



# Pals

Summer 2014

## From behind the pile . . .

I was told when I started at PALS that summer was the slow time. I didn't really think it was that slow last year, but then again it was my first summer and I didn't really know what was going on, so I just agreed. Well, as I am preparing this newsletter and trying to arrange staff vacations, workshops, events, and fundraisers I am inclined to disagree with the statement that summer is a slow time at PALS.

This summer there is something that we are starting in response to the volunteer questionnaire that was completed when we were compiling information for our Strategic Plan last year. One message that was stated loud and clear was the request for more activities for volunteers. To this end we have planned a number of presentations/workshop. One on canine body language, one on understanding your placement and one as a volunteer orientation refresher.

These are all provided to members of PALS as part of your paid membership. It is our hope to have others throughout the year as well, on other topics, so if you have an idea or are a presenter please give the office a call.

One other event that is being held on September 13 is a Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. It is being held in the Glennfield area of Fish Creek Provincial Park. This event is open to all PALS members and their families (people and fur). Please bring lawn chairs and poop bags and of course leashes as all pets must be kept under control while in the park.

We are planning on feeding you and entertaining you with some games. Please call or email the office and let us know if you can attend (by September 8) so we can arrange for food. Also let us know about food allergies so we can have something there for everyone.

As always, watch your email for messages from me about upcoming events that I am sure you do not want to miss out on.

Until next time, have a great summer, wear lots of sunscreen and please have a cool one for me!



# Benefits of animal visitation

By Rebecca Stares, MSW, RSW

The topic of animal visitation programs often engenders heartwarming sentiments; visiting animals put smiles on faces, are hugged and kissed and cuddled, and provide a reprieve from/of the day to day. However, PALS offers more than just a feel good program, as animal visitation has documented benefits physically, mentally and emotionally for all of the participants. Better yet is that these benefits are not restricted to a specific population, such as older adults in long term care, but apply to all ages and



abilities, and also across multiple cultural groups. Think about the multiple venues where visiting animals are invited: campuses, airports, hospitals, schools, long term care centres, to name a few.

Among the primary benefits is the opportunity for participants to receive animal-facilitated TLC, based on the concept of the human-animal bond, which, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association (2014), is the “mutually beneficial and dynamic relationship between people and animals that is influenced by behaviors that are essential to the health and well-being of both...”. It allows for unconditional love, camaraderie, and positive attachment. Above all, this bond is not limited to pet ownership, but exists wherever a relationship with an animal is possible. For people who are isolated, unwell, limited in their abilities to have meaningful interactions with others, stressed, overwhelmed, anxious, etc., these visitations offer a sense of relief and joy that can fill an otherwise unmet need. Participants in our visitation programs are encouraged to engage in and foster this bond in situations and settings where in-

teractions with animals may otherwise be restricted. Additional benefits are beginning to emerge in the literature and research into animal visitation programs, and also that into animal assisted therapy. Research has documented many times over that the presence of animals lowers blood pressure, improves cardiovascular health, and decreases the risk of heart attack. The presence of animals, especially when coupled with a minimum of 20 minutes of petting, lowers the levels of stress hormones in the body too – chemicals which are toxic both physically and mentally. From a social perspective, an animal visitation program allows for human and animal engagement; the animal opens doors to communication where barriers may have previously existed - now there is a common theme on which to converse, for example. Many people also have personal stories to share, which lends to connection and positive mood. There is also evidence of reductions in depression, anxiety, lowered mood, social phobias, etc. And (!) these benefits begin the moment the participant is aware the visit will occur and linger long after you’re gone.

In short, the presence of PALS programs – and other related visitation programs – offer volunteers, staff, and recipients more benefits than what may be perceived on the surface alone. For all participants, there is huge potential for personal, physiological, and psychological benefits that well surpass the baseline of a paw-sitive interaction.



