



OVC

## Pet Trust Fund | Best Friends Newsletter

UNIVERSITY  
of GUELPH

Spring/Summer 2011

# FUND!

In order to **find** cures we need your help to **fund** **cures**. Give generously to OVC Pet Trust Fund. Help the pets we love live longer, healthier lives. OVC Pet Trust is grateful for your support.



### Inside this Issue:

#### 2 New Faces

Board of trustees welcomes new members

#### 3 Supporting people

Medical oncologist joins OVC Animal Cancer Centre team

#### 4 Celebrating 25 years

A look back at a remarkable success story

#### 6 Six degrees of separation

The Smiling Blue Skies Cancer Fund is 10 years old

#### 7 In the community

Support pet health by joining the OVC Pet Trust Fund dinner club

#### 8 Clinic profile

Alta Vista and Bayview honour the human-animal bond



Photo by Dean Palmer

Kieper says hello to oncology technician Melanie Brooks during a recent check-up at OVC.

## The Power of Love in Action

Your support is helping pets with cancer beat the odds

#### What a difference a year can make.

The prognosis wasn't good when Joyce Jasper brought her dog Keiper to the Ontario Veterinary College Health Sciences Centre in February 2010.

The lively, affectionate Golden retriever was barely 2 ½ years old and had been diagnosed with lymphoma — cancer of the lymphoid system that in healthy animals plays a critical role in the body's immune response to infection.

"He was in pretty bad shape," says owner Joyce Jasper.

Cancer specialists at the OVC advised Jasper the type of lymphoma that afflicted Keiper does not typically respond well to treatment. They said Keiper might have only

months to live.

But so far, Keiper has beaten the odds. He came through 16 chemotherapy treatments over six months with few side effects. His last treatment was in July, and he's still in remission.

"To look at him now, you'd never know there was anything wrong," said Jasper, who was delighted with how well Keiper responded with few side effects to the chemotherapy. In fact, he loves visiting his friends at OVC. Jasper said following a check-up last month.

"We've developed great relationships with the people there, especially the technicians like Melanie (Brooks)," she said. "When I drop Keiper off and he sees her, he knows he's going to be okay."

That special bond between people, their

Continued on Page 2

## NEWS | Honouring the bond between pets and their people

### Our success depends on people like you

#### From the Board of Trustees: Dr. Mary DeCaire, chair

There's really nothing quite like the OVC Pet Trust Fund.

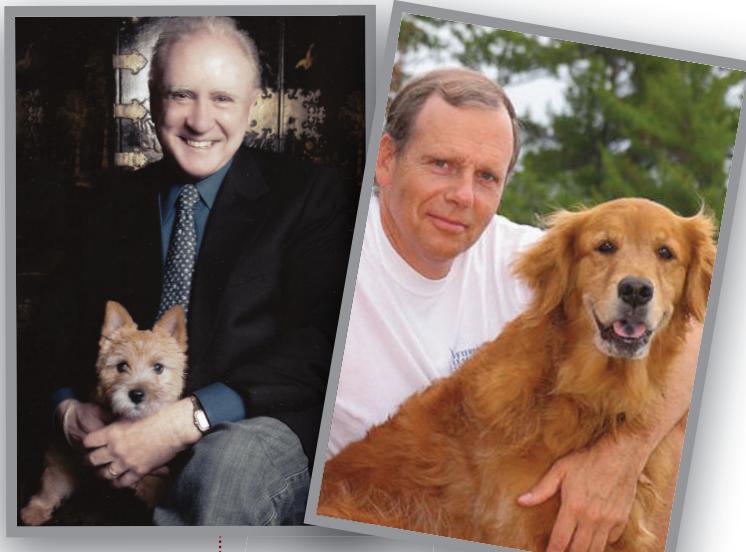
Over the past 25 years, generous and caring people like you have donated more than \$20 million in support of our mission to improve health care for companion animals everywhere. This important work is supported by the dozens of veterinarians and members of the general public who have volunteered their time to serve on the board of trustees. Without their dedication and commitment, the OVC Pet Trust Fund could not function; without Pet Trust, there would be no other major source of financial support in Canada for companion animal health research.

