



The Barker

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

NEWSLETTER

EDITOR:

Deborah Glessner

Issue Highlights:

- SECOND ANNUAL FAMILY DOG WALK
- INTRODUCING BUYER TOPIA
- ANIMAL ASSISTED THERAPY FOR TROUBLED TEENS

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

◆ Olney Charter High School

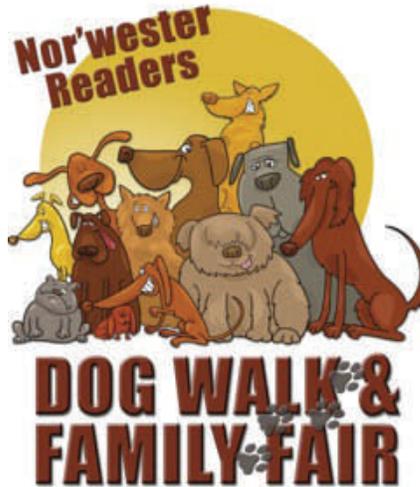
◆ Pennsbury School District

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

~Groucho Marx

Volume 3, issue 1

Winter 2013



NOR'WESTER READERS ANNOUNCES ITS SECOND ANNUAL DOG WALK AND FAMILY FAIR
Sunday, May 5, 2013

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 *Nor'wester Readers Dog Walk and Family Fair* will take place at Tyler State Park (Bucks County), Pennsylvania on **Sunday, May 5, 2013** — 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 15th will receive a Nor'wester Readers walk T-shirt. Registration forms are available on our *Dog Walk* website page. Please make yourself familiar with our participant and canine regulations.

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

CHAMPION: \$100

Company/Business name on our website

GRAND CHAMPTION: \$250

Company/Business name listed on our website

Business card ad on dog walk publicity and promotional literature

SUPREME GRAND CHAMPION: \$500

Company/Business name listed on our website

Half page ad on dog walk publicity and promotional literature

Company/Business website link from the Nor'wester Readers website

Sponsorship commitment forms are also available on our *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 receive a special surprise.





Photo by Hillary Shemin 2012 dog walk family at the start

It takes many volunteers to run this event. Below are just a few ways you can help. Please contact one of our volunteer coordinators below if you are interested in joining the "crew." We need you !!

Debbie Glessner:
dglessner2@comcast.net
215-504-0154

Lyn Bauer: lynbauer@comcast.net

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

- Morning set up committee**
- End of Day tear down & clean up committee**
- Registration table**
- Parking attendant**
- Vendors Coordinator**
- Raffle baskets & 50-50 ticket sales**
- Sales table (selling Nor'wester Readers items)**
- Solicit sponsorships and donations**
- Contribute items for raffle baskets**
- Contribute food items and beverages for food tent**
- Contribute food, snacks, beverages for volunteers**
- Hang posters and distribute publicity materials**
- Assist with dog contest (judges and ring stewards)**
- Assist with setting up watering stations on walk route**
- Assist with marking and flagging walk route**

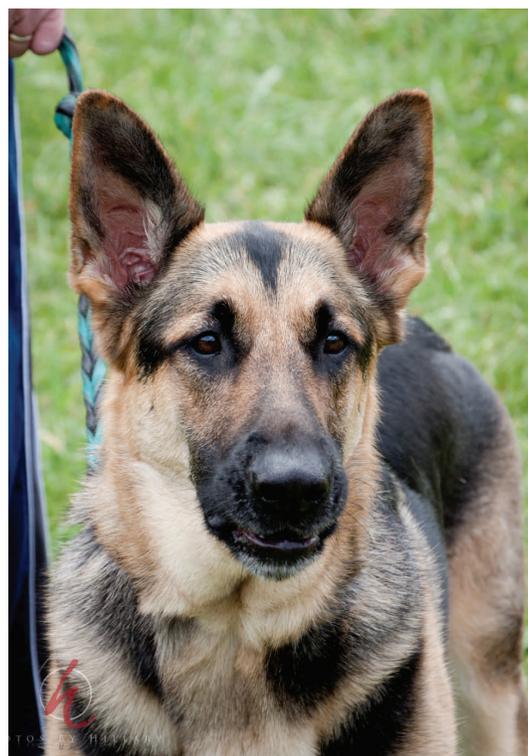


Photo by Hillary Shemin 2012 dog walk participant

INTRODUCING BUYER TOPIA

Visit Nor'wester Readers' new fund-raising store!

