

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2006



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

The pages that follow contain data that will prove informative and useful for our supporters and business partners who helped make our work possible in fiscal year concluded September 30, 2006.

The year 2006 was a year of continued growth at Fidos for Freedom. In conjunction with the Federal Correctional Institute in Cumberland, Maryland we began a program where inmates in an all male minimum security Federal prison raise and train puppies for Fidos. We had four puppies being raised and trained by eight inmates. Every two weeks, two volunteer trainers gave up their Saturday, drove to Cumberland and worked with the inmates, teaching them to train the dogs. In August 2006, we graduated our first class of four dogs. A new class of four dogs is currently at the prison. This program gives the inmates the unconditional love of the dogs and a chance to use their time in a very positive manner. Also, the dogs are exposed to a very diverse population of men that we do not have at Fidos.

Changes also occurred in the ranks of Fidos Board of Directors. After 10 years of service on the Board of Directors, Ann Dunn retired and I was elected president. Fortunately, our executive director and department heads are doing a great job, which made the transition in leadership a relatively smooth one. Fidos began the process of preparing for accreditation by Assistance Dogs International (ADI). This effort was lead by Ann Dunn and Joe Swetnam.

Our building is almost completely rented. The renovated space on the second floor has several tenants and only one empty office. The agility room is being used on a regular basis for flyball practice and competitions, basic obedience classes, and agility classes. Our main training floor is rented for dog training classes several nights a week, and our conference room has been outfitted with white boards and audio visual equipment and is available for rental.

Our junior volunteer program continues at full capacity. Our juniors work to make items for our therapy dog teams to present to the residents at the health care facilities. They also learn about dogs and dog obedience skills using our therapy dogs. They attend seminars conducted by Fidos clients on disability issues. Our juniors continue to volunteer their services as ring stewards at a 2 day agility event in Virginia each autumn and receive a cash donation from the sponsors of this event which will be used to purchase items for our junior volunteer program during the year.

Our goal for the future is to manage our growth and continue to plan for the future as the needs of our community continues to grow and evolve. Fidos will continue to produce quality assistance dogs for our clients and quality pet therapy visits for health care facilities. Our supporters and volunteers continue to be Fidos' biggest asset and without them, the work of Fidos would not be possible. A big thanks to everyone who has helped us during 2006! Fidos turns 20 in 2007- we hope you will be with us to celebrate!

Sherri G. Sirotkin, President
Fidos For Freedom, Inc.



CLIENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Since its establishment in April 2002 the Fidos Client Services Department has made great strides in providing valuable assistance to both new and experienced clients. The Client Services department currently consists of 1 client volunteer, the director, a hearing dog client; the assistant director position is currently vacant. The mission of the Client Services Department is to ensure that applicants and clients progress through the application process and the training program with equal opportunity and at their own pace, and that throughout the process each individual's special needs are met. The department's responsibilities cover all aspects of the client indoctrination process from the processing of incoming applications and coordination with the Application and Client Review Committee through the graduation of each Hearing and Service Team. Key elements of this support are conducting a 3-4 day orientation period for new clients, which prepares them for the training process, and monthly Client Support Meetings.

Applications (Hearing Dog or Service Dog) Requested	47
No Response to Applications	34
Applicants Denied	6
Interviews Conducted	13
Interviewees Accepted	10
Interviewees Denied	3
Applicants/Clients Dropped Out	2
Applicants/Clients Delayed Start Dates	0
Monthly Client Support Meetings	12
Client Training Outings: April 15 to Union Station; April 27 to BWI Airport; June 24 to Baltimore Inner Harbor; September 6 from Fidos to BWI airport and back conducted by WMATA via Metro Bus	4



DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

The Development Department continued to conduct our most successful fundraisers for FY2006. A total of approximately \$18,550 was generated from Fidos sponsored events for FY2006. The golf tournament, Stroll 'n Roll, and the tattoo clinic/CGC/TDI testing showed profits of \$8,000, \$10,000, and \$550, respectively. These were increases over the previous year. The calendar sale fundraiser was handled by the Volunteer Services department.

On October 1, 2005 Fidos hosted our seventh annual Fall Stroll 'n Roll at Lake Elkhorn in Columbia. This was the first year that the Stroll 'n Roll was held at Lake Elkhorn and, despite some growing pains, many lessons were learned for following years. This was the second year that the clients of Fidos took on a leadership role in running the event. About 85 people participated in the fundraising effort to obtain sponsors with approximately \$10,000 collected. We also had approximately 6 event sponsors which covered the cost of the sweatshirts and t-shirts.

