



Autumn 2014

*Touching Hearts, Bringing Joy, Offering Comfort, and
Enriching Lives with Certified Therapy Dog Teams*

Welcome New Members

Denise Angelino and Chase
Linda Helms and Teton
Kathleen Matthews and Piper
Rusty Myer and Samantha
Greg Anderson and Enzo

Adam Bindrum and Daisy
Michele Hemenway and Aragorn
Lotta Rosen and Bear
Michael Dommenege and Joslin

Gina Christman and Moxie
William Mahlmann and Winnie
Elizabeth Smith and Regal
Meredith Dendo and Big

Greetings From Big Dog

by Steve Reiman, Founder & President

For more than 22 years, TDV dogs have left footprints on the hearts of many. We have numerous community outreach initiatives. For example, we unleash smiles from:

- People in hospitals and other health-related facilities
- Residents in retirement communities and nursing homes
- Patients in rehabilitation facilities
- Inmates in correctional facilities
- Students, faculty, and staff in schools, libraries, and youth centers
- Veterans in the VA Hospital and in various veteran clinics

Never underestimate the warmth of a cold nose. Interaction with therapy dogs lets people forget their current situations and stimulates interest away from their problems and toward their visitors. Also, we have noticed that when visited on a regular basis, the people we visit tend to look forward to the visits and exhibit positive behavioral changes.

TDV members must have a moral compass. They choose an attitude of giving love and helping others. In doing so, they take it home in their hearts. And, there are some especially wonderful volunteers who are there every day to support our members.

No words can express how proud TDV members make me. They give of their time to improve the lives of others and I hear about their achievements all of the time. I can't thank them enough for their passion, dedication, and tireless giving.

With my sincere respect and gratitude,



TDV Members at Camp Ta-Kum-Ta

By Wendy Huntley with Cullie



On Friday, August 1st, 9 TDV teams had the opportunity to visit Vermont's Camp Ta-Kum-Ta in South Hero, Vermont, to share their furry friends with 71 campers and over 100 staff members. The fact that TDV is one of the groups asked back to Camp each year is a huge compliment to the quality and integrity of the TDV program and their handler teams. The summer program week at Camp TKT is a fun filled, activity packed time for some truly special kids and staff. It was a great feeling as we walked down the driveway with our awesome dogs to hear kids yell, "YAY the dogs are here!!"

To see more of the magic that happens at Camp during the summer week, check out their website to see highlights of this past summer's program. A huge thank you to the handler teams who gave their time to make this event a great day for all involved. I look forward to next year!

Camp Ta-Kum-Ta provides challenging, extraordinary experiences in a safe and loving environment for children who have or have had cancer and their families. Camp exists for Vermont and Northern New York children, (including other out-of-state children who are treated in Vermont), between the ages of 7-17, at no cost to their families.



Launching a New Opportunity for Member Continuing Education

2014 TDV Annual Meeting and Training Events

by Bob Uerz, Executive Director

In recent memory TDV's annual meeting of the membership has occurred at the very well-attended **Shelburne Museum Goes to the Dogs Event** in September. However, after thirteen years, the event was not held this year and it gave TDV a wonderful opportunity create an event focused on both fellowship and continuing education.

Actually on Saturday, September 27th at the Williston Central School, actually two major TDV events took place. From 9 am to 12:30 pm, a TDV Evaluator Training event was presented by TDV's Co-Director of Training and Certification Deb Helfrich immediately followed by our Annual Meeting and Training Event. What is especially noteworthy about the Evaluator Training Event was the number of new volunteers joining the team which allows us to better serve both existing and new geographic areas.



At the Annual Meeting and Training Event, TDV founder & president Steve Reiman began with his heartfelt appreciation to all those present and was immediately followed by my report to the membership on our growth challenge over the last year including initiating new partnerships and the launch of a new Growth Hub in Woodstock to better serve the central region of Vermont as well as secure needed certified therapy dog teams to make visits at the VA Medical Center in nearby White River Junction as part of TDV's Third Decade Initiative to Serve Veterans.



My remarks were followed by a plenary session by TDV Member and Co-Founder of GoldStar Dog Training Maryellen Sullivan on the critically important topic of "Attentiveness to Dog Body Language."



