



Ontario Veterinary College  
PET TRUST FUND

# Best Friends

NEWSLETTER | FALL | 2009

BEST FRIENDS OF PET TRUST IS  
PUBLISHED BY THE ONTARIO  
VETERINARY COLLEGE FOR  
THE INTEREST OF OVC PET TRUST  
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[www.pettrust.ca](http://www.pettrust.ca)



PHOTO BY DEAN PALMER

Maddie and Kate Hanson took a star turn at a photo shoot donated to OVC Pet Trust by Guelph photographer Dean Palmer, in memory of his sister's dog, Danny (see page 7). The Hanson girls raised \$1700 for OVC Pet Trust; their story is below.

## Big hearts yield big results

### Sisters raise funds in dog's memory

THE BEGINNING OF SEPTEMBER was a busy time for the Hanson sisters. Maddie and Kate of Guelph were getting ready to start Grades 6 and 4. They were also preparing for a lemonade sale – the latest in a series of fundraising efforts they had undertaken to raise money for OVC Pet Trust in memory of Ernie, their dog.

Ernie had been treated for a year-and-a-half at OVC before succumbing to lymphoma in October 2008.

By October 2009, the sisters had raised a total of \$1700, which they presented to OVC Pet Trust in recognition of the one-year anniversary of Ernie's death. It's an impressive amount, not only because of the girls' ages, but also because they raised it through sales of bead crafts and handmade art, the lemonade

sale, and by providing manicures, hair care and massages for family members.

"Our family and our cousins have been very supportive of everything we have done so far," they wrote in a letter promoting the lemonade sale. Their father matched the money they raised dollar for dollar and Gordon Kirby, associate dean of Research and Innovation at OVC, matched the money they raised in the lemonade sale.

Dr. Kirby's research into finding a diagnostic test for canine hemangiosarcoma has received funding from OVC Pet Trust (see page 4); his wife, Nathalie Lauriault, is a teacher at St. John's-Kilmarnock where both girls are in the International Baccalaureate program.

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UNIVERSITY  
of GUELPH

CHANGING LIVES  
IMPROVING LIFE

## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

### Winners announced in survey draw

More than 200 veterinary clinics participated in a survey on OVC Pet Trust Fund that was undertaken by the group's events and marketing committee to determine how the OVC Pet Trust Fund can contribute to the needs and expectations of the practicing veterinarian.

"One of the goals of our organization is to increase our level of communication and support to participating veterinary practices," says Stephen Woeller, executive director, OVC Advancement, who is responsible for OVC Pet Trust Fund. "The survey results will help us develop services that meet veterinarians' needs."

Two \$100 vouchers for Lifelearn Inc., veterinary continuing education, were offered as an incentive to encourage veterinarians to complete the survey. The winners are Dr. Joanne Olinyk, DVM '84, of Colborne Street Pet Hospital, Orillia, Ont., and Dr. J. Marc Bourassa, DVM '81, of Blue Cross Animal Hospital, Petrolia, Ont.

**OVC Pet Trust** would like to extend its thanks to Mary Beaton, owner of Langdon Hall Country House Hotel and Spa in Cambridge, Ont., for hosting a luncheon on Oct. 25, 2009, in support of OVC Pet Trust. Fifty friends and supporters enjoyed presentations by Alastair Summerlee, president and vice-chancellor of the University of Guelph, and Elizabeth Stone, dean of the Ontario Veterinary College. The presentations focused on cancer research in animals and humans.

## Excited about initiatives

### Looking ahead with OVC Pet Trust

IT IS A PLEASURE to have this opportunity to share some thoughts about the Pet Trust Fund. Started in 1986, OVC Pet Trust was originally established to co-ordinate development capacity and applications for research funding. Wayne McDonell, DVM '65, helped to establish within the OVC Pet Trust structure a memorial-giving program allowing veterinarians, families and friends to express sympathy or honour a person or a pet. Before this time, there was minimal funding available for university-level research into the health of companion animals and their relationships with people and human and environmental health.

While the memorial component is still an important first point of contact for many supporters, other first-time donors are attracted because of the strength of OVC's research and clinical practice and the quality of OVC graduates.

Our mission statement is: "OVC Pet Trust honours the relationship between pets and their people and veterinary caregivers. We do this by raising funds and supporting learning, healthcare, and research at the Ontario Veterinary College."

