

Spring 2024



PAWS FOR THOUGHT

The Dog A.I.D. Newsletter



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A MESSAGE FROM THE DOG A.I.D. TEAM

Welcome to our Spring 2024 edition of “Paws For Thought”! We hope that our readers are well and that your spirits are being cheered by the lengthening days, emergent daffodils and approach of the long Bank Holiday weekend. Our Spring newsletter brings you our latest news of our Dog A.I.D. community including a celebration of our amazing volunteer trainers, partnership successes and some fabulous fundraising from our family of supporters across the U.K. We’re so grateful for the hard work of everyone involved in our incredible work and we’re very happy to bring you some of their uplifting stories in the following pages. We hope that they brighten your day!

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TRAINERS OF THE MONTH 2024

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR TRAINERS OF THE MONTH FOR JANUARY, FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2024!

Dog A.I.D.'s Trainer of the Month award recognises the volunteers who have gone 'above and beyond' in their role. This award recognises the exceptional support of their partnerships as well as the additional time and effort that they give in mentoring others and ensuring that Dog A.I.D. develops 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 all of our 2024 winners!



Trainer of the Month for January...Jodie Griffin!

Jodie was selected on the basis of the volunteering hours she has committed to Dog A.I.D. throughout January and for the tailored support she has given her client. We were told "Jodie is such a positive person and influence on me and my dog. She is making the training sessions such a pleasure for both of us. Her tutorial notes are extremely helpful, useful and informative".

Trainer of the Month for February...Paul Kelly!

Paul has been fabulously supportive in volunteering to carry out additional partnership assessments on behalf of Dog A.I.D. as well as training his clients working on the programme. Paul's client Charlotte said, "I feel incredibly lucky to have Paul as my Dog A.I.D. trainer. With his expert tuition, his endless patience, support and encouragement, he has enabled Rozzy and me to have the most amazing partnership...each day we are learning more...she's my Wing-man, and all thanks and credit for this go to Paul".



Trainer of the Month for March...Keyna Mullany!

Dedicated, long standing volunteer Keyna, who has been partnering with Dog A.I.D. since 2018, coached her client through 6 training sessions in March. We were told by her client, "Keyna is so wonderful and understanding. She is an amazing trainer and I really trust her with my dog".



Congratulations to all of our Trainers of the Month 2024! We look forward to bringing you news of our April, May and June winners in our Summer newsletter.

Celebrating Success!

**Congratulations to all of our partnerships
celebrating assessment passes**

Level 3 Passes

Kate and Luna (trained by Heather Stevens)

Alison and Poppy (trained by Sandra Fraser)

Hannah and River (trained by Katherine Ferguson)

Level 2 Passes

Christine and Joe

Peter and Goldie

Kay and Cooper

Alexis and Pwdin

Sharon and Layla

Tilly and Toby

Chris and Zeus

Kay and Buddy

Jo and Ralph

Ilinca and Blu

Annual Assessments

Patricia and Teddy

Laura and Nesta

Emma and Luna

Yvonne and Hope

Ann and Snoopy

Alison and Uneq

Chantelle and Star

Karen and Teddy Bear

Gillian and Rhoda

Rosanne and Bosco

Janet and Delilah

Abi and Bracken

Michele and Cocoa

Our Dog A.I.D. Community

Amazing Antrim rocks for Dog A.I.D.

On 8th March, Antrim rocked to the sound of an array of amazing acts coming together at a community concert at Parkhall College to raise funds for Dog A.I.D. This incredible event was organised by supporter, **Hazel**. Hazel's husband, Richard (pictured below), is a Dog A.I.D. client and qualified with **Assistance Dog Odin**, a stunning Old English Sheepdog, in 2023. Acts giving their time and talent to the concert included the **Rock Choir**, **Turn the Page**, **Rockwood** and a host of solo performers.



Hazel described Richard and Odin as a “very special partnership”. She went on to say in her interview with the *Antrim Guardian*, “The help Assistance Dogs give their handlers really is life changing...they give physical help which creates independence and increased confidence...their presence has an amazing effect alone”. With Odin by his side, Richard plays as part of the **Ballymena Ukelele Group** (pictured above at the concert). Hazel said, “As his family, it's been wonderful to see him being part of something and enjoying himself. Odin seems to enjoy it too”.

