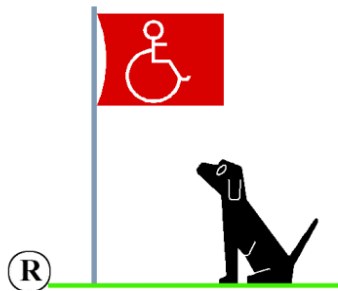


Fidos For Freedom, Inc.



**An Assistance Dog and Therapy Dog
Training Organization**

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2010-2011

Fidos For Freedom, Inc.
1200 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, MD 20707
410-880-4178; 301-490-4005
FAX: 301-490-9061

www.fidosforfreedom.org



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A Message From Fidos' President, Judy Cannon

I took over the presidency of the Board of Directors in July, 2011 from Sherri Sirotkin following her 10 year successful tenure. She will be a difficult to follow, but I assure you I will work hard to keep Fidos moving forward while keeping our mission in the forefront.

The 2010-2011 Fiscal year at Fidos brought many changes. Our new Executive Director, Suzanne Miller joined the Fidos Family. She was able to secure a \$30,000 grant from the Dreyfus Foundation which was used to build and equip an office shared by Client Services and the Training Departments. This new office allows better working areas for both departments. It is especially useful for client meetings, which now can be held without distractions and allowing more privacy. A special table in this office raises and lowers to allow clients in all forms of adaptive equipment to sit and write comfortably.

Our amazingly dedicated training staff volunteers continued to work tirelessly to keep the dogs in training and our clients progressing toward their mutual goal, "GRADUATION" with a dog trained to meet their individual needs.

Our Puppy Raisers and inmate partners from the Federal Prison in Cumberland, MD are doing an outstanding job during the early life of our dogs. When they return from "doing their time" in prison they are solidly trained in basic obedience and often starting on more advanced skills. The Trainers take over to customize the dog for the specific client's needs.

The Client Services Department added some new categories of volunteers, an Intake Coordinator who ushers the applicants through this often confusing and stressful time. The 6 Case Managers help the clients navigate through our program.

The Therapy Dog Teams and DEAR Teams continue to provide friendship, compassion and unconditional love to our community neighbors young and old. A new visit was added to Cedar Lane School for autistic and severely disabled children in Howard County, MD. Our wonderful, patient Therapy Dog Teams help engage and motivate these students to assist in progressing in their educational plans.

Our dedicated Juniors continue to learn and help the organization consistently and cheerfully.

Our building has been undergoing updates thanks to money from the Dorothy Rich Fund. The offices have moved to the front of the building with individual offices for the Executive Director, Bookkeeper, the Therapy Program, a small conference room for meetings, and a front area for the Office Manager. A large central area is available to work on projects and access the copiers. One of our clients generously prepared the Architectural Drawings used for the plans for building these rooms.

The upstairs offices have been refurbished and a renewed effort to get them rented is underway. It was a challenging year for sure, but with bright expectations from continued tremendous effort from our loyal volunteers and hardworking staff. As we move forward, our ADI recertification is scheduled for this year and we are looking at a partnership to provide Assistance Dogs for local disabled veterans.

Judy Cannon



2010-2011 Board of Directors and Program Directors

Board of Directors

President of the Board:	Judy Cannon
Secretary of the Board:	Rebecca Sosa
Treasurer of the Board:	Jane Harford
Board Member:	Tracy Bowman
Board Member:	Pam Loeb
Board Member:	Terry Portis
Board Member:	Eileen Thacker
Board Member:	Christy Shoup
President Emerita:	Sherri Sirotkin

Executive Director:

