



Journal and Activities of PFH Canine-Assisted Therapies Teams  
Volunteering in Napa, Sonoma, Solano and Marin Counties

Volume Eight, Number 3 • June 2006

# Literacy, Kids and Dogs Spells R.E.A.D. in Some Places

*R.E.A.D. stands for Reading Education Assistance Dog* and is a nationally recognized program that was developed by Intermountain Therapy Animals as a means for helping children with language or learning differences.

PFH Treasurer Joyce Bristow has started a R.E.A.D. group in Solano County and has helped to certify four other Paws volunteers: Nikki Pacheco and Mariah, Paulette duClair and Emma, Yolanda Dillinger and Bailey, and Carl Ashlie with Brahmie.

There are hundreds of registered R.E.A.D. teams working throughout the United States and Canada. Their success is based on the simple but powerful idea that reading aloud to therapy dogs helps children relax and focus on the animals rather than on the fear of mispronouncing words or misunderstanding sentences.

Paws for Healing has served Napa, Solano and Sonoma for 8 years in health care and special education settings and this pro-

**cont. page 9**

**What's in This Issue**

<i>Dental Care for Canines</i> .....	2
<i>PFH Volunteer Gail Reece</i> .....	3
<i>Notes From the Field</i> .....	4
<i>Visiting Alzheimer's Patients</i> .....	5
<i>Important Message to Volunteers</i> .....	6
<i>Why Dogs Don't Always Want to Meet Others</i> .....	8
<i>Donations and Acknowledgements</i> .....	10 & 11

# Get Out the Toothpaste and Brush...



## not for you, but your canine companion!

*The Cornell University*  
College of Veterinary  
Medicine wants pet  
owners to know that  
plaque, tartar, cracked  
teeth and inflamed gums  
can mean serious health  
problems for their canine.

Jennifer Rawlinson, DVM  
and dental specialist at Cornell,  
recommends brushing your pet's  
teeth at least several times a week  
if not every day. The purpose is  
not only a matter of fresh breath,  
but of protecting a dog's heart,  
kidneys and lungs from diseases  
that can seriously affect a pet's  
health and longevity.

Your veterinarian can help  
you choose appropriate dental  
tools, primarily a soft-bristle  
brush and toothpaste that are  
specially formulated for canines.  
Human toothpaste is toxic and  
should never be used; human  
toothbrushes are too harsh on  
canine gums.

Make the experience positive  
by having small treats to reward  
your pooch and by introducing  
the procedure gradually and  
only for short periods of time.  
If your dog is comfortable when  
you touch his mouth, reward  
with a treat. Touch it again and  
then lift the lip. Treat. A couple  
of touches and lip lifts are good  
sensitivity experiences, and

should be accompanied with  
treats for each touch of lips.

If your dog growls or  
shows some hostility to having  
his mouth touched, don't try  
anything more until you see  
your veterinarian. A threatening  
reaction may be a dog's way of  
protecting sore gums or lips that  
are inflamed from periodontal  
disease, or possibly a cracked  
tooth that aches. Such behavior  
may also indicate aggression.

The next evening touch  
the mouth (treat), lift the lips  
(treat), and use a clean wash  
cloth or piece of gauze to rub  
over the dogs' teeth (treat,  
treat). Dr. Rawlinson suggests  
dipping the cloth or gauze in  
room-temperature chicken or  
beef broth to entice your canine.  
After less than a minute, praise  
your dog and offer a treat; then  
advance to using a finger brush  
or toothbrush the next night if  
your dog is relaxed. If not, repeat  
touching and rubbing until you  
both are comfortable with the  
routine.

If your dog seems bored or  
frustrated with the touching,  
stop immediately and try again  
later. The total process should  
not take more than a minute or  
two at most, but can be repeated  
during the same day to increase

***cont. page 7***

---

*Did you know that marrow bones, whether cooked or raw, are unsafe?*

# Volunteer Updates — Gail Reece and Otto, Long-time Volunteers from Angwin

*Early May*, one of PFH's first volunteers was severely injured in a traffic accident in Angwin. Gail Reece and canine Otto were regular visitors as the St. Helena Library where she met with after-school children on Thursdays. She also began visiting at Calistoga Gardens and entertained the residents with Otto's repertoire of 35 (!) different tricks.

