

Newsletter

October 2013

The Newsletter of Australian Support Dogs, Inc (ASDOG)

FROM THE ASDOG MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE...

Welcome to a brief newsletter update where the Management Committee can share just how much dedicated volunteers can achieve with your support. We profile Andrea Blackford, volunteer puppy raiser who says, "it seemed that the perfect answer to combine my want of giving back with my love for animals, was to raise an assistance dog puppy". And we are most grateful she did!

It's a busy time of year for ASDOG:

- Public Access Tests and Partnership Evaluations will be conducted with all recipient-assistance dog teams in the coming weeks. The annual tests check each dog's behaviour, temperament, health, welfare and skills.
- Preparations have commenced for dogs in advanced training, Charlie and Ebony, to embark on the next stage of their journey: team-training programs with their newly matched recipients. We look forward to bringing you news of the graduate teams in the next edition.
- The Annual General Meeting, a time to celebrate and reflect on achievements of the past year, will be held on 7th December, 2013.



Jenna with housemate Hayley



Jenna, perfect puppy

Reflections of a first time Puppy Raiser

Jenna joined our busy household of three kids, two cats and a dog on the 24th of April this year and was instantly loved by almost everyone... the feline family members took a bit of convincing!

She makes us smile; we absolutely adore her clumsy puppy ways and her all-encompassing love. I felt very much supported by Ann (ASDOG Puppy Coordinator) and Pauline (ASDOG Training Coordinator) to help me on my journey of raising an assistance dog.

It is an immensely rewarding journey and I have learned a lot along the way. My initial nervousness about taking Jenna into public places such as shopping centres, schools and libraries soon turned into absolute joy. The general public has a big heart and loves to meet an assistance dog in training. Westfield Chatswood sees a lot of us and we recently received a standing ovation, as after many tries, Jenna finally overcame her fear and jumped on the travelator! She has been to the orthodontist, school concerts, the hairdresser and numerous grocery shops, but her personal favourite seemed to be the surf shop, where she recently showed an eye for fashion and helped choose a new bikini! Beach and park outings are always received with huge enthusiasm and our long daily walks are enjoyed by both of us.

Community support for ASDOG and Jenna has been tremendous. Dr Marc Simpson, veterinarian at VETMED Northbridge (www.vetmed.com.au) generously waives Jenna's consultation fees. Harris Farm at Willoughby has kindly agreed to have Jenna and me come in to the store. They went to the trouble of printing a poster showing their support of ASDOG, and letting customers know that a support dog will be in the store from time to time. Willoughby Public School was also very supportive and invited us in for a mini assembly. Ann and Joan with dogs Ebony and Cassie kindly came along and showed their skills.

It is a privilege to see Jenna grow and mature, and all the 5 o'clock wake up barks will be generously forgotten, once she graduates as an Australian Support Dog. We'll be proud to have been part of her journey.

Andrea Blackford
Volunteer Puppy Raiser



Puppy Progress

Jenna

Jenna is maturing into a well-behaved dog, who loves to please. She travels now almost consistently on escalators. Loose lead walking is progressing well. Jenna is mastering many cues including sit, stay, down, wait, fetch and bench, and she also learned "side" this month.



Freya

Freya is now approaching the transition to formal training phase, is enthusiastic and loves to learn tasks. It recently became apparent that her impulse control, in particular when greeting visitors to the home, required some more work. To facilitate this, Freya was moved to Pauline's care (ASDOG Training Coordinator)

in Berowra for some remedial training and behavioural modification. She has responded quickly to the management and training program and is improving at a very satisfactory rate.

Advanced Training Update

Ebony and Charlie

Ebony and Charlie are on schedule with advanced skills and are nearing the completion of the formal training phase.

Arrangements have been made for further meetings with applicants at their homes. In this way the applicants, trainers and dogs will become better acquainted, with a view to facilitating a smooth transition for the dogs in the handing over period. Trainers Ann and Graham attended the September training meeting at Hornsby to focus on working with the wheelchair in a public setting.



From top: Freya catching up on a snooze; Jenna, Cassie and Ebony awaiting cues; Ebony practises placing items on a bench.



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

- John & Yvonne Almgren • Aussie Travel Cover Pty Ltd
- Marjorie Beck • Shirley Bellamy
- Gary & Judi Blackler • Barbara Chapell
- Cathy Curtis • Dawn Daley • Anna Dowe
- Leanne Elsworthy • Malcolm Fell
- Glebe Junior Girl Guides • Inge Hoogendoorn
- Inner Wheel Club North Sydney • Rita Cartwright
- Eurobodalla Canine Club • Hills District Kennel & Training Club
- Amelia Hexton • Pam & Michael Hurley
- Neil Jones • Deborah Lappan • Moira Lloyd
- Jane Milliken • Mark Nashaty
- Louise Newman • Liz Sargood • Ingrid Scharping
- Sue Stenning • Hendra Tatham
- Janet Tinkler • Peter Tomasetti

We are most grateful to the following businesses who are hosting ASDOG Collection Boxes. And thank you all for supporting them.

- Cakes and Creams Café, 455 Marrickville Road, Dulwich Hill
- Gladesville Veterinary Hospital, 449 Victoria Road, Gladesville
- Ku-ring-gai Vet Hospital, 290 Bobbin Head Road, North Turramurra
- Roy Young Chemist, Shop 441, Westfield Centre, Chatswood
- Pats Coffee Shop, 97 Bay Road, Waverton
- Glasshouse Café, 369 Illawarra Road, Marrickville
- Pizza Capers, 465 Illawarra Road, Marrickville

Finally, our thanks to KwikKopy printing Chatswood, and VetMed Northbridge, for their ongoing support. And to the Belrose Bowling Club for generously allowing us to use one of their rooms for our monthly committee meetings.

Plush Puppies For Sale!

ASDOG now has the help of plush toy dogs, named after working assistance dog, Jade, to raise awareness and funds for its canine programs.

Complete with an ASDOG jacket and descriptive tag, the supporter dogs are approximately 10cm high and retail for \$5 each.

The ASDOG Management Committee gratefully acknowledges Danielle Johnke for coordinating the design and manufacture of the plush puppies.

