



TERRIFIC TAILS

News from Assistance Dogs of the West

Spring 2006 Newsletter

FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am delighted to share program news with all our friends and supporters through Terrific Tails, which will come to you regularly with the support of devoted ADW Board, staff and volunteers. Student Dog Trainer Kyle Leeds-Tilley helped to make this first issue happen.

ADW is growing.... Dogs and clients are graduating regularly, 10 or more each year. Schools and institutions around Santa Fe are clamoring for the School Assistance Dog program, and we diligently search for funding resources to support program implementation. After school and summer training programs are full of enthusiastic students. Educational and government agencies like the Veteran's Administration continue to evaluate the program for use.

Organizations like the Civitans, Lions, Rotary Clubs and Kiwanis regularly request ADW presentations to build public awareness and generously make financial contributions. ADW has many wonderful and enthusiastic volunteers who generously help review curriculum, stuff envelopes, work with our dogs and help to fund raise. We would be less successful without them.

ADW hosted info tables at the Statehouse during Non-Profit Day and the NM Department of Health "Abilities Awareness" Day. We continue to educate government and private insurance on the assistive value of service dogs, and the NM Department of Vocational Rehabilitation has agreed to pay \$3500 towards dog placement with their clients. This community and agency interaction helps build awareness and support of the valuable services provided by ADW.

I would like to recognize the ADW Board members who work every day to help our organization to strengthen and grow. Board President Kitty Ault moved to Santa Fe recently from NY. She and her entire family have become integral, contributing members of ADW. Vice President Melissa Winkle wears many hats. She is the

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An Old Dog *Can* Learn New Tricks!

2006 is the first year an ADW dog has been reassigned. George was donated to ADW in 2000, trained by student trainers and ADW staff, and placed with a client in 2001. He lived happily with Judy for years, providing support, resources and love. Recently, Judy decided to move into assisted living and she knew George would not be happy in that environment. Putting George first, Judy gave her dear friend back to ADW.



George and Judy



After School student Kyle Leeds-Tilley and George

George came back into the program and went back to school. Jill and the staff evaluated George to determine whether he should be released to a loving home as a pet, or whether he should be placed with another waiting ADW client. George convinced everyone he truly wanted to continue his assistance work.

So, George is now on his way to a new home. He and his new client, Lindsay, an eleven-year-old girl from Silver City went through Client Placement Training in February. Lindsay is a remarkable person. Due to a severe seizure disorder and the other health problems that accompany it, Lindsay has some paralysis and uses a wheelchair. She speaks softly because of her physical challenges but when she gives George a command, her voice is strong and confident.

You can't imagine how hard our clients work to learn the 90 service dog commands. And you would be amazed to see how our dogs use their training and their spirits to help their owners learn and grow. Lindsay and George enjoy working together and Lindsay's family is thrilled with their newest member.



Lindsay, George, and family

Graduation 2006

This year ADW is proud to announce that the ceremony will be held at the **Lensic Theater, Tuesday, May 9** at 5:00 PM. Along with the moving graduation celebration, there will be an auction of animal shrines made by noted local artists. Carol Anthony, John Fincher, Greg Skoll, Gretchen Wachs, Kristin Lora, David Bradley, Darren Vigil Gray, Lynne Loshbaugh, David Ross and Lisa Bemis are just a few of the contributing artists. The artists' and community response has been amazing and generous; the Lensic Theatre and New Mexico Bank & Trust are two of our graduation sponsors.

Share the experience of our graduates; clients, dogs and student trainers, plus so much more. Watch mail and local papers for reminders and 2006 Graduation news. We look forward to seeing you **Tuesday, May 9** at the Lensic. Animal Shrine Auction begins at 5pm with graduation at 6pm. Tickets are available thru ADW office or at the door, \$5 each (children under 12 free.)

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After School student Lindsay Levitt and Gracie.

Trainer's Tips

Santa Fe is a community that loves dogs. We are blessed by conscientious dog owners who take the time to socialize their pets to a large number of environmental stimulus. How does that happen?

The term socialization is the process of developing relationships with other living beings; people, animals and the environments in which they live. As assistance dog trainers we cannot emphasize this enough. Simple exposure is not enough; proper socialization is necessary in your training regime.

