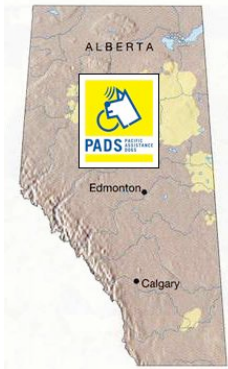




Changing Lives...one dog at a time

PADS PACIFIC ASSISTANCE DOGS



April 2008 eNewsletter

Contact us
at
403-233-PADS

PADS Alberta Satellite Program sends out a monthly e-newsletter to our volunteers who choose to receive e-mail updates about what's happening with PADS in our province. Archives of past eNewsletters will be available in the Alberta section of the PADS website, www.pads.ca.

In this issue, meet PADS Hearing Dog *Chase*, who was puppy-raised in Didsbury, AB, and placed with Client Colleen Barton of McGrath, AB; get last minute details about the MS Conference; and find out what Hearing Dog *Autumn* is excited about!

Sponsorship

Currently, it takes from \$30,000 to \$35,000 to raise, train, and place a PADS Assistance Dog. Sponsorship makes this possible, and PADS is honoured to have many generous Sponsors here in Alberta who have provided for dogs in the PADS program. This month, because we are covering the story of PADS Hearing Dog, *Chase*, we would like to especially thank Husky Energy, Canadian Hard of Hearing Association - Calgary (CHHA-Calgary), and Shaw Staff Charities Program, who are all Co-sponsors of *Chase*. We'd also like to thank Mr Brad Shaw, Senior VP, Operations, with Shaw, who made a personal contribution to PADS this past winter in memory of his own dog, *Barney*.

The Story of PADS Hearing Dog, *Chase*

We called him our "Energizer Puppy".

Chase was a wee ball of apricot fluff when Jackie Clark, PADS Director of Canine Programs, brought him to Calgary for puppy-raising in December of 2003 – a ten week old American import from DoodleQuest Kennels in Kentucky. He was to be the first PADS puppy that Coreen Froese of Didsbury had ever raised, and when she caught her first glimpse of him, she exclaimed, "Oh my goodness! He's so little! How is anyone ever going to believe that one day he will be an Assistance Dog??"



Photo by S. Proudlock



Photo by S. Proudlock

Throughout the winter puppy classes, we were inclined to agree with her for many reasons! *Chase* could not sit still longer than a second – as soon as he was told, "Good sit!" he'd be up and bouncing again. We'd watch his recalls with baited breath as he galloped erratically towards his destination. He'd hop excitedly around a person's ankles until he ran out of leash, effectively calf-roping the person in marvelous Calgary Stampede fashion. A puppy-sitter for him once commented, "From 7am till 7pm, he darted here, there and everywhere. We just sat back and watched in amazement!"

Coreen was also right about the public having a hard time understanding the socialization and training requirements of a small Assistance Dog. She found herself being challenged twice as often as other puppy-raisers at the entrances to stores and businesses, and would have to show *Chase's* certification before she could enter with him – just because he was little.

In spite of the challenges, though, there were glimmers of promises to come. *Chase* had a loving personality, and would cuddle close to a person who was upset and needed comforting. He had a calming influence on children and adults alike. New skills came easily to him, and his memory was phenomenal – he remembered people and places better than any of the other dogs. Because *Chase* was to be a Hearing Dog, Coreen was taught how to give him preliminary sound training with a clicker and a timer-beeper. He responded readily to both sound tools, and also quickly mastered the ten or so sign language commands that Coreen taught him for his future Hearing Dog work.

Coreen sometimes enlisted the help of her family to train *Chase* and harness his endless energy. She would “park” him in the living room with her dad, Eric, and her niece, Erica, who was just under three years old. From a different room, she would call out, “*Chase*, here! Erica, here!” Puppy and toddler would careen excitedly through the house, racing to see who could get to Coreen first. Erica gleefully called this game “fast running”.

Even without Erica around, *Chase* would sometimes be inspired to expend bursts of puppy energy by racing through the house as if he had invisible PADS puppies chasing him – barking excitedly the whole time. After two or three circuits, he’d collapse in a heap and immediately fall asleep.



