

Training Reports

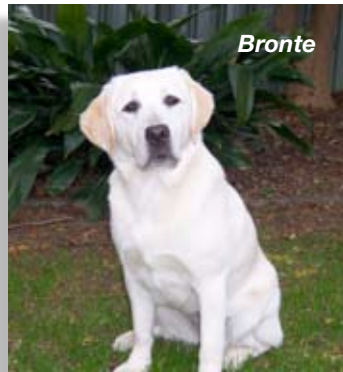
Partnership Evaluations

The last few months have been relatively busy. Partnership Evaluations (which cover Health & Wellbeing, Task Proficiency & Obedience, and Dog-Recipient Relationship) have been conducted with several of our working assistance dog teams and all have passed effortlessly. It is very pleasing to see the connection between the dogs and their handlers that underlies the smooth team work I observe during these annual assessments.

I am pleased to be able to report that our newest team, Daniel and Barnaby, have also completed their training and passed the Public Access Test and Partnership Evaluation with ease. Daniel and Barnaby have now graduated as a working team. Congratulations to them both and to Ann for a job well done.

Bronte

I recently attended the Dogs Big Day Out at Belrose with Bronte. The day appeared to be a big success with a large number of people and their dogs attending. Bronte was initially overwhelmed by the crowd and proximity of so many other



Daniel & Barnaby's official Public Access Certificate photo

dogs. However, she did eventually settle and even seemed to enjoy herself. Recently Bronte attended the Ku-Ring-Gai Vet Hospital to undergo surgery for de-sexing. The surgery went well and Bronte recovered without complications. During her visit to the vet Bronte underwent diagnostic x-raying of her joints and I am pleased to report that no significant problems were found.

Bronte continues to exhibit fear responses to multiple triggers in the environment. Although she now seems to be coping with visits to the shopping centre, she is still reacting to dogs and on occasion to people in the street. She has also shown regression in some areas where she was previously comfortable, such as the elevator at the train station. In November Bronte will be 12 months of age, and at that time an assessment of her suitability for assistance dog training will be undertaken.

Pauline Dickerson, Training Coordinator

Darcy

Sadly a decision was made in August to euthanase Darcy, after a second set of X-rays showed she had degenerative joint disease in her elbows and marked hip dysplasia at only 10 months of age. Even with the bed rest and medication she had been having for the last few months, her elbow was badly affected and her hips markedly deformed. The vet's advice was that she would only have a very painful future.



Bennett

This month has seen many changes in Bennett's little world. He is developing into a lovely dog, and is very happy to be close to everyone - especially after Darcy had gone, he just needs to be with you (or with Clifford!). He has taken to train travel as though that was his thing and has done several trips on the train

now, as well as on the buses. He has started carrying things and putting his toys away, also opening doors and drawers.

We went to see Barnaby and they had a lovely play together. One setback has been an upset tummy but he has recently got over that

so he is back into doing some tasks. His behaviour when out is great, and he is happy to go into Woolworths and Coles.



Clockwise from far left: Bennett waiting for a train; with his friend, Clifford; Bennett waiting patiently at the coffee shop. "I don't take sugar thanks, I'm sweet enough"



Above: Daniel & Barnaby with Daniel's Mum, Sue, and Joan & Bennett at Sydney Park recently. Left: Daniel & Barnaby

Barnaby

For Barnaby's 3 months check-up, we met at Sydney Park with Joan Minns and Daniel's mother Sue. Barnaby looked extremely fit, well and very happy with Daniel. He responded to him well, fetching and picking up the ball Daniel was throwing for him and also retrieving keys that were dropped. He played beautifully with Bennett and other dogs, and recalls were good. His behaviour getting into the taxi was

excellent, and Daniel had no problems to report - he is still delighted with him!
Ann Barnacoat, Trainer and Puppy Raising Coordinator

Newsletter

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The Quarterly Newsletter of Australian Support Dogs, Inc.

Management Committee Report

As we reported in our last newsletter, the ASDOG Management Committee is embracing the challenge of looking forward. To that end the Committee met in September for a day's strategy meeting where we explored ways to meet the organisation's objective to train and provide assistance dogs to help people with physical disabilities to achieve greater independence. What is clear is that there is a huge amount that can be done and that we are all keen to take on the challenge.

Initially, we are looking to add several new dogs to our stable. This will require us to find puppy raisers and eventually trainers as well as improve our fundraising capabilities. Once again, I am reaching out to you for assistance. If you feel that you are interested in not-for-profit work and could bring communications, design or sponsorship skills to the organisation, we would be delighted to hear from you.