So it's with sincere thanks that this spring the board will say farewell to Dr. Barbara Drewry. A passionate Pet Trust supporter for many years, Dr. Drewry has served on the board of trustees since 2004. An OVC '88 graduate, she has owned the Royal City Animal Hospital in Guelph since 1993, and we will miss her wisdom and experience in the Guelph community.

But while we're sad to see Barbara leave, we're also very pleased to welcome to the board Drs. Chip Coombs and John Reeve-Newson, two prominent Toronto-area practitioners.

"Supporting the OVC Pet Trust Fund is a powerful way for veterinarians to connect with their clients and invest in the future of their profession," says Dr. Coombs, right, who retired from practice last summer after 33 years at Eglinton Veterinary Facilities. A writer with many articles to his credit in veterinary journals, pet magazines and newspapers, he has also served on many boards and committees in the veterinary and pharmaceutical industries. "Working with the board of trustees is one way that I can continue to make a difference in the lives of animals that mean so much to us all."

Dr. Reeve-Newson, above left,



established The Animal Clinics One and Two in Toronto. He is also the founder and CEO of the Veterinary Emergency and Referral Clinic Partnership of Toronto, and one of North America's most successful breeders and dog show judges.

"My pets have given me so much over the years, unrequited love, no questions asked," says Dr. Reeve-Newson. "I hope that through my work with Pet Trust I can give something back to these wonderful creatures — our pets."

Cover Story Continued

#### Cancer centre team is growing

pets and their veterinary caregivers is the inspiration for the OVC Pet Trust Fund's support for the OVC Animal Cancer Centre. With more than \$9.6 million donated so far by people like you, construction is set to begin this spring on the most advanced animal cancer treatment and research facility in Canada.

Donations to date include a \$1-million gift from The Angel Gabriel Foundation toward the acquisition of a linear accelerator — the most advanced equipment available for radiation treatment for cancer.

But the cancer centre initiative is about

much more than building the finest facilities — your gifts to the OVC Pet Trust Fund also help recruit and train talented and dedicated caregivers and scientists. Here are just a few of the most recent:

- Dr. Melissa Parsons-Doherty, a veterinary medical oncologist, joins Drs. Paul Woods and Danielle Richardson
- Christy Beckhoff, a clinical counsellor, who will provide clients, veterinarians and staff with crisis intervention, grief education, and short-term emotional support
- ongoing support for three-year DVSc residency in medical oncology, a position currently held by Dr. Maude Touret
- a new radiation oncologist, who will start

in the summer of 2011.

The OVC Pet Trust Fund is also funding a general companion-animal surgery position, which allows Dr. Sarah Boston, a board-certified surgeon trained in surgical oncology, to devote her skills to treating cancer patients full-time.

In addition, the University of Guelph has created a new position that combines cancer research and clinical service. Dr. Tony Mutsaers, an OVC graduate with a PhD in medical biophysics currently, will return to Guelph after completing post-doctoral work in Australia. His new position as a cancer biologist/medical oncologist is supported by the U of G's priority investment fund.

## Your donations at work: supporting people



**"I'm part of a team that's taking a progressive, proactive approach to dealing with all aspects of cancer."**

Dr. Melissa Parsons-Doherty discusses Chloe's case with owner Bruce Cole. Parsons-Doherty's medical oncology position is supported by donations to the OVC Pet Trust Fund.

**Gifts to the OVC Pet Trust Fund** are making it possible for Dr. Melissa Parsons-Doherty to practise veterinary medicine the way she's always wanted.

Parsons-Doherty joined the OVC Animal Cancer Centre team in the summer of 2010 as a medical oncologist — a position supported by the OVC Pet Trust Fund.

Despite developing a deep appreciation for "all things Southern" during career stops in Louisiana and Georgia, she jumped at the chance to return to Canada to make a difference in the lives of pets — and their people — affected by cancer.