We're so grateful to everyone in beautiful Northern Ireland who supported Dog A.I.D. through the concert, **raising a staggering £1800!** We cannot thank Hazel enough for her tireless efforts in bringing everyone together, encouraging donations for the raffle and for making this wonderful cake for the event!

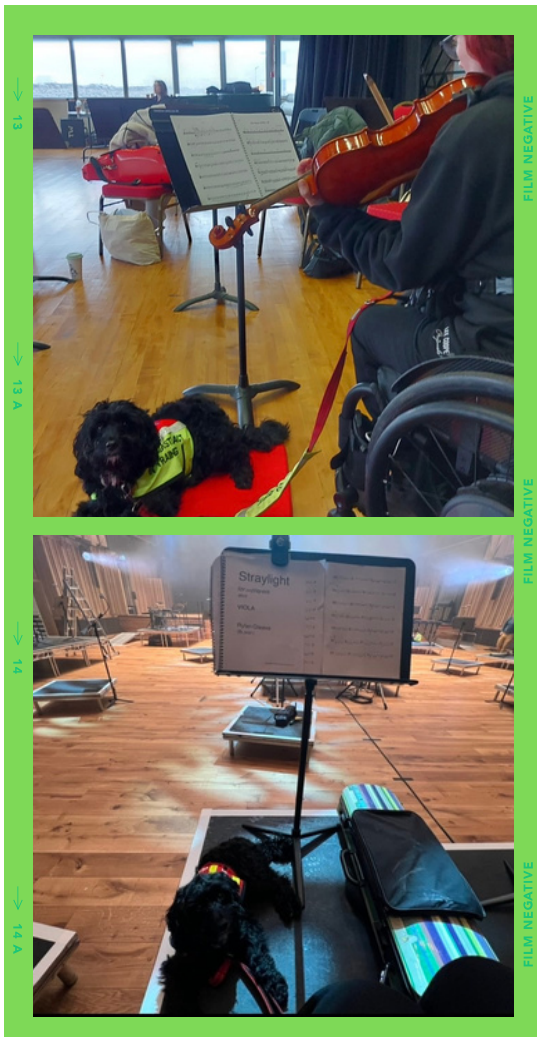


Our Dog A.I.D. Community

Tilly and Toby are the perfect duo

We're continuing the musical theme of this edition of "Paws for Thought" by bringing you an inspirational account from Dog A.I.D. client **Tilly** about the impact of her partnership with **Toby**, a cockapoo in training to become an accredited Assistance Dog. Tilly, a talented viola player and music therapist, is accompanied by Toby during her work.

Tilly said, "Toby's musical journey first began right from the day I got him. I adopted him when he was about 2 years old and he naturally found the rehoming process challenging. He was quite stressed the first few days and really struggled to relax but as soon as classical music was played he would cuddle up and fall straight asleep! When he first started his Assistance Dog training, I hoped that he would be able to come to my private teaching work with me but I had never imaged how well he would take to being around music! Now, he comes to all my teaching work, attends my music therapy work if a client would like him to come and even sits with me in orchestral rehearsals. Together we have travelled across the country playing at venues such as Southbank Centre, Bristol Beacon and Theatre Royal Plymouth".



"Toby loves going to lots of new and exciting places and having him assisting me has made a real difference to my life as a Disabled musician. He gets lots of practice at picking things up for me as I drop my pencil off the stand about a hundred times a day and having him help me change into my performance clothes has made this so much easier.

I'm really grateful to **our trainer Mark Henshaw** who has helped us so much with his training, and to Dog A.I.D. for all their support. What's made a big impact was learning how to read signs from Toby so that I can make sure I'm meeting his needs as much as he is meeting mine. I always have a P.A. on hand in case Toby needs a break during the rehearsal and I always make sure he gets lots of time off during the day to just be a dog. I'm so proud of how far Toby has come with his training and it's amazing that I have a dog who loves music as much as I do!"

