



Seward County Kennel Club

A CLUB FOR PERSONS INTERESTED IN DOGS AND THE SPORT OF DOGS.

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Information for the newsletter, including brags, needs to be submitted by the first week of the month to be included in the next newsletter. Please email submissions to the editor.

**PLEASE JOIN US FOR A
CHRISTMAS PARTY**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH @2 PM
BRING A DISH TO SHARE AND
A \$10 GIFT FOR THE GIFT EXCHANGE**

**HOSTED BY
TROY & TABITHA DVORAK
MILFORD, NE**

MEETING MINUTES

Seward County Kennel Club
November 16, 2023
Seward Civic Center -AV room

Members present:

Cindy Hill, Tanya Williams, Tabitha and Ashton Dvorak, Mary Bristol, Morgan Ehlers
Guest: Sam and Jacob Hill.

Meeting called to order at 7:51 by President Tabitha.

Reading of the October minutes by Secretary. Motion made by Tanya to approve minutes as read, 2nd by Cindy. Motion passed.

Report of the President: None

Report of the Secretary:

-The American Kennel Club (AKC®) is pleased to announce the winners of the 2023 AKC Trick Dog Competition. The overall winners were Paula Jarabin and her All-American dog, "Rosie," from Santa Barbara, CA.

-The American Kennel Club is here with all the info you'll need to begin your AKC FIT DOG 2023 Turkey Trot! You can purchase a turkey trot medal in the AKC shop for \$20.

Report of Treasurer: Mary reported that she wrote a check to Jacks travel for 2 judges travel from 2023. Balance \$15,165.70. Tanya motioned to approve upon audit. 2nd by Cindy. Motion passed.

Report of Committees:

Awards & Trophies: (Tanya)- continuing to get sponsorships.

Legislation: (Kathy)- None

Chief Ring Steward: (Troy)- none

Fun Match: (Tabitha)- If you would like to donate toy(s) or monetary donation let Tabitha know.

Show: (Tabitha)- Mary had idea of having a rally ring and obedience ring at the show and go. Rally ring could have an advance course set up or something.

Discussion.

Judges are all approved for 2024 and panel is full for 2025.

Judges' supper will be at Spare time Friday night and Saturday at La Caretta. Members that are not showing to the judges are welcome and encouraged to come. Judge's rooms are booked at East hill.

Membership: (Linda)- None

Newsletter/ Website: (Cindy)- Morgan will contact Rustic Dry Goods to get a link for the store for the website.

SCKC Founder's Award: (Morgan)-Criteria states that 75% of the meetings must be attended. February's meeting was cancelled due to in climate weather. In a normal year it is required that 9 meeting are attended. Due to the February meeting being cancelled does that mean 8 meetings attended still qualifies? Motion made by Cindy to amend the qualification for the 2023 founders award to be based on 75% of 11 meetings for an attendance of minimum of 8 meetings only for 2023. 2nd by Tanya. Discussion. Motion passed. Members who qualify are Mary Bristol, Tabitha

MINUTES continued on last page.



SERVICE DOGS

PARTNERING FOR LIFE

Aspirited, bright and affectionate 11-year-old boy named James is mostly happy-go-lucky. Havoc stirs when unexpected changes trigger anxiety and stress, causing a meltdown. Diagnosed with autism, James has benefitted greatly from getting his autism service dog, "Prince," now 4 years old, from [Retrieving Freedom Inc.](#) (RFI).

James' parents, Scott and Lisa,* are overjoyed that the 75-pound black male Labrador Retriever joined their family two years ago. "Some family outings are more difficult than others," says Lisa. "Prince is trained to help James in especially tough situations by applying pressure against his body, which calms and relaxes him. When we go on shopping trips, vacations and outdoor activities, the entire family feels reassured by having Prince along."



