

Newsletter

August 2013

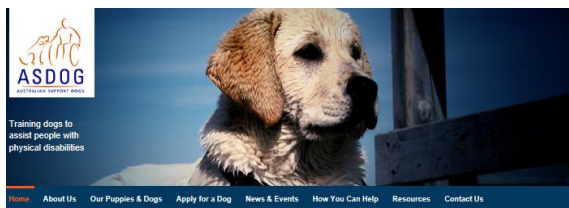
The Newsletter of Australian Support Dogs, Inc (ASDOG)

FROM THE ASDOG MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE...

Welcome to our special edition of the ASDOG newsletter, which focusses on how assistance dogs integrate into the community. In particular, we discuss the way our dogs are required to behave in public and in the workplace. Much of this behaviour and interaction is best shown through demonstrations. Part of our core purpose is to educate the community about assistance dogs and their value to participants. To do this we undertake public demonstrations at various clubs, schools and universities. Examples of some of these are described in this newsletter. If you are involved in an organisation that would like to hear more about assistance dogs, please contact us to arrange a demonstration with our amazing dogs.

This year, one of ASDOG's outings took us to Admiralty House for the launch of ANZAD. We are very pleased to support ANZAD (Australian and New Zealand Assistance Dogs, Inc) the regional chapter of ADI (Assistance Dogs International). ANZAD is an umbrella body of not-for-profit organisations that train and place assistance dogs in Australia and New Zealand. ANZAD aims to heighten the standards of training, placement and working relationships of Assistance Dogs, while improving the education of staff and volunteers across assistance dog organisations in Australia and New Zealand. More information about ANZAD can be found at www.anzad.org.

One of the most frequently asked questions received from ASDOG puppy raisers, trainers and recipients is 'Can I pat your dog please?' ASDOG handlers welcome questions from the general public when they are out and about, and are happy for their dogs to enjoy some attention where possible. Please have a look at our article on Assistance Dogs and Public Interaction for further information.



Finally, we are pleased to report that our new look website has now been released at www.asdog.org.au. We would like to thank our web designers Smith and Rowe for their contribution to developing and refreshing the site. We would welcome your feedback on the new webpage and any suggestions you may have for improvement.

It is only through the support of our volunteers, members and donors that we can continue to operate. We thank you very much for your continued support.

Danielle Press, *President, ASDOG Management Committee*

JADE MEETS THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL: OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF ANZAD

To celebrate the official launch of Australia & New Zealand Assistance Dogs, Inc (ANZAD) on 12th February 2013, ASDOG was invited to share morning tea with the Governor-General, Her Excellency Ms. Quentin Bryce, at Admiralty House in Kirribilli.

A regional chapter of Assistance Dogs International, ANZAD will act as a unifying body for selected non-profit organisations that specially train dogs to help people with disabilities, such as Righteous Pups, Seeing Eye Dogs Australia, Lions Hearing Dogs, The Royal Society for the Blind Guide Dogs Services, Guide Dogs South Australia and Northern Territory and Assistance Dogs Australia, as well as ASDOG. The morning tea provided a fantastic opportunity for ASDOG to come together with other assistance dogs groups in order to share ideas and experiences. Ms Bryce has been a long-time supporter of canine companions for those with disabilities and was very eager to meet each and every animal in attendance, including our very own wonder-dog, Jade. These special individuals possess an extraordinary array of skills, ranging from seeing-eye dogs and dogs for the hearing impaired, dogs for people with physical disabilities or mental health problems, all the way to dogs for those with diabetes or epilepsy. We thank Ms. Bryce for bringing all of us together and officially launching ANZAD.

Danielle Johinke, *ASDOG Management Committee*

ASSISTANCE DOGS & PUBLIC INTERACTION

People frequently ask ASDOG puppy raisers, trainers and recipients how they should treat assistance dogs and puppies-in-training when they meet them in public places. Socialisation is a critical component of the ASDOG puppy raising and advanced training programs. All puppies must have exposure to a wide variety of dogs, adults, children and public places so they will readily and calmly accept new situations. However, the degree of public interaction must be monitored as an accredited assistance dog is required to comply with the Assistance Dogs International standard of not 'soliciting attention, visiting or annoying any member of the general public'. The ASDOG Management Committee encourages members of the public to follow these basic guidelines:

- ASDOG puppies and accredited assistance dogs enjoy pats and attention, but please ask permission before touching a dog. Your attention may be a distraction and prevent the dog from listening and/or tending to its handler.
- Please do not use commands, call, whistle, or otherwise try to distract a working dog. Puppy raisers and recipients have been trained in the most effective ways to control their dog's behaviour, and additional commands are confusing for the dog. Please only provide assistance if requested.
- Please do not feed the dog. All dogs are on a feeding schedule and may even be on a special diet. Food is the ultimate distraction to a working dog and can jeopardise the working assistance dog team.
- Speak to the person, not the assistance dog! Most handlers do not mind talking about their puppy or assistance dog if they have the time.