Suzanne Miller

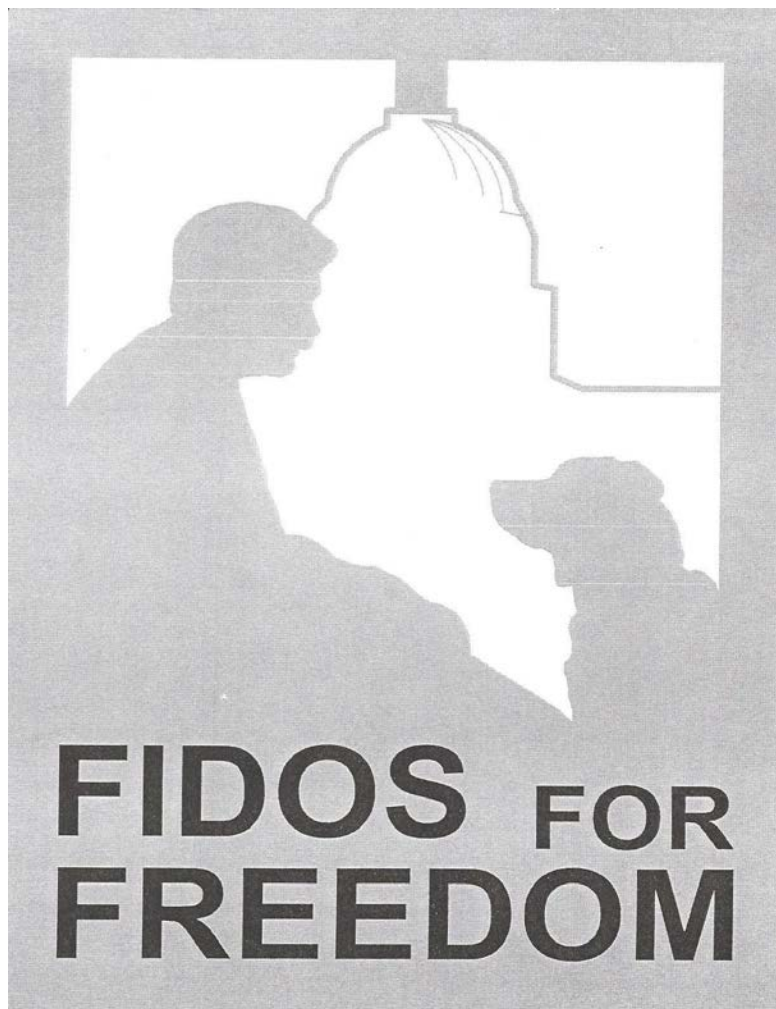
Program Directors

Training Program:	Pat Jarvis
Client Services Program:	Sandy Ball
Therapy Dog Program:	Sylvia Zborowski
Community Education Program:	Sharon Tucker

Introduction

Fidos For Freedom, Inc. (Fidos) is a non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization located at 1200 Sandy Spring Road, Laurel, Maryland. Our mission is to enhance the quality of life for people in the Washington-Baltimore Metropolitan community by providing specially trained hearing dogs, service dogs, and therapy dogs.

Fidos has many programs through which we educate the public about individuals with disabilities and about the benefits of assistance dogs and therapy dogs and the work that these specially trained dogs do for individuals with disabilities, children with reading difficulties, and patients in health care facilities, as well as provide specially-trained hearing and service dogs. Fidos For Freedom, Inc. programs consist of Assistance Dog Program, Client Services Program, Therapy Dog Program, DEAR Program (Dogs Educating and Assisting Readers), Junior Volunteer Program, and Community Education Program.



