

Paw Print

Spring 2015



The Quarterly Newsletter of Australian Support Dogs, Inc. (ASDOG)

NEWSHOUND'S INTRO

OCTOBER 2015

Welcome to the Spring edition of Paw Print! So far it has been a very busy and productive year. It was also a highly emotional year for us at ASDOG headquarters and we are still struggling to come to terms with the loss of our much loved committee member, Sheree: it has taken us all a long time to fill the void but, with a new member, we are all working passionately at our job: *Training Dogs to assist People with Physical Disabilities.*

PAW-SITIVE REINFORCEMENT TRAINING

In line with the ASDOG philosophy of respect and consideration for the physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing of our dogs, positive motivational training methods are used exclusively in their training.

Our trainers are all active members of the Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) Australia.



ASDOG Trainers 2015: Pauline with Lucy, Andrea with Kara, Gayl with Ivy and Ann with Heidi

We are pleased to report that all our dogs in advanced training are progressing extremely well. Living with their ASDOG trainer from approximately 1 year of age, all dogs participate in a 12-month advanced training programme of intensive obedience, skilled tasks and public access training. In this time, they learn over 50 cues at their own individual pace, in a range of different environments. Monthly training outings are organised by our Training Coordinator, Gayl, to facilitate the sharing of skills and knowledge. Puppy Raiser Fran, with gorgeous pup Millie, is always a welcome addition to our training sessions, and so is our tireless and committed volunteer, Joan!

Lucy's and Kara's task training continues to progress well, as does their public access training. Although both dogs are only 16 months old, they show maturity beyond their age. At the three-quarter mark of her training program, delightful black Labrador, Ivy, has mastered many obedience and task cues. She is a regular visitor at Royal Rehab in Ryde, where her sympathetic nature wins hearts.

Heidi, affectionately known as our four-legged blonde, is our cover girl, front of house and life of the party! But make no mistake, at nearly 2 years of age she is a skilled master of all tasks and a model of good behaviour when out and about. Heidi regularly teams up with Kara to do the social circuit of visiting schools, preschools and aged care facilities. *Happy Times all around!*



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A PARTNERSHIP OF MUTUAL TRUST AND RESPECT

BARNABY AND I

by Daniel Hillyer

I first heard about ASDOG five years ago through Sheree Hurley. While I was lying in a hospital bed, she would bring Jade around the ward to visit us. I was then very interested in applying for an assistance dog. At that time Sheree mentioned there was a dog in the process of being trained and his name was Barnaby! He's a cheeky one, I was told.

I met Ann and Barnaby at a park near my house to get to know each other whilst throwing a ball. It's amazing how alert he was, especially when a treat was on offer. Barnaby and I connected immediately and formed a close bond. Once he was familiar with his surroundings, Ann was ready to leave him for a couple of days which was quite hard for her as they had been working together for a long time.

Barnaby was great; he settled in nicely and performed all his tasks well. The first night he slept over I had two great experiences with him: firstly, through the night he brought me every remote control he could find and placed them on the bed; and secondly, when my hand had fallen out of bed, he came to check on me and nudged it back under the blanket.

He can open the fridge door, turn lights on and off, and pick objects off the ground which I've dropped and place them on my lap.



Since getting my licence we are unstoppable and have been on plenty of road trips. Along with my partner, Maryanne, we have been along the East Coast of Australia from Melbourne to the Sunshine Coast of Queensland and everywhere in-between.

Barnaby had his first flight when we visited Perth and did great! After a bout of the hiccups on take-off and a couple of treats to keep him occupied he just chilled out and enjoyed the flight. Everyone was very surprised at the time to see a dog on the inside of the plane!



Barnaby attends the gym with me 3 days a week and is definitely the star of the show when he's there. He is on hand at every moment especially if I have a fall while standing! He comes bounding over immediately to check if I'm ok.

He works great with the younger kids at the gym: he helps with their concentration and sometimes as an object for them to walk to or wheel to at each end of the gym. It's great the smiles Barnaby can put on their faces and change their mood.