Start shopping from a continually updated inventory of over seven million books, DVDs, CDs, calendars, gifts, games, and more.

15% of your purchase will benefit the Nor'wester Readers organization.

GET STARTED TODAY!

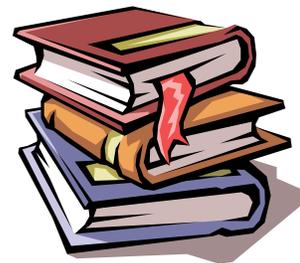
1. Visit the Nor'wester Readers' Store:

<http://buyertopia.com/Shop/NorwesterReaders>

2. Create a customer account

3. Start shopping!

Every time you shop, you are automatically entered into a weekly drawing. Winners and the organization to which they donated will each receive a \$50 Buyer Topia Gift Certificate!



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



Serena Cohen and Moose

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

Serena Cohen's Moose
Members of NWR since 2008

NOR'WESTER READERS HAS PARTICIPATED IN . . .

Special Equestrians Summer Camp for Children with Special Needs (June 28, Aug 9, and Aug 16, 2012)

Canine Book Buddies — Free Library of Northampton Township, Richboro, PA — July 11 through Aug 15, 2012

ESY classes for multiple disabilities students in Council Rock School District — summer 2012

Crafts In The Meadow: Tyler Park — October 20—21, 2012



Jackson

~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 handouts 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

SOME GREAT DOG-THEMED BOOKS FOR STUDENTS

PICTURE BOOKS:

Bad Dog Marley by John Grogan (about loving a dog even though he's trouble)

Bark George by Jules Fifer

Before You Were Mine by Maribeth Boelts (address adoption)

Buddy Unchained by Daisy Bix (addresses rescuing a dog from a neglectful owner)

Clifford, The Big Red Dog by Normal Bridwell (a fun and popular series)

Dog Breath by Dave Pilkey (a dog with bad breath ends up saving the day!)

Help Me Mr. Mutt: Answers for Dogs with People Problems by Janet Stevens and Susan Stevens Crummel

It's Hard to Read a Map with a Beagle on Your Lap by Marilyn Singer (poetry)

Martha Walks the Dog by Susan Meddaugh (Martha solves a bully problem with kindness)

Murphy and Kate by Ellen Howard (addresses losing a dog to death)

Rugby and Rosie by Nan Parson Rossiter (a family raises seeing-eye dogs)

Some Dog by Mary Cassanova (a dog worries that he's not important anymore)

Superdog: Heart of a Hero by Caralyn and Mark Buehner (a dog is a hero despite what others say)

The Old Woman Who Named Things by Cynthia Rylant (a lonely old woman refuses to get close to anyone she could outlive — then a dog comes along and works his way into her heart)

CHAPTER BOOKS

Because of Winn Dixie by Kate DiCamillo

Shiloh by Phyllis Reynold Naylor

Souder by William Howard Armstrong (sad ending)

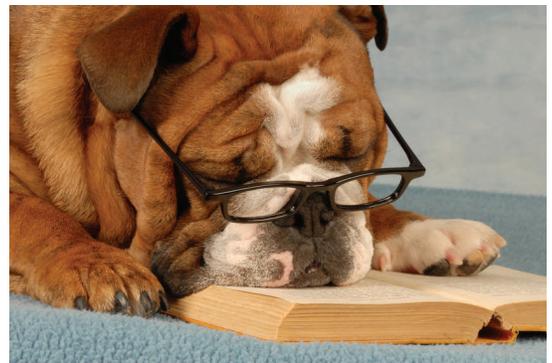
Stone Fox by John Reynolds Gardiner

The Captain's Dog by Roland Smith (Lewis and Clark through the eyes of a dog)