Turn opportunities of something or someone new into a positive experience with treats, toys and fun. Address the problem areas; children, postal workers, loud noises, unusual smells. Start small, a comfortable distance away, in short sessions, and slowly work your way to the new stimulus. A properly socialized dog is a treasure and treat to all they meet.

Working Dogs at Adelante

ADW has an exciting new program and trainer in Albuquerque. Jill Felice, ADW founder and occupational therapist, Melissa Winkle have co-created a program and community partnership with Adelante Development Center in Albuquerque. These two professionals each recognized the value of the other to expand their client resources. From a therapy perspective, participants gain the opportunity to explore and develop therapeutic, leisure, educational and work readiness opportunities by participating in meaningful activities. From the assistance dog trainer perspective, exposure to and training with people with a variety of disabilities provides assistance dogs with valuable life experiences. With daily support from Adelante dog trainer, Dani Miller, the program is a great success.

"Working Dogs at Adelante" opened in April of 2005 and is based on occupational therapy intervention. The program offers pet therapy, animal assisted therapy and vocational training. People with a variety of physical and developmental diagnoses participate in a day program working with dogs from ADW.

Currently, the program has eight student task trainers and a few dozen student social trainers. Adelante clients now have another program choice in an area that they find fulfilling. Participants learn skills in a step-wise manner and gain a sense of control and independence along the way. This program is a welcome alternative to traditional day programming and enhances physical, emotional and social aspects to quality of life. Furthermore, it allows participants to graduate into more independence and to make personal contributions to the greater community. We believe this to be the first program of its kind in the nation.

ADW dogs in the program learn from a very young age how to interact with people who have atypical movements and speech, how to walk with walkers and wheelchairs, how to respond to a variety of verbal volumes and qualities, and how to retrieve and deliver for people with limited movement. The dogs develop positive problem solving skills and the ability to be comfortable with a variety of physical, cognitive and psychological issues.

Professional assistance dog trainers can never really mimic all the different types of disabilities accurately. Training by and working with people with disabilities allows us to better identify for whom each dog may best be suited to work. While this program benefits the Adelante student trainers, the community also benefits from the skilled workers that emerge from the program. Jobs may result at pet stores, grooming and boarding facilities, humane associations and the like.

Program participants reap the all these benefits from training assistance dogs, while future assistance dogs and their clients benefit as well. The end result is dogs are trained for people with disabilities by people with disabilities. Perhaps the most powerful result emerges though when the



general public moves beyond feeling sorry for the Adelante student trainers and recognizes that they can make a difference in their community given the opportunity.

Riding ADW's New Bus: Jodie Backensto, Instructor with Bennet and Logan. Standing: Jill Felice, Program Director, Kitty Ault, Board President with Hayden and Dewey.



ADW Dogs and Trainers deliver Civitans Christmas stockings to Santa Fe Public Schools Special Needs students. L-R Jodie Backensto, Jill Felice, Cree Hayonga, Rebecca Reyes

Register Now for Summer Camp

June 6 – July 28th

Do something different this summer. Students 8-18 years of age will enjoy in-depth, hands-on learning with ADW instructors and dogs. Curriculum includes: training in the classroom and in the field; learn basic obedience training, service-dog commands and skills, agility training, public access training, and disability awareness. Attend class one day a week on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 8:30am-11:30am, \$35 per class. Students must enroll for a full month of classes. Class location and details will be sent with confirmation of your registration. Call the ADW Office for more information.

The Ins and Outs

It is always amazing to watch students transform in the After School Program. At first it's a menagerie of dog legs, kid legs, hands and leashes. With practice, soon everyone is walking smartly up and down De Vargas Mall with a nice "J" shape in their leashes. In the beginning we stay "in" the classroom to learn basic skills (sit, down, stay, leave it).

Students learn to use specific commands for our service dogs. If the wrong words are used such as "get down" when the dog jumps on a table, students are reminded the correct word is "off". The dogs are allowed to jump on a table to get groomed or to retrieve an item, but only when asked! Students are taught about dog behavior, how a service dog is selected and the importance of the role of dog trainers.

In the After School Program students also learn about different disabilities and how our clients benefit from their canine helper. Many of our clients can live independently only because of the service dog in their life.

