

# Our Sentient Friends

## honouring all animals, everywhere

~ Spring 2025 ~

### *In this issue ...*

- Cakes for Apes: Supporting Orangutan Conservation for the Month of Ape-ril!
- ElderDog Canada: Supporting Senior People and Senior Dogs
- Horses: Masters of the Moment
- Humane Canada's Promising Practices Project
- Monarch Ultra — following the flight path of the monarch butterfly



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### On Our Cover:

Toby, a beloved four-legged soul, and the focus of *Toby or Not To Be* (page 13).

***“Spring is a season of second chances, where nature proves that no matter how harsh the winter, beauty will return.”***



***Photo credit: Dominik Rheinheimer, Pixabay***

# Publisher's Ponderings

I've always said that when we follow our passion, everything seems to fall into place organically. We meet the people we are meant to meet, and synchronistic opportunities come our way. This is pretty much what happened with this magazine, which has provided a platform for me to express my love for animals.

The first issue (Winter 2025) came out in January, after which time I was contacted by those who enjoyed the content, but also by those who had stories to share. As a result, this issue is about double the size of the first, which dealt mainly with domestic animals, and the articles cover such a wide span of topics that I felt compelled to change the name to reflect the increased scope. Thanks so much to all who contributed articles this month. Your stories, your insight, and your obvious love of animals have enriched this issue. I am honoured to be able to provide a platform for animal lovers everywhere, to share their stories of the sentient beings that mean the most to them.

The "All Creatures Great and Small" series of events is another platform for animal lovers. The events, which started in March, take place in Guelph and area and will continue through to October, ending with a World Animal Day market on October 4. Events scheduled for April through June include:

- Guest author days at the Children's Reading Room:  
April 23 & 24 - Donna Kaye & Nancy Cronin, authors of *Move Along Huxley & Roscoe*  
May 1 & 2 - Jeanette Clark - author of *The Girl Who Talked the Hind Legs Off a Donkey*  
June 5 & 6 - Margaret Brooks - author of *Grampa's Butterfly*
- Ultra Monarch documentary screening at the Bookshelf cinema

For more information about this series of events, please visit <https://www.ottbookstore.com/whats-new>.



Arlene Davies-Fuhr, author of *Zola: The Zany, Zippy, Zealous Pig*, at Children's Reading Room



David Rankine, presenting on *The Two Bays Pack: The Coyotes of Inverhuron*

I was so pleased to receive several articles this month, that show the interconnection between our relationship with animals and our physical and/or mental health. Awareness days touched on in this issue are as follows:

- April 11 – National Pet Day
- May – Sexual Assault Awareness Month
- May 8 – World Donkey Day
- June – Brain Injury Awareness Month
- June – Seniors Month in Ontario
- June 7 – Butterfly Education and Awareness Day
- June 7 – National Horse Day
- June 10 – National Kitten Day

Are you interested in submitting an article for our Summer issue? The following awareness days might serve as inspiration. And, as always, if you have animal-related events or initiatives that you'd like to promote, please reach out to me at [lisa@onethousandtrees.com](mailto:lisa@onethousandtrees.com). I'd love to hear from you!

- August 26 – National Dog Appreciation Day
- September – CNIB Guide Dog Awareness Month; National Service Dog Month; World Alzheimer's Month
- September 17 – National Fox Day
- September 26 – National Alpaca Day
- September 28 – Belfountain Salamander Festival
- September 30 – National Day of Truth & Reconciliation

Until next time ...

*Lisa*



*Lisa Browning has been writing stories for as long as she can remember. She received a BA in English from York University in 1988, and subsequently worked as an editor for a Toronto-based publishing firm for over fifteen years before founding One Thousand Trees in 2010. No matter what she does, Lisa is inspired to make a difference in this world, to empower others, and help them realize their passion, through storytelling and connection. She was honoured as a Community Champion at the Guelph Y's Women of Distinction event in 2018.*

# Unexpected Company

## by Marilyn Helmer

It was a sunny Sunday afternoon in June and I was busy preparing a family dinner, looking forward to the company of my son Chris and his girlfriend Jenn who were coming for dinner. Suddenly the phone rang. Little did I know when I answered it, that there would be more company arriving than I had expected.

"We're just heading home now," Chris said. He and Jenn had been out of town at wedding the day before.

"Great," I replied. "So we'll expect you in a couple of hours."

"Mom, I have something to tell you..." At that moment, the oven timer dinged, reminding me it was time to remove my pie.

"Tell me when you get here, Chris. Pie's ready. I have to go. Drive safely."

I was about to hang up when I heard him say, "Mom, we're bringing some extra company."

Yikes! Unexpected company? Would there be enough food to go around? "How many?" I asked as the oven timer dinged again.

"Four," Chris answered.

"Four? Christopher, how can I feed four extra people on such short notice?" I shrieked.

"Good news, Mom," my son replied cheerfully. "You don't have to feed people. The company I'm bringing home is four abandoned kittens."

"Kittens? Chris...!" I gasped.

"We'll explain when we get there," Chris said. "We're going to stop at Sandra's on the way. She's getting formula for them. They'll have to be fed every four hours. She'll explain it all to you." My animal-loving daughter was working at the veterinary clinic for the summer.

"Mom, the kittens are so sweet and they're so tiny," Chris went on. "Wait till you see them." His voice faded out. "Oops, gotta go, cell phone's running low, see you soon."

"Wait a minute, explain what?" Too late. Chris had hung up. I was talking to myself.

A series of dings distracted me. My pie! I yanked the oven door open and groaned. It was too late for the pie too. The crust was a very unappetizing charcoal colour, not to mention the equally unappetizing smell of burnt apples.

I made a cup of tea to calm my nerves and I called Sandra.

"What's up?" she asked.

"Apparently four newborn kittens," I answered.

"Don't worry, Mom. I got the formula and the bottles." She paused. "The vet said they'll have to



be fed on a four-hour schedule. He suggested 10 a.m., 2 p.m., 6 p.m. and 10 p.m.”

I took a deep breath. “What about 2 a.m. and 6 a.m.?”

“Well, that too,” said Sandra. “But don’t worry. I’ll come over when the kittens arrive so I can show you what to do.”

Wait a minute! Show *me* what to do? How did I get the job? “Sandra, I can’t take care of newborn kittens. I don’t know anything about feeding them. And what about Misty?” Misty, chief cat in the Helmer household, had made it clear that she preferred to be an only cat.

“Don’t worry, Mom, I’ll help as much as I can,” Sandra said. “But I work all day so I can’t look after them full time.”

Thoughts raced through my mind. And I don’t work all day? I’m a writer. Writers work day and night. Well, sometimes.

“Mom, I’ve got to go,” Sandra’s voice broke in. “Chris and Jenn just arrived. We’ll see you soon. Bye for now.”

I put the phone down and went back to the kitchen. Misty wandered in to see what was in her food bowl. “Guess what?” I said to her. “We’re having company. Lots of company.” I swear she understood

me because her eyes narrowed. "I know how you feel," I said with a sigh.

Don't get me wrong. I love animals passionately but being caregiver to four tiny kittens was more than I could handle. I resolved then and there to, 'Just say No!'

The phone rang again and I snatched it up, expecting it to be Chris or Sandra. "Look, there is no way I can handle..."

"Handle what?" It was my husband's voice. He rushed on. "Never mind, we'll talk about it later. I'm still at the cottage. The guy coming to give me the driveway estimate called to say he's been delayed. I have to wait for him so I may be late for dinner."

"Gary, listen to me," I said. "Chris just called to say he's bringing home some extra company. You'll never guess what the company is."

That was as far as I got before Gary broke in. "The driveway guy's at the door, I have to run, see you later, great about the extra company." With a click, he was gone.

Gary always enjoys meeting our children's friends. Their human friends that is but he agrees with Misty that ours should be a one-cat-only household.

I took a deep breath and began formulating a firm stand. I was still at the 'Just say No!' part when the front door opened and Chris called from the vestibule, "Mom, come see the kittens."

As I started downstairs, reviewing my 'Just say No!' mantra, I heard a chorus of mews. Jenn held out a basket. Curled up inside, snuggled together, were four tiny kittens. Four tiny, perfect little beings, no bigger than the palm of my hand.

"Where did you find them?" I asked.

"We were sitting outside the motel having coffee," Jenn said. "We kept hearing a crying sound coming from the roof. We found the guy who runs the motel and told him about it."

"Mom, you won't believe this," Chris broke in. "The guy said a pregnant cat had been hanging around for a while. Every time he saw her, he chased her away. He hadn't seen her for a few days but he figured she'd had her kittens on the roof. He was ticked off because he was stuck dealing with them. When we asked him where the mother cat was, he just shrugged and said she'd probably been killed on the highway."

"We knew what he meant by 'dealing with them'," Jenn said. "So Chris said we'd deal with them. The guy loaned him a ladder and Chris climbed up onto the roof. He found the kittens inside the air conditioning unit. Somehow, the mother cat had managed to get into the unit and have her kittens there. I guess she was desperate and thought it was a safe place."

I quickly blocked out the thought of what might have happened to the kittens if Chris and Jenn hadn't come along.

At that moment, the smallest kitten raised its head and let out a faint squeal. Before I knew what I was doing, I reached in and picked it up.

"Sandra said he's the runt of the litter," Jenn said. "He's so small he may not survive."

"Unless he has the best care possible," Chris quickly added. "Care only a mother can give."

"I'm not a mother cat," I reminded my son as I wrapped my sweater gently around the unbelievably tiny bit of life in my hands.

Through the screen door, I saw Sandra's car pull into the driveway. As she came in, her eyes went to the sweater-wrapped bundle I was holding. I saw her flash a questioning glance at Chris and his confident nod. I'd be willing to bet that the three of them had had a win-Mom-over planning meeting at Sandra's house. Then I noticed the box in her hands.

"Mom, I have everything you'll need for the kittens – formula, feeding bottles, wipes," she rhymed the list off. "We'll work out a schedule. I'll help and Chris will help too. Maybe we can even get Dad on board." I gave her a get-real look. My husband would do almost anything for his children, *almost* being the key word. I doubt that included becoming foster father to four homeless kittens. "Okay, maybe not Dad," she said. "But, Mom, look at them." She picked up a white one with orange and black markings. The kitten obligingly wobbled her head and managed to look sweet and pathetic at the same time. "How can you resist?"

My eyes went from Chris, to Jenn, to the kittens Sandra and I were holding and finally to the two in the basket who were now wide awake. The house was silent, apart from the chorus of mewling sounds coming from the hungry kittens.

I couldn't resist. In fact, I no longer wanted to resist. 'Just say No!' vanished in the twitch of a tiny whisker. I realized then that I had known all along. I was about to become a surrogate mother to four abandoned kittens.