Since its inception, the OVC Pet Trust has funded hundreds of small animal research studies at the College. All companion animal practitioners, their patients and the patients' families have benefited directly and indirectly from this research. Patients also benefit from the many special projects funded in part or in whole by the OVC Pet Trust. These include the small animal intensive care unit, the MRI and its dedicated suite, the radiation unit, the CT scanner and OVC's 3D colour Doppler ultrasound.



Dr. Mary DeCaire

**Mary DeCaire, DVM '76, is a partner in a small animal practice in Bracebridge, Ont. Dr. DeCaire was elected as chair of the Pet Trust Board of Trustees in the spring of 2009, having served on the Board since 2005.**

We are excited about the upcoming initiatives supported by the Pet Trust Fund, such as the Animal Cancer Centre, a core component of the University of Guelph's Institute for Comparative Cancer Investigations. Please feel free to contact us for more information:

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**519-824-4120 ext. 54370**

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SUPPORTING CANCER RESEARCH

Six Degrees of Separation

The story of Bogey, "The Wonder Dog"

Submitted by Suzi Beber, Founder of The Smiling Blue Skies® Cancer Fund



ROBIN EAGLESON'S HUSBAND CRAIG had never owned a dog. Then he turned 50. He might have bought himself a fancy sports car. Instead, he opted for "speed" of another kind, a border collie named Bogey who proved himself a ready and willing agility participant. Bogey also proved to be the common link in six degrees of separation between various dog owners across Canada.

Bogey had an impressive track record in agility. In 2006, with Craig at his side, Bogey earned the title, Agility Trial Champion of Canada. Bogey was one of only 12 dogs chosen to represent Canada at the World Championships of Agility in Belgium in 2008 – the year he also was the Ontario Regional Steeplechase Champion.

In May of this year, Bogey and Craig placed third overall at the 2009 Agility Association of Canada Ontario Regional Championships. They were supposed to compete in the 2009 Canadian National Agility Championships at the end of July.

Fate had other plans. Bogey was only eight when he got sick. There were no “It has to be cancer” signs. Robin was making jam the

Sunday before Bogey died. From the kitchen window, she watched helplessly as Bogey began to stagger.

The world Robin and Craig knew with Bogey changed forever in that instant. They raced Bogey to an emergency clinic, where they were referred to the Ontario Veterinary College Teaching Hospital. They were completely overwhelmed when they learned that Bogey had hemangiosarcoma, a form of cancer, and that he had about six weeks to live. Four days after his diagnosis, Bogey died in Craig's arms.

Even though Bogey had only been gone for a few weeks when the date for the Nationals came around, Robin and Craig decided to turn their sadness into something special. Robin is Scottish and she loves men in kilts. Someone said that they would pay \$10 to see Craig wear a kilt at the Nationals. Someone else said they would pay \$20 and another said \$40 and so on. Both Craig and Robin wore kilts at the Nationals, where they sold plaid ribbons of hope. Robin created a memory wall – by the end of the 2009 National Agility Championships, almost everyone was wearing a ribbon to honour the memory of dogs lost to cancer. Nearly \$3000 was raised! Sales of the ribbon at agility trials in Thunder Bay, Ont., and in the U.S. added another \$400.

Now for the six degrees of separation. After Bogey died, I received an email from Tania Costa, owner of the Canine Wellness Centre in Toronto, and a long time supporter of Smiling Blue Skies. She had competed with Craig and Bogey in agility and had been a therapist to them too. What's more, she is a very close friend of Lynda and Dan Yielding, owners of Muskoka Agility Dogs (MAD). They are located outside of Huntsville, Ont., in the Muskoka region where the first Smiling Blue Skies Walk for Canine Cancer was held.

“Every once in a while, an agility team completes a course and all a spectator can think of is the beauty of the partnership. Craig and Bogey had runs like that,” Lynda wrote in an email. “I remember one run

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Jewelry celebrates connections

Sales of Smiling Blue Skies Jewelry help celebrate the connection between people and their animals while supporting the donations of The Smiling Blue Skies Cancer Fund to OVC Pet Trust.

The line is designed and created by founder Suzi Beber and features dog and cat tags, pewter necklaces, pendants, lapel pins, zipper pulls, chains, charms, paw print charms, earrings, touch stones, and ankle and wrist bracelets.