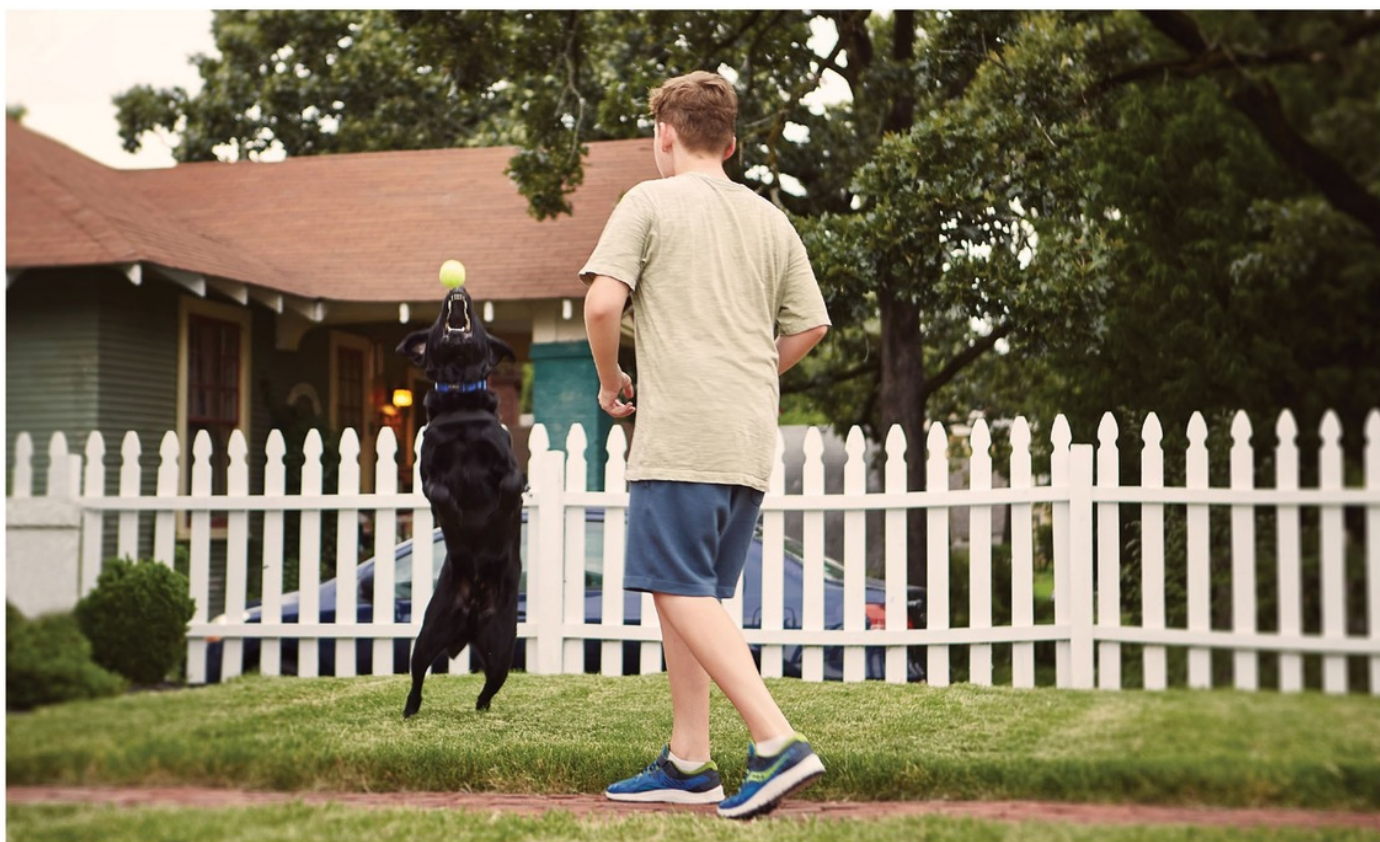
Prince's journey to becoming a service dog started as a puppy.

"James is always excited to be out in public, especially when people show an interest in Prince," adds Scott. "James holds the leash, and this gives him confidence."

Prince's journey to becoming a service dog protected by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) started in puppyhood with a puppy foster parent who introduced socialization and obedience and culminated at 2 years of age after three stages of successful training at RFI. The real test, the Assistance Dogs International (ADI) public access test proving teamwork ability in

public, came after 100 one-on-one hours working with James and his family. They passed.