That afternoon, Sandra walked me through the steps of kitten care. They had to be fed every four hours. Good grief, as infants, my children had not been on such a rigid schedule! Then came the toileting. I won't go into details, but suffice it to say that a disposable diaper does not work on kittens. After that it was bath time. Bathing a young kitten is no quick or easy task. Imagine a body so small it that fits into the palm of your hand with tiny twig-

like limbs and paws the size of a dime. Then they have to be towed dry, taking great care that tiny claws do not get entangled in the cloth.

By the time we had them all fed, cleaned, bathed and bedded, I was exhausted. Dinner was forgotten – I believe we ordered in pizza.

When my husband came home, he agreed that the kittens were, indeed, adorable but I would definitely be their designated caregiver. Misty came by, took one sniff at the basket, threw a hissy fit and went off to sulk in her bed in the rec room.

On my own for the ten o'clock feeding that night. I made a couple of discoveries. There was now four of them and just one of me. I could only feed one kitten at a time, but when one woke up, the others quickly followed. It is truly amazing the feelings of guilt the heart-rending cries from the hungry little waiting souls could create. I also discovered that encouraging the one currently being fed to hurry so the others could have their turn fell on deaf ears. And last but not least, I discovered that all the cozy blankets and towels lining their basket had to be washed because no one was toilet trained.

Fortunately, as the days went by, I did have help. On alternate days, Sandra took the kittens to the veterinary clinic where the staff argued over who would get look after the adorable quartet. Strangely though, no one offered to do the 10 p.m., 2 a.m. or 6 a.m. shifts. I used my days off to catch up with my regular chores but when the kittens weren't with me, I missed them.

Not only did the kittens have to be fed on schedule, but we had to keep track of every gram of formula they took in. The second day I had them, I couldn't bear the thought of listing them as Kitten 1, 2, 3 and 4. So I gave each one a name - Bailey, Zoli and Chloe and for the littlest one, the biggest name of all – Leo the Lion-hearted.

Once named, the kittens seemed to develop individual personalities overnight. Leo certainly lived up to his name. His heart stopped twice, thankfully when he was in my daughter's care. Using two fingers, for that was all that would fit on his tiny chest, Sandra managed to massage his heart back into action.

And what about the kittens? Good news – they all survived and thrived. Zoli and Bailey were adopted by Sandra's cat-loving mother-in-law. Chloe went to live with a teacher friend of Sandra's, and wee Leo was adopted by a client at the veterinary clinic.

Many years have passed since those four unexpected visitors arrived on that memorable June day. Looking back on the whole experience, I am thankful beyond measure that I had the opportunity to play a part in the miracle of their survival and in rearing those precious little beings.

## **Barking Up the Right Tree: Finding Your Ideal Pup by Debbie Mann**

Have you ever met someone and just clicked? Like you were meant to be best friends? That's exactly how I felt when I first saw my future fur-buddy, Paws. She was a big, lovable 7-year-old Mastiff/St. Bernard mix, and was I in for a treat!



### **The Bark-ground**

While I was waiting to adopt Paws (without knowing it!), I became a certified facilitator and coach for Canine Colors and a L.E.G.S. Family Dog Mediator. Then, I started my own business, Creating Canine Connections. Talk about a paw-some opportunity!

Six weeks after Paws and I became roommates, I figured out her personality and what she needed and set out to give her exactly what she wanted – no bones about it! I thought I wanted a 130-pound lap dog, but that was not for Paws. I learned not to force cuddles on her and didn't get upset when she'd walk away<sup>1</sup>.

Paws was naturally calm, cool, and collected. She was an independent thinker and gave affection on her own terms – kind of like a cat in a dog suit! The Saint Bernard in her loved to sniff everything. I even found off-leash trails so she could explore to her nose's content. The Mastiff part of her was my guardian angel, never straying too far.

## Training the 2-Legged Breed

Here's where things get interesting. I'm not a certified dog trainer, but I am a certified people coach. That's what makes Creating Canine Connections different from dog trainers. We help people understand themselves first!

Everyone falls into one of four personality types, and helping humans understand their strengths is as fun as a game of fetch! We use the same idea for dogs, helping people find a pup that matches their personality. Think of us as canine cupids<sup>2</sup>!

- If you're a routine person, most dogs just might be your cup of tea.
- If you're sensitive, an aloof breed might make you feel like you're barking up the wrong tree.
- If you're spontaneous, a working dog breed might cramp your style.
- If you get lost in projects, a needy pup might drive you crazy.

Dogs work the same way, and we use the same process for Fido:

- Dependable and Loyal
- Independent and Curious
- Active and Playful
- Devoted and Social

But remember, there are no wrong matches, just wrong expectations. It's all about finding and suggesting the right match<sup>3</sup>!

If you're thinking about becoming a first-time puppy parent, we'll teach you all about the care and cost of having a pup. We'll cover everything from training styles to socialization – it's like Puppy 101!

Already have a dog? No problem! Creating Canine Connections will help you understand your furry friend better. We'll show you how to nurture their nature by understanding both your personalities<sup>4</sup>.

So, whether you're looking for your first pup or want to bond better with your current canine companion, give us a howl! We're here to help you create a doggone good connection with your four-legged friend.



# Cakes for Apes — Supporting Orangutan Conservation for the Month of Ape-ril!

by Julianna Van Adrichem

For the month of April, we invite you to participate in the **10<sup>th</sup> anniversary** of Cakes for Apes, a project by International Animal Rescue (IAR). This is a time when we dedicate our baking activities to raising money for orangutans!

By participating in this global community effort, you can raise crucial funds for this critically endangered species. Orangutans are one of humanity's closest relatives but face great threats from deforestation and poaching. Their species only stands a chance of survival if people take the problem and every single orangutan seriously. Individuals like Gito and Mawa.

## Gito

In 2015, Gito was found in a backyard, inside a tiny, filthy cardboard box, where he had been left in the sun to die. A parasitic skin infection had consumed his entire body, proving almost fatal. He was on the brink of death but thankfully pulled through, due to the



specialist medical care funded by his incredible adopters!

Gito made a transformation that is nothing short of a miracle, and today is in Forest School. Now nine years old, he has shown remarkable progress, particularly in his growing ability to independently explore and search for food in unfamiliar areas — a significant milestone for orangutan rehabilitation. When Gito is not foraging, he's building or repairing nests to make them as sturdy as possible. But his clingy nature around humans means he still has a way to go before he can be



Photo Credit: Ministry of Forest/Yiari

considered a candidate for release.

## Mawa

At about a year old, Mawa was found by a local resident, and despite best efforts to locate his mother, she could not be found. The villagers did the right thing and contacted the Ministry of Forest, Indonesia, who arrived alongside IAR partners to conduct the rescue. Mawa was immediately treated for malnourishment by the incredible team at the rescue centre.



*Photo Credit: Ministry of Forest/Yiari*

Now Mawa is four years old, healthy and lives in a large, forested enclosure with his adoptive mother, Temon, and two other mother-infant pairs. He is proving to be an intelligent and active forager, gradually incorporating more natural forest foods into his diet. His favorites include ripe papaya, bananas, sweet potatoes, and corn. While he is developing a healthy independence, Mawa is also still learning essential survival skills from Temon, as she has a strong ability to detect danger, particularly from predators such as snakes.

### YIARI

This global baking event and fundraising campaign is organized by International Animal Rescue to support the Ministry of Forest/Yiari in Indonesia. Here, vital orangutan conservation work is carried out to rescue, rehabilitate, and

release orangutans back into protected areas of rainforest.

The team at YIARI cares for baby orangutans who were taken from their mothers to be illegally sold as pets and for adults that have spent their entire lives in captivity, chained or imprisoned in tiny cages. The YIARI team consists of expert veterinarians and keepers who are dedicated to providing the highest quality care to rescued orangutans, just like Gito and Mawa. Unfortunately, due to increasing forest fires, which kill or leave orangutans vulnerable to capture, more individuals desperately need help.

The project is certainly ambitious, yet we are dedicated to rescuing and rehabilitating as many orangutans as possible and providing them with a second chance to live safely in their natural habitat.

Helping orangutans can be a piece of cake!

In 2022, the Guelph, Ontario community raised \$700. This year, our goal is to raise at least \$1,000. Please join us in making a difference in the lives of orangutans by donating to the Canadian efforts of Cakes for Apes! ([www.cakes4apes.org](http://www.cakes4apes.org))

Your fundraising efforts and donations can make a significant impact in protecting orangutans and their natural habitat in Indonesia. \$1,000 would be enough to reforest and protect precious orangutan habitat or provide urgent medical supplies for at least five sick or injured orangutans. Please consider holding a fundraising bake sale or host a party and donate to our JustGiving page:



# How Observing Coyotes Made Me a Better Human

by David Rankine

I never set out to study coyotes (or any other animal). All I was interested in was walking in my favourite place on earth – a place full of childhood memories. Exploring the half-forgotten trails of a park that had been closed for 30 years led me right into on a collision course with the park's apex canine predators – a pack of coyotes.



Five years ago, I found a coyote den exactly where I imagined I would find it if I was the one looking to build a safe all weather and all-season shelter for myself. South-facing, protected from wind deep within a sand dune, hidden and close to a network of trails, the coyotes had chosen well. So began a love affair with these animals. I was not particularly interested in learning about their weight, size, territory, gestation etc – all things I could learn online. What did interest me was their ways, where they went, how they related to one another and how they related to humans. With the aid of trail cameras and a lot of walking 4000 km (so far), I set

out to find out as much about them firsthand... I set out to have encounters, see them, track them, smell them and observe their lives. What I did experience was a crash course in being a real human – in the way humans have been for 99.9% of our existence...before the modern world of machines, with all its artificial light and artificial time keeping.

Observing the coyotes led to me to emulate them. I became a fellow animal embedded in the landscape, and no longer a human “just having a walk.” I started to become acutely aware of sounds and smells. My intimate knowledge of every trail – where every stick on that trail belonged, blossomed. Soon, I could tell if an animal had passed minutes before. Stopping and sniffing the air has allowed me to avoid face to face encounters with the bears, but it also let me know when a coyote had recently sprayed a bush. Paying attention to how they pass through an open area has allowed me to do the same...soundlessly, and close to the edge where I can keep the whole area under observation while remaining hard to spot against the trees at the edge of the space. This also led to my sometimes hilarious ability to pass closely by other humans without being seen or heard. My ‘coyote skills’ have become so good that sometimes I can surprise coyotes with my sudden noiseless appearance.

At a deeper level I started to observe coyotes behaving in ways us humans seem to reserve for just ourselves. In fact, through observing various aspects of their social and family life, I felt a deep sense of

relief and affirmation – that what makes us good humans is really what makes us good mammals.



Simply put, coyotes take care of their young and they take care of each other. They are fanatical about it. In a pack, only one mating pair will have pups and that one litter will be guarded, fed, played with and taught by all the coyotes of the pack. Truly it takes a village to bring up a child. I have observed teenage coyote taking pups out on walks and at times an aunt or uncle watching over them (as they sleep while the rest of the pack hunts).