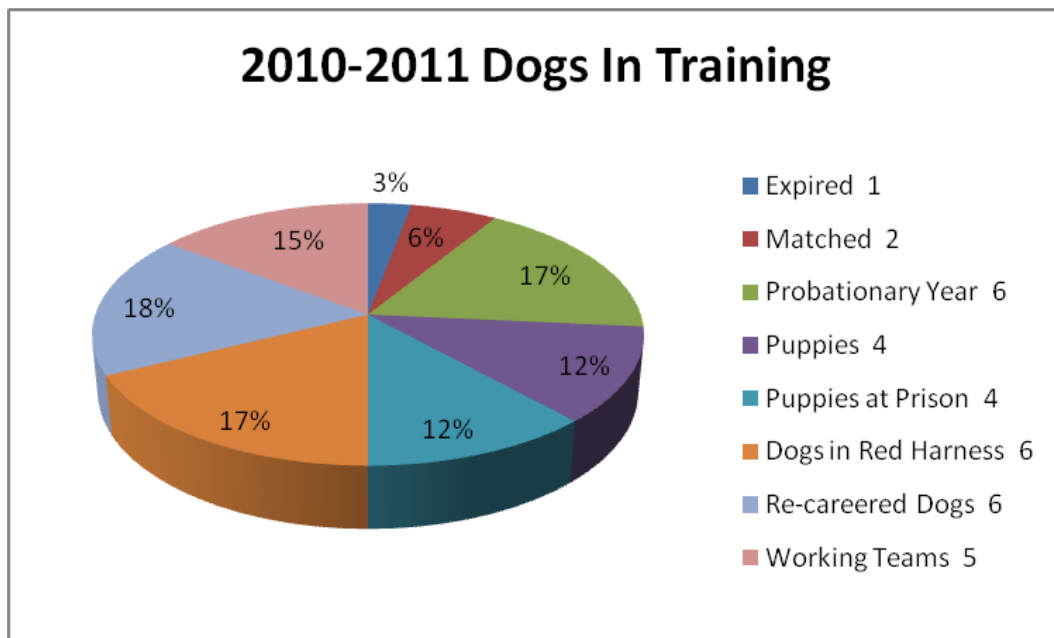


Assistance Dog Program

It's all about the dogs

The foundation of a hearing team or a service team is the happy, well adjusted dog doing a job for which the dog has been well trained and is well suited to do, both physically and emotionally. Our program is geared to selecting , training, and preparing that dog to take its place with a client to assist that client in his or her day to day life.

The training department at Fidos is comprised completely of volunteers, including all of our trainers and puppy raisers. This group of dedicated volunteers prepares dogs to become hearing dogs for deaf or hard of hearing individuals or service dogs for individuals with physical disabilities.



Puppy and Dog Selection and Puppy Raisers

Our staff selects the puppies or young dogs that are donated by breeders or obtained through rescue programs. The puppies are screened for social skills and basic aptitude



for learning as well as for their general health including physical structure and any breed specific tendencies requiring diagnostic checks. We also accept dogs raised and trained at the Dwight Correctional Center Helping Paws Program in Dwight, Illinois.

Our volunteer puppy raisers bring the

puppies into their home and provide love, socialization, training at our training center, and the transport to veterinary care that our growing puppies need. The foundation each puppy's early life is very important for their overall development. Living in a home, learning the "house rules", traveling in the family car, venturing out to meet neighbors, and seeing the "big world" out there is crucial for our future service and hearing dogs.

These puppy raiser volunteers are crucial to our program. Our puppy raisers are often asked how they can give up a puppy they have raised. They know that the job they are doing to raise these puppies has to power to help change lives.

"I began puppy raising with Fidos when I had 2 children, ages 7 and 10. It is always a special treat to get a 9 week old puppy to raise. It's like getting a present that needs house-breaking, but a present still.

We had a yellow Labrador Retriever puppy named Cody who was very white in color. That year we got a snowfall of over 20 inches which was way over the pup's head. Cody looked like a Harp Seal trying to make his way through the snow. All of our neighbors were shoveling and, not taking the easy way out, Cody would leap into the snow and sink in a foot, then leap up with paws splayed out and sink, leap and sink. It was just like he was swimming in the snow. Cody played with such joy and abandon and then he would come back into the house, get warm, and sleep like a baby!

