



# The Barker

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

NEWSLETTER

EDITOR:

Deborah Glessner

## Issue Highlights:

- FIRST ANNUAL FAMILY DOG WALK
- CAROL BOYLE AND CHASE
- TEACHER PROFILE: NANCY RACHLIN

Nor'wester Readers teams are currently visiting classrooms in:

♦ Bensalem Township School District

♦ The Center School Abington, PA

♦ Council Rock School District

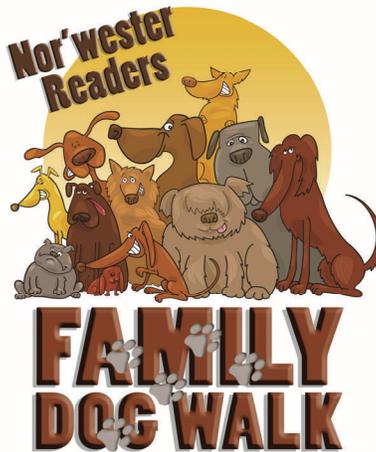
♦ New Hope-Solebury School District

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

~Groucho Marx

Volume 2, issue 1

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## NOR'WESTER READERS ANNOUNCES ITS FIRST ANNUAL FAMILY DOG WALK Sunday, May 6, 2012

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW! You, your dog, your family, and friends are invited to a day of fresh air, fun, and exercise to benefit the Nor'wester Readers organization.

The **Family Dog Walk** will take place at Tyler State Park (Bucks County), Pennsylvania on **Sunday, May 6, 2012** — rain or shine. The 3 mile walk will start at 11AM, and a shorter 1/2 mile walk will start at 11:30AM.

Fees are \$15 for a single person, \$25 for parent and child, or \$50 for a family. Those who pre-register by April 1st will receive a Nor'wester Readers walk T-shirt. Registration forms are available on our **Family Dog Walk** website page. Also check for participant and canine regulations.

We are also seeking sponsors and are offering three levels of sponsorship.

### CHAMPION: \$100

Company/Business name listed on our dog walk program and on our website

### GRAND CHAMPTION: \$250

Company/Business name listed on our dog walk program and on our website  
Business card ad in dog walk program and publicity in all dog walk promotional literature

### SUPREME GRAND CHAMPION: \$500

Company/Business name listed on our dog walk program and on our website  
Half page ad in dog walk program and publicity in all dog walk promotional literature  
Company/Business website link from the Nor'wester Readers website

Sponsorship commitment forms are also available on our **Family Dog Walk** website page.

Individuals wishing to solicit pledges can access the pledge form from our website. The individual with the highest number of pledges will win the opportunity to walk with Champion Balrion Weathertop Nor'wester, CGC, TD, better known as Wes, our very first therapy dog from whom the organization takes its name.



## MEET OUR THERAPY DOG TEAM: Carol Boyle and Chase



Not only has Carol Boyle done therapy dog visits for Nor'wester Readers, she has also designed our banner, bookmarks, and has done other graphic arts work for the organization. We asked her to talk about herself and how she became involved with therapy dog work.

### Tell us about your childhood.

I grew up in Newtown, PA with my parents, Bill and Pat Heydet, and 4 siblings. My parents founded/owned the Newtown Bicycle Shop on State Street. My Dad also founded the Tyler Park Canoe and Bicycle Rental and ran that for 10 years I still live in Newtown with my husband Tom and 2 wonderful children, Olivia and Tommy.

### Tell us about your education.

I went to Council Rock Schools - Chancellor Street School and Goodnoe Elementary. I then went to St. Andrew's school for my middle school years, and returned to Council Rock High School. I graduated in 1986 and went to Beauty School and became a licensed Cosmetologist. I then changed careers and began working in the Marketing Department at St. Lawrence Rehabilitation Center in Lawrenceville, NJ. I am now working for Aspire, a recruiting firm in Ft. Washington, PA, as their marketing director, and I use my creative skills to develop marketing strategies and design company white-papers and promotional items for the team. I love learning new things and am currently working on updating the company's website and social media presence. I work with a dynamic group of people in a high energy office.

### Tell us about the dogs in your life.

My family always had dogs. As a child, my first memories are of our dog Heidi, a German Shepherd. My husband and I got our first two Shelties, Samantha and Bailey. After Bailey died we went to a breeder in NE PA, fell in love with a Sheltie puppy and named him Chase after Chase Utley. He is kind, loyal, and playful, yet very obedient and calm. Before he was even 1 year old, I took him to classes at Country Kennels in Jamison and he was titled an AKC Canine Good Citizen and subsequently a Bright and Beautiful Therapy Dog. We recently added Rocky to our family; he is a tri-color Sheltie.