For the first time in Fidos' history, we had two Stroll 'n Roll fundraisers in one year. The Stroll 'n Roll on September 9, 2006 was a big success. Sixty-six Fidos volunteers provided a venue for the community that included vendors, games, demonstrations, food, water, sodas, goodie bags, special T-shirts for all the participants, and bandanas for all the dogs. The fundraiser brought in more than \$15,000! This Stroll 'n Roll was held at Lake Elkhorn in Columbia, the same location as the first one of the year. The weather was very warm, but the skies were beautiful and the participants had a wonderful time. This fundraiser has steadily grown and has become one of the favorite events of the year.

On February 5, 2005 the annual tattoo clinic, Canine Good Citizen (CGC) testing and Therapy Dog International Testing were held. Thanks again to Tom and Nancy Mantlo for doing a wonderful job of tattooing the dogs. 35 dogs were tattooed (just slightly less than previous years) and approximately 40 dogs were tested for CGC and TDI. The net proceeds from this event were \$200 for tattooing and \$350 for CGC and TDI.

On May 22, 2006 Fidos hosted its seventh annual charity golf tournament at Hampshire Greens Golf Course in Aston, Md. This was the first year the tournament was held at this course. Dave Cogott of Oliver's Old Towne Tavern in Laurel hosted the post tournament cook out and happy hour at the course. This event, again, drew a full field of 144 golfers with 25 sponsors contributing money or prizes, and realized a net profit of \$8,000. BB&T bank was our largest sponsor, donating \$3,000 to cover the cost of our annual golf shirts for the golfers. The net profits were down, slightly, due to an increase in the cost of the golf course and a slight decrease in the number of sponsors. Approximately 25 volunteers helped during the day.

The web page continued to strive for improvement in FY2006.



TRAINING DEPARTMENT

One of the high points of each year is the formal graduation of Assistance Dog Teams. The 2006 Graduation banquet was no exception. Hearing client teams are Hilary Relton and Labrador Retriever, Ryan, Bruce Condit and Labrador Retriever, Sandee. The Service Team graduating was Rodney Cornwell and his Service Dog, Labrador Retriever Chase although unfortunately they could not be in attendance.

There were a total of thirty nine dogs in all stages of training during FY2006. Two dogs were released from the program in FY 2006, both due to medical conditions that precluded their working but were not life threatening. One dog had elbow surgery prior to being released. One was returned to her breeder and was ultimately adopted by a Fidos volunteer as a therapy dog. The second dog was adopted by the trainer with the breeder's approval and serves as a demo dog and therapy dog.

During the Fiscal Year, ten dogs were donated to the program. All ten of the dogs remain in the program. Nine of dogs were donated by breeders who have donated previously. Sister Pauline Quinn, a pioneer in Prison Puppy Raising programs facilitated the donation of one of these dogs. Several breeders we have kept in touch with over the years have donated this year. The Fidos for Freedom Web Site has continued to help us reach breeders interested in donating dogs. More dogs were offered to us, but were turned down as we had reached the limit of our personnel resources.

Four teams finished their probationary year and obtained ownership of their dogs in FY 2006.

Nine new teams finished their team training and started their probationary year in the Fiscal Year. Two more matches did not progress to the probationary year. Both dogs remained in the program for rematch.

Two teams did not complete their probationary year. These matches were dissolved. Both dogs were re-matched, one as our first working home placement.

Eleven dogs progressed from the puppy program into Red Harness during FY 2005. These dogs were Annie, Baloo, Billy, Chloe, Eli, Hogan, Quincy, Roy, Ruby, Tori, and Duncan. Red Harness status moves the dog into a Trainer's home and the dog progresses to working in public with public access. More dogs in training were progressing towards Red Harness status the end of FY2006.

Personnel in the Training Department in FY2006 underwent some changes. Ann Dunn remained the Assistant Director of Training position. Annette Deitrich continued as the puppy coordinator, answering inquiries about dogs to be donated, testing puppies and recruiting and training puppy raisers. Annette took over the puppy training classes with help from Erin Evanich, Julie Tune and JoAnn Wilson. Jolanthe Winjholds took over as the Vacation Home Coordinator, and was succeeded by Linda Griffin when Jolanthe unexpectedly moved out of the country. Client Services worked closely with the training department on those activities that involve the training of the clients. The Client Services Department and Training Department continued to work on some developing some joint policies and procedures.