The [National Institute of Mental Health](#) describes autism spectrum disorder as a neurological and devel-



James plays ball with his autism service dog, "Prince," at home.

opmental disorder that affects how people interact with others and how they communicate, learn and behave. It is considered a “spectrum disorder” because of the wide variation in type and severity of symptoms.

Children with autism may exhibit irritability, lethargy, hyperactivity, and noncompliance. These behaviors may impact families causing high levels of stress, poor emotional coping, marital distress, and high rates of depression. Autism can impact siblings as well as the family as a whole, resulting in lower levels of family adaptability and cohesion.

Since the early 2000s, autism service dogs have helped children with autism and their families. These specially trained dogs use calming behaviors, such as applying pressure by leaning against a child or gently lying across a lap, to decompress anxiety. Their ability to interrupt meltdowns and provide confidence in tense situations has eased stress at home and outside the home on medical visits, shopping, school activities, and trips.

The critical part of training an autism service dog is matching the dog to the right recipient, says Kyle Cory-Yaeggi, RFI Director of Operations. “Each child with autism is very different,” he explains. “Not only do our service dogs perform tasks to disrupt high anxiety, they also offer companionship and unconditional love. Additionally, more than half of children with autism display eloping behaviors. Our service dogs are trained to passively anchor a child, which protects them from running into traffic or getting lost in a store.”

Prince’s puppy foster parent noticed his calm demeanor, and potential to be an autism service dog, at 5 months old as he laid resiliently while her cats pawed at him to play. After months of training and attending classes with college and middle-school students, Prince was confirmed best-suited for a child with autism rather than a veteran with a disability, RFI’s other client focus.

Lisa recalls when James was introduced to Prince along with three other autism service dog candidates. “Prince had a soft mouth when James gave him a treat unlike the other more excited, more aggressive snack-taking dogs,” she says. “Prince also gave James space without crowding him. They bonded pretty quickly.”

TRAITS OF A SUCCESSFUL SERVICE/ASSISTANCE DOG

- Two to three generations of both sides of the dog’s pedigree have passed health clearances for breed genetic and medical conditions
- Passes breed health clearances including tests for hips, elbows, eyes, and heart, as well as genetic tests
- Physically sound, having proper structure, form and function
- Mentally sound, exhibiting a desire to work and an ability to settle in highly distracting environments, such as a grocery store or school
- Intuitive nature, showing responsiveness to its partner



RFI assistant dog trainer Bailey Inman works on core strength and body awareness with this Labrador Retriever service dog in training.

Founded by former professional retriever trainer Scott Dewey and his friend and retriever enthusiast Charles Dwyer in 2000, RFI has locations in Waverly, Iowa, and Sedalia, Missouri. Dewey trained and handled the 2004 National Field Champion, NFC-FC-AFC Dewey’s Drank Of Moon River, and the 2009 Purina Hi-Point Amateur retriever, FC-AFC Castlebay’s Night Robber. Although Dewey and Dwyer are retired from RFI, their mission is going strong.

A prominent assistance dog training facility in St. Louis that began in 1981 to provide assistance dogs to individuals with physical challenges and facility dogs to those in need of emotional assurance is Duo Dogs. Director of Programs Tracy Gellman Liebe says, “Our dogs provide stability and independence, courage and comfort. They generate feelings of love and affection and provide heart and soul.”

Duo Dogs trains mobility assistance dogs, hearing assistance dogs, assistance dogs with skills to provide social-emotional support for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, and facility dogs. Its Touch Therapy Dog program certifies volunteers and their personal dogs to provide pet-assisted therapy at hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, treatment centers, residential facilities, and schools.

Purina is partnering with Duo Dogs in its new Purina Paws for Hope program at

St. Louis Children's Hospital. The program is adding full-time facility dogs and increasing the volunteer Touch Therapy teams to connect pets with youth and promote mental and physical health. Purina's support builds on the one-of-a-kind Purina Family Pet Center that opened six years ago at the leading pediatric hospital allowing family pets to visit patients and thus combining the healing power of the human-animal bond with the family-centered care.

A facility dog through Purina Paws for Hope is "Duo Dog Opal," a 4-year-old yellow female Labrador Retriever, who serves the hospital's Child Protection Program (CPP).