"A cancer diagnosis can be devastating for many pet owners. These animals truly are part of the family and our clients are very committed to doing all they can for them," said Parsons-Doherty. "That can include a range of options from taking an aggressive approach to treating the disease

with surgery and follow-up radiation, to discussing palliative care and pain management to give their pet the best quality of life possible for the time they have left."

A Memorial University graduate with a B.Sc. in biochemistry, Parsons-Doherty completed her DVM at the Atlantic Veterinary College. She then went on to small animal and oncology internships at Garden State Veterinary Specialists in New Jersey and the University of Georgia.

She joins the OVC Health Sciences Centre team after completing residencies at Ohio State University and Louisiana State University. Her research and practice interests span integrative medicine, hematology and feline medicine. She has three cats, enjoys running and is enjoying the challenges and rewards of her new position.

"Being a part of the OVC Animal

Cancer Centre is a great opportunity to be in a developmental position that combines private practice and the academic setting. I'm part of a team that's taking a progressive, proactive approach to dealing with all aspects of cancer. At the same time, I feel like I have more time to devote to each case and develop relationships with clients and my colleagues," she said.

"For example, when we do rounds, there may be people from five or six disciplines discussing cases and how we can do what's best for each patient. We learn from each other. I wouldn't want to practice veterinary medicine any other way."

## Your donations at work | Investing in discovery

# Celebrating 25 years of showing you care

This year is the 25th anniversary of a remarkable success story — the OVC Pet Trust Fund.

We've come long way since 1986 — when faculty and friends of the Ontario Veterinary College (OVC) established the fund largely out of frustration with the lack of financial support from governments and funding agencies for applied health research that benefits companion animals.

Since then, the OVC Pet Trust Fund has provided more than \$20 million for research projects, with much of that support coming from veterinary clinics and thousands of individual donors.

"Many improvements made in companion animal care have come about as a result of donations to Pet Trust," said Dr. Gordon Kirby, the Ontario Veterinary College's associate dean of research and innovation. "We owe a lot to the vision and dedication of founders like Roger Warren, former OVC dean Ole Nielsen and Drs. Wayne McDonell and Ted Valli.

### 1986

Inaugural meeting of the Pet Trust board of trustees attended by Dr. Paul McCutcheon, Dr. Ole Nielsen (OVC dean), Dr. Wayne McDonell, Dr. Ted Valli, Roger Warren, Don Livingston (ex-officio), Martha Liebrandt (secretary), and resource people Judy Tack and Dr. Stephen Kruth.

### 1988

Cardiology program is established with a \$50,000 gift from the Reib Foundation.

### 1988

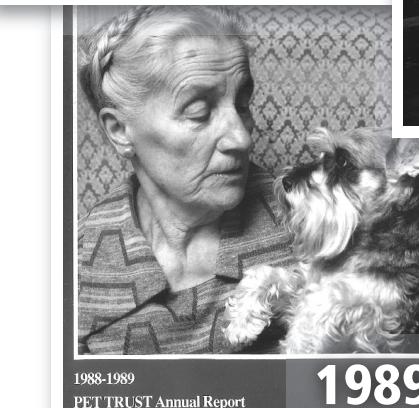
Contributed \$50,000 toward creation of OVC's first radiation therapy unit, which began service in 1989.

### 1989

Annual research competitions (fall and winter) invest total of \$50,000 in a variety of projects.

### 1996

First edition of the Best Friends of Pet Trust newsletter printed. Total number of donors to Pet Trust reaches 6,794.



### 1997

Invested \$125,000 to the MRI project and committed another \$125,000. Established the first Pet Trust Forum (for donors) and Practitioners Appreciation Day (for veterinarians). Pet Trust underwrites expansion and upgrades of the intensive care unit in the OVC Small Animal Clinic up to \$100,000.

### 2000

Fowler Endowment provides \$20,000 annually toward equipment purchases. Pet Trust provides funding to support training of a radiology resident at Cornell University (Dr. Stephanie Nykamp).



