



Partners With Paws: Lake County, Ohio

<http://www.partnerswithpawsohio.org>

Volume 1 Issue 1

Animal Tales...

Something magical happens when Mary Kay DeGrandis brings her dog Jasmine to meet with the autistic children at Moreland Hills Elementary School.

Most recently she and two other Partner with Paws volunteers have been bringing their dogs, and dog oriented books with them to their meetings with the children. The children read to the dogs, or listen to stories while sitting close to the dogs. Sitting near the dogs has a calming effect on the children, and the teachers and classroom aides have expressed gratitude for this.

More than simply relaxing the children, Mary Kay says, "We see improvement with verbal skills. The non-communicative kids are now speaking to us about our dogs!" She says she's had opportunity to meet with some of the parents of the autistic children, and they've said that the volunteers and dogs have made a big difference in their lives. The autistic

children in Mary Kay's class are now talking at home to their families about the dogs.

Gracie, (the child in the photo) joined the pet therapy class for one day. She is a diagnosed (deliberate mute". During her first day with the dogs, she began to speak. She spoke softly and in sentences, and always spoke about, Jasmine, Neon, and Max (the three therapy dogs present that day). Mary Kay states, "It was a great moment to experience the power of our pets!"



Above, Mary Kay DeGrandis sits with her dog Jasmine, and student, Gracie during a pet therapy visit at Moreland Hills Elementary School.

Autistic children, who often times have difficulty reaching out to people, seem to have much less difficulty reaching out to the dogs. They pet the dogs, brush them and hug them with seeming ease.

Benefits of Therapy Dog Programs

Studies have shown that, from your point of view, owning and caring for your dog can reduce your stress, and lower your heart rate and blood pressure. It's one of the healthiest things you can do!



The love of a good dog

So it makes sense then, that for people who are isolated from their families, there's nothing like the love of a good dog. Many people in hospitals, hospices, seniors' residences, palliative care units, day care centers, special needs schools,



psychiatric hospitals, or nursing homes can benefit not only emotionally, but also physically, from regular contact with a trained therapy dog.

Here are some of the ways that dogs improve health – for dog owners and those visited regularly by dogs, alike:

- 🐾 Children who have dogs tend to be more self-reliant, sociable, and less selfish than children without pets.
- 🐾 Elderly people with dogs are better able than non-pet-owning elderly people to cope with daily activities.
- 🐾 Owning a dog gives isolated people a routine, a sense of purpose, and a sense of fulfillment that helps prevent depression and loneliness.
- 🐾 Stroking and petting a dog can be relaxing, which is measured by a slower heart rate and a drop in blood pressure.
- 🐾 Owning a dog can help reduce the risk of asthma.
- 🐾 Dog owners are more likely to survive heart attacks than non-pet owners are.
- 🐾 The presence of a dog can ease the effects of Alzheimer's.
- 🐾 People with dogs have been found to have lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels when compared to people who do not.

Source: *Delta Society*



Matters of Importance

My cat Sarah was a round faced calico with a gentle spirit and a sweet disposition. At night she would curl up next to me and purr. It didn't matter if I'd had a bad day, or how I had been feeling with Sarah next to me. I was content and relaxed.

In January my cats Sarah and Ariel became extremely ill. Ariel was in acute kidney failure, and Sarah was vomiting and had severe diarrhea. I'd fed them both the offending 'cutlets in gravy' type cat food recent to noticing their symptoms. My cats were exhibiting symptoms of having been poisoned. Naturally I searched to find out what had poisoned them. At the time, the only thing I thought could have

poisoned them was an amaryllis bulb I had recently planted. I had no evidence they had ingested any of it, however I knew of nothing else in my home that could poison my indoor cats.