Children being treated through the CPP who have opted to include Opal as part of their clinic visit have recorded a higher appointment attendance of 77 percent compared to a previous average of 60 percent.

Handler Kathleen Houston says, "Opal has a powerful impact on the staff, families and patients who are in a vulnerable state in the child abuse clinic and who have a hard time trusting people after the abuse they've endured. One child said, 'Opal cures depression.'"

Like all of Duo Dogs' assistance dogs, Opal began her training with a volunteer puppy raiser foster family who

PURINA SPONSORS HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND STUDIES RELATED TO AUTISM & MENTAL ILLNESS

Advancing understanding of the human-animal bond in lowering the stress of children with autism and their families and in engaging patients in a mental health crisis was the goal of studies supported by Purina through its human-animal bond program.

François Martin, PhD, head of animal behavior and welfare for Purina, says, "Animal-assisted therapy has been shown to aid those struggling with physical, emotional and mental challenges. This research has provided enormous insights about the bond between people and pets and how this bond can positively impact these patients at home and in therapeutic settings."

Research scientist Gretchen Carlisle, PhD, of the Research Center for Human-Animal Interaction (ReCHAI) at the University of Missouri, wanted to know if having a pet helped to decrease anxiety and increase social interactions of children with autism and their families. The study was based on an online survey that included 764 parents of autistic children, of which 626 were dog or cat owners, 70 were non-pet owners, and 68 whose pet ownership status was unknown.

"Given the high stress experienced in families of children with autism, we wanted to understand the potential for companion animals to help parents who may feel isolated, overwhelmed and stigmatized," Dr. Carlisle says. "Managing stress is important for the health of these families."

Published in March 2020 in the *Journal of Autism and Development*, the study reported these findings based on parents' responses about the benefits of pet ownership:

- Strong pet bonds in which 71 percent of children with autism and 90 percent of parents are attached to their pets
- Lower stress levels in which 59 percent of children and 62 percent of parents experience increased relaxation from a pet
- Companionship in which 56 percent of parents say a pet increases their companionship and affection for their child and 68 percent say a pet adds companionship and affection to their lives



- Increased social interactions for 48 percent of children and 42 percent of parents from pet ownership

Meanwhile, at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, researcher Sophia Soklaridis, PhD, wanted to evaluate how certified therapy dogs aid qualitative research with patients in a mental health crisis. Published in August 2020 in *PLOS ONE*, the study is the first to show the value of using certified therapy dogs as a participatory research tool in a health setting.

"We recorded social interactions between patients and researchers during focus group discussions that included a certified therapy dog to gauge patient engagement on pet therapy activities," says Dr. Soklaridis, associate professor in the Departments

of Psychiatry, Family and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto.

"We found that therapy dogs motivated patients with mental illness to participate in treatment rather than to self-isolate, connected patients with one another and researchers by providing a safe, open environment, and created connections by comforting patients so they were able to relate their own experiences."

Ultimately, participating researchers, recreational therapists, volunteer handlers, and patients agreed that having a therapy dog at their discussions was integral to their success. "Certified therapy dogs can be used effectively to engage hard-to-reach patients in research about their treatment and care. Therapy dogs increased patients' motivation, helped them build rapport and create connections," Dr. Soklaridis says.

"The power of the human-animal bond as reflected in these studies warrants continued studies and understanding," says Dr. Martin of Purina. "These studies are very encouraging by showing that pets may provide relief from stress for families of children with autism and that therapy dogs may encourage mental illness patients to open up for more effective treatment."

took her on outings and to group obedience classes. Around 16 months of age, Opal began advanced training at the Duo Dog facility, working on tasks and skills that matched her natural abilities, interests and temperament. After six months, she began working and bonding with Houston in preparation for facility dog assistance work.

RFI and Duo Dogs seek similar characteristics in service and assistance dogs. Both nonprofit organizations are accredited by Assistance Dogs International, a world-wide-recognized industry authority. About \$50,000 is invested training individual dogs for their roles.