Recruiting and retaining puppy raisers and trainers continues to be a challenge. By providing a more structured training program and more feedback we are hoping to attract and retain puppy raisers. We did retain some puppy raisers and had other puppy raisers progress in the training department as trainers. This area is a challenge to many of the Assistance Dog organizations. We did experience some repeat puppy raisers in the past year which gave us some more resource people and more experience in the program. Our new prison partnership may also help. We may develop another group of temporary puppy raisers to house and train puppies prior to their entry into the prison program. Being a volunteer trainer is a very demanding volunteer job that involves not only training the dog, but training and working with the client.

Ann Dunn, Julie Tune, Annette Deitrich, Pat Jarvis, Tracy Bowman, Sherri Sirotkin and Laurie Hardy represented the training department at the Assistance Dog International conference in January in San Diego, California. This was one of the largest attendances at an ADI conference. There was a continued emphasis on early puppy training and imprinting. Assistance dog skill work is taught much earlier – giving the puppy raisers more work, but also rewarding feedback as the dogs master the skills. We continue to strive to incorporate more of this early learning into our program.

Apprentice trainers Mary Austin, Paul Kriedeman, Sarah Werner, Erin Evancich, Laurie Steele and Tracy Bowman guided their first dogs through team training. This is a great accomplishment. Several additional puppy raisers have worked towards apprentice trainer status at the end of the fiscal year by learning how to train advanced skills.

The training staff meets monthly offering a skills lesson with each meeting as well as updates on training. These skills lessons will be incorporated as part of a written training curriculum for both Hearing Dogs and Service Dogs. More training staff education is planned. Staff development in this area remains challenging with the time commitments, funds to attend conferences and the volunteer status, however progress is being made.

The Fiscal Year happened to contain no Spirit conferences. Fidos was responsible for putting on the 2006 calendar year Spirit Conference. Much time in the fall was spent working on plans for hosting the 2006 Spirit Conference in November of 2006 in Chevy Chase, MD.

This year we continued our affiliation with Federal Correctional Institute in Cumberland, Maryland raising and training assistance dogs in the prison system. Our first 5 puppies returned from the Federal Prison system in Cumberland, Maryland. One returned early and was released from the program for inability to cope with changing conditions – both at the prison and subsequently. One other dog was released due to a congenital shoulder problem that surfaced upon her return to Fidos. Three dogs remained in training from the original group.

The training staff is making bi-monthly trips to the prison to mentor the inmate trainers. A second set of four puppies reported to prison in August 2006. The puppies started at the prison at about five months of age and plans are to have this set of inmates to cover at least the beginning of the dogs skill work. We have been trying without success to develop programs to get this set of dogs more socialized in



town and in “vacation homes” to get used to kitchens, cooking, and furniture. We plan on rotating these dogs back for 2 week vacations to Fidos in FY 2007. Four of eight original inmates remained with the program with two short timers helping with the start of training of this group of dogs.

The annual Client Certification Day was held in May of 2006. Due to a wonderful group of volunteers we were able to test over twenty Assistance Dog Teams. A total of twenty six tested throughout the year. All of the clients worked at keeping up their skills and all passed the written and skills test and the ADI Public Access Test. Significantly we had no overweight dogs, which evidently is a problem in the Assistance Dog community. Fidos stresses from early puppy-hood on to keep the dogs in training at their proper weight and we are able to continue to stress this during the team’s probationary year.

Ongoing work continues on developing a complete training manual to improve skills involved in training hearing dogs and service dogs. The puppy raiser guideline book is updated on a continual basis. Continuing education for trainers and Assistance Dog Teams is being developed. We continue to develop ways to share the training techniques, equipment adaptations, and dog information. Client Services has obtained a source to close caption some of the training tapes we’d like to use with all of the clients. Health information about dog’s weight and longevity has been incorporated into our training of puppy raisers, trainers and clients with the goal being longer and more productive lives for our Assistance Dogs.

Ongoing health of our working dogs remains good. As the working dogs have aged, we have kept in touch with the teams to see how they are doing. The training department will continue to work towards ADI voluntary certification in early FY 2007.



VOLUNTEER DEPARTMENT

General Volunteer Milestones for the Year:

Third annual calendar was produced, sold and generated over \$12,000 income for Fidos.