It may seem natural for other animals (besides us) to take care of their young, but when it comes to coyotes, they are also fanatical about helping each other. I observed a pair of coyotes – a bonded pair, engage in the sweetest story of dedication and care.

A female had been wounded by a hunter and her injury left her unable to move very quickly. Her mate spent the next four years, walking beside her (at her speed), and hunting for her – literally keeping her alive. No coyote is left behind.

Coyotes spend a lot of time greeting, wrestling and playing with each other. They even use toys – from the ever-popular sticks (for throwing) to stolen dog toys, shoes, pens, eyeglasses and pop cans – all of which they store in a “toy cache” so they know where to find them for their next playdate. The play

reinforces family and kin bonds. Upon returning from patrol every coyote is greeted with a joyous amount of yipping and howling.



In my five years of study, I have relaxed into being truly human, truly mammalian, observant and comforted knowing that the best of my behaviour is also exhibited by these gorgeous creatures who have let me study them.



# Toby Or Not To Be

by Lisa Lindsay

*Our vet called. We have a dog that needs a home. He needs to be fixed, needs dental surgery and he's pretty much blind...*

*We'll take him.*



My husband jokes about how Toby came into our lives. *Only you would say yes to that offer he said.* He's now just as in love with this special four-legged little soul as I am!

Toby truly is a special resilient little being. A born teacher for living with what is. *Enjoy life as much as you can and (apparently) let go of any fear in doing so. Be with what is.* He touches the hearts of everyone he meets. Nothing slows him down. Our biggest challenge is his fearlessness!

Our story began with a test run in the home to see if he would get along with our cat. We were told he could see some light. We assumed he'd smell her but his joie de vivre had him often operating faster than his senses. He walked into the bedroom and straight into her. He jumped back in surprise at the same moment she did. Unfazed, he confidently entered the yard walking the few steps of the deck on his own like a pro. Straight into the pond. After his water rescue, he was good to go for more exploring. I fell hard for him that day and haven't looked back since assuming my role as his seeing eye person.

We found a trainer willing to work with a blind dog. Wow, did it make a difference to his confidence having words to guide him on his journey! He could know now when the hair brush or clippers were coming towards him, when the elevation on our walk was changing such as going up a curb and be warned before bumping into the next tree. He even learned a left and right command to stay on course. Like dog training we'd done before, it was more about training me. I learned to be talkative on walks, pay more attention to what's coming and to speed up my word commands based on his fearless forward charge. I even added bells to my shoes so he always knew where I was. I'm beyond grateful for the support with training especially later as we navigated the loss of his eyes altogether. The hard work and persistence for us was worth it!

The next advice was to get him goggles to protect his eyes. It didn't occur to us that, despite being

unable to see, he still had eye balls to take care of. Being blind made him more prone to getting scratched when he sniffed bushes and got into his adventures on walks. Boy, if you want to meet people and have a conversation starter, get your dog some spectacles!



Eventually, disease would force the removal of Toby's eyes. It's quite amazing to see the difference in people's reactions to Toby on our walks. Occasionally I get comments that *I should trim my dog's fur, I can't even see his eyes*. To my surprise most adults don't even notice he doesn't have eyes. More often children notice right away that Toby doesn't have eyes and stop to ask questions.

When we were told that the first eye had to be removed and then the second six months later, I was concerned. How was I going to remain connected without eyes? I felt so selfish being focused on my sense of connection when he was about to have such a loss. True to form Toby accepted this next life challenge with grace. There was an adjustment period of course, and then he was his usual, *well-lets-get-going-there's-a-life-to-be-lived* energy. To my relief and surprise, we've become closer and more bonded even without eyes to guide us. He always touches people on a walk when they see the tail wagging and how he navigates. Initially, we hear the *aww* and watch that sadness come across

others' faces. In short order he assures them that life is still good and *I'm here, let's live and play*. To watch that smile come back to their faces is amazing. It never gets old.

I naively thought that at least with this dog being blind I would be spared skunk issues on our walks. Not so with this spunky one and we got the pleasure of having to take him home in the car after being sprayed on an Arboretum hike. Only Toby....

Toby has formed an intimate bond with my dad (at first based on his generous treat giving). Since meeting each other my dad has entered a journey with dementia. Toby has brought him such joy with just being his curious moochy self! Every time Toby arrives my dad says *"Toby or not to be, that is the question."* Even on the days that Dad doesn't realize I'm his daughter; he still asks about the dog without any eyes. It's been a beautiful gift to witness. We purchased a little stuffy that looks like Toby for my dad. Now on phone calls I can talk to him about his dog.



Yet again, this four-legged shining light is blessing us with his strength as a mini miracle. Exactly three months ago now he collapsed suddenly on a walk to send us into a tailspin for the next forty-eight hours. All his friends (so many human friends, we realized!) came to say their goodbyes. One of his favourites, his vet (he loses his mind for the vet!!) just shakes her head at this little guy, who initially she didn't



think would make it through the weekend. With the aid of steroids, he's walking again, although wobbly and a little less focused due to a brain tumour. To my surprise, we still get to enjoy our neighbourhood walks! He's given us the gift of time to adjust to our loss of such a precious family member, having to let go of being a seeing eye person and to embrace the practice of living with what is as he is having to do right now.

Toby has never let misfortune slow him down. The trust we've cultivated has created a bond like no other. We are so grateful for this final gift of time. In his acceptance of what is and how he is, *Toby or not to be* has taught *me to be*. What a blessing....

*Note: Our precious little soul named Toby died after this article was submitted. His favourite vet beside him supporting him and his people through cherished and heart-breaking moments. He remained Toby until the end and continues to live in our hearts. This piece is dedicated to Dr. Shanna. Thank you for bringing us together and giving us all the gift of a lifetime.*

The following poem, written on the day he died, is in honour of love bundled in a little dog named Toby...

## Last Moments

I'm trying to etch the  
 sound of your breathing into my memory  
 engrave the weight of your head resting on my leg  
 into my heart,  
 forever  
 the softness of your curls  
 the sound of your little paws  
 knocking on the cupboard door  
 demanding food.  
 to feel in my bones  
 the joy that fills the room  
 when you greet someone,  
 anyone  
 and the laughter in my eyes  
 as you play and roll and snort  
 to have the gratitude rain down endlessly  
 for your courage and teaching me acceptance  
 expanding how I see beauty in the world.  
 you live  
 even without being able to see.  
 writing the love letter of a lifetime on my heart  
 that I may give it to you  
 to pocket on your journey ahead  
 that you may never forget  
 how much I love you  
 and what a precious little soul you are.



# ElderDog Canada: Supporting Senior People and Senior Dogs

by Ardra Cole

Like many seniors, an elderly woman, moving to a nursing home, had no one to care for her beloved little dog. Thinking that the only option was euthanasia, she made the dreaded appointment. The small, sweet-tempered, 9-year-old was in good health, had been well cared for, and likely had many years left to enjoy, if given a chance. The veterinarian called ElderDog Canada for help and, within hours, the little dog was on her way to a foster home. Her stay would be short. The day before, ElderDog received a call from a distraught senior, who had lost both her husband and dog within a very short period and desperately wanted a small companion. Several phone calls, paperwork, home visit, and the coordinated effort of ElderDog volunteers later, found the sweet little dog in the loving care of her new, very excited, senior companion whose own life had just been given new purpose. It

all began with two phone calls about a senior dog and a senior person in need of each other.

Sadly, not all stories like this end on such a happy note. It is not uncommon for senior dogs to have their life cut short when their senior companion is no longer able to care for them. It is also not uncommon for older adults to be denied the opportunity to enrich their life with a canine companion. It was precisely this kind of scenario that compelled me to create ElderDog Canada in 2009.

At the time, one of my dogs, Tattoo, and I volunteered in an animal-assisted therapy program in a palliative care unit of a hospital. There, I witnessed the comfort that Tattoo was able to provide to those at end of life and their family – his silent presence a soothing balm. Also at that time, I was conducting a program of research on caregiving and

Alzheimer's disease. In conversations with family caregivers across Canada, the family dog was repeatedly described as an important part of the care team, offering companionship and respite to both family members and their ill loved ones. The learning I gleaned from those two sets of experiences coalesced with the after effects of a life-changing phone call. My older brother had died suddenly, leaving behind his old and ill Chocolate Lab, Mister Brown.



Without hesitation on my part, Mister Brown joined our pack. Walking daily through fields and forest, with three dogs revelling in the natural world, is a time both to reflect and imagine. Grieving the loss of my brother and observing Mister Brown enjoying life, seemingly oblivious to his advanced age and ill health, I was haunted by a call to do something, to make a difference. On those walks, two questions plagued me: What happens to senior dogs who lose their human companion? How can older adults continue to enjoy their relationship with their dog when the capacity to fully care for their dog is compromised? My response was the creation of ElderDog Canada.

ElderDog Canada, now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year, is a nationwide not-for-profit and registered charity dedicated to supporting the vital connection between senior people and their dogs, who are often senior themselves. Elder Dog is headquartered in Nova Scotia with 39 chapters (Pawds) in communities in eight provinces where nearly 4000 volunteers carry out ElderDog's work. Whether it is helping healthy, independent seniors to find an older canine companion, finding new homes for older dogs who have lost their human, or providing help to seniors with basic dog care, ElderDog Canada is dedicated to supporting ageing

dogs, ageing people, and the important connection they enjoy.

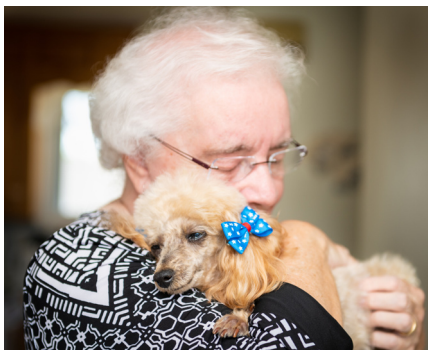
For older adults, especially those living alone, a dog provides a source of comfort and companionship. Companion animals are considered by some to offer one of the most significant enhancements to an older person's quality of life. They provide unconditional support at any time, when family members or friends are not around. Studies report that a majority of elderly dog owners see their dogs as their only friend and their relationship as strong as with humans. From an emotional health perspective, animals help elderly people gain a renewed sense of purpose and increased sense of self-worth, a stronger sense of independence, higher levels of happiness, and overall enhanced quality of life. At a time

in society when loneliness has become so prevalent as to be described as a mental health crisis, canine companionship is of utmost importance.

For many seniors, physical, mental, and social health and well-being are integrally linked to the presence of a beloved canine companion. And yet, a variety of challenges can make it difficult for seniors to adequately care for their dog. Through ElderDog's Dog Care Support for Seniors Program, volunteers provide regular help to seniors living at home with a dog and needing assistance with basic dog care activities such as walking, transportation to grooming or vet appointments, help with brushing or hygiene, and fostering in cases of medical emergency.