2014 TDV Annual Meeting (Continued)

Following Maryellen's insightful presentation, members had their choice of attending a workshop titled, "Keys to Successful Reading Programs with Therapy Dogs" presented by two TDV members with extensive knowledge and experience with reading programs, Karen Odatto & Cheryl Chittick or . . .



"Visiting Persons with Dementia" presented by dog lover and Alzheimer's Association Group Facilitator Sherril Bover-Cheney.



2014 TDV Annual Meeting (Continued)

The final workshop of the day was presented by new TDV Vice President and new Woodstock Growth Hub Director Gordon Perkinson. While the workshop was titled, "Maximizing Visits with Veterans," Gordon who also is a Veteran shared with the audience an update on TDV's Third Decade Initiative and our steady progress in increasing the number of certified therapy dog teams at the VA Medical Center and at regional VA clinics and closed with a powerful story about the impact our visits make to those who have given so much for us. There wasn't a dry eye in the room.



Concluding the day's activities was an Ice Cream Social celebrating the tireless efforts of TDV's Co-Director of Training & Certification. Thank you, Deb Helfrich, for your continuing efforts to build and sustain TDV.

A word of thanks as well to Ben & Jerry's and to The Essex for donating product and partial donation of services for this joyful event which included a thank you gift for Deb!

Thank you to Williston Central School for allowing us to utilize their space at no cost for the day and for Sylvia Love, from the school district, for spending the entire day with us too.



Albarg Library Summer Reading Program

by Gail Yocis

Sandy made several visits to the Albarg Library for their summer reading program. Kids would either read to her or I would read a story while Sandy listened also. Once we visited their pre-school activity. Sandy enjoyed being petted by many little hands simultaneously! We hope to return again next summer. We wish to thank the staff for allowing us this opportunity.



Photo was copied from the Albarg Library Website

Note: TDV has a READ program in many schools and libraries around Vermont. Teachers have found that children learn quickly while reading to a dog who never criticizes or corrects them.



Visiting People with Dementia

by Sherril Bover-Cheney

When visiting people with dementia, perhaps the most crucial thing to understand is that reasoning and explanations don't work. Dementia, including Alzheimer's disease, takes away a person's ability to think clearly, to use logic and to "put two and two together." Dementia patients often have trouble multi-tasking: the patient may be unable to talk with you and pet the dog at the same time. You do not have to make a lot of conversation; let your dog do his job by simply being there for the warm and tactile experience he provides.

So pare everything down: walk quietly into the room, calling the person by name and introducing yourself and the dog in as few words as possible: "Hi, Mary, I'm Sherril and this is Bart." If the person is sitting, you may want to get down at dog level so she doesn't have to divide her attention between a standing human and a sitting dog. You can ask if she would like to pet the dog, (although you may not get an answer) and you may have to gently guide her hand toward the dog. A common deficit of dementia is being unable to initiate actions, like reaching out to pat the dog. In other words, she may *want* to pet the dog, but her brain is not translating that desire into action.



Sherril and mother, Mary

A person with dementia may ask you a lot of questions. Why am I here? When can I go home? She may repeat these questions over and over. You can't stop that from happening, but you can give simple, soothing answers such as "I think the doctor wants you here." Or, "I don't know." Or, "Soon." It is a kindness to use these short answers, which are clearly not the whole truth. This is not lying or being impolite. This is respect for her condition. If a person you're planning to visit seems agitated or upset, when you enter the room, you may decide to quietly leave, contact a caregiver to let them know the person is upset and perhaps return later. Even a few minutes can make a difference.

A very good technique to learn is distraction or diversion. This can be as simple as changing the subject. If the person is repeating a question, you might quietly say, "Let's pat Bart," and guide her hand to your dog. It's OK if the person thinks your dog is hers and it's OK if she tells you stories that are clearly not true. We never argue with a dementia sufferer. Again, simple, kind answers are the best. "Oh, yes. I love Bart too!"