Gail's family asked PFH if Otto could be fostered by another Paws volunteer so that he could continue visiting others and so that he might visit his human companion of 11 years. He was able to see Gail while she was in Santa Rosa, but she has since been moved to Kentfield Rehabilitation and

PFH volunteers have not yet been approved to visit with Otto. Gail is in a coma but her family reads her get-well cards, plays familiar music and stories, and encourages people to visit a website that her brother designed for those interested in her progress (<http://www.gailreece.com>).

Initially, Otto was taken care of Gail's good friends, Floyd and Marta Hayes, but now resides in Napa with Elaine and Will LaFontaine, PFH volunteers. In the interim, Otto needed minor veterinary care and, while his vet, Sally Kimsey, DVM, and Dr. Anthony Gouveia have

*Sheryl Thompson, the Activities Director at Calistoga Gardens, was the first to let us know about Gail. She was so concerned whether or not someone was taking care of Otto that I contacted Gary Reece, Gail's brother. That's when he asked if there might be an interest on the part of a PFH volunteer who might foster the small, blonde poodle.*

*One email went out and 30 responses later, not just from Paws volunteers, but friends and family who also wanted to help, Otto found a home Napa with a new playmate, Lucy. When I told Gary about people's generosity, he wrote back and asked that I thank you all for your overwhelming support and kindness. It is no small thing to open up one's home and heart to a dog, knowing it may very well be temporary; the Reece-Coe family is very grateful to you all.*

**cont. page 7**

---

*Raw bones can cause food poisoning; cooked bones can damage teeth.*

# More About PFH's Volunteers —

## Notes from our Teams

Volunteer teams often write a comment or two about their experiences over the year on their re-evaluation forms. Here is a sampling:

- *The best part of visiting the Veterans Home for Trudee Lewis (Napa) and Tristan is “the vets themselves.”*
- *Joanne Martin (Solano) says that, “Quincie gets a great reception from everyone. He is different, soft and lovable.”*
- *LaVerne Robertson (Solano) is pleased by the reception she and Jasmine get: “It is very uplifting to see so many of the guests happy to see us. I am amazed at how patient Jasmine is, even when she is handled by such a variety of people.”*
- *Ellen Maxton (Sonoma) says that Balou “loves the ‘meet and greet’ aspect of his social therapy visits. He considers it a special outing when he puts on his Paws vest.”*
- *Margery Smith (Napa) enjoys the nice people and staff they meet and she appreciates how gentle and loving Moulon is with everyone he meets.*
- *Betty Johnson (Sonoma) appreciates the patients’ responses to Summitt, who “is the most loving dog ever.”*
- *Nikki Godfrey and John Kunkel (Sonoma) write, “It has been such a rewarding experience to take part in a program that helps patients and staff heal. Jake is the ultimate healer. He is very empathetic.”*
- *Bernie Schwartz (Sonoma) says that, “Walking with Toby is like walking with a movie star. Toby appreciates the attention, but also seems to know he is providing something in his greetings.”*
- *Judy Rhoden (Solano) writes, “Everyone is very welcoming and keep thanking us for coming. It was very gratifying for us and they were so receptive. We may even expand to twice a week. The need is certainly there and we hope to fill some hearts with joy. Thanks again for letting me be part of PAWS.”*

---

Did you know that many dogs aren't interested in meeting other dogs?.

# Mediating the Effects of Alzheimer's Patience and Forbearance are Vital

Many of our volunteers visit patients who suffer from Alzheimer's or dementia and the experience can be as challenging as it is rewarding. Understanding the needs of AD patients can be of benefit to both canine and human interaction with these patients.

Keep in mind that a person may not remember what breakfast was the day you visit, but may remember many details of the past experiences. Talking about the past can be therapeutic socially and mentally: reminiscences stimulate parts of the brain and enable people to have pleasant social interaction through conversation.

Sometimes residents will confuse opposites and may say something is black, for example, when it is white. One piece of

advice that comes from an Alzheimer's caretaker is not to debate such issues because it only further confuses and frustrates the person. Instead, the caretaker suggests nodding in agreement, or saying things like, "Gee, I never knew that," "That's really interesting," or "Yes, that's right." Don't risk upsetting patients by correcting their statements even though you are well intentioned.