All can be custom-designed to include an animal's name and the purchaser's choice of stone (depending on piece). The full line of jewelry can be viewed on the [Smiling Blue Skies](http://www.smilingblueskies.com) website [www.smilingblueskies.com](http://www.smilingblueskies.com). Negotiations are underway to carry the line through the OVC Bookstore.



Custom-designed for Robin and Craig Eagleson, pieces feature an image of Bogey on the front and the words “Always” on the back of the zipper pull (left) and “Bogey, The Wonder Dog” on the back of the pendant (right). The semi-precious stones used are moonstone, Baltic amber and black onyx.

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK: INVESTING IN RESEARCH

**\$5 million allocated to Animal Cancer Centre**

Following discussion at the June board meeting, the OVC Pet Trust board of trustees voted to make a \$5 million allocation to the Animal Cancer Centre (ACC), a key component of the University of Guelph's Institute for Comparative Cancer Investigation.

"Our donors have made this decision possible. We can now speak with certainty: Canada's first comprehensive animal cancer centre is about to enter the design and build phase," says Stephen Woeller, executive director, OVC Advancement.

More than three-quarters of the amount will support the first phase of the ACC's infrastructure, including architectural design and construction. Two physicians (a medical oncologist and a general surgeon) will be hired on contract. Funds also will be used to purchase and implement software to allow the CT scanner to talk to Cobalt radiation therapy unit and improve the accuracy of radiation therapy.

**Developing a test for cancer in dogs**  
**Aim is for early detection**



JUST A FEW DAYS EARLIER, the dog had seemed relatively normal. Yet when Gordon Kirby, DVM '83/PhD '92, now associate dean at OVC, operated on the animal, he found a basketball-sized tumor. "The earlier a cancer is discovered and treated, the more positive the outcome is likely to be," says Dr. Kirby. This rule applies to animals as well as humans. Yet one cancer common in large breed dogs, hemangiosarcoma, is usually identified so late that the average life expectancy after diagnosis is only four to six months.

Hemangiosarcoma is a cancer of the blood vessels that can begin in various parts of the dog's body, making it hard to detect. "It could save many lives to have a test that could detect this cancer at an earlier stage," says Dr. Kirby. He set out to see if one could be developed, in collaboration with researchers Margaret Stalker, Paul Woods and Sarah Boston. To create the test, Kirby explains: "We acquired blood serum samples from dogs who had this kind of cancer, as well as samples from dogs who didn't, and started looking for something that might be a marker for the cancer."

Blood serum has thousands of different proteins in it. The researchers processed the samples to separate these proteins and dye them – one colour for the proteins in the cancerous serum, and another colour for the proteins in the healthy dogs. "What we found when we compared these was a much higher level of one particular protein in the dogs who had the hemangiosarcoma,"

Dr. Kirby says.

Further comparisons led to a result that Dr. Kirby describes as "so exciting I could hardly contain myself." One dog had serum samples taken at different times. When he was first diagnosed with the cancer, his levels of the marker protein were high. Then the tumor was removed, and the levels dropped. Dr. Kirby then noticed that at a later point in time, the protein level had increased again. It turned out that the cancer had returned. This change in the protein level according to the state of the dog's health suggests it could be a reliable indicator.

"We have to do more to validate this, and to test it with a larger number of dogs," says Dr. Kirby. "Our hope is that this will be a test that vets in the field can do readily for dogs who may be at risk. I think this may turn out to be a great example of how investing in research can show real benefits to the health of our companion animals."

Dr. Kirby presented his initial results at the Veterinary Cancer Society meeting in October; many in attendance asked when the test would be available to practitioners and several oncologists offered to send him dog serum samples to help verify that the test is accurate.

