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Boskovic

In memory of "Pippen":
Mr. Thomas Burden

In memory of "Ling" Palmer:
Ms. Aviva Cahn

In memory of "Jackson":
Mr. & Mrs. Matt Croft

In memory of "Chessie" Smith:
Amy Elefante

In memory of "Manny" Joel:
Mrs. Nancy Goldstein

In memory of "Bo" Kozon:
Lori Kozon

In memory of "Cody" Dziedzic:
Wendi Mancini

In memory of "Chessie" Lawler:
Ms. Ann Rohlen
Mr. & Mrs. Jerome Stemnock
Ms. Judith Jaffe

In memory of "Cookie" and "C.B.":
Mr. & Mrs. Samuel Rosen

In memory of "Mr. Darcy":
Geri Smith and Greg Brewster

In memory of "Windsor" Hoffman:
Mr. & Mrs. David Weinstein

In memory of "Penny" Van Den Hende:
Ms. Angela Zainelli and "Cozzi"

In memory of "Mackinaw" Nagle:
Caryl and Jerry Horn

In memory of "Sasha" Golden:
The Schulert family

In memory of "Hillary" Olshein:
Ms. Judith Jaffe, "Scotchie," and Star"

In memory of Susan Russell:
Ms. Ann Dudley

In honor of Barbara Morris:
Ms. Wendy Coyne

In honor of the wedding of Kim Kubiak and John Himmel:
Ms. Phyllis Renzik

In honor of "Rusty":
Ms. Jane Perisho

In honor of Ola May Brown:
Ms. Andrea Varol

In honor of "Dean" Himmel:
Mr. & Mrs. Lawrence Waco

In honor of Carole Herhold:
Mr. Timothy Williamson

In honor of Dr. John Kasmersky:
Mr. & Mrs. Frank Blair
Mr. & Mrs. Charles Haffner

In honor of Mary Ann Alexander and "Tag":
Mrs. Ann Alexander
Ms. Margaret Lott

In honor of Garron Segal:
Ms. Diana Rich



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