



Montgomery Pet Partners Newsletter
November, 2009
8th Addition

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Letter from the President:

November 18th, 2009

Welcome everyone to the fabulous Texas Autumn! This is why we enjoy Texas so much and are reminded and thankful we do not live in the mid-west! Enjoy those wonderful dogs of yours and get out spreading the word about MPP to friends and people you meet with and without pets. The group needs many volunteers in many areas, so if you are able to help us or know someone that can help and has a special skill or knowledge in PR, advertising, website, accounting, secretarial, media relations, designs, members relations, scheduling healthcare and much more, then please let me know.

We have been so lucky these past few months.

- We have secured **sponsorship** with **Raising Cane's restaurant**, located in The Woodlands on Research Forest and Hollyhill (www.raisingcanes.com). They have been constant supporters and promoters of MPP and the work we do throughout the past year, helping provide food, money and more to the READ program, presentations and local schools. Please help us support them by visiting for some delicious chicken fingers, the best you will taste!

- We were chosen to be the **beneficiaries** of the **John Cooper School Signatures Series Luncheon**, featuring **John Grogan** (best-selling author of Marley & Me). This event was such a tremendous success and has boosted our image and awareness of MPP immensely. For those of you that attended the event, thank you for your support and such a concerted effort. We were truly exceptionally represented and everyone was so supportive and helpful. I will keep the membership informed as to when we receive information regarding the amount MPP will receive from the event.
- And lastly, but I can assure you not least – we have been awarded a **grant** from **Market Street** (in The Woodlands) for the **Change for Charity** program (proceeds from the metered parking in the area) for the months of June, July and August 2010. Thank you to Dina Martin for her work on this grant application.

We are looking forward to climbing onward and upward, please let me know if you have any ideas or suggestions surrounding the group and its growth. We are excited about the coming New Year and I look forward to working side by side with you. I hope to see as many of you as possible at our Christmas Dinner on December 9th, 6:30 p.m. at Buca di Bepo (please email Kay Bollinger for details: kaybollinger@yahoo.com).

Happy Thanksgiving, Michaela Durisek

MPP President & Chair R.E.A.D. Program

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS -

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Durisek

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Orientation

Co-Chairs, Healthcare Facilities	Kay Bollinger Anne Menz
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Chair, Education	Dina Martin
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**Reliant Rehabilitation Hospital
The Woodlands, TX**

MPP has an agreement to provide AAT (animal assisted therapy) to patients of Reliant Rehab Center in the Woodlands. Reliant patients are recovering from neurological conditions such as cerebral vascular accidents and myocardial infarcts: orthopedic surgery such as joint replacements and other conditions require time (two to six weeks) and the services of physical and occupational therapists to become more independent. Some of the expectations for our dogs will be their ability to fetch, play catch, allow grooming, and be able to participate with the patient and the therapist during a rehab session. Right now we are interested in hearing from you as to your interest, and anything about your animal that you think can benefit a therapy session. In addition to therapy, we have several

dogs who visit the patients in their rooms to give them a break in their day. These dogs do not have to participate in physical therapy. The atmosphere at Reliant is cheerful and the staff is very eager to have us there.

As of now, Robert and Oliver, Kay and Zuey, Melissa and Conan, and Sheila and Max and Kimberly and Classy, and Kimberly and Caesar are working at Reliant. Anyone else wanting to participate can contact :

annemenz@consolidated.net or kaybollinger@yahoo.com if you would like to explore this opportunity with your dog. A schedule can be worked out to fit your schedule.

Memorial Hospital The Woodlands

Memorial Hermann Hospital the Woodlands is our new hospital agreement. we made our first visit in November and the visits have been a great success. Susan Shelander, the hospital volunteer coordinator has been very enthusiastic and hopes to have a dog in the hospital every afternoon and evening. Our present schedule is Tuesday afternoon and Thursday evening with plans to have MPP members choose days and evenings that accommodate their schedules sometime after the first of the year. We hope that the MPP members who work during the day will take advantage of the evening hours. There is a hospital volunteer orientation that must be attended before you can visit, the next orientation session will be in January. If interested contact annemenz@consolidated.net

Conroe Women's Shelter

Sammi Fuller recently took over working at the Women's Shelter. Due to her dog, Roady's untimely death, she will no longer be visiting the shelter. Annie has agreed to fill in for awhile.

Nursing Home Visits

Carolyn Wong is coordinating any nursing home visits. Please call her at 281-363-1567 to understand our visiting policy whereby you will be able to set a flexible schedule that fits into your lifestyle. Visits all take place at Park Manor in Conroe.

R.E.A.D./UPDATE ON SCHOOLS

We are thrilled to say that we have begun visits to a new school here in The Woodlands, Wilkerson Intermediate School. Presently we also have teams in Collins Intermediate School in The Woodlands and Sam Houston Elementary School in Conroe. Here is a little snippet from one of our fabulously dedicated READ teams to give you a taste of what you are missing. If you are interested in becoming a READ team please contact me at mdurisek@comast.net or (832) 515-0121.

Story from a R.E.A.D. team:

“We R.E.A.D. to a little fellow in the 6th grade, twice a week to help boost attendance. He apparently has had tremendous issues with attendance before we started the visits. He has only missed two sessions since we started in September - one because of the flu (understandable!) and one because his father took him somewhere. I’m thinking he forgot it was a R.E.A.D.-with-Max day. It was one of our first days other than our standard Friday. The teachers said that he missed almost every Friday last year. He’s now at school every Friday (except the flu week) without fail.”