Please don't be offended if the assistance dog handler does not have time to stop and chat to you! Whilst we welcome enquiries and comments from the public, we do all lead busy lives and may simply have run out of time!

- Don't be afraid of the dog. Assistance dogs from organisations like ASDOG and other members of Assistance Dogs International are carefully tested for sound temperament and have been professionally trained to a high standard.

Sheree Hurley, ASDOG Secretary

WARRINGAH DOGS BIG DAY OUT



Many members of our management committee were happy to attend this popular annual event, which was held at French's Forest Showground on 26th August 2012. As a registered 'not for profit' charity we are grateful to be allocated a stall free of charge. It was a really well attended event, certainly helped along by a perfect day weather-wise. Our main aim is to raise public awareness of the work that ASDOG does; and afterwards it was the general consensus that we had achieved this objective very well!

We had some truly scrummy cakes and slices made by the committee and also some homemade doggy treats! (Both were very popular and one very kind lady came back several times, giving a very generous donation each time.) Many people stopped at our stall to enquire about ASDOG – and the cakes! And of course the dogs/puppies were more than happy to be petted and admired by all. It was a long day for the stallholders but a very rewarding one, that's for sure.

It was also a pleasure to be visited by Bennett; one of our previous puppies-in-training. Sadly, ASDOG had to withdraw him from the programme for health reasons, and he had been carefully re-homed. He is now a much loved family pet and was pleased to see us, showing clearly that he is definitely very happy with his life!

Joan Minns, ASDOG Vice President



ASDOG AT BAYVIEW

Sunday 23rd September 2012 was the Spring Equinox and what a truly gorgeous day it provided for Pittwater Council's Dog Day by the Bay! We really do seem to have worked out a winning formula for these enjoyable days out! We took and displayed plenty of information about ASDOG, our homemade cakes for humans and some doggy bacon bites, plus of course, our lovely puppies and working dogs.

Our committee members were on hand to inform visitors of the valuable work that our Assistance Dogs are trained to do. And the visitors certainly seemed to enjoy our lovely cakes and slices, and proved very generous in their support. It was especially pleasing to have several people sign up as volunteers for ASDOG.

Our dogs, as always, were very happy to meet and greet everyone who came by - people, babies and dogs big or small. One little Jack Russell in particular was almost licked to death by Ebony - and she would have been happy to lick the babies too, given half a chance!

Joan Minns, ASDOG Vice President



University of Sydney Demonstration

After the success of last year's seminar at the Faculty of Veterinary Science, University of Sydney, ASDOG organised a follow-up demonstration on 8th August 2013, to celebrate International Assistance Dog Week (4-10 August, 2013). The 60-minute presentation provided a valuable opportunity to discuss the process by which ASDOG raises, places and trains assistance dogs, as well as share many of the success stories associated with the program.



Led by our Training Coordinator Pauline Dickerson, the seminar was wonderfully supported by demonstrations from ASDOG superstar Jade, pups-in-training Ebony, Charlie and



Amika, newcomers Freya and Jenna, as well as retired support dog Cassie. In front of an audience of over 80 students, lecturers and faculty staff members, the dogs showed off their wide range of

skills, from picking up dropped items, opening and closing doors to taking a jacket off and switching off a light.

As last year, the day was a great success, with many of the attendees eagerly coming forward to meet the committee members and assistance dogs after the talk.

Danielle Johninke, Asdog Committee

Ravenswood School Visit

Last July, ASDOG was asked to give a talk and demonstration about assistance dogs at Ravenswood School, Gordon, in the Northern Suburbs of Sydney.



It is always a pleasure to have an attentive audience and the girls received us very well. They were impressed by the young puppies' skills - although they may be trainees, they do

have LOTS of enthusiasm!

Sheree gave an excellent talk and demonstrated just how important her support dog, Jade, is for her independence.

Cassie, who is now a very happy retired assistance dog,



was very keen to get up onto the stage (she is still a busy girl) and after watching those pesky puppies attempting to pull a small box on wheels, she finally took matters into her own 'paws' and promptly pulled it the full length of the stage and then back again with such grand 'Cassie' style! She was a real star and the girls just loved her.

Our dogs were, as always, well behaved and after the demonstration were more than happy to meet and interact with the girls outside in the school grounds. It was a great opportunity for ASDOG to raise public awareness of the role of assistance dogs in the community.

Visit to Glebe Junior Girl Guides

Glebe Junior Guides actively support ASDOG and invited us along once more to one of their meetings. Ann and I were very happy to accept.



Ann started off with a short demonstration with the puppies Chelsea and Ebony. The girls then got into a little bit of role-playing! Smarties were made available as the rewards for the 'dog' players who were rewarded for completing tasks correctly for their 'partners in wheelchairs'. Whilst this proved to be a fun experience, it also effectively demonstrated to the girls the

true value of an assistance dog's role to a person with physical disability.

Ebony greatly impressed them all with her skill in removing her puppy raiser's jacket, and then she revelled in repeating her ability, by promptly removing several of the girls' jackets! They were delighted with her performance.

