

Dog B.O.N.E.S. Partnership: A Real Treat

When Mr. King and Mitzy come to CLASS, the hallways are buzzing with excitement. Individuals like Jeff Thomas and Lydia Verdijo grin ear to ear waiting for their chance to pet the nearing 100 pound German Shepherd named Mr. King, or to hold Mitzy, the petite Miniature Schnauzer.

And while this is considered a “fun visit” by many of the people receiving services, staff understand the underlying benefit of therapy for people with disabilities.

Mr. King and Mitzy began working at CLASS with their owners, Marilyn McMillan and Dan Miller in November of 2004. What at first was a curiosity for staff and individuals in programs, soon became a “best seller” as far as anticipation for a day’s activity.

Marlene Robarts, Day Hab Manager, says that the visits have been wonderful. “People in my program who typically don’t display much emotion or reaction to things, all of a sudden were very happy, smiling and excited about joining in the activity.” More than 30 people visit with the dogs between Day Hab and IDS Depts., holding them, petting their fur, and talking with them. “It’s a real pick me up for a lot of people here – individuals and staff alike” according to Marlene.

And for King, there is an added benefit. King was brought to an animal shelter when he was 12 years old – an age that is considered very difficult to find a home according to rescue workers. But Dan Miller, his new owner, wanted to give him a chance to not only live happily during his last years, but also to give to people at the same time. That is how King came to be part of Dog B.O.N.E.S. and CLASS. He now looks forward to spending his “golden years” adding a little sunshine to the lives of staff and the people we support.

Dog B.O.N.E.S. (Dogs Building Opportunities for Nurturing and Emotional Support) is a non-profit organization headquartered in Provincetown, MA. They provide training, certification and volunteer community contact information for people wanting to volunteer their canines as therapy dogs. We thank our volunteers, Marilyn McMillan and Dan Miller, for providing this wonderful added benefit to the Programs at CLASS.



Harris Appointed Second Vice President of ADDP

Bob Harris, President and CEO of CLASS, has been named Second Vice President of the Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers (ADDP). The Association of Developmental Disabilities Providers (ADDP) offers proactive, state-wide leadership on behalf of community organizations in Massachusetts that provide services and support to people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities and their families.

The Association is made up of 96 community organizations from across Massachusetts that provide services and supports to more than 32,000 people with mental retardation and other developmental disabilities.