Bruce and his senior companion, Buddy, have been inseparable since Buddy was a puppy. When Buddy developed a skin condition and required regular baths, Bruce faced a problem. His arthritis made it difficult for him to bathe Buddy at home and he did not have the resources to take Buddy to a groomer as often as was needed. Not knowing where to turn, John called 2-1-1 and was referred to ElderDog. After a few short months, with baths given several times each week by ElderDog volunteers, Buddy's skin condition cleared and his coat was restored to its former healthy sheen.



Joan has restricted mobility and can no longer take her much-loved Rosie for the long walks they once enjoyed. To complement the short walks that are still manageable, ElderDog volunteers give Rosie the daily exercise she needs so that she remains healthy and so that she and Joan can continue to enjoy each other's companionship.



Frank has a chronic health issue that requires him to have regular short hospital stays. Before he learned about ElderDog and unable to afford foster care, Frank either would opt out of his medical appointments or leave his beloved Dezi alone in their apartment for days at a time with a neighbour checking in. Each option was unviable over a longer term and detrimental to both Frank's and Dezi's well-being. Now, when a hospital stay is required, Dezi stays with an ElderDog volunteer. Frank receives the care he needs without worrying about Dezi, and Dezi enjoys time spent in his second home.

Older dogs, whose lives are disrupted due to relocation, ill health, or death of their human companion, find a new leash (sorry) on life in a loving home with a new senior companion who wants a mature dog to "grow old with." Through our Rehoming Program, ElderDog has provided loving new homes to hundreds of older dogs who, due to financial, health, or relocation

reasons, have lost their human companions. The senior dogs live out their lives in loving companionship and their former companions rest easy knowing their cherished dogs will be loved and cared for forever.

And let us not forget lessons to be learned in the company of an older dog:

The satisfaction of a good meal, warm bed, and leisurely walk reminds us of the PLEASURE IN SIMPLE THINGS.

Living in the moment, as dogs do, makes way for a tremendous capacity for CONTENTMENT.

With the quiet COMPANIONSHIP of an old friend there is no loneliness; only a strong PRESENCE of a meaningful other.

Regardless of how we look or feel or our abilities or challenges, we can count on an old dog for ACCEPTANCE without judgement.

It is remarkable how long an older dog will wait, fixed to a spot, for our return, for that delicious bone she suspects is coming her way, or for a promised car ride. PATIENCE.

There is no need to tell an older dog how to behave on good or bad days. They have an amazing capacity for EMPATHY.

A thud of a tail on the floor at the mere sound of our voice or appearance is the sound of LOVE.



ElderDog continues to grow across Canada and is always in need of committed volunteers to join existing Pawds and to extend support into new communities. Everyone has a role to play in enabling senior people and senior dogs to live in healthy companionship. Visit [elderdog.ca](http://elderdog.ca) for more information, or contact us by phone at 1-855-336-4226 or by email at [info@elderdog.ca](mailto:info@elderdog.ca). ElderDog is 100% volunteer-run and there are no fees for any services.



## Remembering Marley by Allan Berry

I bade a fond but reluctant farewell to a dear friend of mine earlier today. My pet cat, Marley, was anxious to embark on a new adventure, and I did not want to hold him back.

Each day, when he was finished doing what cats do, he would, invariably, seek out my company. His purring and the way he licked the back of my hand with his sandpapery tongue, provided ample evidence that he found pleasure in my presence.

I am fairly certain that he loved me as much as I loved him, and, wherever he is now, I hope he forgives me for not always being the most attentive dad.

So long my buddy and thank you so much. You taught me a lot.

Written in 2020, for Allan's wonderful friend, Marley.  
(August 20, 2004 – December 15, 2020)

# Horses: Masters of the Moment

by E. Anne Porteous

In a world that constantly rushes towards the future, horses remain anchored in the present. Their inherent ability to live in the moment is not just a trait, but a profound lesson in mindfulness and presence that humans often struggle to grasp. This unique quality makes horses not only magnificent creatures but also silent teachers of the art of “now.”

## Definition of Mindfulness

There are many definitions of mindfulness. In my equine assisted learning programs, I incorporate Jon Kabat-Zinn’s definition which states: “Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgementally... in the service of self-understanding and wisdom.”

## The Equine Essence of Presence

Horses, by their very nature, are attuned to the immediacy of their surroundings. Unlike humans, who are often preoccupied with past regrets or future anxieties, horses exist harmoniously within the present moment. Their acute senses of sight, smell, and hearing continuously gather information from their environment, ensuring their survival and well-being.

A horse’s life is a delicate balance of instincts and reactions. It is an intricate dance, where every

twitch of an ear or flick of a tail signifies their engagement with the now. They do not dwell on the past or speculate about the future; instead, they respond to the immediate stimuli, embodying a perfect state of presence.

## The Silent Communication

One of the most fascinating aspects of horses is their non-verbal communication. Horses convey emotions, intentions, and reactions through subtle body language and energy. Their ability to read each other and their human companions is rooted in their acute awareness of the present moment. A horse cannot afford to be distracted; its survival hinges on its ability to respond swiftly and accurately to its surroundings.

This silent communication extends to their interactions with humans. The horse senses this engagement and responds with its own expressions. A tilted head, a swish of the tail, a shift in weight – all are part of an ongoing dialogue of presence and attention. This exchange requires humans to be fully present as well, fostering a unique bond built on mutual awareness and respect.

## Lessons in Mindfulness

Spending time with horses can be a transformative experience for people seeking to cultivate mindfulness. Observing and interacting with horses

encourages individuals to ground themselves in the present moment. The rhythmic cadence of a horse's gait, the soft rustle of their breath, and the gentle sway of their movements can all serve as meditative anchors, drawing the mind away from distraction.

You don't even need to touch a horse, simply being around them can help people develop a deeper sense of self-awareness and calm. The necessity of being attuned to the horse's signals and moods requires a level of focus and presence that is often absent in our daily lives. In this space, there is no room for the clutter of thoughts about the past or worries about the future – only the serene, immediate now.

## Building Trust and Connection

The relationship between humans and horses is built on trust, a trust that is nurtured through consistent and mindful interactions. Horses are incredibly perceptive and can sense the emotional state of those around them. They respond best to calm, centred energy, reflecting the importance of inner peace and stability.

Working with horses teaches patience and empathy. It requires an understanding of their needs and responses. By approaching horses with a mindful presence, humans can create a harmonious partnership where both parties thrive. This mutual respect and understanding can extend beyond the stable, influencing how individuals interact with the world and people around them.

Horses have a unique ability to mirror the emotions of those working with them, providing invaluable feedback in safe settings. The presence of a horse can offer a sense of calm and reassurance, helping individuals to regulate their emotions and gain insights into their own behavior. The non-judgemental nature of horses creates a safe space

for expression and growth. The therapeutic bond formed between horse and human is a testament to the profound impact of equine presence.

## Conclusion

In the bustling rush of modern life, the horse stands as a majestic reminder of the power of the present moment. Their unwavering presence and mindful existence offer a window into a way of being that is often lost to us. Horses, through their silent communication and serene presence, teach us to slow down, to listen, and to truly inhabit the now.

As we strive to grasp the elusive concept of mindfulness, we need only to look to these noble creatures, the masters of the moment, to guide us. In the symphony of equine presence, we find a timeless lesson in the art of living fully and deeply, embracing each moment with the grace and awareness of a horse.



# Horses, the Natural Truth Detector

## Sunday, June 8, 2-4pm



Horses have the unique ability to relate to humans when words fail, which fosters open and honest dialogue, and facilitates the emergence of insights for both the service provider and the client. Patience, respect, teamwork, understanding, and collaboration are required when working with these magnificent animals.

Join E. Anne Porteous MScN, EALF, as she discusses how horses serve as authentic mirrors that are difficult to deceive, with their heightened sensitivity and responsiveness to human emotions.

There is no charge for this event, although donations will be gratefully accepted.

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# Open House at Sierra Acres

## Saturday, June 7, 10am-3pm



3188 Eramosa-Milton Townline  
Rockwood, ON N0B 2K0  
[www.sierracres.ca](http://www.sierracres.ca)

An opportunity for a supervised visit with horses (NO RIDING) and goats, or walk to the naturally rolling forest area. Space is limited, and registration is required for one of three time slots (10-11:30am, 12-1:30pm, 2-3:30pm). Children are welcome, but must be supervised by an accompanying adult.

To register, email  
[lisa@onethousandtrees.com](mailto:lisa@onethousandtrees.com)

### Children's Craft Time

10am-3pm

Create a collage, paper plate horse, or wood craft. All supplies are provided (although donations are accepted).

Note: must arrive no later than 2pm to take part in crafts.

Thanks to  
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# One Soulful Stride at a Time

by Anne Theriault

Soulful Strides Inc. was not born from a perfect plan, but from a healing journey – one intentional, soulful stride at a time. Healing is never linear. It bends, twists, pauses, and sometimes even feels like it's moving backwards! But, with every step forward, and with every breath taken in presence, we are rewriting our stories!

For me, that story began in survival. Life had thrown its share of hardships, and like so many others walking this earth, I carried wounds unseen. Trauma has a way of whispering that we are alone, unworthy, or stuck. That's a lie. The truth? Healing is possible! Transformation is possible. And sometimes, the unexpected bridges we cross – like the ones built with the silent knowing presence of a horse – can lead us home to ourselves in ways we never imagined.

## The Moment That Changed Everything

One of the most profound lessons I ever received didn't come from a human – it came from a horse named Mia. She

stood alone, powerful and unwavering, radiating confidence in a way that made it hard to look away. To me, she was breathtaking – a vision of resilience and strength.

Her story was anything but easy. Used, discarded, and forced to bear more than her share of burdens, she had every reason to be broken. Yet, refusing to let her past define her, she stood in her own power unapologetically.

That moment cracked something open in me. I had spent so much of my life carrying my past like a heavy weight, believing it had somehow made me less – less worthy, less capable, less whole. Standing in front of Mia, I realized something I had never truly accepted before: **our stories do not define our worth.**

Horses don't care about where you've been. They don't judge you for who you were five minutes ago, five months ago, or five years ago. They meet you exactly as you are at this moment! **They offer us a chance to do the same for ourselves.**

For someone who has walked through trauma, this is everything. The fear of being judged, of being “too much” or “not enough” can feel paralyzing. Connecting with a horse is sometimes safer than connecting with a human, especially when we're raw, hypervigilant, and still finding our footing. A horse will never look at you with pity, nor will they ask you to explain why you're hurting. They simply stand beside you. Grounding you. Remind you that you hold value, just as you are!