There were lots of sensible questions, all answered by Ann, and the girls very kindly presented us with some money they had collected for ASDOG, and we gave them a thank you card in return. Ann and I had a delightful evening: it was a lovely way to raise awareness, in particular to a young and proactive audience.

Joan Minns



UPCOMING EVENTS

25/8/2013 – Dogs Big Day Out, Frenchs Forest

31/8/2013 – Rotary Spring Fair, Forestville

22/9/2013 – Dogs Day By The Bay, Bayview

20/10/2013 – Festival of Mosman

6/12/2013 – Martin Place, Sydney

Please come and visit our stand at any of these events. We would love to see you there.

ASDOG TRAINING COORDINATOR'S REPORTS

January to April 2013

The year has started well with our dogs-in-training, Ebony and Charlie, making great progress in their formal training. Our trainers, Ann and Graham, have met all training challenges with enthusiasm and dedication. In overcoming the challenges presented to them, they have expanded their training knowledge and experience, gaining great satisfaction from their success.



It is particularly pleasing to see the dogs developing more confidence working in public areas. As working assistance dogs, they may need to deal with many novel situations that can be quite worrying and difficult for the average dog. Under Ann and Graham's guidance, Ebony and

Charlie are realising their potential to cope with a diverse range of scenarios.



ASDOG is fortunate to have the support of many enthusiastic volunteers. Joan Minns attends most training meetings to assist where she can, which often means handling an extra dog or puppy which has come along for the experience. Gayl O'Grady, an experienced trainer in her own right, has been attending training meetings regularly, offering training support and guidance.

Recently we were also fortunate to have Louise Newman join us. Louise is an experienced dog trainer and is keen to offer assistance to ASDOG in whatever capacity she is able as a volunteer.



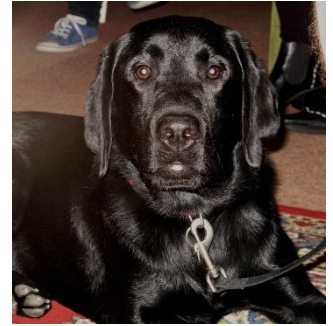
With our assistance dogs-in-training progressing well, we are now looking toward matching the dogs to suitable recipients before they have completed their twelve month training period. Ann and I attended an interview with a new applicant last month. The meeting went well and the applicant has now been accepted and added to the waiting list for a trained assistance dog. In the

coming months the prospective recipients will be invited to attend a training meeting, where they can observe the training and meet the dogs.

Annual reassessments have been successfully undertaken by all working dog teams. Gayl O'Grady accompanied me on these visits in order to meet the recipients and working dogs and to observe the re-evaluation process. Our newest trainer, Graham Sheather, also attended a visit with Charlie for educational purposes.

May to July 2013

Monthly training meetings for the dogs in advanced training, Ebony and Charlie, continue to be productive. With an increased focus on public access training, both dogs are progressing slowly toward the designated monthly training goals and a successful graduation at the end of this year.



Puppy training sessions have been running smoothly. Attended by Ann with Freya, who is now nearing the stage at which she can begin advanced training. Jenna, our newest canine member is looking very promising, thanks to the concerted efforts of our volunteer puppy raiser Andrea.

Earlier in the year ASDOG made contact with ADA (Assistance Dogs Australia) with a view to fostering a working relationship between the two organisations. In April several members of the ASDOG team attended the ADA graduation ceremony in the city. We all enjoyed the ceremony and found it very informative. The following week two of us from ASDOG met with Richard Lord and ADA Canine Programmes Manager, Helen Stathy. During the course of the meeting similarities and differences between our two organisations were discussed, and we resolved to maintain regular contact and cooperation. And so we were joined at the July training session by four trainers from ADA with their dogs in training. We all found this to be a very interesting and informative meeting and look forward to a reciprocal visit to the ADA training facility in the near future.

Pauline Dickerson, ASDOG Training Coordinator

Presentation at Northern Suburbs Dog Training Club (NSDTC)

During August several members of ASDOG, with their dogs, gave a presentation to the members of the Northern Suburbs Dog Training Club (NSDTC). The presentation was given after training classes at the club and was attended by club members and a number of instructors and committee members. Under Sheree's direction, working assistance dog Jade demonstrated a selection of tasks that assistance dogs regularly perform and Sheree spoke about the positive impact Jade has had on her life. Further demonstrations were carried out by Ann and her two puppies, Chelsea and Ebony. Marjorie displayed her retired assistance dog Cassie's enduring eagerness to carry out tasks even as a retiree. As training coordinator I spoke briefly about the training methods used and gave an overview of the stages of training.

Judging by the questions posed by members of the audience during the performance and the keen interest in the dogs and the organisation following the presentation, the session was a great success. The feedback in the following weeks has been very positive. As an outcome of the presentation, ASDOG has received many generous offers of assistance from members of the club, for which we are very grateful.

Pauline Dickerson, Training Coordinator