### What made you pursue therapy dog work?

Chase seemed to naturally migrate towards children and play with them gently. One day, my daughter Olivia was taking at-home piano lessons, and the teacher brought along her husband Dave, who had advanced Parkinson's Disease. Chase went over to him and sat by his side. Dave petted him for 30 minutes straight, and Chase never left him. This brought tears to my eyes, and I knew then that he was a special dog I should share through therapy work.

**Where have you done TD work?** I am in my fourth year of volunteering at Wrightstown Elementary School. I also volunteered in an after school program at the Wrightstown Village Library for children in the reading specialist class. When I returned to work I needed to reduce my volunteer hours. I felt that the first graders were the most impacted by Chase's visits because the teachers loved the program and were creative with the ways they integrated Chase into the classroom. Since then, I have worked with the first grade at WES under the two sweetest teachers, Mrs. Colleen Downer and Ms. Beth Kessler.

### Talk about your feelings as a TD team working for NWR.

Chase has such a magnetic personality! He looks as if he is always smiling. Children want to reach out and touch him because his fur looks so soft. There were a few children who were afraid of dogs and wouldn't come to Chase. But soon after meeting Chase, they came closer and closer until they were finally petting him and eventually sitting next to him. Parents are so excited to learn about Chase. They have reached out to me to thank us for giving their children motivation to practice reading books so they can read to Chase in class. The children would go home and read to their guinea pig, cat, dog, stuffed animal - whatever pet they have, to practice reading.

**Why did you join NWR?**

I met Debbie Glessner, co-director of NWR, who was in my therapy dog class with her beautiful black Lab, Hannah. I was interested in reading to the dogs programs and loved the idea of helping children gain confidence in reading. I talked to Debbie about bringing Chase to visit children at Wrightstown Elementary School. I met with Debbie and Wendi and was so excited about the program that I joined Nor'wester Readers in 2008.



It has been wonderful to be a part of NWR. It is full of generous individuals and their therapy dogs. I consider myself privileged to work with and enjoy their friendships during the past four years. I truly love that we all have a common goal - to make a positive, lasting impression on children, helping them to love reading, building confidence and to enjoy learning through the healing touch of our loving dogs.

Congratulations to Wendi and Debbie for establishing such a powerful partnership with teachers and therapy dog handlers to pursue a bright new way of encouraging the ultimate love of reading and learning.



**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

**WATCH OUR VIDEO!**

Chris Chesar of Montage Show Productions generously donated his professional services to produce a video for **Nor'wester Readers**. It highlights several of our dogs at work and offers testimonials from administrators, teachers, parents, handlers, and students. The video is currently being shown on the CRTV channel in the Council Rock School District. It can also be viewed on our website on the "ABOUT US" page.

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

**Gail Tower's Sadie**  
**Lisa Conicella's Daisy**

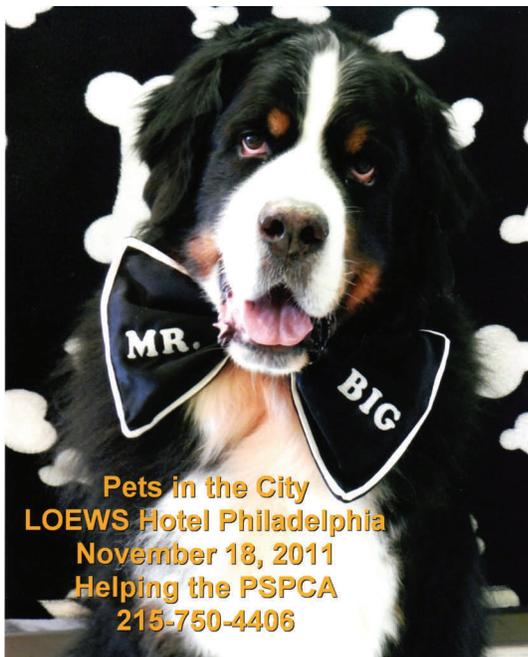


**THE FOLLOWING TEAMS  
HAVE RECENTLY JOINED  
NOR'WESTER READERS**

- Pat & Ted Mayrhofer with Tucker
  - Michele Lecker with Rory
  - Kathy Winters with Odessa
  - Eileen Long with Sawyer
  - Dee Wilson with Zeus
  - Tina Walters with Bailey
  - Dolores Esposito with Daisy
  - Melinda Berger with Hannah
  - Malou Walther with Willie and Thatcher
- WELCOME!**