That moment – standing beside a horse for the first time, it is so profound. It's the space where fear meets presence, where uncertainty transforms into curiosity, and often where the body starts to remember its own power.

Horses, in their raw authenticity, invite us to stand in our truth. They don't demand performance, just presence. For those of us who have spent years bracing for impact, silencing our own needs, or questioning our worth, this invitation is revolutionary!

It's not about overpowering fear, it's about making peace with it, holding space for it, and allowing it to soften into trust. From that trust, something even deeper emerges – *real power*. Not the kind we're conditioned to chase, but the power of our own essence, our individual, unshakable strength.

That first step beside the horse? For me it was the beginning of a dance. A dance of courage, connection, and discovery.

### **From Surviving to Thriving: The Power of Learning Through Horses**

As my healing deepened, so did my desire to learn. Becoming a certified Equine-Assisted Learning (EAL) facilitator wasn't just about gaining knowledge – it was about stepping into my own power. It showed me that moving forward doesn't mean erasing the past; it means integrating it, understanding it, and choosing to grow because of it.

One of the most eye-opening moments in my training came during a seemingly simple team exercise. We were guiding a horse through an obstacle course, a task meant to strengthen communication and teamwork. I was determined to get to the finish line – so



determined, in fact, that I completely lost sight of the people beside me. In my hyper-focus on the goal, I bulldozed forward, dragging both my teammates and the horse with me!

It wasn't until the activity ended that I realized what had happened. I had been so fixated on achieving the end result that I failed to notice how I was

affecting those around me. I had turned what was supposed to be a collaborative journey into a race, one where I had unknowingly pulled others forward rather than moving in sync with them.

What a powerful reflection of life!

This is the beauty of learning through horses – it's never meant to shame or demean. It's not about pointing out faults; it's

about revealing patterns in a way that is gentle, honest, and deeply impactful. A horse doesn't lie, but they also don't criticize! They simply show you who you are in that moment, and then offer the reflection: *How do you want to show up?*

That moment changed me. It made me more aware of my energy, my intentions, and how I interact with others. The best part? I didn't have to hear it in a lecture, or read it in a book – I *experienced* it. **Equine-Assisted Learning isn't just about understanding – it's about embodiment.**

## Building the Bridge for Others

As I grew through my work with horses, I saw something incredible happening – not just within me, but within those around me. I started bringing my family to the farm, watching them soften, breathe deeper, laugh more. I saw firsthand how powerful this work was.

That's when Soulful Strides Inc. took form – not as a business, but as a bridge.

A bridge for others who, like me, had walked through survival and were searching for a way to step into something more – a life of

thriving, of presence, of connection.

At Soulful Strides, we use equine-assisted learning as a tool for self-awareness, confidence, and empowerment. Through hands-on experiences with the horses, participants learn:

- **The power of presence:** grounding in the now, rather than living in the past or future.
- **The importance of self trust:** understanding that our emotions are valid, and learning how to navigate them.
- **Leadership through connection:** because leadership isn't about control, it's about trust and clear communication
- **That simply showing up IS enough** – that YOU are enough, just as you are!

## We Do Not Heal Alone

One of the greatest truths I've come to understand is this: **we do not heal alone.**

Connection – true, deep, heart-centred connection is an essential part of moving from surviving to thriving. It doesn't always start with people.

Sometimes, it starts with a horse breathing beside you, steady and strong.

At Soulful Strides, community is everything. We believe in holding space for those who are ready to take that first step. We know the courage it takes to begin! We also know the freedom waiting on the other side of fear!

## An Invitation to Walk Your Own Soulful Strides

The journey from surviving to thriving is yours to take. No one can walk it for you – but you do not have to walk it alone!

If you:

- feel drawn to the healing power of nature and animals
- want to experience personal growth in a unique, empowering way
- are ready to reconnect with yourself in a safe and supportive space

then this is your invitation.

Come step into something new. Come breathe, come grow, come discover. Come remember – just by showing up, you already hold value!

Your next soulful stride is waiting.  
**Are you ready to take it?**

# Promising Practices

## *a Humane Canada Project*

by Sue O'Neill

Epidemics of gender-based violence are being declared in provinces across Canada, and the question of how to end gender-based violence is weighing on the minds of many. Humane Canada has been working on a project focused on ending gender-based violence in collaboration with humane education and gender-based violence education partners across the country. Humane Canada's Promising Practices Project is focused on engaging men and boys as allies in preventing gender-based violence through community-based humane education programming. This project shows promise in utilizing humane education values to engage men and boys in conversations about healthy ideas of gender, relationships, and actions they can take to end gender-based violence in their communities.

The project has developed a Promising Practices Framework to guide educators in designing programs to engage their communities in this work. The Framework has a foundation section to ground the educator in

making decisions regarding their audience and implementation. The Framework also has an introduction section to guide the educator in how to introduce their audience to the program. The Framework has six pillars that have concepts woven into them regarding the education and action needed to end gender-based violence. The six pillars are:

1. Transforming Perceptions of Gender
2. Addressing Violence
3. Respecting Boundaries
4. Living Well Together
5. Empowered Action
6. Confident Self Expression

Humane Canada's Promising Practices Project is piloting the framework with 13 focus group partners across the country. The focus groups are piloting in many different settings including school humane education programs, humane education clubs, conversational events, community-based settings like youth shelters, and more. The program is being evaluated during this pilot phase.

A final report will be released in 2026.

The Promising Practices Project is also launching an online learning centre in May 2025 that will live within Humane Canada's Online Learning and Resource Centre. The Promising Practices Online Learning Centre will offer educational modules and resources for educators and community champions who wish to implement the framework as part of a program in their community or create a program based on the framework. The online learning centre will also offer a community space for networking and exchanging knowledge, including quarterly community of learning meetings with guest speakers. Email [sue@humaneCanada.ca](mailto:sue@humaneCanada.ca) for more information.

The Promising Practices team believes that the way to end gender-based violence is by creating a world where all humans and animals can live well together, and the Promising Practices Framework offers a pathway towards that future.

# How Donkeys Make My Day

by Keith McKenna

When I retired from my job as a social worker I wondered what I would do with my time. While I loved my time working in mental health, with the homeless, it took a toll on me and I wanted to do something completely different. So I said to myself, *how about something rural involving farms and animals?* That's the polar opposite of urban support of people on the street. And so I found the Donkey Sanctuary of Canada, located just south of Guelph Ontario.

The donkey sanctuary has been in operation since 1992, when David and Sandra Pady turned their farm, with several existing donkeys, into a non-profit home

for unwanted donkeys and mules. Their generous donation has grown into a home for over 100 donkeys and mules, plus a network of host farms who take in their share. There is a core of trained animal care staff, plus visiting vets and farriers (hoof care). New donkeys are assessed for health problems, and are carefully integrated into suitable paddocks. Most donkeys have come from owners who wisely looked ahead and realized that they would be unable to care for their animals in the future, and therefore made a referral to the sanctuary. Others came from situations of neglect and were in need of rescue. They are gently retrained to be able to socialize

with their fellow donkeys, and are brought back to optimal health.

So where does a retired social worker come into the picture? As a volunteer, I give several hours a week to do barn chores and animal grooming, under the supervision of the full-time staff. They have trained me how to approach and gain the trust of donkeys and mules, and how to care for them safely and positively. About half of my time is spent brushing and grooming donkeys and mules, and the other half is spent shovelling you know what! There are separate paddocks for female donkeys (jennies), male donkeys (geldings), mini donkeys, mules, and those who need special medical care. All have 24 hour access to fields as well as an indoor paddock with food and water.

The sanctuary is open to the public on Sundays from May to October with a small entrance fee. We are also open to school groups and individual booked tours. There are special days for senior tours and annual events such as the 5K marathon, the



PACE for the Donkeys. I ran my first marathon last year, with my donkey friends looking on, probably thinking *what are these hundreds of people doing running all over the place?* The sanctuary has a beautiful 200 acres of fields and woods, several barns, and a historic century farm house which serves as the administrative centre.

I have watched the calming effects of these beautiful animals on school children, even the shyest ones. The school kids get to brush and interact with a selected donkey. They are herd animals and want to do nothing but hang out together and chew on some hay. They are always curious and interactive with their



human visitors. They give back more to me than I give in the form of brushing and grooming. Acceptance, calmness and kindness are their gifts. Come see us for an open day on Sundays from May to October.

For more information:  
519-836-1697  
[info@thedonkeysanctuary.ca](mailto:info@thedonkeysanctuary.ca)



# Monty: A Faithful Companion On My Journey of Recovery

by Brenda Sullivan

I remember awakening to the sound of slow, rhythmic breathing. It was deep, steady, comforting. My vision adjusted as I opened my eyes, the breathing was my dog, Monty, my black and white sheepadoodle, all curled up beside me. Head resting on his paws, eyes half open, tail wagging, watching me.

I tried to gather my thoughts, which were scattered, as they had been for many days. The thoughts were like the loose pieces of the child's puzzle that I could not complete. I felt useless. What was the sense in even getting up? I picked up my phone, trying to read my messages. I only saw double of everything close up; peripherally I could not see anything, like a horse with blinders. The sound of the television was deafening, and noises made my head ring.

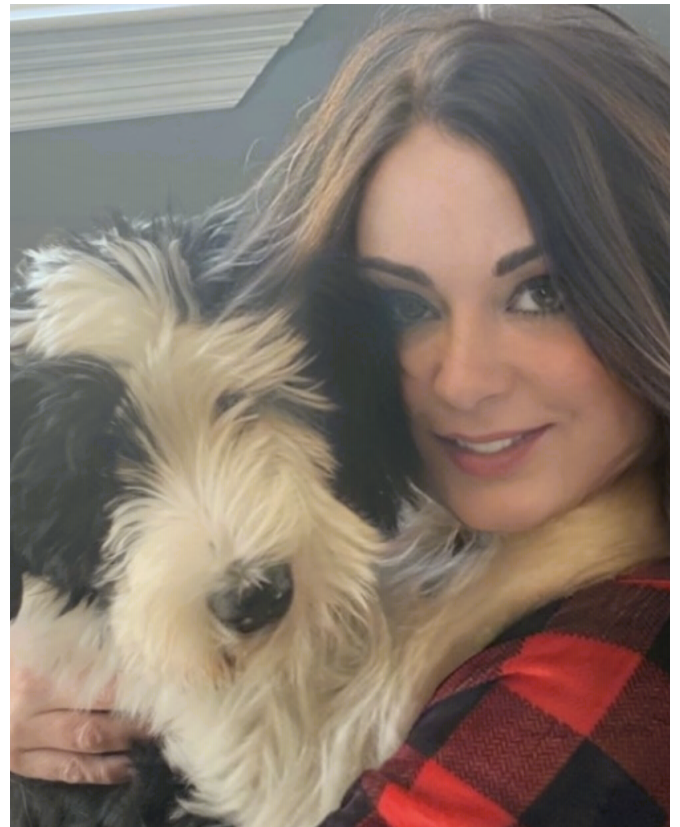
Monty nudged me with his soft, wet nose. He knew me even though I felt like I didn't know myself.