Cody just turned 2 years old. He is now with a trainer and has begun to work with Fidos clients. I can't tell you what a joy it is to watch him work! He will pick up a cane or a leash for a client and heel around a wheelchair or walker. He will be a helper dog to one of the Fidos clients very soon."

-- Joanne Wilson, puppyraiser



Intermediate Dogs – The Prison Stay

An intermediate step in our dogs' training is a stay at the Federal Correctional Institution in Cumberland Maryland. Fidos runs a joint program with the FCI Cumberland named Tails of Freedom. Four of our dogs in training are in residence in Cumberland. The inmates at Cumberland have learned how to train both the basic obedience and the more advanced skills such as retrieve, opening and closing doors and refrigerators, flipping light switches and the wall plate for automatic door openers. Our training staff volunteers who work with this program are also required to be qualified as volunteers in the Federal Prison system. This dedicated group of trainers travels to Cumberland and visits the inmates and the puppies every two weeks. Classes are conducted and updates on the dogs' progress are provided. The puppies come back from the program as young adult dogs with solid assistance skills.



Advanced Training

Once the dogs return from Cumberland or come to us from Dwight Correctional Center they go to live in a trainer's home. The trainer brings the dogs to training classes, has the dog accompany them in public and, if permitted, to their work. This is the stage where the dog learns to use their skills and socialization and receive advanced training in public settings. The dogs go to restaurants, shopping, on the subway and to many other public places and events to get ready to work with their future partner. The dogs are evaluated at this point for the skills they do best and whether they have the abilities to become a hearing dog or service dog, or a combination of both. The dogs are closely evaluated for not only their skills but their working "style" as well, to better determine which client may become their team member. The dogs start working at the center with wheelchairs, walkers, and other medical equipment and then with clients in training. Dogs with the ability to become hearing dogs are identified and specially trained.

The Matched Team

The training staff carefully evaluates both the clients who are training for dogs, their specific needs, and the dogs who are in training. When the client's needs and the dog's size and skills match up, we have a match. This is an exciting time, but also a time for a lot of work on the part of the trainer, the client, and the dog. The trainer works with the client and dog to customize the dog's skills to the needs to the client. The dog starts spending time at the client's home, in their place of business, and other places the client frequents. The client's family is involved in the training also as needed. When the team is ready, they take several tests. One is the Assistance Dogs International public access test to show they are ready and safe to work in public. They also take and must pass the skills test to show that they can utilize their dog's skills safely and effectively. We also test the clients on their knowledge about the health of the dog, proper handling, feeding and weight management, grooming, and providing the proper veterinary care for their dog. The clients are taught how to teach their new

partner additional skills they may need down the road.



Beyond the Match

The team enters a probationary year following testing and the dog moves into the client's home. We provide two classes each week for our client teams to drop in and work with their dogs, not only for their probationary year but for as long as the team would like to attend. Clients are always able to confer with the training staff, both in person at the polishing classes and via phone or email.

Yearly re-certification tests are offered to all client teams for the life of the team as well. These tests include the ADI public access test, team tests, skills tests, Americans with Disabilities Access rights, and general dog knowledge.

Volunteers

Fidos can't operate our training department without volunteers. Our training staff consists of some of the most dedicated volunteers any organization would be proud of. We ask a tremendous amount of these volunteers and they go above and beyond delivering. We continue to look to increase our volunteer staff to maintain the quality of our teams. We need puppy raisers, prison trainers, vacation home providers, trainers, class callers, liaisons to breeders and rescue groups, record keepers, photographers, writers, staff developers, equipment managers, computer and AV personnel, and others. Staff development and continuing education for our training staff are essential to maintaining the quality of our program.

The Future The future of dogs helping people to mitigate their disabilities is promising. As the years have gone by we have continued to expand the physical disabilities that our dogs can assist with. We have trained dogs for clients with a mixture of hearing and physical disabilities. In the future Fidos For Freedom will continue to expand our services to help with a wider range of disabilities.



