

Doctor Paws

Dogs bring joy to Botsford patients

BY BETH MONTALVO
SPECIAL WRITER

After a grueling day of physical rehabilitation, stroke and joint replacement patients may not only be exhausted but also emotionally drained as well.

"Trying to return to independent living can be a daunting, long-term process. A patient might think, 'Will I ever be happy again?'"

Everyday on Botsford General Hospital's physical rehabilitation unit, about 20 such patients are probably feeling blue about life. Most tend to be elderly people who may be suffering from stress, loneliness and depression, along with their physical maladies.

And then in walks joy, love, a soft, furry head, long floppy ears, a wagging tail and sympathetic eyes.

The therapy teams from the Doctor Paws Pet Assisted Therapy program have arrived, to the delight of the patients. Doctor Paws of Michigan is affiliated with Therapy Dogs Inc., a nationally known therapy organization, which provides training and membership guidelines for dog owners and their pets.

In addition, upon passing a rigorous evaluation, each therapy pair registers with the organization and are insured for animal-assisted activities such as hospital, special needs center and nursing home visits.

Leading the nonprofit, all-volunteer Doctor Paws of Michigan program is Terry Seraceno. Seraceno also works part-time for Botsford as a secretary in Medical Administration.

However, most of her time, to the tune of 30 hours per week, is spent running Doctor Paws. In March, Doctor Paws membership doubled to 150 when Seraceno staffed a booth at the Detroit Kennel Club Dog Show at Cobo Arena. Yet, the need for more therapy teams seems boundless.

While the Michigan program started at Botsford about seven years ago, it has grown to include sites all over the state, with more everyday requesting Seraceno to provide therapy teams for their facilities.

Seraceno explains her motivation to give so much to this organization, "There is real magic when fur meets frailty. In an instant a connection is made that sparks life from listlessness. Even Alzheimer's patients, who have ceased interacting with others, can act appropriately with therapy dogs. It's a miracle to witness moments like these."

Dr. Jeff Pierce, a physical medicine and rehabilitation specialist on Botsford's staff, finds the interaction between his patients on the physical rehabilitation unit and the Doctor Paws dogs to be beneficial.

"It's uplifting and therapeutic for patients, helping them to relax and

relieving their depression. In fact, I have read about research that has been done that documents these positive effects."

Interested in learning more? Visit www.drwpaw.org, or call Terry Seraceno at (248) 888-7488. Botsford's Web address is www.botsfordsays.com.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLER
Pet Fashion: Terry Seraceno displays the kerchiefs Doctor Paws sells to help with costs.



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Smooches from pooches: Helen Tesso pets Boomer while he steals a kiss from Carla Ligi, a Botsford recreational therapist.

Relay for Life returns

The American Cancer Society's annual 24-hour Relay for Life returns to Stevenson High School starting at noon Friday, June 15.

This community event allows people from all walks of life to celebrate life for survivors, to remember loved ones lost and to rally together as a community to fight cancer.

Last year, the Livonia Relay for Life raised more than \$51,000 and brought more than 600 people to Stevenson High School. This money is used to fund cancer research and local education and community outreach programs.

Kicking off the relay is a victory lap of cancer survivors around the track. And as the sun goes down, luminaria line the track in remembrance of those touched by cancer and remind participants of the importance of their contribution.

Relay For Life is held in more than 2,700 communities throughout the country.

Those interested in participating are invited to call the American Cancer Society at (248) 557-5353.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLER

Play time: Boomer catches a ball tossed by owner Carla Ligi. Therapy patient Inez Cox also tossed the ball to Boomer, which assists with her physical therapy.



STAFF PHOTO BY BILL BRADLER

Bully for him: Zak the English Bulldog and his owner, Sue Roberts, are ready to hit the wards.

Residents support Old Homestead SAD

BY HEATHER NEEDHAM
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Twenty years ago, Old Homestead residents had paved streets put into their subdivision, replacing gravel ones.

Now, the streets are starting to show signs of normal wear and tear, such as cracks and potholes.

Hills City Council Monday approved a special assessment district for Old Homestead residents to cover a \$908,006 repaving project, of which the homeowners will pay 80 percent. Council also approved granting the contract to Detroit Concrete Products of Milford.

Work is expected to begin mid-

May and be completed within 90 to 120 days, or by this fall, said Skip Ottwell, city engineer. Old Homestead, which was built in the 1950s, is located at the northwest corner of Drake and 11 Mile.

"We're going to grind off the top of the streets and repave them," Ottwell said. The street was paved in 1981 and has not had any major work done on it since then.

The road will be reconstructed to conform with local road standards. Ditches and culverts will be improved and there will be some drain improvements as well.

Included in the total project cost is \$85,000 for drainage

improvements to address runoff problems associated with San Marino golf course. The city will cover those costs.

Each homeowner with frontage on Old Homestead's interior streets will pay roughly \$3,989.93, depending upon how much frontage they have. Residents will be able to pay over a 10-year period with interest if desired.

A petition distributed to residents showed 62 percent were in favor of the repaving.

One of those residents was James Orr.

"I am 100 percent in favor of the project," Orr said at a council meeting Monday.

Sorrows auction slated April 28

On Saturday, April 28, the Family Center at Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Farmington will be transformed into an enchanted spring garden as the OLS Parent-Teacher Guild hosts the "2001 Springtacular Spectacular" Auction.

Proceeds will benefit the school's Technology Fund. The gala evening will include fine dining, dancing and an extensive auction.

Celebrity Chef and Our Lady of Sorrows Alumnus Keith Famie, hosted by Bruce and Peggy Lilley, a condo in Naples, Fla., for a week; a trip to Cancun, Mexico; a new kayak with lessons; a dinner for six by Chef Dave Platzer at the Bonfire Grill; limited edition U-M football autographed by Drew Henson and Lloyd Carr; and an official Red Wings Jersey autographed by the 2000-2001 Red Wings Team.

The evening begins at 6 p.m. with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, music by harpist Christa Grix and the opening of the Silent and Super Silent Auc-

tions. A buffet dinner featuring pasta and carving stations will be served at 7:30 p.m., followed by the Live Auction and Selective Raffle drawings.

The evening will continue with a Dessert and Cappuccino Bar and dancing to the music of "Living Energy."

Our Lady of Sorrows School provides education for more than 950 students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Auction tickets can be purchased for \$50 per person. For information, call Cheryl Crawford, auction co-chair at 248-478-2771.

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