### 2000

Earmarked \$90,000 to replace existing radiation unit with a cobalt machine from Princess Margaret Hospital, acquired in 2001.

### 2000

Roger Warren becomes the board of trustees' first honorary member.

"We created Pet Trust because of animals is an ongoing project."

Roger Warren, founder

## Your donations at work | Investing in discovery

"Essentially the OVC Pet Trust Fund has transformed a barren research funding landscape at OVC for pet diseases and health to one where research can flourish."

Dr. Ole Nielsen, former OVC dean and one of the founders of the OVC Pet Trust Fund

### 2002

Winter funding competition provides \$225,000 to OVC scientists. Donations to the MRI project total more than \$900,000.

### 2006

Institute for Comparative Cancer Investigation established at University of Guelph. Pet Trust board of trustees launches fundraising for the OVC Animal Cancer Centre.



### 2003

\$30,000 provided for DVSc residency in diagnostic imaging at the OVC.

### 2004

Two echocardiographic ultrasound units purchased with \$400,000 provided by donors.

### 2010

Funding available annually for research projects increased to \$500,000.

### 2011

With more than \$9.6 million raised to date, construction ready to begin on OVC Animal Cancer Centre.

## Achievements

• **Radiation therapy:** OVC's radiation unit, established in 1989 upgraded over the years thanks to Pet Trust donors, was the first at a Canadian veterinary hospital. It remains the only centre in the region offering palliative and curative treatment for canine and feline cancer.

• **Diagnostic imaging:** an initial pledge of \$700,000 grew to \$1.2 million in support of the MRI unit that opened in 2004. Support from the OVC Pet Trust Fund also established the nuclear scintigraphy (bone scanning) unit. In 2004, your gifts supported the purchase of two "3D" echocardiographic ultrasound machines.

• **Outcomes:** Increased understanding of dilated cardiac myopathy in dogs; contributed to the development of a simple test for PDD, a wasting disease in parrots; better understanding of feline immunodeficiency virus; improved safety and efficacy of pain medication and anesthetics for critically-ill pets; validated new methods for pain control in surgical and non-surgical patients; improvements in blood transfusion therapy; increased understanding of epilepsy in cats and dogs; supported pioneering work on the human-animal bond and veterinarian-client communication; evaluated new surgical techniques for improved outcomes

• **Training:** Support for a four-year DVSc residency in diagnostic imaging at OVC, along with the development of the MRI and CT scanning facilities, is helping address a shortage of veterinarians qualified to seek certification from the American College of Veterinary Radiology.

"use it was needed, and it still is. Improving the lives of pets that benefits us all."

Dr. Ole Nielsen, founding member and former chair, currently honorary member of the board of trustees

## Your donations at work | Six Degrees of Separation

### That was Then. This is Now

The Smiling Blue Skies® Cancer Fund is 10 Years Old



**He was the sun and moon and stars to us.** He was our Smiling Blue Skies. Since the loss of our Blues to lymphoma in the spring of 2001, the Smiling Blue Skies Cancer Fund has been supporting the OVC Pet Trust Fund's quest to find more and better ways to deal with and understand the complex and devastating disease of cancer.

Smiling Blue Skies is not about one dog, one cat, or one person. It is about all of us, and thanks to special people like you, we have been able to fund a variety of exciting projects and promising studies.

To build on the momentum, we established the Smiling Blue Skies Fund for Innovative Research. As Dr. Brenda Coomber, co-director of the University of Guelph's Institute of Comparative Cancer Investigation reported, "Getting the ball rolling on a novel concept can be a major challenge, and almost every cancer researcher hears the same thing from funding agencies . . . 'Come back when you have some evidence you are on the right track.' The Smiling Blue Skies Fund for Innovative Cancer Research fills an urgent gap in OVC and the cancer centre's ability

to support creative cancer research at its most fragile and vulnerable early stage."

Two recent examples include the hemangiosarcoma validation study and North America's first cancer registry for companion animals.