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

- Newtown Veterinary Hospital Pet Fair: September 10, 2011
- Crafts In The Meadow: Tyler Park — October 22-23, 2011
- Neshaminy Service Unit Leaders Meeting (Girl Scouts):  
November 14, 2011
- Pets In The City: November 18, 2011
- Loews Hotel—Philadelphia
- Supporting the Pennsylvania SPCA



**Pets in the City  
LOEWS Hotel Philadelphia  
November 18, 2011  
Helping the PSPCA  
215-750-4406**

**~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)**

## TEACHER PAGE: Featuring Nancy Rachlin

Mrs. Nancy Rachlin, Reading Specialist and Title I Coordinator for the New Hope Solebury School District, was raised as a child in Bucks County, but moved several times with her parents and five siblings while her father pursued his professional career. Growing up, she attended two elementary schools, two middle schools and two different high schools! Nancy graduated from J. P. McCaskey High School located in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Throughout her many moves during her childhood and teenage years, the family's Collie dogs always helped with the transition of making friends and feeling secure in her new surroundings.

Pursuing a teaching career, Nancy attended Wesley College in Dover, Delaware and received her Associates of Arts degree in Elementary Education; she then transferred to Slippery Rock University, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in Elementary Education. Much later, Nancy pursued a Master of Science degree in Reading with Reading Specialist Certification from Gwynedd-Mercy College. Currently she is a student at Drexel University, studying Educational Leadership and Administration. She has recently attained her Principal Certification.

Nancy says, "I wanted to be a teacher because I truly enjoy learning, and the school environment always provided personal and positive rewards for me. Many teachers that I had were passionate about their craft, very engaging, and most purposeful about their craft. Those wonderful teachers and professors ignited a passion; just as my students, colleagues, and administrators continue to inspire my profession today."

She continues, "My philosophy regarding the teaching of children is a blend of pedagogy, experience, passion for learning, and advocacy. The responsibility of educating children requires a high level of collaboration, not only from professional educators, parents, and administrators, but also from the community at large."

Nancy believes strongly that support programs relating to social services, along with outside funding sources, local colleges, and volunteer non-profit groups, are significant components which are essential to the educational system for children to flourish and reach their ultimate potential.

**"Nor'wester Readers Canine Assisted Learning Program** is a wonderful program which our district introduced to us two years ago," relates Nancy. "Wendi Huttner, owner of Ridgeway Labrador Retrievers and champion therapy dog, Wes, are the perfect complement to our Title I Reading Support program! Once weekly, Wes and Wendi meet with three different groups of Lower Elementary children in first and second grade, offering friendship and a friendly wag of a tail to children who are developing their confidence in reading and writing. **Nor'wester Readers** has also extended their program to our Upper Elementary School, with Malou Walther and her two Labrador Retrievers Willie and Thatcher, working with our Title I Reading Club in the third and fourth grades. This type of community cooperation between the handlers and the Reading Teachers has enhanced our program by motivating our students to read aloud confidently. It has additionally provided a comfortable environment for learning to occur and for our students to enjoy reading as it is meant to be."

As a dog lover, and owner of two white Siberian Huskies, Nancy is deeply moved by the relationship that continues to develop between her students and Wes. "I am also moved by the passion that brought this program to our schools. Thank you just does not seem enough when children are inspired to read joyfully with their special canine friends!"





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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.

## OUR VISION STATEMENT

**Nor'wester Readers** therapy dog teams will enhance the educational environment in ways which will prompt students to fully realize their learning potential.

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



## THOUGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR:

It's hard to believe we are nearing the second half of our fifth year !

What started with one team (dog + handler = team) has grown to more than thirty teams working in 17 schools (elementary, middle, and high schools) in four districts. Plans and approval are currently underway to move into a fifth district. Some of our volunteers do multiple classes so our dogs work in more than thirty-five classes each week, making a difference with more than 600 children participating in the **Nor'wester Readers** canine assisted learning program.

We started as a "read to the dog" program which has grown to include writing, oral presentations, crisis intervention, multiple disabilities, life skills, guidance support, social-emotional support, and autistic support. The dogs are magic, and the teams are making breakthroughs with some of these children that no one else has been able to accomplish.

We have a long waiting list of teachers wishing to host a certified therapy dog team in their classroom. If you are a handler with a registered therapy dog who can contribute an hour weekly, we welcome you to join our organization.

We also work cooperatively in providing community service hours to high school students who are certified therapy dog handlers and who have an interest in being a mentor to younger children in their local elementary schools.

Wendi Huttner