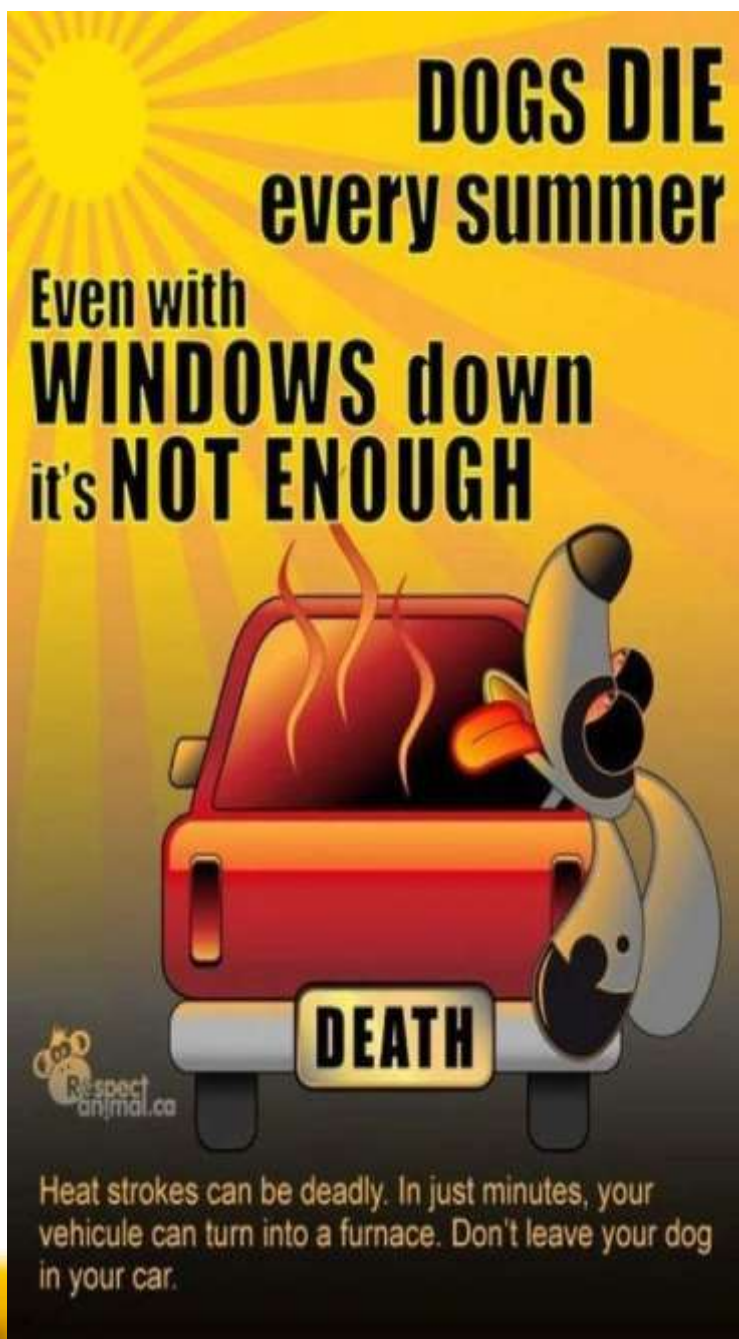
# PALS DOGS NEEDED TO VOLUNTEER AT

Calgary *Humane* Society™

## cocktails for critters

Your dog will walk with the model up and down the runway  
(don't worry—you don't have to model, your dog is the eye candy)