I placed my feet on the floor, movements direct, steady, and purposeful, as my world tilted slightly, but Monty was already there, pressing his warm, fuzzy body against me, holding me steady.

All through my illness, Monty stayed beside me. He was with me when the dizziness made the room spin, or when my irritation heightened from not being able to recall simple things. What day it was. What simple task could I perform to relearn my brain? Why did the sound of the television made me want to cringe?

One day, I was sitting in my garden, staring at the grounds, and Monty ever so gently licked my face. I then realized I had not eaten yet that day, or taken Monty for a walk. I used to walk him three times a day. I asked if he wanted to go for a walk, and his ears perked and tail wagged.

I grabbed his leash and he was there walking beside me, only at the pace I could endure. Steadily, slowly, side by side, Monty and I walked daily, until one day the dizziness was gone.



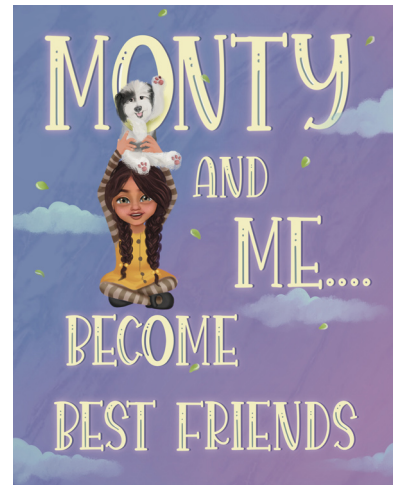
He was there as sadness overcame me at the loss of my career. He was there to hug into at the loss of my marriage. It was then I realized that I needed to be steady and strong, patient and loving to myself, like Monty was to me.

I don't remember how long we walked that day, it seemed like hours, but as we did, I let go of the hurt, the frustrations, the irritation, the sadness that had enveloped me over the last several months.

I realized as we finished our walk, and the sun dipped below the horizon, that something inside of me had changed. The pain and losses were still there, but so was my Monty. Steady, patient, and strong, and I realized as I saw those pieces of him that they were also inside of me.

And from that day forward, I began my healing journey with Monty by my side.

I have even written and published two books in the "Monty and Me" series, in honour of, and with gratitude for, my faithful companion on the journey.



# Do you have a story to tell?



## ONE THOUSAND TREES

empowerment through storytelling and connection

# TURTLES ON ROADS

## NAVIGATING ENCOUNTERS TO SUPPORT TURTLE CONSERVATION

By Julianna Van Adrichem

### THE SITUATION IN A NOT TURTLE SHELL

Spring is here! Across the southern regions of Canada, our freshwater lakes, rivers, and wetlands are thawing, and freshwater turtles are emerging from hibernation.

These semi-aquatic scaly friends will spend most of their time in water, especially in wetlands, but at some point, between now and the fall, they will get the itch to travel and come onto land to lay their eggs. This is where things get tricky.

Unfortunately, over 70% of wetlands have been lost, and what remains is often fragmented by roads...this means a lot of road crossing for our



slow-moving friends, and cars have become their #1 threat. For instance, it is estimated that 1000's of snapping turtles are killed on roads in Ontario each year.

Together with the loss of habitat, every species in Canada has been impacted and are now listed as threatened. This makes supporting and rescuing turtles along roads a crucial activity.

### WHY DID THE TURTLE CROSS THE ROAD?

All turtles must lay their eggs on land, and it turns out that they love the texture of gravel for nesting. But they are particular and can spend days on the side of a road searching for the perfect spot to nest.

Turtles also go onto land to establish new territories, find a mate and move between wetlands.

### EACH TURTLE IS PRECIOUS

Adult female turtles are ESSENTIAL to the survival of a species' population. Less than 1% of hatchlings reach maturity, and only half of these

are likely to be female. Furthermore, turtles do not reach sexual maturity until the age of 5 for painted turtles, to 25 for snapping turtles! It can take decades of nesting for just one egg to survive and replace the turtle that laid it.

### REPORT THE TURTLE!

Dead or alive, report any turtle you see along a road to help scientists and organizations conserve them. You will be a part of *Citizen Science*!

Visit [inaturalist.org](http://inaturalist.org) or download the app.

See Canada's turtle species here:

[natureconservancy.ca](http://natureconservancy.ca).

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Photos: Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre  
For literature cited, contact [jvanadri@gmail.com](mailto:jvanadri@gmail.com)

# WHAT YOU CAN DO



## MOVING SNAPPERS 101

If you see a **uninjured** turtle along the road, pull over and safely move it across the road in the direction it is travelling.

Snapping turtles have sharp beaks and claws! Their neck is very long, allowing them to reach their beaks half way down their shell length!

DO NOT hold them on the sides between the legs!



**Step 1:** Put on leather work gloves to prevent scratches!

**Step 2:** Slide the fingers of one hand under the shell beside the tail. Tilt the turtle up and slide the other hand under the belly (plastron) from the back, as if to carry a platter, and lift.

(Option to carry as in photo)

**Option:** Place the turtle onto a piece of cardboard or tarp to drag it across the road.

PLEASE DO NOT

Lift a turtle by the tail or drag it across the road. These actions will cause the turtle serious injury.

PLEASE DO

Carry the turtle close to the ground so that if you drop him/her, he/she will not get badly injured!

Wash/sanitize your hands after!

**Take the turtle in the direction it was travelling or it will turn around and try again!**

## TURTLE CAR KIT

Keep these items in your car from May to October:

- Thick work gloves for moving snappers
- Rubber gloves for handling badly injured turtles
- Tarp and container for transporting
- Notebook for observations
- Phone numbers of rescue centres

## FOUND AN INJURED TURTLE?



### DO NOT DISPAIR!

Even the most horrendous looking shell injuries can usually be repaired, and with some care, the turtle can return to its natural home!

## CALL US IMMEDIATELY

An **injured turtle** needs medical attention asap!

Turtles from across Ontario can be brought to the OTCC via our first responder system. Please:

1. Place in a well-ventilated container without water
2. Note the location (intersection, mileage) so it can be released according to provincial regulations.
3. **Call the closest wildlife rehabilitation centre.**
4. Do not offer it food or water or try to treat it.

## RESOURCES

Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre (OTCC) 705-741-5000, [ontarioturtle.ca](http://ontarioturtle.ca)

Toronto Wildlife Centre 416-631-0662, [torontowildlifecentre.com](http://torontowildlifecentre.com)

Note: the SPCA does not treat turtles.

Consider donating to these organizations so they may continue their important work!

# From Adoption to the Rainbow Bridge

by Brenda Cassidy

When I lost my miniature dachshund, Hudson, in 2013, I wasn't in a hurry to have any more pets. It's heartbreaking to lose them. We had gotten Hudson when he was just 8 weeks old. After researching different types of smaller dogs, this breed fit what I wanted in a dog. A breeder was found, so I booked an appointment and took my three boys to meet the puppies and their parents.

On arrival, we were invited into the home and were told to each sit on a seat in the living room. We were "warned" that they would be bringing in the parents of the puppies so we could meet them. They were purebred dogs, and the protocol was to meet them before deciding on whether to get a puppy. They used the word "warned" because the dogs were so friendly and loving that they would be jumping up onto each of our laps to meet us. And they did not disappoint or leave anyone out.



Since we were delighted with the parents of the puppies, we were then escorted out to the kennel to meet their offspring. The puppies were just 6 weeks old at this time, so we couldn't take one home yet. However, there was one puppy that stood out from the rest. He was very cute and affectionate, and my middle son took note of the green "toothpaste" mark inside his ear. It was a tattoo to authenticate his pedigree, but my son thought it was toothpaste at the time. My sons, Jordan, T.J., and Kyle, at that time, were aged 19, 11, and 9.

Two weeks later, we went back to pick out our puppy. T.J. immediately found the one with the same "toothpaste" mark. We all agreed that he was the one that we would adopt. I had already made a list of possible names we could pick from, and "Hudson" was the one we had decided on. It was such an exciting day for all of us!

Back at home, we took Hudson into the house and let him investigate the kitchen, where he would have to be segregated until he was trained to use the puppy potty facilities outside. We had a crate ready for him, with a comfortable blanket and some toys. I had been reading all about training puppies and had noted that they don't usually dirty their crate but will try to wait until they are outside of it. We had newspaper spread around on the floor outside just in case.

In the meantime, I would be the chief trainer and feeder of our new member of the family. To train him, I would have to take him out in the yard at regular

intervals and encourage him the whole time by speaking kindly and softly and by saying the same phrase over and over. I chose “Hurry up; hurry up Hudson” as the code words for him to do his business in the grass. They were said in a very encouraging and loving way, and when he would finally conduct some business, I would follow this with an abundance of praise.

What I didn’t really think about previously was how I would have to put the crate beside my bed at night so that I would hear him if he whined to go out. And even if he didn’t, I decided that it would be best to take him out at least every three hours to reinforce the idea that the two “Ps” were to be deposited outside, not inside. Well, I realized then that this period of time would be comparable to getting up with a newborn—I was very tired for quite some time. Eventually, I was able to stretch the time in between outings, until he was finally able to make it till morning before having to relieve himself.

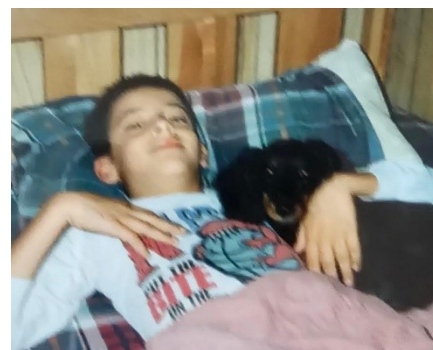
We had started to let him explore the rest of the house, with very few accidents. He was teething, so there was the issue of him trying to chew on the buttons on the couch and on some wires. But that didn’t last too long. He never tried to chew anything that he shouldn’t; he only bothered with his own toys. And he wasn’t

a digger either, although dachshunds are known to have been first bred, in the early 1600s in Germany, to flush out badgers and rabbits.

When he got a little bigger, I bought him a leash so that we could take him for walks. The first time I put the collar and leash on him and took him outside to the sidewalk, he immediately lay flat on his belly with his legs splayed out, and he would not move. This was very foreign to him, so I couldn’t really blame him. Eventually, we got him moving, and from then on, one of his favourite things to do was to go for a walk. Mind you, as he got even older, the walk was a little slower because he had to christen each blade of grass, each pole, and each signpost along the way. However, walks were essential for making sure he got enough exercise.

