



# The Barker

Nor'wester Readers Canine Assisted Learning Program  
... all the news that's fit to bark!

NEWSLETTER

EDITOR:

Deborah Glessner

## Issue Highlights:

- CANINE BOOK BUDDIES SUMMER READING PROGRAM
- KELLY WOLFF AND MISS DAISY
- TEACHER PROFILE: KIM RINELLA

Nor'wester Readers teams are currently visiting classrooms in:

♦The Center School  
Abington, PA

♦Council Rock  
School District

♦New Hope-Solebury  
School District

"Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read."

~Groucho Marx

Volume 1, issue 2

Summer 2011

## CANINE BOOK BUDDIES SUMMER READING PROGRAM

Nor'wester Readers is collaborating with the Free Library of Northampton Township in Richboro, Pennsylvania, to offer a six week summer 2011 reading incentive program for students in Kindergarten through fifth grade. Starting June 29th, the program is offered each Wednesday for an hour and will end on August 3rd. Children have the opportunity to sit with the dogs and handlers while reading aloud to the dog and other children in their group.

The Nor'wester Readers organization is currently working with the staff at the library in hopes of reintroducing their *READ TO THE DOGS* program in the Fall. If interested in becoming involved with your therapy dog, please contact one of the Directors.

Nor'wester Readers thanks the following teams for helping to make the Canine Book Buddies program a success:

Denise Gurwood and Jackson  
Karen McAllister and Moose  
Estelle Gurwood and Minnie  
Wendi Huttner and Wes  
Kelly Wolff and Miss Daisy  
Christina Minsky and Harry

Lisa Conicella and Daisy  
Lynne Weiser and Teddy  
Bob Muska and Jillian  
Anne Paige and Bella  
Debbie Glessner and Hannah  
Gail Tower and Sadie



## **NOR'WESTER READERS APPRECIATES YOUR DONATIONS!**

Your contribution can:

- ~ Make a great teacher gift
- ~ Celebrate a graduation or learning milestone
- ~ Honor a person, pet, or favorite volunteer
- ~ Honor an anniversary or birthday



Your generosity and thoughtfulness will enable *Nor'wester Readers Canine Assisted Learning Program* to grow and to improve our services to the children and classrooms visited by our therapy dog teams.

Please use our PayPal button on our website or mail your tax-deductible donation to:

Nor'wester Readers  
485 Worthington Mill Rd.  
Richboro, PA 18954

## **NOR'WESTER READERS HAS PARTICIPATED IN . . .**

### **Family Reading Night at Richboro Elementary School (Council Rock School District)**

On Dr. Seuss Day, March 2, 2011, Nor'wester Readers participated in Richboro Elementary's Family Reading Night. Parents and children enjoyed the company of Serena Cohen's Bernese Mountain Dog, Moose, and Wendi Huttner's Labrador Retriever, Sadie. Moose and Sadie sat with Community Readers Bernadette Heenan, Council Rock School Board Member and Evan Millstein, Council Rock South Drum Major, as they read to the children in their groups.

### **Celebrity Readers: Lower Elementary School (New Hope Solebury School District)**

On February 8, 2011, our organization was invited to provide handlers and dogs to participate as Celebrity Readers at Lower Elementary School in the New Hope Solebury School District. Nan Muska, accompanied by her dog Jillian, read to Kindergarten. Wendi Huttner, with Sadie, read to first graders, and Debbie Glessner, with Hannah, read to the second graders. The Celebrity Reader program is a monthly treat for the students as part of an ongoing celebration of reading.

## **NEWS FLASH!**

The students in Carla Foy's second grade class at Richboro Elementary (Council Rock School District) won the reading challenge for a school-wide visit from the Phillie Phanatic. Mrs. Foy attributes the presence of her therapy dog team Wendi Huttner and Wes for motivating her class to read and helping to establish a life-long love for reading and learning.