Photo by S. Proudlock

All too soon, though, his puppy-raising year passed and it was time to send *Chase* back to PADS Campus for Advanced Training. There, he was placed on Apprentice Instructor Pam Zimmerman's string of dogs. Other than occasionally preferring to follow an intriguing scent he'd picked up instead of responding to a recall, he continued to absorb his training without a hitch. *Chase* did so well, in fact, that by late summer – a scant six months later – he was being groomed for placement with a Client in McGrath, Alberta.

Colleen Barton was a young mother with four lively children, one of whom was still a baby. Colleen's genetic hearing loss had progressively deteriorated since she was seven or eight years old, but with excellent speechreading skills, and only a slight impairment to her own speaking ability, she was coping relatively well with the busy world outside her home, especially with the help of her husband, Jay. But in dealing with her growing family, the stress of trying to stay vigilant for the safety of her children was taking its toll. As she put it, “I was always very, very stressed, worrying about my kids all the time. My family – everybody – always teased me because I never let my kids go anywhere. I needed to see them, to know they were okay and safe.”



Dogs in Advanced Training, PADS Campus. *Chase* shoulders his way nonchalantly through his boisterous Yellow Lab friends – *Sable*, *Jasper* and *Stella* – to get to the fence.

Hearing Dog *Chase* would change all that. For one of the final steps in his training at PADS, Pam Zimmerman asked Colleen to send a tape recording of her baby crying, so that it could be used as a specific sound trigger for *Chase* to learn. For some reason, as she set up the first training session using the tape, it went off prematurely. *Chase* reacted immediately, even though he'd never heard that particular sound before, and alerted Pam to the cries of a baby like a pro. At that point, Pam knew he would be perfect for Colleen.

Team Training usually takes place on PADS Campus, but in Colleen's situation – with four young children – staff decided it would be better for the Trainer to come to her. Accordingly, Pam Zimmerman and *Chase* made the journey to McGrath in September of 2005, stopping briefly in Calgary for *Chase* to bring greetings to his Puppy Sponsor: Husky Energy, one of his Co-sponsors: CHHA-Calgary, his Puppy-raiser: Coreen, and all his other PADS friends in Alberta.



Coreen Froese, Pam Zimmerman, and *Chase* Photo by S. Proudlock



TJ (Colleen's friend and interpreter), family members Faleen, Quinn & Jay Barton, Colleen Barton, Chase, Coreen Froese, Eric & Shirley Froese.

Photo by John McMann, Shaw

After a successful three-month probation period, PADS declared *Chase* officially placed with Colleen Barton. Life for Colleen would never be the same!

With *Chase* on duty to hear for her, Colleen was able to relax when she needed to, or to concentrate on a project she was working on. Napping when the baby was asleep was no longer out of the question, because *Chase* would alert her with a touch as soon as the baby stirred. Her sleep at night became deeper and more restful, because she no longer worried that one of the children might need her and cry out; if it happened, *Chase* would know. He supervised the children whether they were playing in the yard or needing help with potty training, and alerted her if they called out. He joyfully summoned her whenever the doorbell rang, to announce the arrival of every visitor. When Jay called Colleen's name, *Chase* would dash to alert her, and bring her to Jay's side. Everyone discovered there was no more testing of Mom's limits by playing quietly so she couldn't hear – when she said ½ hour to bedtime, she'd set the timer, and *Chase* would alert her when the beeper went off.

Colleen herself was incredulous about *Chase's* abilities. "The first time I realized just how amazing *Chase* was, happened about two months after we got him," she said. "We'd had a lot of snow, and then the weather was warm, and then cold again. My yard was a skating rink! The kids had friends over and it was very late. Another Mom and I were talking before they left, and the kids were outside playing.

"All of a sudden, *Chase* jumped on me and led me to the door. I was really confused, because there was no one there. I asked him, 'What is it? What is wrong?' Then one of the kids came running around the corner and said that Quinn, my son, had fallen and hit his head. I was amazed! I could not believe that *Chase* had done that, as we have never practiced with him using the other kids' voices or crying."

It was still challenging for Colleen to take *Chase* out into public, though. She said people didn't seem to see the Hearing Dog vest that *Chase* wore, and store clerks would challenge her as they had done with Coreen, saying that she couldn't have a dog in their store. When they gave Colleen a chance to explain about his certification and the work he did, however, most store clerks and managers understood and allowed them to enter.