SPONSORS

Sponsors are the lifeblood of Fidos For Freedom. They make our work possible by generously supporting the dogs in training. Their donations provide for the food and vet care for Fidos dogs until they become assistance dogs.

2010-2011 Sponsors:

John Bledsoe
Nelva Bledsoe
Brian Bowman
Judith Kneen
Knights of Pythias
Carol Margolis
Order of the Eastern Star
Margaret Paul
Joanne Wilson

Thank you.



Client Services Program

Since its establishment in April 2002, the Fidos Client Services Program has made great strides in providing valuable assistance to both new and experienced clients. The Client Services Program currently consists of eight client volunteers-the Director, Intake Coordinator, and six Case managers, many of whom are service dog clients.

Client Services works closely with the training department on the activities that involve the training of the clients. We also collaborated on changes in the Service Dog and Hearing Dog programs and will continue to work on updating Client Progress Records, contracts, and revisions to the client handbook.

The mission of the Client Services Program is to ensure that applicants and clients progress through the application process and the training program at their own pace. Client Services works to insure that each client's individual needs are addressed. Client Services works to cover all aspects of the client training process from application requests to coordination with the Application and Client Review Committee through the graduation of each assistant dog team.

Key elements of the client services program include conducting an orientation period for in which new clients are prepared for the training process and client support meetings to assure continued support and success. There were two such meetings during this fiscal year. On January 22nd "A New Dog" was presented by Tracy Bowman. On November 20th the topic was "First Aid for Dogs," which was presented by Maritta Orndorff. There was 1 client training outing: April 9th, to BWI Airport.

The Client Services Program received 46 requests for Hearing Dogs or Service Dogs during the year. Applicants returned 9 completed applications. The Client Services and Applicant and Client Review Committee (ACRC) had one partial application returned and were awaiting other required information. There were six Applicant and Client Review Committee (ACRC) meetings during the year. The committee conducted 6 Interviews. There were 6 interviewees accepted (6 Service Dog clients); no interviewee was denied. Only one applicant/client dropped out of the training program. Only two applicant/clients delayed their starting date.

Graduating teams at Fidos' Annual Banquet in April 2011 included:

Wayne & Denver (Service Dog Client)
Ann & Ruby (Service Dog Client)
Nora & Alice (Hearing Dog Client)
Joyce & Maya (Companion Dog Client)
Diane & Moxie (Hearing Dog Client)

During 2011, the Client Services Program, along with the Executive Director and Fidos Board of Directors, decided to augment the Client Services staff. Fidos established Case Manager and Intake Coordinator positions within Client Services. The Case Manager volunteers assist with of the ongoing mentoring and nurturing of clients-in-training. There are six new Case Managers and one Intake Coordinator who works with applicants and new clients.





Therapy Dog Program

Giving to the Community – Fidos' Therapy Dog Program

The Fidos For Freedom Therapy Dog Program sends specially trained, well-mannered dogs to provide emotional and physical benefits to many people in the community. The volunteers and their dogs bring unconditional love to patients in various health care facilities throughout our community. The Fidos Therapy Dog Program continued to deliver patient therapy and further expanded our community outreach in 2011.



Each type of facility addresses the needs of a different section of the community. The dog's skills are often matched to the type of facility and the needs of the patients. The variety of facility types showcases the broad skill range of the Fidos Therapy Dog Program.

Visits include the following types of facilities:

- Autistic Adult Day-Care
- Military Rehabilitation Center
- Nursing Homes
- Local Hospitals
- Hospice
- Long term residence facilities for veterans
- Family Support centers like the Ronald McDonald House and Johns Hopkins Children's House



Each month the scheduled visit is showcased on facility bulletin boards and calendars. Patients look forward to snuggling and kissing with new friends (unconditional love is hard to beat); the staff appreciates giving patients a break in their routine; and family members welcome visitors to brighten the day. Everyone looks forward to our monthly visits!