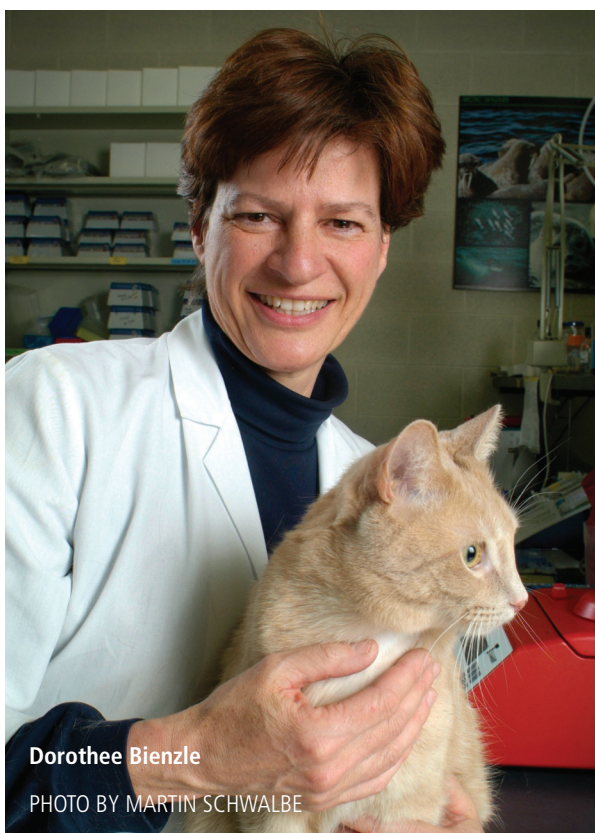
"We are currently planning a large validation study (hopefully with Pet Trust funding) that will involve participation by local referral practices," says Dr. Kirby.



## YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK: INVESTING IN RESEARCH

# Research focuses on feline immune illnesses

Results may have applications to humans



Dorothee Bienzle

PHOTO BY MARTIN SCHWALBE

“THE OVC IS A WONDERFUL PLACE TO DO RESEARCH,” says Pathobiology professor Dorothee Bienzle, DVM ‘88/M.Sc. ‘92. “The record-keeping is excellent, so you can track cases and analyze results. Not every place where animals are treated has such excellent records.”

Dr. Bienzle’s research uncovers hidden jewels buried in the records of past cases: data that when analyzed can help guide decision-making for future cases. Recently, working with student Daniel Caudle, B.Sc. ‘08/DVM ‘12, Dr. Bienzle reviewed cases of cats with feline lymphoma, a cancer of the immune system. “This is very common in domestic cats,” she explains. Caudle and Dr. Bienzle examined sections from stored blocks of tissue taken from biopsies on the cats, the records of how the cancer was treated, and information about the outcomes for the cats.

“We found, for example, that most cats who had lymphoma in the nose tended to respond well to chemotherapy and live for several years afterwards,” Dr. Bienzle says. “Cats who had lymphoma in the thymus, though, generally did not do well, even with chemotherapy.” The data is still being analyzed and results will be presented in December.

Dr. Bienzle is also collaborating with researchers around

the world to study the feline immunodeficiency virus, which she describes as “like AIDS for cats.” The key feature of both diseases is that the virus infects the immune cells, and Dr. Bienzle says she is studying bone marrow and blood samples to determine how the virus is able to do this. “We don’t really know what goes wrong and why the immune system is not able to deal with this kind of virus the way it fights other viruses,” she adds, “but we are identifying some of the factors that make cats resistant so they live longer even when the virus is present.”

Like feline lymphoma, worldwide FIV is quite common in domesticated and wild cats. “With domestic cats, the main route of prevention is simple – don’t let them have sex or bite each other,” Dr. Bienzle says. Beyond that, treating the disease caused by FIV can be complicated. While HIV has only been infecting people for about 300 years, Dr. Bienzle says that cats have been contracting FIV for more than 20,000 years, and that’s why cats may take longer to become ill after infection than humans do – both cats and the virus have adapted to each other. “Our research is identifying some of the aspects of the infection that change with time,” she explains.

The connection between diseases that affect humans and those that affect cats is very close to the surface in Dr. Bienzle’s work. The insights and discoveries that she makes about treating cats, she says “may also give us some clues about helping people.” For example, some lymphomas in cats occur in chronically inflamed tissues, akin to their human counterparts.

## Animal Cancer Centre focus of campaign

OVC Pet Trust friends and donors will be asked for their support for the Animal Cancer Centre in the Annual Fund appeal that begins in November. “We have been so fortunate for the support we have received to date,” says Karen Scott, development officer, OVC Pet Trust. “We are in the home stretch of this part of the campaign, but still need help to achieve our goal.”

The Animal Cancer Centre will build on existing cancer services at the OVC. It will help offer advanced cancer care for sick pets, train future cancer specialists, provide counseling for families and fund leading-edge research in new diagnostic procedures and therapies.