In time, Hudson picked my son T.J. to be the one he usually slept with at night. He attached himself to him more than to the rest of us, although he loved us all very much. When T.J. got older and would leave the house to go out with his friends, and even more so when he was older and had a job, Hudson would take all the Kleenex, and whatever else he could find, out of the garbage baskets and take them to the front door, where he would proceed to ceremoniously rip

them to shreds. This, learned later, was from “separation anxiety.”



Eventually, we got a house with a closed-in yard. That was great because I could just open the door and let Hudson out, and he would just come to the door and let me know when he wanted back in. He loved going out in the yard. As soon as I would open the door, he would make an exit at full speed, and he would literally clear the short flight of steps and land on the grass below them. Being that he was just a little dog, it was easy to pick up after him. I would walk the yard (which wasn’t really that big) in a grid pattern and locate all the miniature cigars that he so generously left for me.

Over the years, Hudson attempted to have a few adventures. He would somehow manage to escape the house or yard. I can remember three particular times that he did this. The one time was when we lived on a very busy street, which was near a very busy cross street. It wasn't too long afterwards that we realized that he wasn't in the yard. Panicking, my sons and I took off down the street in different directions to look for Hudson. He had already started going down the busy cross street when he was spotted. Lucky for him, and for us, he hadn't attempted to cross the street.

Another time, on the day of moving into a new house, he got loose in the confusion. There we were, once again, running down the street to find him. The street we were on was a dead-end street, so he didn't get too far before his exploit came to a halt. A few years later, we moved again, and we then had a closed in yard. Even so, the gate would sometimes not shut properly, and we would have to double check it to make sure. It was only human nature to sometimes be in a hurry and not realize that the gate had not latched properly. Hudson took advantage of this at least three times.

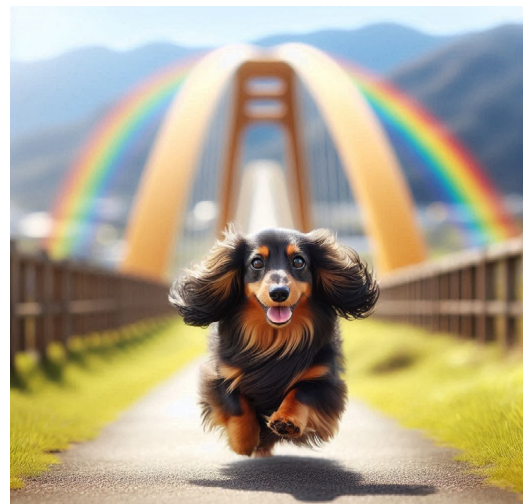
The first time, he was several blocks away, and a homeowner took him inside and called the number on his tags. They were provided our phone number so that they could call and notify us that they had Hudson. I immediately went and picked him up. Poor Hudson—foiled again! The next time he got out—I'm sure he checked the gate every time—he went in the opposite direction, and we found him halfway down the block. His next stint was even shorter as we caught up with him before he even had a chance to get to the end of the driveway.

We have many fond memories of Hudson, who was with us from 1997 to 2013. He was a precious part of our family. His health started to fail during the last three or four years of his life. His eyesight and hearing started to go, and he was having trouble

making it outside in time to do his business. In December 2013, we had gone to my mother's place for a Christmas get-together. When we returned home, Hudson was sitting in the kitchen, unable to move. He was whining in confusion and possibly even pain. It was common for dachshunds to develop back problems, and to even become paralyzed from issues relating to this.

Unfortunately, along with his other age-related issues, this is what happened to Hudson. There was no choice but to take him immediately to the veterinarian, where my three sons and I were told that there was nothing that could be done for him. The life expectancy for dachshunds was around 16 or 17 years at the most, and he was now almost 16 years old. Even though I knew how blessed we were to have had this time with him, and even though it was the humane thing to do, it was the most heart-wrenching and saddest time my sons and I had to go through.

Hudson lay in my arms, with my sons standing right next to me, and we offered him love and comfort as he transitioned. He quietly and peacefully went to sleep. There is a belief that a "rainbow bridge" awaits our pets when they transition. Hudson would have been so happy to cross this bridge—a bridge to freedom and one big final adventure!



# Monarch Ultra

*- following the flight path of the monarch butterfly*

**by Clay Williams**

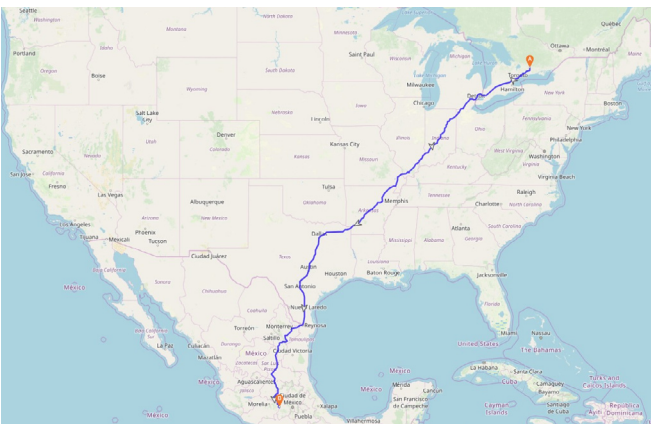
On March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018 I received an email from Carlotta James. She had run in my Canal Pursuit for Mental Health relay and wanted to discuss a new potential project with me. I met her and documentary film director Rodney Fuentes at a little restaurant in Peterborough to talk about it.

Carlotta handed me a printed presentation, four or five pages, outlining an idea she had to run along the migration path of monarch butterflies all the way from Peterborough to the butterfly sanctuary in the Sierra Madre mountains in central Mexico, and to make a documentary film paralleling the struggle of the runners with the struggle of the butterflies on their impossibly long migration. I did some quick math in my head: 4000 km distance, 100 km per day, 40 days, crossing two international borders on foot, they both speak Spanish, I could make a few bucks for making maps and organizing the run.

I was immediately convinced I could do it, just by expanding on work that I had already done on the Canal Pursuit. So within a few days I had submitted a budget proposal. I did some internet searches so that we could have a unique name for the event, and the Monarch Ultra was born. The “Ultra” comes from the name of races longer than marathon distance: Ultramarathons.

There was a producer who was supposed to find sponsors, as well as organizing accommodations, transportation, most of the logistical stuff, but after months of stalling and lack of action we fired him and had to rely on a bunch of small donations to cover the basic costs of the project, and on our own resources for accommodations and transportation. This meant we didn’t have a big sponsor, I wouldn’t be getting paid for creating the route and logistics info, and none of us would have income for the time away from work to run the event. In spite of all that we decided in February that we would go ahead and do the run.

We started in Peterborough on September 19th, because that’s where the other two team members lived. And on the very first day we got an omen of what the rest of the run would be like, we ran into the first construction zone, unaware that it was going to be there. I immediately had to decide if we would reroute the runners, or send them through the construction. We had a couple of bicycles strapped to the back of our RV, so two of the crew



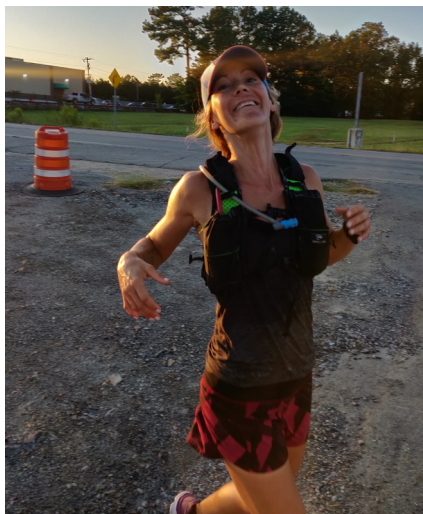
got on bikes and checked out the construction. There were no workers present, and the area was passable on foot, so we told the runners to run straight through.



About two months before the run started we realized that we were not going to have enough runners, and that Carlotta and I could not fill in all the empty spots, so it would not be a continuous relay run, there would be gaps. In Indiana, we ran a couple of sections off course because the RV was in the shop for repairs. In Arkansas, the planned route was on a frontage road that was really busy and really dangerous, so I took the runner to a parallel road to finish her 100 km run. In Texas we went off course to avoid having to drive the RV in downtown Dallas Traffic. We rerouted in Nuevo Leon Mexico so we wouldn't be running on public roads without a police escort. We rerouted in Guanajuato Mexico so that we could be at receptions that were

planned for us by local government officials.

In spite of some last minute cancellations and drop-outs, the runners were the real stars of the event. There were over 100 runners in all, many running distances of 50 km, 80 km or 100 km. And for many of them, it was their first time running those distances. Three of the runners chose the running date because it was their birthday. One of the runners in Arkansas, Micah, was over the moon about running for butterflies. She ran 100 km and she was so bubbly and excited that I forgot to get the baton from her at the end of her run.



The baton was a letter written to the butterflies by a third grade class in Peterborough, and each runner read the letter before they ran and carried the baton. She ended up mailing the baton to us in Texas and we picked it up on the way through.

On November 4th, I was one of the group of runners who ran the final 25 km. There were two Canadians, two Americans, and three Mexicans. We had an over-the-top reception at the little town of Macheros, with local and regional government officials there. The high school students did a butterfly dance, the elementary students met us and gave us food and water, and we went up into the butterfly sanctuary to read the letter, the baton, to the butterflies that were up there. As you can imagine, it was a pretty emotional day, the culmination of the work of our team over a year and a half.

What did we accomplish? The team ran every day for 47 days. We and the runners raised funds for three conservation groups, one in each country. We had steady newspaper and radio coverage of the event in all three countries, and a gradually building social media presence. We made contact with and had conversations with conservation groups, and individual citizen activists in each country. We had impromptu visits and classroom talks in four schools.

And my part? Well, I started out as just a runner with a simple understanding of the bad condition of our environment, and a desire to try and help a little. By the time I got to Mexico

it was really clear to me that almost everything we do has an effect on our environment. We can choose to continue to have no consideration for the way our actions affect our future, or we can choose to spend a little time to educate ourselves, and stop pushing our environment over a cliff and expecting our children and grandchildren to fix it.

As I look back on the event, I recall that I saw monarch butterflies flying southward on every single day of this international adventure.



# **The Monarch Ultra**

## **Screening at The Bookshelf Cinema**

### **Thursday, June 5, 7pm**



Thanks to

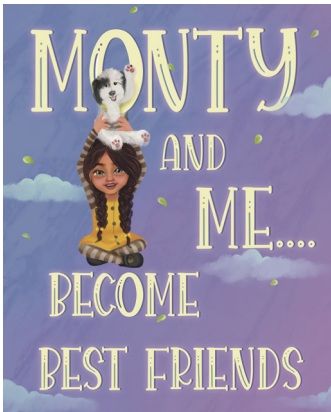
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Visit [www.onethousandtrees.com](http://www.onethousandtrees.com)  
for more details, or to watch the trailer.