Patience is key in any relationship with people who have AD. If a resident gets into a repetitive loop of questions or comments, think of a question that will divert the conversation to another topic. If, for example, a patient keeps asking about

**cont. page 7**



## A Note from the Editor—

The "Did you know..." questions and answers come from Your Dog, "The Newsletter for Caring Dog Owners" that is published by the Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University.

The article on reactive dogs on page 8 is also based on the article Pat Miller wrote for the February 2006 issue of the newsletter. Contact the Editorial Office for reprints by writing to Betty Liddick, Tufts Media, 200 Boston Avenue, Medford, MA 02155.

Additional information for the newsletter comes from DogWatch, "The Newsletter for Dog People." DogWatch is a publication of the Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine.

---

*Genetic programming may make a dog more solitary or independent.*

# VIP— Very Important Points to Remember for our Very Important Volunteers

---

*Since we won't be seeing* our volunteers over the summer, the Board and Volunteer Staff of PFH first want to thank everyone for their continued good work. We are honored to be in so many facilities and regarded as professionals in providing canine-assisted therapy.

To maintain our privileges and standing, it is vital that we all review infection controls, site and safety protocols. We urge you to please review those pages in your manual. If you would like new copies, please email [info@pawsforhealing.org](mailto:info@pawsforhealing.org) or leave a message on our phone at 707-258-3486.

You all know now that washing hands before, after and between patient visits is the best means for minimizing infectious contact. Secondly, don't forget to carry antiseptic wipes for patients, for yourself and to wipe your canine's head, shoulders and paws whenever necessary.

Secondly, as a safety protocol and site courtesy, please let PFH and your mentor or facility contact know if you need to change your schedule. That is vital especially in the larger facilities where we have many volunteers. With regard to scheduling and visitations, these tips will help keep PFH volunteers a welcomed addition to facility programs.

- When summer temperatures soar, remember that hot pavement can burn sensitive

pads and you may want to reschedule visits for cooler times of the day or evening.

- It is safest for your dog, patients and staff if you use a 4-foot lead so that your dog is close to you at all times.

- If people greet you in hallways, make sure to stand to the side or find an open area where you won't interfere with staff and patient traffic.

- Please limit your visits, especially in the summer and for your dog's well-being, to an hour or less. Remember, one hour is like four or five hours for your dog who is the center of attention and the healing force of the visits.

Finally, because our teams are so well-regarded, many of our volunteers receive special requests from family, friends or staff to make personal visits with our canines. Let PFH and your mentor or the facility contact know if you want to go at times other than when you are normally scheduled. Your communication is a great aid in coordinating our volunteer teams and extending our services in special circumstances.

---

*Do you know how Dr. Freud determined a therapy session was over?*

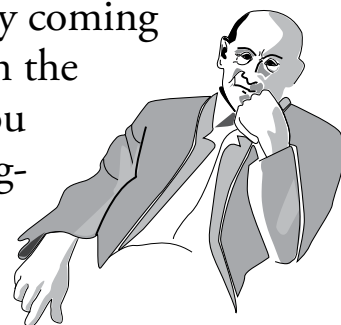
## Using C.A.T. with Alzheimer's Patients —

cont. from page 5

what a dog eats or how much it weighs, ask what foods are the client's favorites. If a resident keeps asking "What kind of dog is that?" redirect the question by asking the person if he or she ever had a dog, what's its name was, what color it was, and so forth.

Some patients suffering from AD or dementia may not talk or may say things that have no bearing on the present. Calmly talk about your dog, encourage the person to touch your canine, and don't feel pressured to keep talking. Silence is relaxing, too. On the other hand, don't be surprised if a patient who hasn't spoken becomes coherent or asks a question; that's happened to several volunteers.

A few other considerations: don't startle patients by coming up behind them or from the side and tapping them on the shoulder or touching their arm. Make sure they see you first. Later in the day, some patients become increasingly upset or worried, a behavior known as "sundowning". Schedule your visits in the morning or earlier in the afternoon when patients are at their best.



