

SUMMER 2024

# PAWS FOR THOUGHT

## The Dog A.I.D. Newsletter

**Welcome to the Summer edition of Paws For Thought.**

It's taken a while, but we finally seem to have some summery weather. We hope that our latest updates bring you a little additional sunshine!

In this newsletter, we're bringing you updates on the work of our hero **volunteer trainers** and the story of **Jodie Griffin** who has had a fascinating journey from Dog A.I.D. client to volunteering with our charity. We celebrate the success of our **partnerships**, bring you news of our **Dog A.I.D. community** and show our appreciation for our incredible **fundraisers**.

In this newsletter, we are celebrating support from **Pets Foundation** and Dog A.I.D. being named as winner of the **2024 Reech and Reward** initiative. These fantastic new partnerships are so important to our mission of empowering even more physically disabled people to live more independently through training their own pet dog to become an Assistance Dog. We're so grateful for the support of our partners and look forward to working with them.

Wishing you and your dogs a very happy and enjoyable summer!



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# Thank you Pets Foundation!!!

We're absolutely over the moon to announce that Dog A.I.D. has been awarded a substantial three-year grant from Pets Foundation.



The generous funding provided by Pets Foundation will be vital to growing our network of amazing volunteer dog trainers and engaging and supporting more physically disabled people to train their own pet dog to become an Assistance Dog. The impact of having an Assistance Dog is huge for the clients we work with, empowering them to become more independent as well as increasing confidence and well-being and reducing social isolation.

Dog A.I.D.'s CEO, Belinda Johnson, expressed the charity's thanks to Pets Foundation saying, "We are so grateful to Pets Foundation for their ongoing generous support of Dog A.I.D. There is ever-growing demand for our programme and this fantastic award is so important for Dog A.I.D. as we look to grow and improve our services delivered throughout the United Kingdom".

**"We're so grateful to Pets Foundation for their ongoing generous support of Dog A.I.D."**

BELINDA JOHNSON,  
DOG A.I.D. CEO







# Train the Trainer Workshop

During **Volunteers' Week** at the beginning of June, we were delighted to host a **Train the Trainer workshop**. The workshop brought together our amazing volunteer dog trainers to network, to practice their coaching skills and refresh their knowledge of some of our assessment criteria.

Our volunteers were joined by members of the Dog A.I.D. staff team and qualified partnership **Abby and Pepper!**

We absolutely loved the feedback from our volunteers including this comment: **“Had a FAB time at the Trainers’ Workshop in Telford today! Huge thanks to Lynn, Tara and Jen for their hard work...in putting on a really professional, useful and fun day...it was also great to meet the others who attended, work with their super dogs and swap training ideas”.**

We look forward to hosting further Train the Trainer workshops in the North East and South of England this Autumn.







# Trainers of the Month - June and July

Dog A.I.D.'s Trainer of the Month award recognises our amazing volunteer trainers both in the support of their partnerships and in helping Dog A.I.D. develop its capacity to qualify and assess more partnerships, empowering more of our clients on their journey towards having a fully accredited Assistance Dog. Congratulations to our June and July winners!



## Trainer of the month for June - Lillie Abbott

Lillie has gone above and beyond in volunteering for Dog A.I.D., ensuring that we can assess our clients in South Wales so their Assistance Dogs can retain their accreditation. Lillie is a wonderful, person-centred trainer and highly regarded by us all.

We received such lovely feedback saying, **"Lillie is a fantastic advocate for Dog A.I.D. She is always willing to go that bit further to help in any way she can. Her skills, experience and empathy are invaluable to clients; it's a pleasure to have her with us!"**

## Trainer of the month for July - Mallory Bergman

We love the feedback from one of Mallory's clients who said, **"We absolutely love Mallory! Nala has come so far since we started training with Mallory and you can really see the progress now and it's so fantastic to see."**

Mallory said of volunteering with Dog A.I.D. "I love what I do and watching these dogs start to pick up the things they are taught, but it's even better knowing it's all going to be helping others in their daily lives and making life easier for them".





# From client to trainer - Jodie's story

**Jodie Griffin** trained her **Assistance Dog, Buddy**, with Dog A.I.D. Inspired by her experience, Jodie trained as a dog behaviourist and trainer, and is now a Dog A.I.D. volunteer trainer. Jodie has shared her story with us.



“I first joined Dog A.I.D. as a client back in 2009 after my parents had spotted an article in our local newspaper. I had been really struggling with my disability and loss of confidence and independence, so applied straight away with my puppy Buddy. Buddy and I trained with Dog A.I.D. and I got involved in volunteering, fundraising and delivering talks and events.

