

Paw Print


Winter 2016



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

NEWSHOUND'S INTRO...

JULY 2016

Welcome to another paw-packed edition of Paw  Print! And a very warm welcome to Anna Felton, our new Training Coordinator. In other stories, ASDOG Trainer Andrea entices us to follow Kara's journey, David gives us a compelling insight into his working life with Assistance Dog Ebony, and we are eager to keep you up to date with the latest ASDOG happenings. Thank you to all who contributed. If you have something you'd like to share with us in our next issue, please email us at information@asdog.org.au

AT THE OTHER END OF THE LEASH...



Anna Felton is a lifelong animal lover with a Zoology degree from the University of New England, majoring in behaviour and ecology. She has calmly taken control and charmed her way into the hearts of her four-legged ASDOG charges.

The role of the ASDOG Training Coordinator is multifaceted; Anna is responsible for overseeing the health and wellbeing of all dogs in our programs, she assists the puppy raisers and provides training and guidance for our trainers. Assessing potential recipients and providing on-going support for all recipient-assistance dog-teams is all in a day's work for her.

Welcome aboard, Anna.



ASSISTANCE DOGS INTERNATIONAL - RE-ACCREDITATION IS UNDER WAY

ASDOG is proud to have been a fully accredited member of Assistance Dogs International (ADI) since 2011. It is a privilege to be one of only 8 accredited organisations in Australia, three of which are based in NSW. The ADI accreditation process is dedicated to the pursuit of excellence. It is a voluntary peer-review process to determine if current policies and procedures comply with established industry standards. Re-Accreditation assessments must be undertaken every 5 years, and ASDOG's is now under way...

HOW YOU CAN HELP



DONATE via our secure online payment facility **Paypal** at www.asdog.org.au

DONATE by **cheque** or **money order** made payable to Australian Support Dogs Inc. (ASDOG) and posted to **PO Box 5492, West Chatswood NSW 1515**

DONATE via **Direct Deposit** to National Australia Bank, A/c Name: Australian Support Dogs Inc. **BSB: 082-201 Account No: 571 238 135** and email your name, contact details and date of transfer to information@asdog.org.au. **N.B.** All donations of \$2 and over are tax deductible.



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THE TRAINING OF AN ASSISTANCE DOG

15 INCHES LATER or KARA'S GROWING UP STORY...

by Trainer Andrea Blackford

I first met Kara in August 2014 when I acted as a stand-in puppy raiser for her first week with ASDOG. This 8-week old honey-coloured bundle of paws came into our busy household and appeared to be rather feisty. Did the Volhard Test* mislead us as to her temperament? Or was it that I was puppy raising one and minding another ASDOG trainee Assistance Dog at the time? Throw in two inquisitive cats and the resident mutt and Kara's behaviour could easily be explained.

Ann Barnacoat (*see photo below*), Kara's intended puppy raiser, soon took over and for the next 6 months, Kara did what puppies do best: exploring and conquering the world. Ann and Kara made regular visits to the Leichhardt Children's Centre, where the wonderful and supportive pre-schoolers had the important job of naming Kara. They loved to see her grow and hear about her puppy adventures.



In February 2015, Kara came to live with me and together we set off on the journey of learning. We were both new to this: Kara aspiring to become an Assistance Dog and me nervously embarking on training my very first one. Trials and jubulations followed in equal measure but, mentored by Pauline Dickerson, we seemed to succeed.



It was one of the best years of my life, incredibly rewarding and always such fun. I could say we both - OK, chiefly me - were on a constant high, especially when after days of training and half a roast chicken, Kara mastered a new and difficult skill.

The list of skills in Kara's repertoire grew longer and more accomplished and the time came to find someone who would benefit from Kara's assistance. And find we did. Earlier this year, Kara, by now a dog of remarkably calm demeanour, was matched with Declan, a young man living with Cerebral Palsy (*see photo below*).

Now I had arrived at the most rewarding, albeit the most challenging part of training an Assistance Dog... Team training is a slow dance, a give and take and a time to let go. It is a time to pass on information, give a helping hand in teaching Declan the right cues and allowing them to develop a bond. After each team training session I feel more confident to take a further step back and very soon I will only be watching from afar. I do however hope to have regular visitation rights!