When our Therapy Dogs visit hospital and rehabilitation patients they do very important work, such as:

- cheering lonely and depressed patients
- reducing boredom
- making the facilities feel more homelike
- encouraging conversations with visiting family
- helping patients achieve goals related to restoring speech, movement, and socialization
- comforting a patient's family and friends

These wonderful Therapy Dogs are our own volunteers' pets that have passed special temperament and obedience tests. Each dog and person team attends weekly classes at the Fidos facility to further improve obedience skills and learn visit etiquette for our many different types of facilities. The dogs practice maneuvering through crowds, safely entering elevators, walking around health care equipment, proper 'bedside manners' for visits with fragile patients, and best of all, how to give kisses. These classes also strengthen the dog-owner bond, important to a good therapy visit.



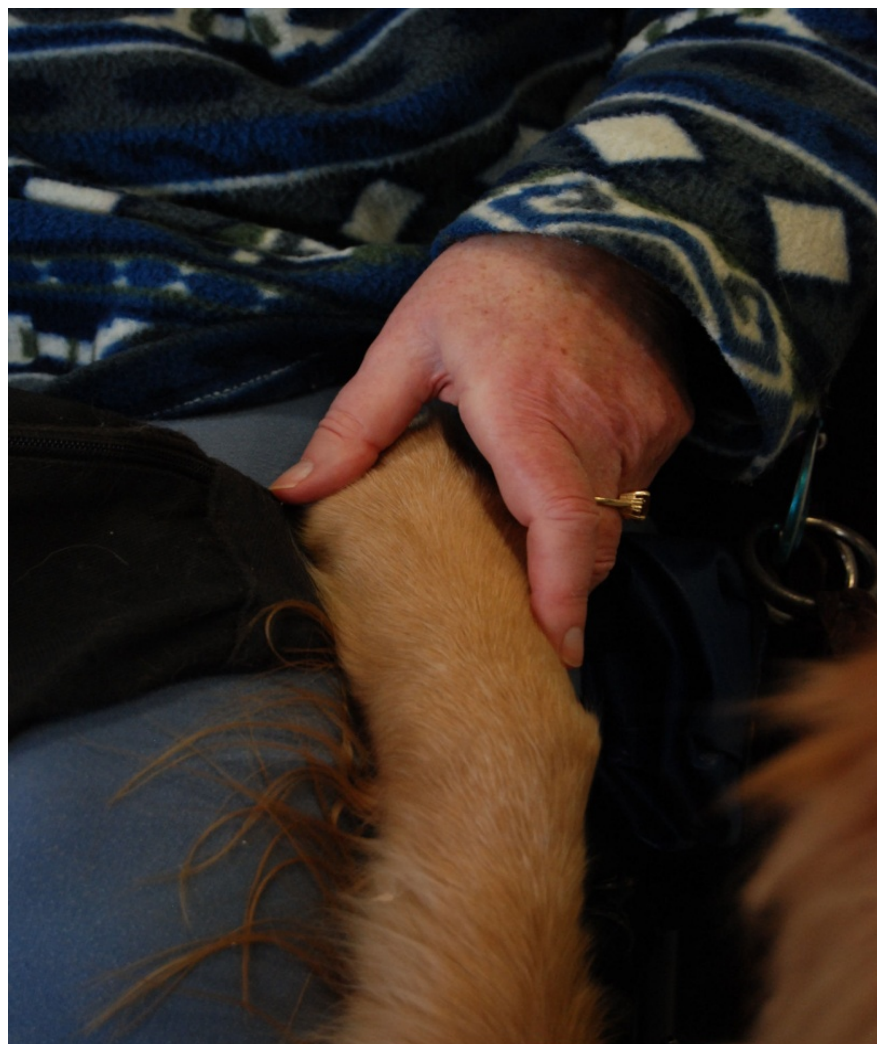
Fidos Therapy Dog teams provided 288 health care visits in 2011. The 126 Therapy Dog teams brightened the lives of residents, staff and family at 22 local health care facilities serving Anne Arundel County, Prince Georges County, Montgomery County, Howard County, and Baltimore City. Fidos added 32 new Therapy Dog teams and one new health care facility in the year 2011.