Banquet/Silent Auction generated over \$11,000 income for Fidos.

New policies instituted for training requirements (can take other eligible classes at Fidos).

New policy for attendance requirements (demos and info booth participation counts as a 2 for 1).

Changed TD testing to include a pre-screening, a meet & greet with dogs to reduce drop out rate.

Added an additional training session for TDs on Wednesday evenings. Helps decrease the traffic on the training floor during regular class and help newbies get acclimated.

Dogless handler program going very well - retaining more dogless volunteers and utilizing extra dogs and handlers more efficiently.

New position, Assistant Director of Volunteer Services was created.

Other new positions were created in the department to handle increased number of volunteers and TDs.

New TD status of "retired" allows older dogs with some medical issues to continue to participate in limited capacity.

Training requirements were reduced for experienced teams who make more than 20 visits during the year.

Therapy Dogs:

32 new teams joined Fidos.

180 visits were made total: 80 DEAR visits and 100 health care visits (38 at nursing homes; 62 at hospitals).

5 new DEAR teams were added

2 new visits were added in 2006: Port Discovery in Baltimore, Md. and Riderwood in Calverton, Md.



Volunteer Department Continued...

Juniors:

There are 31 Junior Volunteers in the program.

Juniors earned \$1200 through the agility trials in the September 2006.

Community Education:

79 demos

74 information booths

12 dAp days, equaling 36 demos/presentations.

12 career days, with 3-5 demos for each school.

Total number of students Fidos educated through the disabilities Awareness project(dAp) and other school programs was more than 15,000.



DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION

The Department of Community Education continued to provide education to residents, government agencies, schools, and businesses in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. area. Fidos volunteers conducted 79 demonstrations during 2006. These demonstrations provide education to the public on the valuable role of Hearing Dogs, Service Dogs, and Therapy Dogs in our society. During these demonstrations, Fidos demonstrates the work that a Hearing Dog does to alert its person to all types of sounds in the environment. Service Dogs demonstrate the multitude of tasks they perform to help a person with a physical disability. These tasks include opening and closing doors, retrieving dropped items, helping a person remove shoes and clothing, and many other tasks.

During the year the Department of Community Education conducted 74 information booths throughout Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia. Using this forum Fidos volunteers greeted the public, disseminated literature about the organization, and educated the public about Hearing Dogs, Service Dogs, and Therapy dogs. One information booth, in particular, was the two-day NBC4 Health and Fitness Expo held at the Washington, D.C. Convention Center in January 2006. Approximately 70,000 people attended this expo, many of whom visited the Fidos' information booth. Another noteworthy information booth that Fidos conducted was held at the annual Renaissance Festival in Crownsville, Maryland, in September. Approximately 10,000-15,000 people attend this festival.

Each year Fidos participates in the Disability Awareness Project (dAp) held each year in the schools in Howard County, Maryland. Fidos volunteers attended 12 dAp days with multiple presentations and demonstrations given each day. A total of 36 demonstrations and presentations were given to school children of all ages educating them in the work that Hearing Dogs, Service Dogs, and Therapy dogs do and the importance of these dogs to individuals with hearing impairments or deafness, physical disabilities, and to individuals in nursing homes and hospitals. Fidos educated approximately 15,000 children through the dAp Program. Each school that Fidos visited has 400 to 1,000 students, depending upon location and grade levels (elementary, middle school, or high school).

During 2006 Fidos participated in career days in schools in the following counties: Prince Georges, Baltimore, Harford, Frederick, Anne Arundel, Washington, and St. Mary's County. We also participated in career days in schools in Baltimore City. During career day, individuals from various vocations are invited to attend career day to discuss their profession (fireman, police, etc.). Fidos was invited to attend 12 career days and gave 3 to 5 demonstrations for each school.

The Department of Community Education revised the Fidos brochures, editing and modifying information in the brochures. The general brochure was reduced in size from a 4-panel brochure to a 3-panel brochure which resulted in more economical printing costs.

Weekly on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings, volunteers gave tours of the Fidos facility to individuals from the general public. Tours provided information on Fidos programs including the Hearing Dog and Service Dog Program, Sponsorship Program, Therapy Dog Program, Junior Volunteer Program, DEAR (Dogs Educating and Assisting Readers) Program, Community Education Program, and Puppy Raiser and Vacation Home Provider Programs.