Date is November 1. Call Diana at 403-250-7257 for more information



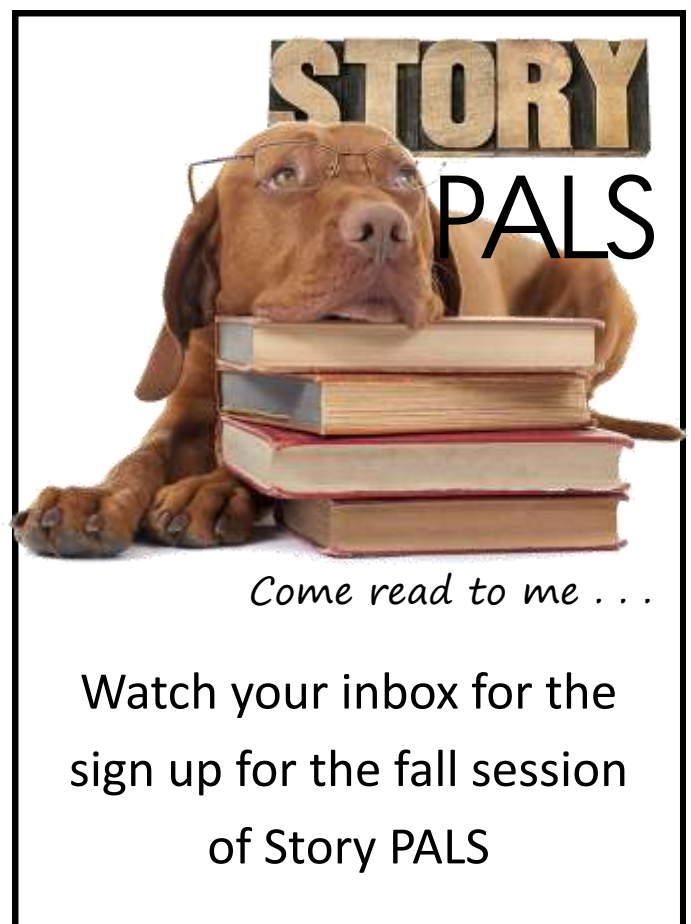
**DOGS DIE**  
every summer

Even with  
**WINDOWS** down  
it's **NOT ENOUGH**

**DEATH**

Respect  
animal.ca

Heat strokes can be deadly. In just minutes, your vehicle can turn into a furnace. Don't leave your dog in your car.



**STORY PALS**

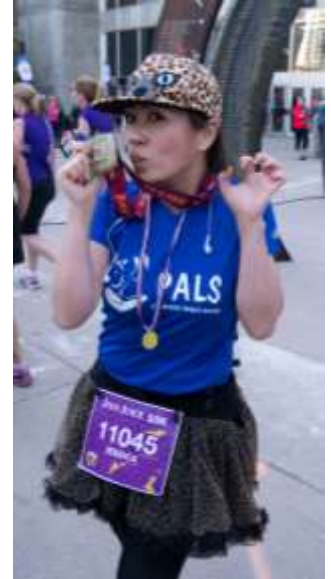
*Come read to me . . .*

Watch your inbox for the sign up for the fall session of Story PALS





# Team Healing Paws did awesome!



**Thanks to Team Captain Camelia & her teammates  
Raising over \$10,500 for PALS programs**



## *Bobbi's Corner*

Well, it looks like summer has finally arrived. At least if the mosquitos are any indication. They sure make a feast of my belly when I go out for a pee break and they think my mom is pretty tasty too. Lucky for us the office is air conditioned so we don't have to keep the door open to keep the place liveable. We just make the mad dash from the door to the grassed boulevard and back.

We have had a couple of new visitors for the last month or so. Jake and

Tucker have been coming to work with their mom. Jake had surgery on his bum cheek so he had to wear the "cone of shame" and he was not a happy camper. He was pretty grumpy there for quite a while and really did not care much for me being in his face. Man is his bark indication. They sure make loud, and his growl is pretty scary too! Mind you, not enough to keep me away—hahaha!

Tucker is pretty easy going and is quite willing to play, but I think that I irritate him sometimes.

On a really good day Diana will bring in her fosters Darcy and Tony and then we can have a really fun no holds barred play day.

Sigh, life is good . . .!  
Smell you later!

## **UPCOMING** *Events*

### **Shaw Charity Classic Golf Tournament**

Canyon Meadows Golf Club

August 27– 31

### **PR Booth at Cocktails and Critters**

Calgary Humane Society

November 1

### **Dog Volunteers to walk with models**

At Cocktails and Critters at CHS

November 1

### **Art Market**

Telus Convention Centre

November 20—23

**Please contact Diana at 403-250-7257  
or [Diana@palspets.com](mailto:Diana@palspets.com)**

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR - 2013

Presented to  
Holly Yaschuk

*In recognition and appreciation of her commitment to the Pet Access League Society and for making a difference through volunteer service.*

Dana Seibert, Executive Director PALS



# PALS Volunteer Award Recipients

Awards were handed out to those who could attend the AGM in April.