The Centre is a key component of the University of Guelph’s Institute for Comparative Cancer Investigation and part of the emerging Ontario Veterinary College Health Sciences Centre.

PET PROFILE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that I judged in Kingston, Ont., and I just felt privileged to be in the same ring. I had goosebumps when they finished, and the goosebumps still come back when I picture that run.” After the loss of Bogey, MAD held a trial to celebrate his life and to honour his memory. They raised more than \$1100.

I belong to the Academy of Vancouver Island Dogs (AVID) here in Victoria, B.C.; France Jackson, Barry Beckner and their entire club of instructors and students have been longtime supporters of Smiling Blue Skies. France and Barry distributed Smiling Blue Skies clickers and information about Smiling Blue Skies and OVC Pet Trust to participants at the Nationals and wore jackets that read "It's always a clean run with Smiling Blue Skies."

France and Whistlin Dixie, her border collie, placed eighth at the Nationals. The first-place team was Kim Anderson, another longtime supporter of Smiling Blue Skies Jewelry, and her border collie, Spring.

Anneli Hilton, the owner of Edmonton's See Spot Run Doggie Daycare and Training Centre, also was at the Nationals where she wore one of the Eagleson's plaid ribbons of hope and was heartened to see Bailey on Robin's memory wall. Anneli is waiting for her own special piece of Smiling Blue Skies Jewelry, which she learned about from Shannen Jorgensen, an agility enthusiast and papillon breeder from Calgary, Alta.

In 2003, Shannen and her papillon, Target, made history when they were selected for the first Canadian Agility Team to compete at the Agility World Championships. Five years later, Shannen competed alongside Bogey and Craig in Belgium.

Shannen wears a portrait of Target that I created for her. AVID's France Jackson and my friend Kathy Campbell now have papillons from Shannen - Rysk and Zip-R.

We are all so closely connected by the love we have for our dogs that the six degrees of separation really aren't that surprising.

# Mya keeps moving

## Cancer, hip dysplasia won't slow her down



Mya is a seven-year cancer survivor.  
PHOTO COURTESY MCDONALD FAMILY

MYA'S GETTING READY TO CELEBRATE HER 15TH BIRTHDAY this December with some dog treats and probably a walk to the park. For her owners, their joy in celebration will be mixed with appreciation for the care Mya has received at OVC over the past seven years.

When Mya, a Shetland sheepdog (sheltie), retired from the show ring at age eight, she was adopted by Marion and Alex McDonald of Gravenhurst, Ont. Veterinarian Mary DeCaire evaluated her and found that she had hip dysplasia. "The only reason Mya was still walking was because she hadn't seen the X-rays and didn't know how bad it was," says Dr. DeCaire. An OVC graduate herself, Dr. DeCaire sent Mya to OVC for possible hip replacement surgery, but it was determined that medical management was probably a better choice, given how small and light Mya is.

"The treatments OVC recommended are working beautifully," Dr. DeCaire says. "Mya's still walking seven years later."

A year later, Dr. DeCaire discovered a mass on Mya's right hind leg. A biopsy revealed that it was cancerous, and Dr. DeCaire performed surgery on the tumor.

Unfortunately, Dr. DeCaire says: "I couldn't remove enough of the tissue to be sure it wouldn't recur – that would have meant removing the whole leg. And while many dogs are fine with three legs, because of her hip dysplasia, that wouldn't have worked for Mya."

So once again Mya came to OVC, this time for radiation therapy. But she didn't come alone. The McDonalds packed up their motorhome and stayed in a Guelph campground for four weeks while Mya had radiation treatments five days a week. Each morning they'd take her to OVC for her treatment, wait until it was finished, then bring her back to the motorhome to rest along with their other sheltie, Garth. That meant Mya had the reassurance of her family and familiar surroundings at the end of each day.

"Mya's now a six-year cancer survivor," Dr. DeCaire says. "She's free of any kind of cancer and just has a little bit of a bald spot from the radiation."

The little dog continues to be a favourite at Dr. DeCaire's practice and impresses everyone with her good nature. As Dr. DeCaire says: "She's a great ambassador for OVC, because she's done so well."