The Dog Who Wouldn't Be by Farley Mowat

Tornado by Betsy Byars

Where the Red Fern Grows by Wilson Rawls (sad ending)



IDEAS FOR INCORPORATING ANIMAL-ASSISTED INTERVENTIONS

(taken from *101 Creative Ideas for Animal Assisted Therapy* by Stacy Grover)

LET'S TALK: A therapy dog team working under the direction of a professional can facilitate discussion on many topics.

Commonalities: This is a very powerful metaphoric tool in the hands of skilled therapists. Using carefully selected children's literature or actual or contrived stories about the animal, discuss feelings or situations that apply to the student's needs/goals. Have the student identify times when (s)he has felt the same as the animal in the story. Then discuss helpful ways for the animal and the student to deal with those feelings.

LEARNING: There is a multitude of ways a therapy dog team can be used to enhance the educational environment.

Research: Have the student study the therapy dog and think of a question that could be answered by doing research. Students can research in books, online, through personal observation, and interviewing experts in the canine field. Examples of questions could be how dogs care for their young, their roles in packs, how they communicate with each other, the history of a specific breed, how their sense of smell works, and what is involved in training a dog to do therapy dog work. After the research is completed the student can give an oral presentation, write a report, create a pamphlet, or develop a power point presentation to teach their audience what they learned about their topic.

SIX IDEAS FOR LITERACY MOTIVATION

(taken from the *R.E.A.D. Manual*)

The Six C's of Literacy Motivation: Teachers often rely on therapy dog handlers to help reinforce these techniques while a student is reading to a therapy dog.

CHOICE: Allow the student to select high-interest materials

CHALLENGE: Match materials to the child's reading level, depending upon whether the child is reading independently or with support.

CONTROL: Let the student control the book, such as deciding when to turn the page, when to linger over an illustration, or when to stop and talk.

COLLABORATION: Approach reading with a "conspiratorial" attitude of "we're in this together, we're going to be successful in the challenge of learning to read well."

CONSTRUCTIVE COMPREHENSION: — Urge the student to keep making sense of what they read and pay attention to places where the student may become confused.

CONSEQUENCES: Demonstrate the positive outcomes of reading such as having something interesting to talk about, getting useful information, finding answers to questions, a sense of accomplishment, or interaction with the therapy dog.

Animal-Assisted Therapy for Troubled Teens

By: Christine Hawkins, MSW

As a 220-pound St. Bernard, Samson had quite a presence. Even as a puppy, he had the ability to connect with children and youth with special needs, and we soon certified him as an Animal-Assisted Therapy dog. He often accompanied me to my job as a counselor at a boarding school for at-risk teens where he had a way of getting the attention of even the most difficult-to-reach youth.

The day after we lost Samson, I could hardly get myself out of bed much less go to work. When I arrived that morning, the school had just enrolled a new 15-year-old female student. Her mother had sent her to the school in hopes of saving the girl from serious self-destructive behaviors that included cutting and drug abuse. The student spent much of her first day refusing to eat or communicate with anyone. I met her in one of our counseling rooms where she was folding herself into the fetal position. My offer to help her was ignored and my effort to speak with her was not received.