Over many happy years at Dog A.I.D. we made life long friends and great connections and had so many special memories. It was not only my introduction to dog training but also **led to improvements in my confidence, independence and most importantly, an acceptance of my own identity as a disabled person. I felt much more positive about my future.**

During my early days at Dog A.I.D., I was introduced to dog communication, the works of incredible behaviourists such as Turid Rugaas, learning to read our dogs' body language and recognise calming signals and signs of stress. Over the years I had continued learning about dog behaviour and did several training qualifications and worked on and off with a few clients but didn't have the confidence to work full time with dogs. **But when my beloved Buddy passed away, I promised him I would share with the world everything we learned together, about relationships, communication, safety and trust**”.(continued on page 5)



“Several years later and I’m working as a dog behaviourist and volunteer as a trainer at Dog A.I.D. In memory of Buddy, I achieved my higher level qualifications in dog behaviour, and specialise in dog communication and body language, dog social relationships and reducing stress. I hope in future to work toward helping our Assistance Dogs with their welfare and wellness and keeping them emotionally happy and physically healthy for a longer and more successful working life.

My journey with Dog A.I.D. ignited my passion for dogs, improved my confidence and independence and played a huge part in who I am today. I’m happily married, living with my husband and our three beautiful dogs, and planning our future family together.

I’m currently volunteering to coach three of my lovely Dog A.I.D. clients and their beautiful dogs towards their level three accreditation. I’m supporting them not only with dog training skills but an understanding of their dog’s emotional and social needs, relationship building and effective communication, to **help enable them, alongside their dogs, to achieve their future goals and live their best lives just like Dog A.I.D. did for me**”.

We’re so grateful to Jodie for writing this inspirational article for Paws for Thought and for all of her wonderful work in volunteering with Dog A.I.D. Thank you Jodie!

You can find out more about Jodie’s work on her website - <https://www.ethicaldogapproach.co.uk/>

**“My journey with Dog A.I.D. ignited my passion for dogs, improved my confidence and independence and played a huge part in who I am today”**

JODIE GRIFFIN, DOG A.I.D.  
VOLUNTEER TRAINER







# Celebrating Success!

Huge congratulations to all of our partnerships who have passed assessments since the release of our Spring newsletter

## Level 3 Passes

Kate and Sam (trained by Jo Pay)

Julia and Maya (trained by Paul Lasky)

Christine and Joe (trained by Peta Brandwood)



## Level 2 Passes

Nat and Wisp

Michelle and Honey

Cassandra and Clover

Carol and Bailey

Daphne and Poppy



## Annual Assessments

Caroline and Charlie

Chloe and Ted

Nicola and Fidget

Sarah and Vega

Chloe and Ocho

Elizabeth and Theo

Shirley and Skye

Sue and River

Megan and Rowley

Alex and Zak

Debbie and Rexy

Rachel and Milly Rose

Gareth and Ike

Ruth and Seren

Debs and Vega

Abby and Pepper

Deborah and Dillon

Elizabeth and Nalu

Caroline and Casper

Allan and Oscar

Hilary and Salty

Susanne and Mutz

Emma and Pepper

Nat and Jazz

Emma and Kida



# Dog A.I.D. - Reech and Reward winners 2024!

We are incredibly excited to announce that **Dog A.I.D. has been chosen as the winner of the Reech & Reward initiative for 2024!** We will be working with Shropshire-based agency Reech over the coming year. Their expert marketing support will be instrumental in helping us reach a wider audience, raising awareness of our work and securing the resources that will enable us to train even more life-changing Assistance Dogs.

Belinda Johnson, CEO of Dog A.I.D., shared her excitement about the partnership: **“Reech’s support will allow us to share our story with more people and secure the resources we need to train more life-changing Assistance Dogs.** We’re incredibly grateful for this opportunity to get more people behind the Dog A.I.D. mission and in turn, make a bigger difference.”

Amelia Redge, Reech’s Agency Director, is equally excited: “We are so looking forward to our partnership with Dog A.I.D. Their dedication to their clients and unique approach is truly inspiring. We can’t wait to see what the Reech team create to raise their brand awareness and drive results for the charity.”

You can find out more about Reech’s work on their website - <https://reech.agency/>

**“We are so looking forward to our partnership with Dog A.I.D. Their dedication to their clients and unique approach is truly inspiring”.**

AMELIA REDGE, AGENCY  
DIRECTOR OF REECH





## A wide, horizontal photograph of a beach. Gentle waves with white foam are washing onto a sandy shore. The water is a mix of light blue and white, and the sky is a pale, hazy blue.