The organisation continues to provide Public Access Testing for our teams. I am pleased to report that Daniel and Barnaby passed their initial Public Access Test with flying colours. All other partnership tests will be conducted over the coming month.

And I am happy to tell you that we have another new puppy, Daisy, to add to the ASDOG family. She is a Golden Labrador who will join us this month and will be raised by Ann. We look forward to sharing her progress with you as she develops the skills to be an Assistance Dog.

It is with a great deal of sadness that I must report we had to have Darcy euthanased in August. Unfortunately, she was born with severe hip and joint issues which were not treatable, and she would have been in constant pain. We would like to thank Ann for her kindness and strength in raising Darcy and making her as comfortable as possible in her short time with us.

Finally, I would like to thank all of our donors for their generosity. Without you, we would not be able to operate and continue the work that we do.

*Danielle Press,
President, ASDOG*



ASDOG's new puppy, Daisy

New Locations for ASDOG Collection Boxes

Cakes and Cream Cafe
455 Marrickville Rd, Dulwich Hill, NSW

Post Café
274a Marrickville Rd, Marrickville, NSW

Aussie Pet Supplies
183 Parramatta Rd, Haberfield, NSW

If you are nearby any of these establishments, why not pay them a visit? Pick up one of our leaflets from the box, and tell your friends about us. The collection box project is part of our current drive not only to help with fundraising, but also to increase community awareness of the true value of an assistance dog to a disabled person's quality of life.



Cakes and Cream
Café, Dulwich Hill

Thank You...



We have received assistance and donations from the following people and organisations. Thank you for your generosity.

- Mr and Mrs T. Cappie-Wood • Inner Wheel Club of North Sydney
- Moira Lloyd • Tom Foster Community Centre
- Nancy Somerville • MM and KP Fell • Forestville View Club
- Kerrie & Bruce Waldron

As always, our special thanks to Moyna Smeaton, moynzart@skymesh.com.au, who designs and produces our newsletters.

And thanks of course to the Belrose Bowling Club, Jackie and all the staff there, for generously allowing us to use one of their rooms for our monthly meetings.

Welcome to our New Member:

- Daniel Hillyer, NSW



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PO Box 5492, West Chatswood NSW 1515 Enquiries: Phone 1300 788 721

Email: information@asdog.org.au Website: www.asdog.org.au

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Dogs Day Out at French's Forest Showground

Some of our committee members recently set up a stall at this very popular event.

It proved to be a perfect sunny day, which brought lots of people out along with their dogs of all shapes and sizes, and of course they were all beautiful!

We had much interest in our lovely cakes and biscuits (which were kindly made by Hannah and Carol) and people were very generous with their donations.

Many were also very interested in the work that ASDOG does and we were pleased to have gained new members, volunteers and a potential new dog trainer, all very welcome and much needed for us to grow.

Our newest recruit Bennett took the event completely in his stride, greeting all-comers with his characteristic 'full on' approach. He loved the people and dogs alike, from the biggest to the smallest (including the most

minute Chihuahua who literally screamed blue murder at him from 3 feet away!).

We took along various donated items - quality books; small items of doggy equipment and our delectable cakes!



We do not put a price on these items, but simply ask for a donation. People can then give whatever they feel comfortable with and we are most grateful for their generosity.

Should you have any small items that are of good, clean condition that you would like to donate for future events that ASDOG attends,

please contact us so we can arrange collection.

Any and all donations will eventually turn into working Assistance Dogs!

Joan Minns

Above: The ASDOG stall at Warringah Dogs Big Day Out

Left: Joan and Bennett

Mature Assistance Dogs

Ever wondered what the plight of a mature assistance dog is? ASDOG is committed to its dogs' welfare and follows an established set of guidelines designed to assist recipients in determining their dog's sound working capability. It is understandable for a recipient to face the prospect of retiring their assistance dog with reluctance, because of the unique bond achieved by a comfortable working team. Sometimes, though, that recipient and assistance dog bond can get in the way of making the difficult decision of when to recommend retirement. For this reason, an assessment with an ASDOG trainer or assessor is undertaken annually prior to the Public Access Test, and in between times as required. There is no official retirement age, simply a review of what is best for each dog. Assessment categories include: health and physical condition, performance of tasks, response and motivation, and behaviour indicators in the home and public environment. Above all our dogs work for as long as possible while they are healthy and happy to do so.