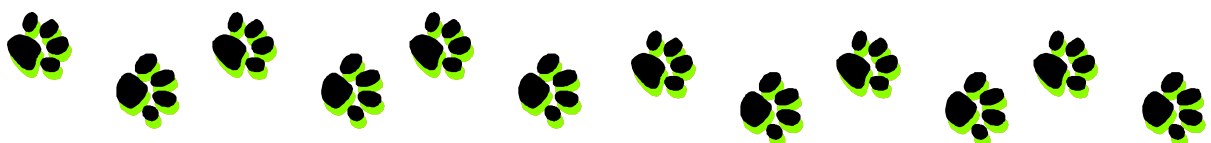
Ariel was in such extreme kidney failure that my vet believed, she would die from it. Sarah, herniated herself from severe vomiting and diarrhea. On my veterinarians' advice, I rushed Sarah to Akron for emergency surgery. She suffered, and did not recover. I miss her terribly, and my heart breaks remembering how much pain she endured.

Ariel is recovering. How much residual kidney damage she will have will remain to be seen.

Are these lessons to be learned from this? I know that I am

much more aware of what I feed my pets, and of the environment in which they live. I researched plants that are poisonous to pets, and discovered that lilies are highly toxic to cats. If a cat ingests any part of a lily, it can be fatal, causing severe kidney damage, vomiting and diarrhea. The ASPCA web site lists plants that are poisonous to pets, but their list is in no way all inclusive.

While my cats were being treated for the poisoning, I removed not just the amaryllis, but almost



every house plant from my home. Although in retrospect, I believe the culprit was the "Menu Foods" wheat gluten in the food that I know they ate, it is good to know what potential sources of poison may be in your home and to remove them.

Spring is here and lilies are popular at this time of year. Hyacinths, narcissus, and daffodils are all in the lily family. Keep these and all lilies away from your home, if you have cats. If you are unsure if the plants in or around your house are

poisonous, find a new home for your plant.

If you suspect that your pet has ingested a poisonous plant or food, you should contact your veterinarian immediately. The length of time you take to get medical intervention for your pet can mean the difference between life and death.

It is important to understand, that your pet may appear normal for several hours or days after ingestion poison. Waiting until your pet stops eating or drinking to seek medical attention may cost you the life of your pet. If you

suspect a problem, call your vet immediately.

If you suspect your pet has been poisoned by a plant, it is advised to bring part of the plant to a nursery for identification if the exact species is not know.

*The ASPCA poison control center continues to caution dog owners that raisins and grapes may be toxic to some dogs. In a one year period the center managed 140 cases of dogs ingesting grapes. Over 50 of the dogs developed life threatening symptoms, seven dogs died.

If you are concerned with all the recent pet food recall here is a website for you to check out all the recalls:
<http://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/petfoodrecall>

PARTNERS WITH PAWS is a 501(c)3 organization promoting awareness of the unique benefits of the human-animal relationship and it's importance to society by providing animal assisted education enhancement (AAEE) programs to youth. Improving the quality of life by helping them develop positive academic, emotional, physical, behavioral and social life skills.

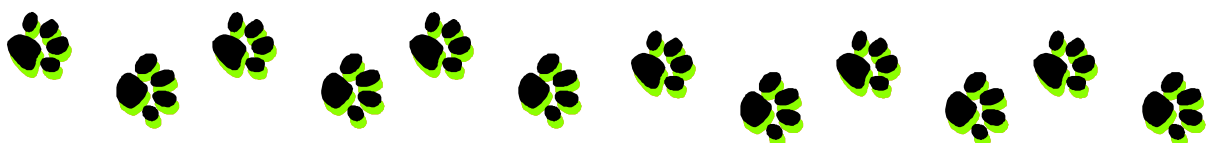


To learn more about Partners With Paws

Visit us at:

www.partnerswithpawsohio.org

or call 440-256-7297



INTERESTING NEWS FOR YOU AND YOUR PET

Barb Collins teaches therapy dog preparation classes at Kelli's K-9 Kingdom in Highland Heights. www.k-9kingdom.com, 440-442-0876. She screens the potential PWP prospects and includes a talk about PWP in her classes.

PWP school year starts in October.

Ingrid Nelson does evaluations/renewals for Delta Society at Kelli's K-9 Kingdom. The next one will be on Dec. 1, 2007. Registration forms can be found on www.royalcrestanimalspa.com site.

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P.O. Box 64
Novelty, Ohio 44072
440-256-7297