We're delighted to bring you the latest news from our Dog A.I.D. community including client stories, our fabulous fundraisers and a celebration of our supporters from businesses and funders across the United Kingdom

# Thank you to Team Verso!!!



The Dog A.I.D. team are so grateful to the incredible staff and customers at [Verso Lounge](#) for fundraising for us over the last year. **Verso is a wonderful dog-friendly venue in the centre of Stafford that provides a warm welcome to dogs and their humans!**

Verso chose us as one of their charity partners and have worked tirelessly putting on events to fundraise for us and raise awareness of our work. Their fundraising culminated with "Lounge Aid", a whole programme of events throughout June which included quizzes, raffle and a cutest dog competition!

**Thank you so much to Christabel, Connor and the whole team** who have been involved in the planning and delivery, as well as everyone who has attended events and contributed so generously.



## Michelle and Honey: The unbreakable bond



Here's the story of **Michelle and Honey's** Dog A.I.D. journey as written by Michelle:

"Honey and I met on 17th June 2022. **It was love at first sight, she was intelligent from the start...so eager to do things** and I needed help in several areas due to my disability. We were matched with trainer **Caroline Penistone**. This has turned out to be a perfect match and has enabled me to train Honey to learn to pick up dropped things, help put washing in and out of the washing machine and dryer...[and she] helps take my socks off and other clothes.

Most of all Honey is just by my side when I am too poorly to do anything. Caroline, my trainer, has gone above and beyond [and] it's not just about what Honey can do, it's also about reading Honey's body language and what to look out for if she is unhappy about something. **The joy and bond that Honey and I have is unbreakable. Thank you Dog A.I.D. for all your hard work in matching each client with the right trainer. I am truly blessed".**

## Team Debs on their travels!

Thank you to qualified client **Debs** for sharing this great photo with us of her on holiday in Cornwall with **Assistance Dog Vega**. Vega's furry friends, Skye and Riley, joined them both on the trip. Debs said, "Skye doesn't always walk now because she's 16...Riley trained to level 2 with Dog A.I.D. before retirement, but the skills she learned during her training [walking alongside a wheelchair] are still being put to good use. **I am so grateful to Dog A.I.D and our trainer for setting us on the path we now enjoy so much".**





# Fabulous fundraisers!



In our Spring newsletter, we reported that supporters **Megan, Lauren and Chloe were running the Paris Marathon to raise funds for Dog A.I.D.** They all completed the event and **raised a staggering £800!!!** Megan sent us this report:

“We had an amazing time. The day went pretty much to plan, we had decided to run at a relatively easy pace for us so we could enjoy the sights and the atmosphere without worrying about our pace/time. It also turned out to be pushing on 20 degrees so much hotter than the wet winter we have been used to running in here. **We finished in just over 4 hours and 30 minutes so we are pleased with that for our first marathon but we are definitely itching to do another one already to see what we can do if we push the pace a little!**

After the marathon we did some last bits of sightseeing and I'm very glad we carried on moving because, apart from being a little tired, my legs aren't feeling too horrendous! **I'm really glad we have been able to raise over £800 for Dog A.I.D. and that was definitely a huge motivation during the hard miles”.**

We're so grateful to Megan, Lauren and Chloe for their incredible efforts - **thank you all!**

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# Fabulous fundraisers!



Dog A.I.D. client **Ann Blake** has worked tirelessly to bring together 50 pieces of original artwork and inspirational quotes in a beautiful book called “**A Legacy of Love**”. The book is being sold to raise funds for two causes close to Ann’s heart including Dog A.I.D.

Ann and **Assistance Dog Snoopy** (pictured left) recently met one of the artists featured...none other than musician **Jools Holland**! Jools and his drummer signed copies of the book which Ann intends to auction to raise further funds. **Thank you for your incredible efforts Ann!**



A big Dog A.I.D. “Thank you” goes to supporters **Jill and Kathie** (pictured above centre) who attended this summer’s **Disability Awareness Day** at Walton Hall, Warrington to raise awareness of Dog A.I.D.’s work. They attended with **Assistance Dog Luska** and **retired Assistance Dog Paddy** (and a guest starring role from **Parker** who hopes to be an Assistance Dog one day too!) Thank you ladies for your continuing support!