# The Bookshelf

*The following books, all published by One Thousand Trees, are related to some of the articles in this issue, and are available from the One Thousand trees online bookstore at [www.onethousandtrees.com](http://www.onethousandtrees.com). Click on the QR codes for direct links.*



*Monty and Me ... Become Best Friends* is about a little girl, Lucy, and her new puppy, Monty. Monty and Lucy develop a new-found friendship and a strong bond of love is built between them as they make a promise to care for one another.

*Monty and Me ... Go to the Park* is about a little girl, Lucy, and her new puppy, Monty. Monty and Lucy strengthen their friendship and bond of love as they help each other work through the fear they encounter when they are caught in a thunderstorm.



Keira is a little girl who likes to talk, a lot ... so much so that her grandma told her she could “talk the hind legs off a donkey.” Keira thinks this is funny, but after a donkey ride on a hot day she thinks she has actually caused the donkey to collapse. Keira is so upset that she stops talking.



**The Two Bays Pack**  
*the Coyotes of Inverhuron*



David Rankine

Over a period of 4 years, David has walked thousands of kilometres on coyote trails learning first hand about the behaviour and ways of this coyote pack. Exciting face to face encounters, howls and many trail camera photos have led David to a greater understanding of himself as a human being and a deeper understanding of these magnificent creatures.



**THE TRANSFORMATIVE  
POWER OF HORSES**



How They Can Help  
Change Your Life

*The Transformative Power of Horses* is an anthology in which 15 individuals share their stories of healing experiences with horses. Also included is information about research conducted on this topic, by Dr. Kristina Karvinen, Professor, Faculty of Education and Professional Studies, Nipissing University.



**Animals and  
Our Emotional Wellbeing**



Personal Stories About Our Best Friends  
and Their Impact on Our Lives

Illustrations by Irene Oktaba

An anthology of stories about animals/pets, and the positive effect they have on our health and wellbeing. Includes stunning illustrations by watercolour artist Irene Oktaba.



## This month's contributors ...



**Allan Berry** (*Remembering Marley*)

Allan Berry has always been a keen lover of the printed word, their origins, as well as their uses. In elementary school, he always had his blue Oxford Pocket Dictionary at his side in order to look up unfamiliar words and phrases and commit them to memory. However, it has only been in the retirement years that writing has become a primary focus, this being a consequence of more free time, along with the support and encouragement of a trusted friend. He has been a member of The Wellies creative writing group in Fergus, Ontario for the past three years. His other hobbies, or avocations are: reading, photography, music, boxing, and trying to get the maximum use of a fitness club membership. All of these, fortunately, provide material for his weekly contributions to the writing group.



**Brenda Cassidy** (*From Adoption to the Rainbow Bridge*)

Brenda's journey has been one of growth and learning. There have been many zigs and zags and even U-turns to get to where she is today. But looking back, she can see that this was the path that she was meant to be on. Many lessons have been learned and many blessings received. She is doing what she loves and feels she was meant to do, which is writing. Her spiritual journey has evolved over the years, and she is especially grateful to be able to share this with others through her writing.



**Ardra Cole** (*ElderDog Canada: Supporting Senior People and Senior Dogs*)

Founder of ElderDog Canada, Ardra is a university professor with a background in educational psychology, teaching and learning, research methodologies, adult education, and community development. She has been a faculty member in universities for more than 30 years and has had a career-long commitment to making her research matter in people's everyday lives. Through her volunteer work in animal-assisted therapy with her beloved Tattoo (now deceased), she observed the power of animal companionship at late and end of life. Ardra also has specialized training in pet loss and bereavement.



### **Marilyn Helmer (*Unexpected Company*)**

Marilyn is the award-winning author of over thirty children's books. Her books include picture books, early chapters, retold fairy tale, riddle books and novels. Her short stories, poetry and articles have appeared in many children's magazines and anthologies in Canada and the United States. Marilyn's penchant for entering writing contests has resulted in success with short adult fiction as well. Visit her website at [www.marilynhelmer.com](http://www.marilynhelmer.com).



### **Lisa Lindsay (*Toby Or Not To Be*)**

Lisa is beyond grateful for animal friends and family in her life. It's a creative joy and honour to be able to write about them. They inspire her to write! Lisa volunteers with ElderDog Canada, which is an extra precious gift right now with the loss of her pup. She enjoys poetry, meditation, qi gong, painting and nature to support herself on her healing journey. It's important to Lisa to share about death and grief to support our community in embracing death as part of life. She has completed death doula training, qi gong teacher training, and Realization Process teacher training, and she is now receiving the gift from these practices on her own grief journey.



### **Debbie Mann (*Barking Up the Right Tree: Finding Your Ideal Pup*)**

With over 30 years of experience spanning both corporate and not-for-profit sectors, Debbie has built a diverse career in purchasing, sales and sales development, membership acquisition and retention, product training, event and conference planning, and supporting festivals and events across Ontario. Her passion lies in creating meaningful connections and driving impactful projects. As a natural networker, Debbie was introduced to Personality Dimensions© and Canine Colours—tools rooted in temperament theory. These programs taught her the value of understanding personality types to improve communication, build stronger relationships, and even connect better with our four-legged friends. Incorporating these tools into her life has enhanced Debbie's ability to thrive personally and professionally by fostering cooperation and understanding. Whether it's through storytelling, building connections, or empowering others with new tools for success, Debbie is passionate about making an impact in every area of life.



### **Keith McKenna (*How Donkeys Make My Day*)**

Keith was born and raised in Willowdale, Ontario. He holds a Bachelor of Arts (Psychology) from Simon Fraser University and a Bachelor of Social Work from McMaster University. Keith worked in mental health settings for 40 years, including as a support coordinator and crisis worker with the Canadian Mental Health Association - Waterloo Wellington. He is a recipient of the SCOPE Award (Supporting Consumer Opportunities for Empowerment), awarded by the Mental Health Rights Coalition of Hamilton, 1997-1999. Now retired, Keith has been a volunteer at the Donkey Sanctuary of Canada since 2020.



### **Sue O'Neill (*Humane Canada's Promising Practices Project*)**

Sue has a background working in gender-based violence services, specifically in emergency GBV shelter and community services. Her work in these settings resulted in supporting the development of an agency-based offsite animal safekeeping program. Her additional professional experience has been in various roles in the areas of mental health, employment, and education. Sue is a Masters of Women and Gender Studies candidate at Saint Mary's University and recipient of a SSHRC grant to fund her thesis research. Her thesis research is focused on the impact of farmed, working, and larger companion animals on the safety decision making of survivors of gender-

based violence. She is a Master of Education graduate from Western University, in which her project work focused on the entanglement of violence towards animals, humans and the environment within education. Sue also holds an Honours Bachelor of Child Development. Sue's favourite role is being the pet guardian to a cat named Mew Mew.



### **E. Anne Porteous (*Horses: Masters of the Moment*)**

E. Anne Porteous Reg.N., MScN was a professor and coordinator of nursing in the McMaster/ Mohawk/Conestoga collaborative program for twenty years. Anne has been able to combine her passion for teaching and ongoing learning with her passion for horses -- a unique combination -- by offering Equine Assisted Mindfulness programs. Anne is an instructor in the mindfulness program offered at the University of Toronto, and a volunteer facilitator for Action for Happiness.



### **David Rankine (*How Observing Coyotes Made Me a Better Human*)**

Through his original music, art, writing and teaching, David explores the nature of creativity and its place in healing, and in the development of consciousness and search for self. He lives and works in rural Huron County and spends much of his time at Inverhuron, watching the ever-changing skies and lake. Over a period of 4 years, David has walked thousands of kilometres on coyote trails learning first hand about the behaviour and ways of the Two Bays coyote pack. Exciting face to face encounters, howls and many trail camera photos have led David to a greater understanding of himself as a human being and a deeper understanding of these magnificent creatures.



### **Brenda Sullivan (*Monty: A Faithful Companion on My Journey of Recovery*)**

Brenda is a retired registered nurse and mom of one son. Recently life has been turned upside down by a mild traumatic brain injury but because she has had great life lessons she has been able to turn lemons into lemonade. In honour of her companion on the journey she has, to date, published two books in the “Monty and Me” series: *Monty and Me: The Best of Friends* and *Monty and Me: Go to the Park*. For more information visit her website at [www.brendasullivan.ca](http://www.brendasullivan.ca).



### **Anne Theriault (*One Soulful Stride at a Time*)**

After 16 years in the insurance industry, Anne experienced a turning point due to PTSD in 2021. In early 2023, a guiding dream set her on a journey towards her life’s purpose. A series of serendipitous events led her to become a certified groom serving as a stable assistant at Sunrise Therapeutic Riding Centre, while also fulfilling her passion as an Equine Assisted Learning facilitator. After receiving certification as a Dreamwinds/CartierFarms EAL facilitator in 2023, she completed her work at Sunrise and started working with a private herd. This led to the founding of Soulful Strides in 2024. Outside of professional pursuits, Anne’s interests include gardening, nature walks and

bird watching, learning and acquiring new knowledge. She resides in southwestern Ontario with her family and beloved poodle named Clarabelle. Visit her at [www.soulfulstridesinc.ca](http://www.soulfulstridesinc.ca).



### **Clay Williams (*Monarch Ultra*)**

Clay is a 64-year-old father of two living in Elmira with his wife of 43 years. He was born in Northern Manitoba and his family moved to southern Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and eventually settled in Thunder Bay. In 1982 Clay lost his oldest brother to suicide, and then in 2007 another older brother took his own life. Clay's wife, his oldest sister and his daughter all struggle with mood disorders and he has recently found his voice as an advocate for mental health awareness and education, speaking to middle school and high school students and encouraging conversation about mental health. He was the Run Director of the Monarch Ultra, a 4,300km run from Peterborough,

Ontario to Mexico, following the flight path of the monarch butterfly, in order to raise awareness of a population in decline.



### **Julianna Van Adrichem (*Cakes for Apes: Supporting Orangutan Conservation and Turtles on Roads*)**

Julianna is on a mission to protect wildlife and their ecosystems. She has over 20 years of experience in the environmental sector, centred on effective communication to encourage environmental practices. She is now the National Communications Advisor at Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS). Her degrees in International Development and Biological Sciences (Zoology) from the University of Guelph give her an understanding of specific species and how threats to biodiversity fit into the larger context of human issues. A life-long learner, Julianna is always reading and studying

wildlife and how to be an even more effective voice for the voiceless! She leads interpretive nature walks about beavers, and writes and speaks about wildlife conservation. In her spare time, she may be sewing, reading, hiking, biking, or sitting in the woods, watching and listening to birds and other wildlife. Follow her on her new Instagram account, @JulesTalksBiology.

**Are you interested in writing an article for our Summer edition?**

**The submission deadline is June 7.**

**Email [lisa@onethousandtrees.com](mailto:lisa@onethousandtrees.com) for more information.**