CAT OF THE YEAR - 2013

Presented to  
Smokey

*In recognition and appreciation of his commitment to the Pet Access League Society and for making a difference through volunteer service.*

Dana Seibert, Executive Director PALS



Presented on April 27, 2014

*Congratulations*

DOG OF THE YEAR - 2013

Presented to  
Liesel-Marie

*In recognition and appreciation of her commitment to the Pet Access League Society and for making a difference through volunteer service.*

Dana Seibert, Executive Director PALS



*Excellent job :)*

TEAM LEAD - VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR - 2013

Presented to  
Karen Langdon

*In recognition and appreciation of her commitment to the Pet Access League Society and for making a difference through volunteer service.*

Dana Seibert, Executive Director PALS



Presented on April 27, 2014

*Fantastic*  
**Exceptional Fabulous**  
CONGRATULATIONS  
*Fantastic Fabulous*  
**Terrific OUTSTANDING**  
*Fabulous* **OUTSTANDING Exceptional**  
**Terrific**



# PRESENTATION/WORKSHOPS

Any of the following are free to any PALS member in good standing, based on availability. Check the registration date on each event and be sure to get your name in for the ones that interest you.

## Canine Body Language – Recognizing Stress in Dogs

Tuesday, July 15      630 to 845 pm  
Kahanoff Centre (105 12th Avenue SE, Suite 200)

Registration is free to PALS members in good standing and limited to the first 90 registered.

**You must register by July 11 5 pm to be guaranteed a seat. Email [diana@palspets.com](mailto:diana@palspets.com)**

### About the presentation/workshop

Understanding dog body language is your key to communicating with any dog you may encounter, including your own.

With some insight, you can be sure that you will begin to understand your dog's body language, and this is going to be great for your relationship with your dog.

There are three main areas that you want to think about when it comes to your dog's body language – their ears and face, their body, and their tail. If you pay attention to those things, you'll find that you are easily able to understand how your dog is feeling, even though he can't talk to you.

Alison Stephens will be speaking about reading your dog's body language, techniques of minimizing stress in our pets, learning to recognize the calming signals they are presenting to us and other dogs and how to interpret them.



## Understanding Your Placement

Thursday, August 21      630 to 845 pm  
Kahanoff Centre (105 12th Avenue SE, Suite 200)

I have often heard that what volunteers thought visiting with PALS was going to be like, turned out to be quite a bit different.

This does not mean it is bad, but it could just be a bit overwhelming. Well, PALS would like to help! We understand that if you have never been to see someone who is residing in a long-term care facility the sights, smells and sounds can overpower you. This can also be the case if you have never visited anyone in a mental health ward or on a sick children's ward. The emotions that you feel can sometimes make you wonder exactly what you have volunteered for.

This evening is designed for those who would like to have some insight and knowledge some of the more difficult places to visit, what to expect, coping mechanism and support for the visitors.

**Please register with Diana by August 18 at [Diana@palspets.com](mailto:Diana@palspets.com) or 403-250-7257**



# PRESENTATION/WORKSHOPS continued

PALS

## Volunteer Refresher

Thursday, September 18 630 to 845 pm

Kahanoff Centre (105 12th Avenue SE, Suite 200)

This is for all volunteers who may have questions, concerns, comments, and ideas and would like to share them with the rest of the PALS volunteers and head office. While this is not mandatory, we highly recommend that if you can attend that you do. We will be handing out the new volunteer manual and going over the policies and procedures that head office receives that most comments about.

Most importantly we want your input on what is working, what needs fixing, how visiting is going and how we can support you better. This is your time to have our ear so please come out!

**Please register by September 15 with [Diana@palspets.com](mailto:Diana@palspets.com).**



## VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION PICNIC

**Saturday, Sept. 13**

Starting at 2 pm

Glennfield Fish Creek Park



Food

Games

Refreshments

Kids and dogs welcome  
(please bring leashes and poop bags)



Something for everyone—wide variety of foods for all dietary needs

**Please register for the picnic by September 8 so we can order food. [Diana@palspets.com](mailto:Diana@palspets.com)**