# Thank you to our supporters from Shropshire businesses!

## Barratt Foundation

Thank you to the **Barratt Foundation Community Fund** for their fabulously generous donation to Dog A.I.D.! It was a pleasure to meet with **Sarah** at the **Lillies development in Shrewsbury** to receive our cheque. We're very grateful to the Foundation's Community Fund for choosing to support our partnerships in Shropshire.



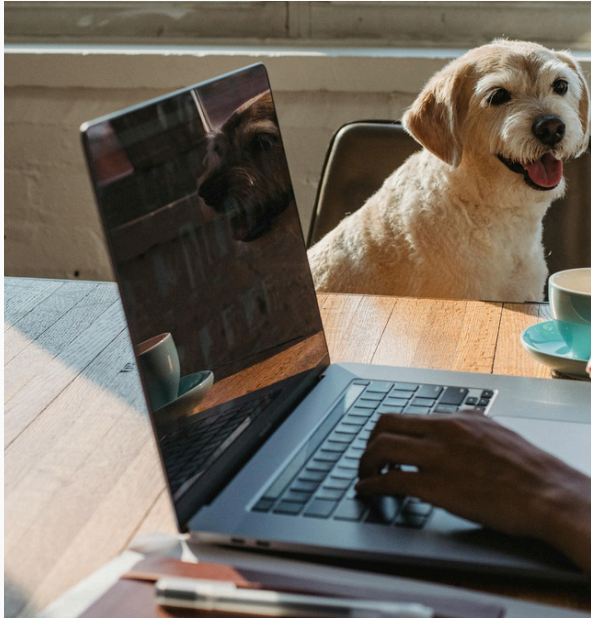
## Ableworld

We'd like to send a big Dog A.I.D. "thank you" to **Ableworld in Shrewsbury** for organising an in-store raffle of a lovely basket of dog-related goodies to raise funds for us. **We're very grateful to Emma and her team and to Ableworld's customers** who got involved and supported us so generously.





# Upcoming Events



## Dog A.I.D. AGM 2024

Our Dog A.I.D. AGM of 2024 has been scheduled for **Sunday 15th September, at 3pm.** The AGM will take place on Zoom. The AGM is **open to clients (in training and qualified) and volunteer trainers.** There is one position due for election to the Board of Trustees at the 2024 AGM: the role of 'Trainer Representative Trustee'. Notice of the AGM and the Trainer Rep pack have been sent out to clients and trainers by email. To register to attend, please email [belinda.johnson@dogaid.org.uk](mailto:belinda.johnson@dogaid.org.uk)

## Webinar for clients and volunteers

A promotional poster for a webinar. On the left, text reads: 'Scentwork In Training', 'The learning journey and its benefits', 'hosted by Sarah Cerezo', and 'UK Sniffer Dog Instructor, Scentwork UK Instructor, ISCP Canine Behaviour Diploma'. On the right, a photograph shows a person in a dark jacket and boots standing next to a dog on a leash. The dog is sniffing a row of small containers on the floor. In the background, a banner says 'FIND A LOCAL INSTRUCTOR FOR CLASSES WORKSHOPS TRIALS HERE' and 'www.ukdogaid.org.uk'. A diagonal banner at the bottom right says 'Wed 21st August 6:30pm'.

Sarah Cerezo is a Bronze, Continuation and Silver UK Sniffer Dog instructor, a Scentwork UK level one instructor, holds a diploma in Canine Behaviour with the ISCP and is one of our very own Dog A.I.D. volunteer trainers. In this webinar, Sarah discusses what is included in the scentwork learning journey of a dog and their owner, and examines the positive impact that scent work can have on a partnership, and their training. To register email [admin@dogaid.org.uk](mailto:admin@dogaid.org.uk)





# Saying goodbye and thank you to Paul



Sadly, we will be saying “goodbye” to our Chair of Trustees, **Paul Miles**, at our AGM in September.

Paul will be moving on from his role at Dog A.I.D. and has provided the following statement:

“For personal reasons, I will sadly be resigning as Chair of Trustees at our AGM in September, and the process of recruiting a replacement is in progress”.

“I leave the Charity in safe hands, and with the recruitment of two additional members of staff and three new trustees ongoing, the charity will be in a strong position to move forward and help many more people. Thank you very much for your support and I wish everyone the very best for the future”.

**Everyone at Dog A.I.D. would like to wish Paul all the best for the future and thank him for his commitment to the charity.** Over the past year, he has led our Board of Trustees and made a huge contribution to the development of our strategic plan. We look forward to bringing you news of the appointment of our new Chair or Trustees in due course.



**Dog A.I.D. (Assistance in Disability)**



**[www.dogaid.org.uk](http://www.dogaid.org.uk)**



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