Breeding programs at RFI and Duo Dogs have been developed over the years. About half of RFI's service dogs are from its in-house breeding program, and half are sourced from reputable breeders they work with across the country.

"We primarily train Labrador Retrievers and Golden Retrievers due to the biddability of these breeds to work with multiple handlers," says RFI's John Drach, Director of Training. "A dog that has retriever drive with middle-of-the-road energy makes a good service dog."

Prince, for example, was whelped by "Faith," who is part of RFI's in-house breeding program. Faith came from the Kerrybrook Labrador Retriever kennel owned by Chris Wincek of Chardon, Ohio. Originating in 1980 from English field trial lines, Kerrybrook has produced Master Hunters, a Field Champion, Qualified All-Age dogs, two Champion Master Hunters, and show Champions. Wincek has donated to service dog programs since 1990.

"Service dogs must have a temperament that is highly intuitive, confident, introspective, empathetic, and resilient with a bit of stubbornness. The stubbornness comes in handy when a dog perceives something as a risk and refuses a command for all the right reasons," Wincek says. "I look



These RFI service dogs in training are practicing "place," in which they are taught to stay on the raised dog beds amid distractions until released.

for puppies for RFI that have unflappable temperaments and that are extraordinarily willing to please."

Duo Dogs are bred, whelped and raised at the facility, where volunteers provide 24-hour care of newborn puppies. Dams are chosen from their own breeding program, and Duo partners with reputable breeders to match stud dogs.

Crissy Smith, Duo Dogs' Director of Canine Services and Assistance Dog Trainer, says, "Labrador Retrievers are our standard choice dog breed due to their high trainability and ease of transfer to clients. We breed for specific temperaments that include good behavior, discipline, training, and acceptance of strangers."

Duo Dogs and RFI adhere to a strict review of potential breeding dogs' pedigrees, health clearances and genetic testing. "Purposefully bred dogs from breeders across the country with proven traits that make for a successful service or assistance dog have been instrumental in the past and future success of our programs," Cory-Yaeggi says.

The dynamics of the human-animal bond make dogs ideal partners for people with disabilities. Their intuitive nature combined with training of specific tasks allows them to help people struggling with physical and emotional challenges in unique ways. A bonus is their companionship and unconditional love.

Typically, a two-year wait on both ends — for the recipient and the service dog in training — allows time to prepare for the life-changing partnership. A visit to James and Prince's house these days might find them playing games of hide-and-seek or fetch. At night, James nestles in with Prince lying at the foot of his bed. By morning, the sweet Labrador Retriever has carefully worked his way to the top of the bed close to James. ■

*The family's first names have been changed and last name omitted to protect their privacy.



Duo Dog Opal gets lots of petting in her job as a facility dog at St. Louis Children's Hospital. Opal, who offers emotional assurance to children in the Child Protection Program, is part of the Purina Paws for Hope partnership with Duo Dogs.

MINUTES continued from page 2.

Dvorak, Linda Soukup, Jon Thomas, Tanya William. Troy Dvorak and Morgan Ehlers need 1 meeting to qualify.

Nominating Committee: Includes: Troy, Tanya, Cindy alternates Diane, Jon

Performance: CGC was huge success. 2 out of 8 dogs didn't pass. This is the best class we have ever had. Huge thank you to Lester Breidenstine for teaching the class.

Spring March 18- April 29th has yet to be approved by Ginny for building reservation.

Scholarship: None

Old Business: Discussion of having a raffle at the show.

Need to have a head person to oversee this project to know how many baskets or items for each day. Set up table display and sell tickets. Please get in touch with Tabitha if you would like to take this on.

New Business: Morgan sending out meeting reminder and due reminders.

Mary made motion for the awards banquet dinner for very title is an entry into a drawing for free dinner paid for by the brags jar. 2nd by Tanya. Discussion. Christmas party- will be December 9th at 2pm at the Dvorak's house. Bring a dish to share. There will be a \$10 gift exchanged (white elephant) address is 2012 Vandoran Road, Milford.

Motion to adjourn meeting made by Tanya, 2nd by Cindy. Meeting adjourned at 8:46pm

Seward County Kennel Club

Cindy Hill
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