“He just finished his second book. After the first book (we’re reading Encyclopedia Brown mysteries), I asked if he’d ever finished a book before. “No!” he said, with a grin as wide as the Grand Canyon. Then the R.E.A.D. dog went up and kissed his nose and his grin grew even bigger.”

“The R.E.A.D. dog curls up right next to him and occasionally looks into the book, then up at him, then snuggles up closer to him. The boy loves it. He smiles at the R.E.A.D. dog, pets him, laughs at him – even asks me questions sometimes totally unrelated to the dog or to reading. The school said they’d never seen him smile before – in an entire year. I think he just needs someone to feel comfortable with, someone who can boost his confidence.”

“Most importantly, on Tuesday we had 3 Encyclopedia Brown stories to read before we reached the end of the book. Usually we read two stories each session and try to figure out the answers before reading the solution at the back of the book. After the second one, I asked him if he wanted to read the last or wait until next week. “Today!” he said. He *wanted* to finish reading the book. It’s quite exciting to watch.”

November 2009

Michaela L. Durisek



Annual Author Series Luncheon Continues Successful Tradition with John Grogan

The John Cooper School celebrated the success of the 5th Annual Signatures Author Series in The Woodlands on November 11, 2009, with approximately 700 guests in attendance to hear "Marley & Me" author John Grogan. "Each year, our goal is to have 600-800 guests join us, and we feel fortunate to have met this goal each year," said 2009 Signatures Chairperson Isela Atwood. "Attendance is always

based on interest in the author and we are very pleased to have had the opportunity to host a diverse array of authors each year." The annual luncheon event has previously hosted Barbara Bush, Mitch Albom, Dave Barry and Anthony Bourdain.

As is a Signatures tradition, a chair, donated by Jane Page Design Group and signed by Grogan, was auctioned off and this year raised \$1,100. The Theodore Alexander, hand-carved walnut chair, was taken home by the top bidder, Shirelle Chimenti. Also on hand at the event were nine local authors, pet organizations **and representatives from Montgomery Pet Partners (MPP), a locally based non-profit organization that relies on volunteers and their therapy dogs to help improve the literacy skills of students. A portion of the proceeds from the luncheon will be given to the MPP R.E.A.D. Program.**

John Grogan entertained the audience with stories about the writing of his top bestseller, "Marley & Me: Life and Love With the World's Worst Dog," also giving some behind-the-scenes humorous stories surrounding the making of the film based on "Marley & Me" starring Jennifer Aniston and Owen Wilson. He also discussed the writing process for his

memoir, "The Longest Trip Home" and finished his presentation by taking questions and answers from the audience.

Grogan explained in his speech that after the success of "Marley & Me," he found that young readers also wanted to read about Marley, so he wrote a young reader's version of the non-fiction book, aimed at Middle School-aged kids. He has also written three children's books (fiction) loosely based on the antics of a dog named Marley. The day after his Signatures presentation, Grogan read his most recent children's book, "Marley Goes to School," to third through fifth graders at the Cooper campus.



Libraries:

If anyone has any questions or would like to volunteer at the library, please contact Eileen Lee at elee@countylibrary.org

We have many dates available for teams to visit The Woodlands library in the Spring - 2/13, 3/13, 4/10, and 5/8 from 10 AM to noon. This is a great weekend volunteer opportunity for those out there who can't volunteer during the week because they work. Barbara Kott generally covers the Conroe program herself, but other teams are always encouraged to visit so children have the chance to read to more than one dog.

SCHEDULE FOR 2009-10 FOR THE SOUTH BRANCH LIBRARY, THE WOODLANDS:

South Branch Library
The Woodlands
2101 Lake Robbins Drive
(936) 442-7727
<http://www.countylibrary.org/sou.htm>

Date & Time – Second Saturday of Each Month

NOVEMBER

Saturday 14th - ****CANCELED**** - DUE TO THE CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL
10am-12pm

DECEMBER

Saturday 12th
10am-12pm

JANUARY

Saturday 9th
10am-12pm

FEBRUARY
Saturday 13th
10am-12pm

MARCH
Saturday 13th
10am-12pm

APRIL
Saturday 10th
10am-12pm

MAY
Saturday 8th
10am-12pm

**SCHEDULE FOR 2009-10 FOR THE CENTRAL LIBRARY,
CONROE:**

Central Library
Conroe
104 I-45 North
(936)539-7814
<http://www.countylibrary.org/cen.htm>

Date & Time – Second Wednesday of Each Month

DECEMBER
Wednesday, 9th
3:30pm-4:30pm

JANUARY
Wednesday, 13th
3:30pm-4:30pm

FEBRUARY
Wednesday, 10th
3:30pm-4:30pm

MARCH
Wednesday, 10th

3:30pm-4:30pm

APRIL

Wednesday, 14th

3:30pm-4:30pm

MAY

Wednesday, 12th

3:30pm-4:30pm



Roady

Roady was the sweetest little dog who loved being brushed. He never met a stranger. He worked at the nursing home and Women's Shelter with his partner Sammi Fuller. Roady was born to be a pet partner. Roady died after being hit by a car. He will be missed. He was two years old.

MPP Christmas Dinner

The MPP Christmas dinner will be held at Buca di Bepo in the Pope's room at 6:30 p.m. If you plan to go and you have not already let Kay know you will be there, please email her at kaybollinger@yahoo.com

Other news:

I, Kay Bollinger, will be leaving the Houston area next spring to live in the Atlanta area near my North Carolina cabin. Since I write the newsletter, I would like to find a volunteer who can work in Microsoft Publisher to continue on with our newsletter. Please email me if you would like to take over this job. Remember, this will count toward your hours to retain your membership. kaybollinger@yahoo.com I will train you. Kay