Desperately missing Samson, I began telling the student of this very special "Saint" and all the good he had accomplished. She shifted her head and leaned in a bit and seemed to be listening. At least she had stopped the loud sobbing. As I went on and on about Samson, I heard a very faint, "Thirteen." Thirteen? "I HAVE THIRTEEN!" she cried, and the yelling and sobbing resumed until she was able to catch her breath and explain that she had thirteen animals at home. She was sure she had abandoned them by being sent to the school. Recognizing her grief and the sense of duty she felt in caring for her pets, her therapeutic team was able to incorporate her love for animals into her treatment plan. This student was later selected to work with the on-campus Search and Rescue Dog program, and over the next year her self-confidence and self-respect increased dramatically. She not only achieved academic success, but found the courage to become involved in other activities including acting in the school plays.

Anyone who has ever loved a pet knows about an animal's ability to comfort us, reduce anxiety, nurture empathy, and enhance quality of life. Unfortunately, and for a variety of societal and personal reasons, many people today lack the time, ability and/or motivation to develop and benefit from a human-animal bond. This is especially true of high-risk teens.

The trials and tribulations experienced by today's teenagers manifest as psychological diagnoses, including ADD, ADHD, ODD, OCD, depression, bi-polar, conduct disorder, and alcohol and drug abuse; and behaviors that include stealing, self-mutilation, promiscuity, eating disorders, and the compulsive use of computers. Add financial stress, divorce, adoption issues, trauma or grief, and the need for peer acceptance, and teen behavior can quickly spiral out of control. In the face of such challenges, connecting with nature and animals can provide at least some of the comfort and peace a troubled teen so desperately needs.

Incorporating Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) as an additional intervention within a youth's treatment/educational plan is a fairly new concept. It wasn't until the early 1960s that Boris Levinson, an American child psychologist, looked at the possibilities of using animals therapeutically. Dr. Levinson had been working for months to connect with a disturbed, nonverbal child when a chance encounter with Dr. Levinson's dog elicited the child's first response and opened the lines of communication. (Hooker, Freeman & Stewart, 2002). Thus, the term "pet therapy" evolved, and research has grown from anecdotal stories to scientific findings. In 1977, with the successful use of animals in a vast array of therapeutic situations and scenarios, the Delta Society emerged to organize and encourage pet therapy or "animal-assisted therapy" (ATT).

AAT is a goal-directed intervention in which an animal meeting specific criteria is an integral part of the treatment process. AAT is delivered and/or directed by a health/human service provider working within the scope of his/her profession. AAT is designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive functioning, thinking and intellectual skills. AAT is provided in a variety of settings and may be group or individual in nature. The process is documented and evaluated. (Delta Society, 2004, p. 11) (continue to page 6)

(page 6) AAT can foster interconnectivity while encouraging a teen's active participation in a treatment plan. The unconditional acceptance experienced with a therapy animal is mutually beneficial. Self-esteem and self-perception improve when teenagers connect with animals and discover that they have something to offer in return. Once they see that they're capable of maintaining a mutually beneficial relationship, they can apply the experience to human relationships in other environments, including school or work. As the teen acquires a sense of place and purpose, an increase in self-acceptance makes it easier to behave in positive and healthy ways.

Studies have shown that adolescents in a therapeutic setting are more open to communication and experience less tension and anxiety when a therapy animal is present, and that the stigma and judgments they associate with therapy are minimized (Hooker et al., 2002). Another study showed that AAT effectively reduced aggressive behavior in the classroom by requiring students to care for and be responsible for the well-being of the class hamster (Flom, 2005). The students learned that the hamster was more likely to bite when feeling threatened or hurt. In making that connection, the students were given a sense of purpose and their social interaction improved. Parents of the students reported a decrease in aggressive behavior and an increase in self-calm and impulse control.

Dr. Cynthia Weaver's casebook, *Sinclair's Listening Ears: The Journey of a Feline Social Worker*, offers several case histories that exemplify how an animal can be a powerful tool in therapy. Weaver presented the case of John, a young male grieving the death of his mother. John clearly did not wish to engage with Dr. Weaver or the therapy process. However, the presence of "Sinclair," a therapy cat, immediately caught John's attention. Not only did his mood improve, but he was able to embrace the therapy process by using Sinclair for a transitional relationship. Because John once had a cat that died, he was able to recognize and discuss that loss first, and eventually work through the death of his mother. (Weaver, 2003, p. 10-11).