The hemangiosarcoma study, led by OVC's Dr. Gordon Kirby, aims to determine whether a particular blood protein found at high levels in dogs with the disease is useful as a diagnostic tool for the presence of this cancer. For more about this study, see the Summer 2010 issue of *Best Friends*.

The Guelph Companion Animal Cancer Epidemiologic Registry collects population-based information about the occurrence of cancer among dogs and cats. It will provide important insights into species-, breed-, age- and sex-specific frequencies of cancer. The goal is to help answer questions about the causes of cancers and help identify preventive strategies.

Smiling Blue Skies has evolved in so many ways over the past 10 years. We never dreamed that a one-page memorial would turn into a real presence on the web;

Agility groups from across Canada have helped the Smiling Blue Skies Cancer® Fund continue to grow. To show their support, Victoria members of the Academy of Vancouver Island Dogs (AVID) sported Smiling Blue Skies t-shirts at last year's B.C. - Yukon regional agility championships.

that one walk in Muskoka, would turn into walks in communities across Canada; that companies like Canine Life, West Coast Canine Life, and Endless Pawsibilities, would donate a percentage of the proceeds from the sale of all their products to Smiling Blue Skies; that groomers and trainers and doggie day cares, like Paws to Claws, would donate tips to Smiling Blue Skies; that 2,500 blue bracelets would find their way to wrists across Canada and the United States and beyond, joining us all together as Kindred Spirits in our quest to wipe out cancer; that agility groups across Canada would embrace Smiling Blue Skies in so many ways, from the distribution of clickers, to raffles, to Smiling Blue Skies t-shirts for special events and one-of-a-kind pieces of Smiling Blue Skies jewelry for trial judges; that regional and national clubs across Canada, would share our passion and mission, making Smiling Blue Skies a partner in a variety of events; and that individuals and groups from coast to coast would reach out to us so we could help them to organize and host their own very special events, from Luke's Legacy and Fashion Frenzy to our annual Janice Gunn Obedience Training Weekends.

Most important of all, Smiling Blue Skies continues to offer 24/7 support to anyone whose life has been touched by cancer. It doesn't matter where you live. Smiling Blue Skies will try to help you in any way they can.

Thanks to all of you, we are going places we never could have dreamed possible, back in the spring of 2001. Together, we are reaching beyond the bluest skies and brightest stars, to take bite after bite out of cancer, until there is nothing left!

## Your donations at work | In the community

### Providing Emotional Support in Difficult Times



**Christy Beckhoff understands the emotional impact** of dealing with a health-care crisis. "Although there are differences between the animal and human health-care settings, the depth of emotion involved, particularly the grief felt by clients who have lost a beloved pet, is fundamentally the same," says Beckhoff.

A social worker trained in palliative care with extensive experience in a human hospital setting, Beckhoff has joined the OVC Health Sciences Centre team as a clinical counsellor.

Funding for the part-time position is provided by donations Pet Trust.

"Christy will be an invaluable asset, providing emotional support and helping clients faced with making difficult health-care decisions for their pets," said Dr. Mary DeCaire, chair of the board of trustees. With a master's degree in social work from Wilfrid Laurier University, Beckhoff comes to Guelph after working with the in-patient oncology team at the London Regional

#### Cancer Program.

"As an animal lover and owner of two rescued mix breed dogs, what really propelled me to apply for this position was my experience at OVC in March 2010, when my older dog Annie was diagnosed with T-cell lymphoma," she says. "I learned first hand how devastating it is when your pet is seriously ill. This position allows me the opportunity to give OVC clients the empathy and understanding that comes from having a shared experience, within the framework of a therapeutic relationship."

Much of her work in human hospitals involved supporting patients and families as they moved through the experience of illness and faced difficult decisions along the way. Clients with sick or injured animals go through the same process, although often without the support they need from others who might not understand the depth of the human-animal bond.

"For example, a cancer diagnosis for a pet often means a complex and difficult

illness trajectory," she says. "This type of counselling position offers clinical support to people who might not otherwise have the opportunity to fully discuss their concerns and process their emotions."