Do you have a photo of your dog while s/he's having his or her teeth brushed? If you do, send a JPEG to Meir Horvitz for the PFH website's canine photo gallery: [mihorvitz@comcast.net](mailto:mihorvitz@comcast.net)



### **K-9 Dental Hygiene** *cont.*

the dog's tolerance. Once you can use a brush and doggie-toothpaste, brush teeth gently in a circular motion and hold the brush at a 45° angle to teeth.

Keep treats small, about the size of "Cheerios". Bites of kibble will work; or look for "Charlie Bear" treats at pet stores.

### **Gail Reece and Otto**

*cont from 3*

donated services, there is a bill for blood and urine tests and antibiotics.

If anyone would like to make a donation toward these expenses or to help with Otto's current care, it would mean a great deal to Gail's family. Everyone's hope is that she will improve to the point where she can once more have Otto by her side.

Donations may be sent to Paws for Healing, Inc., with a notation on the check that it is for Otto's care. We will make sure that any donation received will be set aside for his care and applied to current bills.

---

*When his Chow stood up and yawned. (Honest.)*

# Meet and Greet... or flee and retreat? Learning What Triggers a “Reactive Dog”

*The Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University* writes that cases of canines that become over-aroused in the presence of fellow canines is more common today. The canines, which are referred to as “reactive dogs” may be acting this way for several reasons.

Four theories, all of which contain some truth, deal with genetics, changing care patterns, increased social acceptance of dogs, and competitive canine sports.

*Genetics:* Herding breeds (Border Collies, Australian Shepherds, Great Pyrenees and Cattle Dogs, for example) use direct eye contact to help control their charges. Eye contact from other dogs is considered a challenge, especially when dogs intrude on the personal space of a herder. In other cases, particular dog breeds have been promoted for protection or fighting. Those most highly aroused by other dogs are most often selected for breeding and financial value.

*Environment:* In the past, dogs were more often allowed to roam the neighborhood or rural areas where they could meet and interact fellow canines. Today, responsible owners provide secure backyards and so many dogs do not socialize as puppies with

other canines and may not know proper canine “etiquette.”

*Attitude:* Problem dogs were commonly euthanized or left home alone. Today, more people are willing to work with a pet with problems so that it can socialize or at least safely be in the company of others. The number of dog behaviorists in your telephone directory attests to this fact, as well as the number of dog-friendly venues that invite you to bring your dog with you.

*Sports:* Instead of sedate dog shows where each canine exhibits perfect behavior and control, there are activities such as Agility, Frisbee, and Flyball that encourage competition and excitement.

While the level of dog-to-dog reaction varies, it is important for owners to acknowledge such behavior rather than pass it off. The consequences could be dangerous for other canines or humans who try to break up a possible fight. Also, if an owner is sensitive to a dog’s need for personal space or its low tolerance for mouthy puppies, then it is easier to avoid stressful situations that may trigger an unwanted reaction.

Pat Miller, who wrote the article for Tufts on reactive dogs, recommends that puppy owners

**cont. next page**

---

*Did you know that neutered male K-9s are less likely to get into dog fights?*

## Positive Training is Crucial *cont. from 8*

socialize their new pets in safe puppy classes or for adoptive owners to enroll in obedience and socialization classes. The experts also warn that physical punishment, like scruff shakes or strong verbal or physical corrections for reactive behavior may lead to increased aggression, confusion or resistance. It is important to find classes where teachers and trainers advocate positive reinforcement techniques.

Moreover, Miller—past president of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers—urges owners not to use prong or electric shock collars as they will increase a dog's stress. Another wrong-headed technique, called “flooding”, is based on overwhelming a dog with the stimulation of other dogs until he or she just gives up. Those are old-fashioned and inhumane methods that will not help your dog learn how to be a good companion and friend.

### **Learn new strategies that avoid reactive behaviors**

Pat Miller also suggests practicing an emergency exit for reactive dogs that keeps your canine's attention on you rather than a dog in a chance, around-the-corner surprise encounter.