AAT can be used with teens to achieve a variety of other therapeutic goals, including handling fear. By working with a therapeutic animal that has been rescued from an abusive environment, a teen can learn how fear and suffering can subside where stable relationships and trust exist. Over time, and with love and support, the abused animal that initially fled from human contact or help gradually opens up and becomes vulnerable again to human touch. Observing such an animal, a teenager learns that with hard work and perseverance, trusting others and respecting one's self is possible.

Today there is much positive support for AAT, given the joy, interconnectivity and relief to be found in the presence of a therapeutic animal. AAT can enhance the therapeutic relationship while awakening compassion, responsibility and self-worth that can benefit at-risk teens.

Delta Society. (2004). *Team training course manual*. (6th ed.). Renton, Washington: Delta Society.

Flom, B. (2005). Counseling with pocket pets: Using small animals in elementary counseling programs. *Professional School Counseling*, 8(5) 469-473.

Hooker, S., Freeman, L. & Stewart, P. (2002). Pet therapy research: A historical review [Electronic version.] *Holistic Nursing Practice*, 17-23.

Weaver, C. J. (2003). *Sinclair's listening ears: The journey of a feline social worker*. Lanham, Maryland: University Press of America.

A NWR STORY OF AT RISK TEENS:



We are always well received at Sloan School in Council Rock, and Rory definitely enjoys celebrity status. On Tuesday when we arrived, after howling with pleasure when she saw the kids, she went first to a girl in the infirmary. The young lady got right up and went to her next 2 classes without any fuss. Then Rory went to a boy and flopped down in front of him; he got on the floor and started petting her. The teacher came over and said, "I am so glad she is with him. He really needs this." So we went to his next class with him and then to the next. In the second classroom no other students joined us so Rory, the student and I sat and talked. He sat on the floor with her, and she made sure he petted every inch of her, rolling this way and that way. As we talked he told me about his life and how he is moving in with his Dad in two weeks. He said he suffers from depression, and his therapist recommended he get a pet. He and his Dad have discussed the possibility, and he is hopeful it will happen. He said he looks forward to getting his own dog because he knows how happy Rory makes him feel as soon as she walks into the room. I know how much the kids enjoy our visits but it is not often articulated. That simple declaration and the smile of contentment on his face really made my day, and I feel lucky to be able to be a part of the NWR organization that makes it possible. (Michele Lecker)



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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



THOUGHTS FROM THE DIRECTOR:

Greetings!

As I write I am looking ahead to our second annual NWR Dog Walk and Family Fair. Last year's walk was such a great success. We had over 125 walkers with and without dogs, and the fun they had at the fair was unbelievable. One highlight was the dog contest; participants entered their dogs and competed in entertaining events such as best costume, dog with the best howl, or dog that looked the most like its owner, etc. This year we are adding more vendors, a Moonbounce, horse drawn wagon rides, and much more! Join us Sunday May 5th, 2013. We can use your help with volunteering an hour or more or, of course, a donation or sponsorship.



We started twelve new teams this fall. This has increased the number of children benefiting from therapy dog visits to approximately 800 children weekly. We are constantly receiving calls from teachers and administrators asking for a therapy dog team

Our NWR volunteers, both human and canine, have become a large family. In the crazy times in which we now live, I have come to realize how important family is. Please consider joining our NWR family. Opportunities to become involved exist for non-dog volunteers as well as those with therapy dogs. High school students can earn community service hours by volunteering with NWR.

On a very sad note, we just learned that one of our charter therapy dogs, Serena Cohen's Moose, passed away in November. Our deepest sympathy goes out to the family and all the friends Moose made along his journey.

Wendi Huttner