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

**Did you know?  
that the U.S. Senate has proclaimed November 14th  
National Reading Education Assistance Dogs Day!**



**NOR'WESTER READERS THANKS THE FOLLOWING COUNCIL ROCK SCHOOLS WHO HELD "CASUAL FOR A CAUSE DAY" TO SUPPORT OUR ORGANIZATION.**

Richboro Elementary  
Rolling Hills Elementary  
Wrightstown Elementary

**OUR DOGS NOW HAVE BANDANAS!**

Thank you to NWR supporter Julie Sturman of Media, Pennsylvania, who donated the funds to purchase canine neck bandanas for our dogs and to NWR volunteer Carol Wagner who cut and sewed them in the different sizes we needed.



**THREE TERRIFIC READING WEBSITES FOR KIDS!**

[www.readkiddoread.com](http://www.readkiddoread.com)

[www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com)

[www.bookadventure.com/](http://www.bookadventure.com/)

**PAST PARTNERS**

The Nor'wester Readers Organization honors the memory of our therapy dogs who have retired or crossed the Rainbow Bridge.

Cathy Guenzel's Rascal

Jacqui Smith's Weezie (retired)

**~ANNOUNCEMENTS & REMINDERS~**

**HANDLERS:** Remember to send us a Xerox copy of your therapy dog membership renewal ID before the expiration date.

**TEACHERS:** Please send us copies of any hand-outs you develop to use in conjunction with your therapy dog visits. Digital copies are greatly appreciated along with your permission to share on our website.

**PLEASE RECRUIT NEW THERAPY DOG TEAMS FOR OUR ORGANIZATION!**

[www.norwesterreaders.org](http://www.norwesterreaders.org)



## MEET OUR THERAPY DOG TEAM: Kelly Wolff and Miss Daisy

Dolores (better known as Kelly) Wolff and her Shih Tzu, Miss Daisy, have been part of the Nor'wester Readers organization for the past three years. Kelly learned about our canine assisted learning program from Cathy Guenzel while volunteering at Abington Hospital. Because Miss Daisy loves children so much, Kelly decided to join NWR.

Kelly is a native of Philadelphia, and was raised in North Wildwood, NJ. She graduated from Gwynedd-Mercy Academy and then went to the University of Pennsylvania for a degree as a dental hygienist. After working in this profession for 10 1/2 years, marrying, and raising her two children, she decided, at the age of 38, to go back to school for a nursing degree. She attended Gwynedd-Mercy College where she acquired her BSN degree. Kelly then went to work at Holy Redeemer Hospital as a Labor & Delivery nurse for 27 years. "I loved every minute of those 27 years," says Kelly.

Kelly has had dogs all her life. She grew up with large breed dogs such as German Shepherds, Collies, and Great Danes. She had Great Danes until 1994 when she lost her last Dane named Alex. At that point she decided to move to a smaller breed and got a miniature French Poodle whom she named P.J. Wolff. P.J. delighted everyone with his intelligence and obedience, but succumbed, at age 12, to a non-operative tumor in his ear.

Shortly after P.J.'s death, Kelly's best friend convinced her that the Shih Tzu was a perfect breed for her. She found a wonderful breeder of Shih Tzu dogs and was permitted to choose her puppy from a litter of five. Now 4 years old, Miss Daisy displayed her wonderful temperament at an early age. It was this that made Kelly decide to pursue therapy dog certification with her. Miss Daisy passed "with flying colors" and joined the Abington Hospital therapy dog program. Occasionally they also visit a nursing home in Rydal, PA.

Currently they add Rolling Hills Elementary School (Council Rock School District) to their list of therapy dog visits. Miss Daisy is a "good listener" to the 4th graders of Mrs. Swenson's class. "She is so eager to go to



school on Thursdays," relates Kelly. "She leads me to the classroom and wiggles her whole body when she sees her children. I know how much they love her from all the special stories they write about her."

When she is not doing therapy dog work, Kelly loves to travel. She says she got the "travel bug" from her father who was a Chief Steward on passenger liners. She feels fortunate that she has been able to travel extensively. Her other hobby is solving crossword puzzles. "I'm afraid I'm an addict," she confesses.