### Join the OVC Pet Trust Fund Dinner Club

#### You're going to eat anyway.

So why not invite some friends and raise money to help improve the health and welfare of your loyal companions — your pets.

The OVC Pet Trust Dinner Club is one way for people to make a profound difference in the lives of pets by inviting friends, neighbours and colleagues to join them for a meal in exchange for donations to the OVC Pet Trust Fund.

"It's a fun and simple way to show you care and for your friends to learn about a worthy cause," said Karen Scott, managing director of the OVC Pet Trust Fund. "Whether it's home-cooked or catered, a casual spaghetti dinner or a multi-course gourmet affair, help support the OVC Pet Trust Fund by breaking bread with the people you care about — they'll appreciate it and so will our beloved animal companions."

The possibilities are endless:

- make it a regular event by encouraging your friends to take turns hosting a dinner
- add a personal touch by making it a theme night (ie. a special holiday or ethnic cuisine)
- ask each guest for a minimum donation or simply what they can afford to pay

For more information or to register your event, contact the Pet Trust office at 519-824-4120, Ext. 54695, or by email at [ovcpet@uoguelph.ca](mailto:ovcpet@uoguelph.ca).

## OVC Pet Trust Fund | Staying in touch

### OVC Pet Trust Fund Best Friends Newsletter

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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CHANGING LIVES  
IMPROVING LIFE

## Being There for Your Clients

### Alta Vista and Bayview Honour the Human-Animal Bond

#### Saying goodbye to a beloved pet and family member is never easy.

The team at Alta Vista and Bayview Animal Hospitals in Ottawa help clients through this difficult time on a daily basis, through their general practices, emergency and referral services.



Alta Vista and Bayview Animal Hospitals encourage the human-animal bond from day one. "We want to be there for our clients and their pets throughout their pet's life. Pet Trust is a great way to honor that bond." —Dan Rodgers, CEO

## COMING EVENTS

April 22-24

### All About Pets Show

Toronto International Centre

Come visit us at the OVC Pet Trust Fund booth!

[www.allaboutpetsshow.com](http://www.allaboutpetsshow.com)

May 28

### Pet Trust Forum

Guests invited to the forum will also receive a free pass (\$40 value) to attend the lively and informative sessions at "Come. Sit. Learn: A Special Day Devoted to the Human and Animal Bond." The daylong celebration of our relationship with companion animals

"Donations to Pet Trust have helped our clients stay positive during such a difficult time in their lives. They appreciate that the loss of their pet is recognized and valued with the donation we make on their pet's behalf," says Dr. Dan Rodgers, CEO.

As an OVC '77 graduate, Dr. Rodgers appreciates that his alma mater has taken such a leadership role in companion animal health research. "The donations to Pet Trust send a powerful message to our clients. Although it is a sad time in their lives, they can appreciate that their pet's passing will help other pets in the future."

In just seven years, the Alta Vista and Bayview Animal Hospitals have donated over \$60,000 to the OVC Pet Trust Fund. With a staff of over 170 and growing, the teams at both hospitals see the impact of Pet Trust on their clients on a regular basis.

Appreciation from clients comes in the form of cards, letters, and phone calls, and frequently mentions the significance of Pet Trust donations. Many staff members have also felt the positive effect of Pet Trust after the passing of their own pets. "It helps you to realize that good things are coming from the pain and sadness you're dealing with."

is the 2011 edition of the OVC 150th anniversary seminar series.

Keynote speaker: Dr. Marty Becker

Watch for your invitation in the mail.

For information, call 519-824-4120, Ext.

54695 or email [ovcpet@uoguelph.ca](mailto:ovcpet@uoguelph.ca).

Oct. 13

### Pet Trust Gala

Featuring The Jim Cuddy Duo

Granite Club, Toronto

For ticket information, contact Carrie Skeels at 519-824-4120, Ext. 54695 or [cskeels@uoguelph.ca](mailto:cskeels@uoguelph.ca).