We love going to the beach together. Since getting a 4x4 wheelchair which allows me to go on the sand, we spend a lot of time down at the beach chasing a ball or swimming and making new friends.

He is great off-leash and friendly around the other dogs.

Barnaby and I have been partnered for 4 years now and I wouldn't change a thing - he's my best friend.



RETIREMENT INEVITABLY LOOMS & THE ORANGE JACKET IS HUNG UP FOR THE FINAL TIME...

MOLLY by Emma Maher



My name is Emma Maher and for the last 12 years we have had an assistance dog called Molly.

In our previous house, Molly would perform a lot of tasks. If the front door rang, and I knew who it was, she would take the keys to the front door and push them through the mail hole. We lived in a small, narrow, two-story house. I was barely walking, so to help me she would put her nose under my foot and nudge it up the stairs. She could carry my washing downstairs for me. Most importantly she would fetch anything I dropped.

Molly is 14 years old now and since her retirement in 2010 she has very much progressed from assistance dog to living the life of luxury.

While she was working she would sleep in our bedroom but for the last few years she has slept in our son, Louis's bedroom. He relies on her company for a sound night's sleep.



She still loves having a sniff and going for a walk, although they're getting shorter and slower. She loves basking in the sun and being scratched. Dogs love their food and Molly excitedly dances around like a puppy at dinnertime. Molly has always been driven by food. Her eyesight has declined so she can't see if the back door is open. Her hearing has also diminished quite substantially but amazingly her appetite hasn't changed a bit!



Aside from a few physical limitations she still has the same gentle and calm nature. Despite being big and black, she is approachable and super friendly. She has transformed many of our Louis's friends from being scared of dogs into loving them.

I rarely get her to do any tasks any more, apart from the occasional paper pick up! She sleeps most of the time and has her favourite spots - they get the most sun! She has and continues to be a much-loved, integral part of our family.

JADE'S RETIREMENT... by Jade



"Retirement! I don't have time for that!

After losing my beloved 'Mum' Sheree, I have moved to the farm with Sheree's Mum and Dad, where I sleep in their bedroom, play with their dog, Ellie, swim in the dam, then curl up for a nap in front of the wood fire.

Dad takes me to work in his van and Mum takes me shopping. Ellie and I have adventures in the bush, and run around the farm. I have an understanding with the kangaroos: I don't chase them and they don't chase me.

I sleep on the lounge when no one is watching and lap up plenty of cuddles. My favourite pastime of all is running alongside the quad bike. It's a tough and busy retirement – but someone has to do it..."



SPRING FESTIVALS, FAIRS & COMMUNITY EVENTS

CHATSWOOD STREETFAIR 2015

North Shore's biggest street party was the place to be! Spring had sprung, the sun was out and we enjoyed seeing familiar faces and meeting new people. Thank you for supporting our Spring Raffle.



DOGS BIG DAY OUT, FRENCHS FOREST SHOWGROUND

What a fun and entertaining day! Heidi and Kara took to the stage and demonstrated their considerable skills and we enjoyed catching up with ASDOG recipient, Allan, and his gorgeous assistance dog, Rayner.



CURRAMBENA PRIMARY & PRE-SCHOOL, LANE COVE

This lovely school is teaching their students a responsible and respectful way to interact with dogs in general and assistance dogs in particular. Assistance dogs-in-the-making, Heidi, Kara and Millie, loved to demonstrate their skills to an attentive audience and we all were delighted how quickly the children learned 'dog-speak'.



OUT & ABOUT IN OCTOBER 2015 (l to r):

We shared our amazing assistance dogs-in-training with **ONLY ABOUT CHILDREN CHILDCARE, GLEBE** and presented an information session at **MARK MORAN LITTLE BAY, AGED CARE FACILITY**. We joined students at **THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW SOUTH WALES** for Disability Awareness Week, and promoted our spring raffle at **HIGH STREET MARKETS, WILLOUGHBY**.



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