"NWR is a wonderful organization," says Kelly. "Our two directors make it what it is. They have new and exciting ideas, always with an eye to the future. This is an organization which keeps in close touch with its volunteers, not just once a year."

"Reading to Miss Daisy has been a wonderful incentive for my reluctant readers," says Mrs. Swenson. "The dog's presence is also a motivational reward for students with behavior problems."

Kelly and Miss Daisy are making a difference!



## TEACHER PAGE: Featuring Kim Rinella

"I can't remember a time I didn't want to teach," says Kim Rinella, our 2007-2008 NWR pilot teacher. "I found a book in my parent's basement that I'd made in first grade, and I'd written that I wanted to be a teacher or librarian."

Raised in Bensalem, Kim graduated from Arcadia University with certification in elementary and special education. She then went to Holy Family College for her graduate work and obtained her masters in reading and acquired her reading specialist certificate. She has taught in Council Rock School District since 1997.

Kim's family has been a fan of Siberian Huskies for her entire life.

She relates, "Our current Husky, Nikki, loves babies. When we brought my daughter, Bailey, home from the hospital, Nikki would lie beside her playpen and come running for my husband or me if Bailey made a noise or cried. Now that my son Braydon is one, Nikki is eager for the day she can run with him in the yard."



Because Kim was the pilot teacher for the NWR program, she shared some of her experiences. "When my principal, Dr. Pat Carney-Dalton, approached me about having a dog in the classroom, I think she knew my answer before she even asked. The problem was, I had no idea what we were going to do. The first year was a learning experience for everyone involved, not just the students. We experimented with how to best seat the students with the dog and where the handler would sit. How much interaction would there be between student, dog, and handler? Wes was the perfect experimental dog because he was so calm; he even went to sleep most weeks! The kids could pet or rub him, lie with him, check his teeth, feel his paws, and touch his tail. We put him in the middle of a circle and allowed the kids to experience him with all their senses for a writing project. It really helped bring their descriptive writing to life when they were writing about something that was right there in front of them. It also helped that they were going to share their stories with Wes. They couldn't wait for him to hear about all of the adventures he would have.

Our second year we were a little more experienced. Hannah brought a little more puppy playfulness to the group. One of my favorite memories of the next 3 years is actually told in pictures. On the first day with Hannah we took pictures of the students. One of my students sat about 3 feet away from Hannah. When we took pictures again that winter, he was sitting next to her. At the end of the year, he was holding Hannah's leash in a playground shot. By the end of his second year with Hannah, we have pictures of him hugging her. That's what dogs can do that people sometimes can't. They hold no grudge; they pass no judgment. They only offer love."

One of my favorite quotes is from comedian Gilda Radner, "I think dogs are the most amazing creatures; they give unconditional love. For me they are the role model for being alive."

---

### BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS FROM KIM RINELLA:

I like to introduce the therapy dog program at the beginning of the year by reading *HOORAY FOR READING DAY* by Marjorie Cuyler, to my students. It starts the conversation about why a dog is such a great reading audience. I also found *SCHOOL DOG, COOL DOG* by Deborah Heiligman, which is about a dog that misses his owner so much he sneaks into school one day. The students beg the teacher to let him stay so they can read to him.



NOR'WESTER READERS  
485 Worthington Mill Rd.  
Richboro, PA 18954

215-504-0154  
Lab324@aol.com  
Dglessner2@comcast.net

Directors:  
Wendi Huttner  
Deborah Glessner

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT:

The goal of the *Nor'wester Readers* Canine Assisted Learning Program is to utilize registered therapy dog teams who will work cooperatively with public school teachers to support and build student motivation, enhance focus, and increase task persistence. The presence of our therapy dog teams will offer a stress free learning environment which will increase student self esteem and confidence.

[www.norwesterreaders.org](http://www.norwesterreaders.org)

NOR'WESTER READERS  
485 Worthington Mill Rd.  
Richboro, PA 18954