All of this is truly hard work. It is repetitive and precise. Remembering all the correct words when asking the dog to perform a task and keeping an eye on the dog while having an afternoon snack can be demanding. Once the whole group is "up to par", we take the students "out". Everyone is gathered on our little bus with treats and red vests in hand and we head to the De Vargas Mall. The teams work on dogs opening the automatic mall doors, lying down patiently and walking gracefully through the mall. Working with dogs in public helps students realize the importance of their dog's skill level. It also invites people to ask questions about ADW and what service dogs do for people. This part of the After School Program helps build social skills and a sense of pride, for both students and dogs.



George receives Rotary Club of Santa Fe Centro donation check for student Laura Heuner's After School Program scholarship.

Watching the camaraderie between students of different ages and the partnership they develop with the service dog they train is truly touching. When they walk through the mall with those easy, looped leashes in a group...I know they are having a learning experience that will stay with them for the rest of their lives.

Jodie Backensto, Instructor

Nito's Tale

A True Story of an
Assistance Dog of the West

"Nito's Tale" was written to delight young children and teach them about the life of a service dog. Nito, the runt of his litter, is selected to become an Assistance Dog of the West. Through jingles and colored illustrations, we follow Nito on his adventures as he learns how to become a very special dog. By the story's end, Nito is sad to leave his teachers and friends, but is ready to give unconditional love and support to someone who needs him.

AUTHOR BIO:

Judith Newton always wanted to write a book for young children, and inspiration came from her involvement as a Board Member with ADW. Judith created this wonderful story, invited a friend to illustrate it and donated all the production costs. Judith and her husband Philippe live with their chocolate lab Chutney, who always wags her tail. **We cannot thank her enough for her creativity and generosity.**



ILLUSTRATOR BIO:

Sue Blackburn started drawing and coloring after 25 years of being "grown-up". She and her family love to travel and she has sold her bright, happy drawings of children to people from all parts of the world. Sue does over 100 family portraits every year, designs posters, magnets and Christmas ornaments. She has also illustrated several books and has donated her wonderful Nito's Tale illustrations to ADW.



Nito's Tale can be purchased during the month of May at Borders or by calling Assistance Dogs of the West.

ADW NewsBarks

Volunteer Corner

We would like to extend warm thanks to these volunteers who have generously given their time to assist ADW over the last few months!

Betsy Armstrong	Mack Farquhar
Andy Ault	Alex Fischer
Betty Backensto	Sarah Lawless
Carol Bartlett	Ross Moyer
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	Stewart Youngblood

Volunteer Needs

We are looking for people who have experience in the following areas:

ADW Graduation Assistance:

- Ticket Sales
- Silent Auction Setup
- Auction and Graduation Program Design

Administrative:

- Mailings
- Database Entry

Disability Access in Santa Fe Hotels Survey

ADW Client Nat Dean and T'ai (black Labrador retriever) are working on a telephone survey of all Santa Fe hotels/motels. It will compile the kind of disability concerns each business has addressed and list where and what appropriate assistance devices are installed in old or new facilities.

The responses have been very mixed thus far. The primary purpose for this survey is to identify which local hotels can best accommodate ADW students coming from out of town to meet their new "partners" and participate in Client Placement Training with a comfortable and welcoming temporary home designed to meet any special need. The survey results will also be shared with the SF Chamber of Commerce and SF Convention and Visitor's Bureau for their use.

Nat can be reached at (505) 474-6257 with any questions or input.



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Thank You from Assistance Dogs of the West

We want to take this opportunity to recognize our generous donors and supporters.

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Your tax-exempt gifts can be used to help with the following needs and expenses:

For Students

Single Summer/After School Class Sponsor:	\$35/\$25
Complete Summer/After School Class Sponsor:	\$350/\$250
Annual School Program Student-Trainer Sponsor:	\$2,500
Annual School Program Sponsor:	\$30,000

For Dogs

Dog Treats for a Month Sponsor:	\$25
Collar, Leash, ID Tag Sponsor:	\$50
Balance Harness Sponsor:	\$500
Annual Vet Care Sponsor:	\$1,500
Single Dog Training Sponsor (Name the Dog!):	\$5,000–15,000

For Clients

Individual Client Sponsor:	\$3,500
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Administrative Needs

Program Vehicle Sponsor:	\$25,000
Trainer Salary Sponsor:	\$28,000
Office Equipment (color copier)	\$3,000
Laptop Computer/LCD Projector	\$3,000

Any Amount is Truly Appreciated!

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All contributions are 100% tax deductible

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