Use a cue, such as “Run away” or “Let's go!”, that means you're off on an adventure. Turn quickly, pat your side, make fun noises or toss a toy in a new direction that will invite your dog to run with you. Practice this in non-emergency times until your dog learns that this is a happy time and spins around to be with you rather than react to another dog.

## Reading Going to the Dogs? *cont. from 1*

gram will be a valuable addition to the non-profit's offerings. A pilot program at the Vacaville Public Library has already demonstrated the potential benefits and success of R.E.A.D. On the first day a small group of children gathered around Amber, a golden labradoodle, and, as they read to her, they showed Amber the illustrations and explained what was happening in them.

In addition to reading aloud, the children became mentors and helpmates for Amber by interpreting information for her. That experience not only enhanced the students' ability to read, but gave them a boost in self-confidence as well. (By the way, Amber was a perfect learner—she listened to every word the children said.)

Librarians and volunteers interested in R.E.A.D. should contact PFH by email or phone: [info@pawsforhealing.org](mailto:info@pawsforhealing.org) or 707-258-3486 and queries will be sent on to Joyce Bristow.

*Did you know that spayed female K-9s have less risk of mammary cancer?*

# Donation News and Acknowledgements

## April through May, 2006

Soroptimist International of St. Helena has invited Paws for Healing to their annual donation luncheon. Patty DiTomaso, the group's Co-President, writes, "PAWS has always impressed our group. We are amazed by your hard work and we wish to continue to support you and your volunteers."

We are very honored by this donation as it represents many hours of fundraising done by these business woman who are dedicated to help their community. We are proud to be on a list

that includes groups such as Red Cross and the Napa Emergency Women's Services, among many other very worthy charities.

**More News!** The Contractor's Safety Forum at Valero Refinery, Benecia is also honoring PAWS at their Annual Golf Tournament on June 23rd. PFH will have a table to hand out brochures and meet the donors, and they have also invited a PFH representative to speak to the group about the mission and activities of our organization. Thank you for this wonderful opportunity.

*In Honor of Dr. Anthony Gouveia  
and his wife, Lois,  
for their many kindnesses.  
Sandy and Nellie Yates*

*In Honor of our new "Doc"  
Joanne Yates, PhD.  
Randy & Lea Stegman*

*In Honor of Meir Horvitz.  
Vaca-Valley 4-H Club*

*In Honor of Ashby.  
Linda and Steve Goldfarb*

*In Memory of Karen Umbdenstock,  
a wonderful neighbor and  
great dog walker.  
Harriet & Marty Spitz*

*In Memory of Bobbie Williams,  
a great friend and dog lover.  
Randy and Lea Stegman*

*In Memory of Maxx Miller,  
Beloved Friend.  
Ron & Ruth Shogren*

*In Memory of Mary Reynolds  
Jack & Kaye Colby Gordon*

*In Memory of Ruby Emerald Bay, a  
great-hearted Golden Girl  
who was well loved by  
Greg Smith & Tom Merzon.  
Sandy & Nellie Yates*

*In life and death, our true friends and companions are always with us...*

# Thank you for your generosity and support

250+

Forestry Crab Feed: Alicia Amaro, Tim Streblow and Marley  
John & Francis Pershing  
Jeff Coyner and Trent Vannieuwburg

75+

Marilyn and Meir Horvitz

50+

Harry Englebright & Evelyn Somjen  
Steve and Lee Stefanki

25+

Daniel & Lisa Hall  
Scoobie Doo's  
Ms. Margery Smith  
Maria Delmas with Blessings  
Michelle & Will Wyman III

**If you care to make a contribution\* to Paws for Healing to honor or in memory of a beloved friend, please provide us with the information that will enable us to acknowledge the person, family and companion animal. The enclosed envelope is for your convenience.**

**In Honor of** \_\_\_\_\_ **or**

**In Memory of** \_\_\_\_\_

**Send acknowledgement to:** \_\_\_\_\_

*\* All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. PFH is a 501 (3) (c) non-profit corporation.*

*All donors will be acknowledged with a letter as well as those families or individuals who are honored or remembered.*

*May we see them again one day and revel in their light and love.*

Paws for Healing, Inc.  
1370 Trancas Street, PMB 127  
Napa, CA 94558



**NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
NAPA, CA  
PERMIT NO. 7**