# Honouring Danny

Photographer takes people and pet portraits



Donna Palmer and Danny  
PHOTO BY DEAN PALMER

DEAN PALMER DIDN'T REALLY LIKE Danny the Doberman at first. His sister, Donna Palmer, DVM '99, had adopted the dog as a rescue and "he clearly had had some troubled times," Palmer says. "I didn't trust him around my kids."

Danny's behaviour changed over time, however. "He became more friendly, more trusting and better socialized," Palmer says. On subsequent visits, "I realized I really liked him; he totally won me over."

Danny was also very special to Donna. She is an avid distance runner and Danny was her running partner, even saving her from a potentially dangerous situation on one run.

When Danny died in August 2009 of heart failure at age 12 and a half, Palmer wanted to do something to honour his memory. He was flipping through *Dogs in Canada*, thinking of an appropriate tribute, when he spotted an OVC Pet Trust ad.

"I wasn't in the position to make a financial contribution," Palmer says. "But I thought 'Hey, I could take pictures – it's what I do!'"

Palmer, a commercial photographer based in Guelph, wrote to OVC with an offer to donate photography services to OVC Pet Trust. "They emailed back right away. I was really pleased, because you never know how an offer like this will be received. And my sister was thrilled."

A casting call went out and on October 3, Palmer spent the day photographing different groupings of 20 dogs, a half-dozen cats and a variety of humans. He turned over a disc of more than 250 pictures to OVC Pet Trust, along with full usage rights.

He's used to working with dogs; one of his best clients is *Dogs in Canada*. He often takes pet portraits and many clients include their pet in family portrait sessions.

Palmer doesn't have dogs himself – his son's allergy prevents it – but "The rest of my family makes up for it," says Palmer (father Nigel is also an OVC graduate – DVM '63). "Both my sisters and my parents always have dogs."

"Of course Donna loves all her dogs, but Danny was one that really stood out."

*OVC Pet Trust could not carry out its work without people like you whose generosity will help ensure that our animal companions live longer and healthier lives.*

## Other ways to help

Dean Palmer (see opposite) took a creative approach to supporting [OVC Pet Trust](#) by donating a day of his photographic services. This is just one of several ways to support [OVC Pet Trust](#).

Legacy gifts enable you to make a significant gift out of your estate and may include bequests in wills and through trusts. Some legacy gifts are started with a current gift and concluded with a bequest.

Gifts in kind involve donations of collections, books, artwork or equipment.

You may choose to donate a new or existing life insurance policy, or to maintain ownership of the policy and designate the University as beneficiary.

A charitable annuity provides income payments for life, as well as a tax receipt equal to the gift portion.

The OVC website details various methods of making gifts to the College and/or [OVC Pet Trust](#). See [www.ovc.uoguelph.ca/givingmethods/](http://www.ovc.uoguelph.ca/givingmethods/).

## CLINIC PROFILE

# Oakville clinic provides time, funding support



**"OVC Pet Trust is an incredible program for clients and staff," says Dr. Joanne Best, seen here with the members of her staff.**

FOR MORE THAN 20 YEARS, The Animal Hospital of Oakville has been a proud supporter of OVC Pet Trust and continues to believe in and strongly support the fund. It has donated more than \$64,000 since 1988.

"(OVC Pet Trust is) an incredible program for clients and staff," says hospital director Dr. Joanne Best, who is an OVC graduate. "When the owners of the pet who was euthanized receive the card from OVC Pet Trust, they recognize that their pet truly is special and that the donation made by the clinic may contribute to the health and well-being of other animals in the future.

"I can proudly look at my clients and know that the money we have donated has helped all pets and has helped increase the human-animal bond."

"What other charity better supports the veterinary community as well as our clients?" Dr. Best continues. "It helps all pets through the purchase of equipment, through research and through the building of top-notch facilities."

Dr. Best sat on the Pet Trust Board of Trustees for seven years. "I was delighted to see the MRI arrive and I am very pleased that funds are going towards the building of the Animal Cancer Centre".

OVC Pet Trust would like to congratulate The Animal Hospital of Oakville and give our sincere thanks to their continued support.



**Dr. Joanne Best, appreciates that donations to OVC Pet Trust help all pets.**

## Best Friends

**Best Friends** of Pet Trust is published by the Ontario Veterinary College for the interest of Pet Trust donors and friends. Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the OVC Pet Trust board of trustees. Reproduction of material from this newsletter is welcomed. Credit should be given to **Best Friends** of Pet Trust.

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