When the visit is over, make the leave-taking simple. No long goodbyes, no promises to come back. Simply say, "Goodbye for now," or "We'll see you later," and make your exit. If the patient doesn't want you to go or holds on to the dog or to you, diversion is called for. You can pick up any nearby object, gently touch her hand and say, "Will you please hold this for me?" Usually the reflexive sense will take over and she will release your dog and grasp the new object. Sometimes you might ask if she would like a cookie, or a cup of tea and this will divert her attention long enough for you to slip out. If the patient becomes agitated, it would be a wise choice to call a caregiver to help you divert her. Nearly every time I would leave my mother, she would beg me to stay. As painful as it was, I would summon a caregiver who would divert her with an offer of coffee and I would slip away without even a goodbye or a hug. The blessing of dementia is that patients rarely remember these episodes for more than a few minutes.

While your visit may not be remembered for long, the joy of interacting with a kind human and a beautiful, warm, dog is important and nourishing in a patient's life.

For more information on Alzheimer's disease and other dementias you can go to www.alz.org. Please feel free to contact me at sherril.bover@gmail.com if I can help or provide information. Thank you for all you do.



Thank you Katie MacDonald

Social Director of Therapy Dogs of Vermont



Have you followed TDV on Facebook? If not, you should check it out. Pictures of TDV dogs on duty are posted there as well as the upcoming events where TDV teams will found. It is full of great photos, stories, and comments from followers.



A lot of time and effort are put into making this site a joy to follow and a blessing to our organization—not to mention allowing us to let our readers know about key events, upcoming testing and clinic dates and more! Moreover, our FB page puts a professional face on TDV's work. This doesn't all happen by accident. We are able to most effectively use this social media tool thanks to the efforts of TDV Member/Volunteer, Katie MacDonald, our official Social Media Director for TDV.

Our Volunteer Director of Certification and Training, Deb Helfrich, commented "I love working with Katie! When I need something posted to our FB page, even if it's a totally last minute request to fill an upcoming test or clinic, Katie always responds with a can-do attitude, and makes sure that the posts she puts up for me (and all of my Hub Directors) are professional, and accurate. She's a huge asset to my certification team efforts!"

From all of us in TDV, we say ***thank you, Katie.***



Announcing Our Inaugural TDV Certified Therapy Dog Team Photo Calendar for 2015

In an effort to raise funds to support TDV as well as a tribute to our Certified Therapy Dog Teams, TDV volunteers are, as you read this, working on the details of this effort. We hope that each team will submit a photo and purchase a calendar. It is envisioned that Team pictures will be part of a collage for each month of the 2015 and list the names of both handler and dog at the bottom of the page.

The photo submission date and pre-order price will be forthcoming.

In the meantime have someone take a picture of you and your pup ready for a visit with TDV bandana and ID in place! <Photos must include only the TDV Certified Therapy Dog Team. No other persons or other dogs can be included> More details to follow in [The Woof](#), on TDV's Facebook Page, and on TDV's Website Homepage.

TDV HUB DIRECTORS

Deb Helfrich, *Co-Director of Certification and Training*

Vacant, *Co-Director of Certification and Training*

Kristen Comeau Manchester Hub

Kristen Comeau Manchester Hub

Beth Wadleigh Northeast Kingdom Hub

Karen Odato Randolph Hub

Jason & Emily Reed Williston Hub

Gordon Perkinson Woodstock Hub

TDV TESTERS and/or EVALUATORS

Raymond Belanger

Brenda Carpenter

Jenn Vaughan

Jason Reed

Deb Helfrich

Emily McLean

Karen Odato

Deb Helfrich

Deborah Schapiro

Emily Reed

Callie Field

Beth Wadleigh

Steve Reiman

Helyn Herr

Kristin Comeau

Our testers and evaluators are also supported by dedicated certification support team:

Craig Deslaurier

Nancy Kahn

John O'Connor

Maryellen Sullivan.



TDV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Steve Reiman, *Founder & President*

Gordon Perkinson, *Vice President*

Connie Barrett, *Treasurer*

Katie Ziegler, *Secretary*

Julia Page, '15

Colleen McLaughlin '16

Brian Carten, '17

TDV SUPPORT TEAM

Katie McDonald, *Social Media*

Vacant, *TDV Webmaster*

Vacant, *TDV Senior Newsletter Editor*

Janet Dooley, *Fanny Allen Coordinator*

Kathleen Boyce, *FAHC Orientation*

Wendy Huntley, *Liaison to Camp Ta-Kum-Ta*

STAFF

Bob Uerz, *Executive Director*

Allison Ross, *Operations Coordinator*

Muffy Deslaurier, *Administrative Assistant*