Fidos Therapy Dog Facilities:

- AAMC Cancer Center
- Anne Arundel Medical Center, Annapolis, MD
- Athelas Institute, Columbia , MD
- Brooke Grove Retirement Village , Sandy Spring , MD
- Cedar Lane School, Fulton, MD
- Cherry Lane Nursing Center , Laurel, MD
- Heritage Harbour Nursing Home, Annapolis, MD
- Holy Cross Hospital , Silver Spring , MD
- Holy Cross Rehabilitation and Nursing Center, Burtonsville , MD
- Johns Hopkins Children's House, Baltimore , MD
- Joseph Richey Hospice House, Baltimore MD
- Kennedy Krieger Institute, Baltimore , MD
- Manor Care Health Services, Silver Spring , MD
- Mercy Hall, Bethesda Naval, Bethesda, MD
- Montgomery General Hospital, Olney , MD
- Port Discovery Children's Museum, Baltimore , MD
- Riderwood at Renaissance Gardens, Silver Spring , MD
- Ronald McDonald House, Baltimore , MD
- Spa Creek Center, Annapolis, MD
- Walter Reed National Medical Center, Bethesda , MD



Another year of bringing smiles and happiness to the community by visiting facilities with our wonderful therapy dogs is what makes Fidos Therapy Dog program so special and enduring. Our therapy dog teams tell us all the time how much it means to them to be able to bring some small measure of happiness to the patients, their families, the staff, and all those who lives we touch.



The people we visit tell us over and over again how much the therapy visits mean to all who get to be a part of the experience. The facilities we visit tell us how residents or patients eagerly await the dogs visiting every month and how it brightens what for some is a very difficult day or time in their lives. The Fidos TD program continues to strive to bring therapy, warmth, and good old fashioned happiness to all we touch and hope to do so for many years to come.



DEAR Program (Dogs Educating and Assisting Readers)

The Fidos DEAR Program (Dogs Educating and Assisting Readers) is a reading literacy program that matches elementary school children with a therapy dog and handler for reading tutoring. The program provides the children with a sense of accomplishment and self-esteem enabling them to increase their reading grade levels.

DEAR visits were conducted weekly at Bond Mill Elementary School in Laurel, MD, and in three Howard County libraries (East Columbia Library, Glenwood Library, and Savage Library).



“We have 24 students who participate in Fidos DEAR program at Bond Mill Elementary School. The students are a combination of 3rd, 4th and 5th graders.

After reviewing the data from the 1st quarter and 2nd quarter benchmarks given to these students we have seen the following:

- **62% improvement overall in reading scores for all grades**
- **28% improvement in reading for the 3rd graders**
- **One of the 3rd grade students moved from basic to proficient**
- **26% improvement overall in reading for the 4th graders**
- **One 4th grader moved from Proficient to Advanced**
- **One out of three 5th grade students improved in reading by 8%**

The Fidos DEAR Program provides an environment for the students to read in that is less threatening. The children are benefitting and I know we will continue to see growth from these students in reading because of this positive and unique reading program.

Student’s attitudes toward reading have improved. They look forward to bringing a favorite story to read with their dog. Areas of improvement: Fluency, Comprehension and Vocabulary development.”

Annette Mosier,

**Teacher liaison for Bond Mill’s DEAR program, a
Prince Georges County, MD, Public School**

Fidos also continued our ground breaking DEAR Program for adult students at Howard County Community College. In 2011 Fidos volunteers participated in over 114 DEAR visits and added 5 new DEAR teams to the program.