Retirement inevitably looms, however, the orange ASDOG jacket is hung up for the final time, and after years of devoted service and companionship, the assistance dog is respectfully given the opportunity to lead a quieter lifestyle. The recipient has first option of adopting their retired dog, or placing the dog with an approved adopter who is a close friend or family member. If the recipient chooses not to adopt, the Management Committee will locate a suitable adopter as soon as possible.

*Sheree Hurley,
ASDOG Management Committee*

Cassie

One of our lovely working dogs, Cassie, was retired earlier this year due to medical issues. Cassie began working in 2004 and was able to stay with the same recipient for the whole of her working life. In this time, she assisted with picking up objects, opening and closing doors, taking clothes out of the washing machine, pushing the wheelchair footplates up to enable her recipient to transfer, putting items in the bin, turning lights on and off, pushing buttons at pedestrian crossings, and taking the doona off the bed.

When ASDOG received a veterinary report outlining the conditions that would be required for Cassie to be supported medically, the Management Committee sought a suitable family to enable Cassie to relax into retirement. Cassie has now been adopted by a loving family who are able to meet all Cassie's requirements and they tell us that Cassie has won the hearts of everyone she has met and has settled happily into their lifestyle.

Cassie still comes to visit us from time to time, and we will let you know how she is going.

Robyn Colleran, ASDOG Secretary



A recent photo of Cassie (left) with her friends Bennett and Barnaby.

Barnaby and Me

After my long stay in hospital after my accident I wondered what could be out there to get me through my days where I wouldn't be bored or have nothing to do. I soon caught the eye of a peer support worker who had an assistance dog!!

I was soon introduced to Barnaby, and we clicked very soon on. It started with him coming out with Ann for some home visits and getting him used to me, then a couple of park visits where we could throw a ball and Barnaby would come back to me and bench on the side of my chair to return the ball.

Barnaby helps me by assisting with pushing doors closed or tugs them open with some rope we have placed on the handles. Also when I drop things off my lap he's first on the scene to retrieve them for me.

Barnaby can assist in tugging off of clothes such as my jumper - that's really handy as I'm always getting stuck.

Since receiving Barnaby we have been shopping together, a couple of restaurants, other outings. We are going camping on the long weekend down the south coast to Lake Conjola that we are looking forward to.

My famous quote "I would be very wealthy if I received a dollar for every time we are out and someone comments on how beautiful Barnaby is."

Daniel Hillyer



Left: Barnaby helping with my jumper

Right: Barnaby and I go fishing in a boat

Below: at the opening of a new nursing home in September

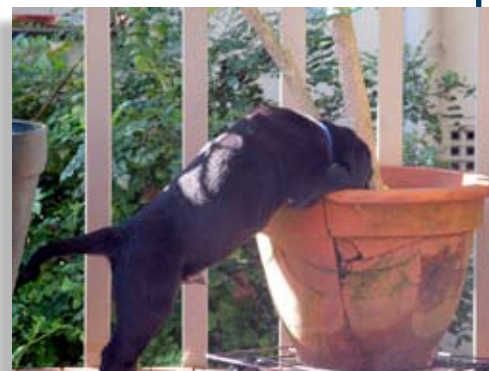


Barnaby closing the door

Bennett - That B Word!

Well, you might recall from the last newsletter that we have recently purchased an adorable little black Labrador, who is named Bennett in recognition of the founder member of Australian Support dogs, Peter Bennett.

He is proving to be quite a character, living up to many of the B words, being a boisterous boy, bold and very brainy! There are definitely times when he is simply well - just a little B!



Bennett the busybody...!



Brainy Bennett!



Bennett - a boisterous boy!

Seriously, if he is awake then he is a busy boy, using his time productively (from his point of view)! He is usually an action man and is generally pretty lively.

However Bennett is a clever boy, very eager to learn and has great focus. He shows good social skills and is very confident, not to mention his 'nosy' nature!

So far he has many of the necessary attributes that will equate into his being a great Support Dog...

He still is a bit bouncy but is gradually gaining his self control. (In fact his puppy-raiser is also kept bouncing on her toes in order to keep up with him!) Bennett is still very young of course, but so far is showing great promise.

The photograph of Bennett opening the gate here is a graphic example of how brainy he is: he wanted to play with his segregated friends, so he simply undid the tie and pulled open the gate, quick as a flash. He was 9 weeks old at the time. Problem solved the B way!

Watch out for more of those 'B' words that I am sure will become relevant to Bennett as he grows up!

Joan Minns, Bennett's Biographer