Sometimes, too, passers-by would see the friendly dog at her side and call out to him or try to pat him, totally ignoring the Hearing Dog vest or the "Please don't pat me – I'm working" crest. She would have to explain over and over again how important it is not to distract a working dog. Or if people did see the vest, they would misinterpret what it said, and ask how she helps her "deaf" dog! For these reasons, Colleen is eager to participate with PADS in their efforts to improve public awareness about Assistance Dogs and their working relationships with people.

When John McMann from Shaw called her to ask if he could do a video segment about how *Chase* had changed her life, Colleen agreed immediately. They set a date for mid June, 2006 for the interview, arranged for an interpreter to be present and asked Coreen to come south to McGrath to provide puppy-raiser background information. *Chase* happily demonstrated many of his Hearing Dog skills for John, and Colleen described how he helps with her day-to-day activities. The video segment aired on Shaw Cable not long after, and was an excellent promotional piece for PADS in Alberta.



Photo by C. Froese

In spite of the occasional trials in public, though, Colleen can't imagine going back to a life without her Hearing Dog, *Chase*. "He is amazing," she says proudly. "It is non-stop. Every week there is something that just brings me to tears with him."



Photo by S. Proudlock

A case in point happened recently, when she was making some caramels in the kitchen, and trying out a new digital thermometer she had purchased that would blink when it reached the correct temperature. Suddenly, *Chase* alerted her to the fact that he'd heard something. Colleen gave him the inquiry response, but he wasn't sure what else he should tell her. She was already at the correct location for the sound, but she didn't seem to be cluing in on what he'd heard, so he chose to lie down – the Hearing Dog response for a Smoke Alarm.

Just then, her son entered the room and commented that the candy thermometer was not only blinking, but also beeping! *Chase* had never heard that particular sound before, but he knew it was important enough to let Colleen know that something was happening.

Chase just keeps going and going – still our Energizer Puppy!

PADS Presentation for the MS Society



PADS Alberta Satellite Program will have a display table and give a presentation at the upcoming Multiple Sclerosis Conference on May 10, 2008:
**Executive Royal Inn Conference Centre,
2828 – 23 Street NE
8:00 am – 3:00 pm.**

The PADS presentation will be from 8:15 to 8:45 am.

PADS Client, Colleen Barton, husband Jay, and Hearing Dog *Chase*, will be at the table to meet people, as will PADS Client Verne Trevoy and Service Dog *Charlie*. Both Clients are fine examples of people whose lives have been changed by their PADS Assistance Dogs. PADS volunteers who would like to attend the conference and help man the display table can get in touch with Catherine Tudhope, studhope@telus.net or (403) 276-5080.

Important Announcement!!

PADS Hearing Dog, *Autumn*, is very excited to announce that her humans have brought home a new little human to live with them in Didsbury. Greg announced on Sunday, April 6, that she was going to get to play over at Auntie Coreen's house for a day or so, while he took her Kimmy somewhere special. That was fun, because Hearing Dog *Chase* was visiting at the time, and they got to talk all about little humans and how Hearing Dogs can be especially helpful by listening for when the little ones cry. Then the phone rang, and Auntie Coreen said it was Greg, with the news that Jeremy Robert Smith had arrived, safe and sound! Next thing she knew, Auntie Coreen was taking her on a trip to the local hospital to meet her Kimmy and Greg, and *Autumn* got to bring Jeremy a new stuffed bear, and carried it into the room all by herself. Jeremy is very tiny, and has only a little bit of fuzzy fur on the top of his head, but other than that, he's a lot like the PADS puppies when they are first born – kinda soft, and sweet smelling, and noisy when they get hungry!

[Autumn's final Hearing Dog certification was pre-empted this month for Jeremy's arrival, but will be re-scheduled. She and Kim are doing well together.]



Autumn meeting Jeremy Robert Smith for the first time. Photo by Kim Smith

Wag the tail, talk the talk, and keep the furry side up!



PADS raises and trains Service, Hearing and Facility/Therapy dogs for persons who are facing the daily challenges of life with a physical disability, who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, or are living in long term care facilities.

Alberta Satellite eNewsletter
Production/Layout
Wendy Proudlock

100% of all contributions are directed towards meeting PADS fund raising budget goal of \$591,000 for 2008. For more information, contact Bob at 604.527.0556

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