Junior Volunteer Program

The Fidos For Freedom, Inc. Junior Volunteer Program was initiated in 1994 and was expanded in 2010 in an effort to help more students between the ages of 12 and 18 meet the Maryland State requirements for community volunteer service that they need for high school graduation. Twenty students participated in this important program in 2010 which meets every Wednesday evening for one hour during the school year. In 2010 our junior volunteer program remained full to capacity, and we had students waiting in the wings to apply for next fall. These young people performed a variety of services for Fidos, including socializing dogs in Fidos various programs, helping at information booths, holiday decorating of the training facility, newsletter folding/addressing, making gifts for patients in local health care facilities, and assisting with preparation and break down of our annual graduation banquet. The juniors received classes by our clients and volunteers on numerous subjects relating to disability awareness issues and dog care and training. They learned about Agility Trials by participating in trials, setting up and moving course equipment, and worked hard to raise fourteen hundred dollars for Fidos.



"As a dog lover and disability advocate, I knew the first time I rolled into Fidos that I was in the right place! The people were (are) so inviting and supportive. I joined the Junior Program in 2006 when Fred Sirotkin was the Junior leader. Through him, the juniors learned how to train dogs and how service dogs assist people with disabilities. Fred showed us movies and led games to help us learn about dog behavior. We made craft projects that therapy dogs could 'give' to the people they visited. The craft projects were a constructive way to socialize as a group and work on a common goal. We also contributed to the Junior program by working the annual fundraiser at the Agility Field Trials. Occasionally a person with a disability would speak to the Juniors to help us understand the purpose and importance of Fidos service dogs. The Halloween and Holiday parties were always fun--decorating, eating, and socializing with all the members. I couldn't wait to see the costumes of both the dogs and people. When I aged out of the junior's program, Fred asked me to stay on as his



assistant which I was very happy to do! When Fred retired, I was grateful to Debbie for volunteering to take over the junior's program. Debbie continues to teach the juniors about the importance of caring for, training, and understanding service and therapy dogs. With the demands of college, and all my other actives in my life, my time at Fidos is limited but I try to help out as a Junior Assistant Leader as often as possible. Also I am interested in maybe doing something with the therapy dogs..... I also help out by socializing, hugging, and kissing the therapy dogs! :D In the future I hope to work with a service or training dog myself. My experience with Fidos, the dogs, and the people I have met has been wonderful and fulfilling in my life. It is great to be part of such an awesome program for these past years, it's like a community!! "

-- Fidos' Junior Volunteer



Community Education Program

The Community Education Program provides educational presentations to residents, government agencies, schools, and businesses in the Baltimore-Washington, D.C. area. Fidos volunteers conducted 81 education presentations during the year. These demonstrations provided education to the public on the valuable role of Hearing Dogs, Service Dogs, and Therapy Dogs in our community. During these demonstrations, Fidos volunteers demonstrate how a Hearing Dog alerts its person to all types of sounds in the environment. Service Dogs demonstrate a 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 Community Education Program conducted 70 information booths throughout Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Northern Virginia. Using this forum, Fidos volunteers greeted the public, distributed literature about the organization, and educated the public about Hearing Dogs, Service Dogs, and Therapy dogs. Another noteworthy information booth that Fidos conducted was held at the annual Renaissance Festival in Crownsville, Maryland, in October. More than 14,000 people attend this festival.

Fidos conducted 90 educational presentations in businesses, schools, government office buildings and fairs in Maryland, Washington, D.C., and Virginia. Fidos gave presentations in Washington, D.C., Baltimore City, and in the following Maryland counties: Alleghany, Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Frederick, Hartford, Howard, Montgomery, Prince Georges, St. Mary's, and Wicomico. These presentations, involving at least one service dog team, one hearing dog team, and one therapy dog team, demonstrated our capabilities and skills to the residents of the State of Maryland. Fidos staffed 69 information booths to educate the public about Fidos Hearing, Service, and Therapy Dog Programs, providing more than 15,000 educational brochures to the general public.