*The Volhard Puppy Aptitude Test, or PAT was created by Joachim and Wendy Volhard as a way to test behavioural tendencies and predict what a puppy will be like as an adult.

TWO ASDOG PARTNERSHIPS: ONE DEVELOPING AND ONE WELL-ESTABLISHED

INTRODUCING A BRAND NEW TEAM...

Our former ASDOG Training Coordinator, Gayl O'Grady, is an old hand at training Assistance Dogs. After successfully training Facility Dog, Freya, Gayl was delighted to have the opportunity to guide black Labrador pup, Ivy, through the formal year of advanced training. Ivy matured and thrived under Gayl's tutelage and successfully completed the program. Ivy has now been teamed with ASDOG recipient, Hayley, and together they are on the road to a mutually beneficial partnership. We wish them all the very best for a long and happy alliance!



ATTENTION PLEASE – TEAM WORK IN PROGRESS

OTEN Access and Equity teacher and ASDOG recipient, David King, has been paired with gorgeous Assistance Dog, Ebony, since 2013. We caught up with the team and asked them about work...

VET Flea Help! by David King

Our story has this particular title as Ebony is a working dog – she accompanies me to work at TAFE in Strathfield. VET Flea Help is a very bad pun referencing the Tafe NSW “VET Fee Help” enrolment system. Sorry about that but if you don't laugh you cry with the state of things in the VET (Vocational & Educational Training) Sector.

Ebony fits into our workplace very well. She is not so keen on the travel, coupled up in a wheelchair accessible vehicle. Her way of letting me know, i.e. by the panting, soon changes to a much more relaxed demeanour when we arrive and escape the confines of the cab.

Ebony is happiest when she is in the workplace.

She has her favourites: walkers and willing paw shakers and a varied routine of activities and rest. Being controllable and reliable is one of the characteristics of an assistance dog, though when we take her out of the office for her 11.30 comfort break and ball chasing she displays many wonderful moments of unbridled joy and extreme dogness!

An assistance dog in a workplace enhances greatly a working environment. A lot of people are a lot happier, though some people from some cultures still are very alarmed and I have to be wary of interaction and proximity to them.

All in all I wouldn't be working if it wasn't for Ebony. She is a necessary addition to my day: picking up items dropped by me in the office space and amenities, she gets me active, allows for enhanced social interaction and contributes very well to my wellbeing.



RAISING AWARENESS AND RAISING FUNDS

AN INITIATIVE OF THE COMMONWEALTH BANK OF AUSTRALIA



On Monday 23rd May at lunchtime the 2016 Graduates at the Commonwealth Bank Sydney hosted 'TAKE FIVE' (and "High Five an Assistance Dog") at Darling Park, Sydney. We thank the CBA and Max Cordony for this fantastic opportunity, and happily share their report:



'Heidi and Kara from Australian Support Dogs (ASDOG) visited us at our Darling Harbour offices. What energetic, well-mannered and talented dogs! Raised to help people with disabilities live independently. ASDOG is doing an awesome job and we are looking forward to inviting them back soon.

beyondblue is a charity that fights depression and anxiety, an amazing cause. With 'TAKE FIVE' we wanted to draw attention to stress and mental health in

the workplace. Our goal was for employees to take a break from a busy day and notice how a break can help you relax and work efficiently. The dogs helped us raise \$1,700 in just two hours. These funds have been donated to ASDOG and *beyondblue*.'

EXHIBITING AT SCIA INDEPENDENCE EXPO

Over two days we had the wonderful opportunity to raise awareness for Assistance Dogs at the SCIA Independence Expo - an expo that showcases an extensive range of lifestyle and disability products to empower people with physical disabilities to lead independent lives. We had a lot of interest and were pleased to receive a number of applications from potential recipients.



ATLASSIAN CHARITY MIXER 2016

In April the ASDOG team was excited to accept an invitation to the 2016 Atlassian Charity Mixer. This was a great opportunity for ASDOG to present our organisation to them and identify specific areas and projects we need solutions for. We had the chance to meet other charities as well as Atlassians who were looking for volunteer opportunities.

You can view a short Charity Mixer promo here on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJXYjtp_aHA

We thank them and look forward to productive collaborations in future.



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