Our Dog A.I.D. Community

Support our Paris Marathon Runners

Intrepid trio **Megan, Chloe and Lauren** will be undertaking the monumental task of running the **Paris Marathon** to raise funds for Dog A.I.D. on **Sunday 7th April**. Megan's Dad, Paul, trained **Assistance Dog Alice** (pictured right) with the support of Dog A.I.D. Alice, a Welsh collie, is now retired but Megan is keen to support us because Alice became such an invaluable part of the family.



The Dog A.I.D. team are in awe of Megan, Chloe and Lauren for taking on this amazing challenge, particularly as they have been training so hard throughout this seemingly never-ending, soggy Winter. Please support our runners and donate what you can via their Just Giving page - [Paris Marathon for Dog A.I.D.](#) We'll all be cheering on Megan, Chloe and Lauren on 7th April!

Thank you Duffield Afternoon W.I.!

Dog A.I.D. client, **Rhiannon**, is an incredible ambassador for our charity, tirelessly delivering awareness-raising talks about our work to community groups, supported by her **Assistance Dog, Beanie**. After giving a talk to **Duffield Afternoon W.I.** last Autumn, the ladies chose Dog A.I.D. as their Charity of the Year and undertook a number of fundraising activities to raise money to support our life-changing work. Rhiannon and Beanie paid a return visit to the group in March to collect a cheque for **the fantastic sum of £650!** Thank you to all of the ladies who contributed to the fundraising - we're so grateful for your very generous support.



Our Dog A.I.D. Community

Assistance Dog Ocho strikes a pose!



Assistance Dog Ocho has been a star model for a fabulous paw-trait being painted to raise funds for Dog A.I.D.! Artist **Katie Sims**, based in Taunton, Somerset, is producing a painting of Ocho in order to highlight the difference Assistance Dogs make to the life of their owner and promote Dog A.I.D.'s fantastic work in supporting physically disabled people to train their own pet dog to become an Assistance Dog. Ocho and owner **Chloe** (pictured above) recently attended King's College, Taunton to talk about their partnership and showcase Katie's work.

Katie has set up a Just Giving fundraiser to show her progress as she creates this wonderful artwork and for supporters to donate to Dog A.I.D. You can donate to Katie's fundraiser via this link - [Katie Sims Just Giving page](#) We'd like to give our heartfelt thanks to Katie for using her talents to raise awareness of Assistance Dogs and of Dog A.I.D.

You can see more of Katie's work on her website - [Katie Sims Art](#)

Upcoming events

Trainer Recruitment Drop-In

Are you an experienced and qualified dog trainer looking to develop your skills? Join Dog A.I.D. as a volunteer trainer and be part of an amazing community that makes a real difference. We will be holding our next online recruitment event on **Wednesday 10th April, 11:00-11:30**.

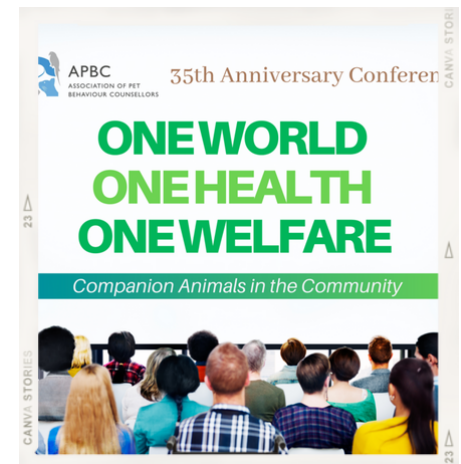
To register, please complete our **Expression of Interest form on our website - [New Trainer Expression of Interest](#)**



Dog A.I.D. at the APBC Conference

Dog A.I.D. is proud to be a charity partner in attendance at the Association of Pet Behaviour Counsellors (APBC) 35th Anniversary Conference taking place **20th-21st April 2024** at the **Mercure Hotel, Daventry**.

There is an exciting programme of speakers at the event aimed at providing a better understanding of how human-animal relationships can be improved in more holistic, effective ways. Tickets for the conference can be purchased on the APBC website - [APBC Conference 2024](#)



Webinar for clients and trainers

Tom Candy is a certified clinical animal behaviourist, certified canine behaviour consultant and certified shelter behaviour specialist. In this webinar, Tom discusses his experience of working in shelters and other challenging environments where high stress levels and extremely limited time means ensuring that goals are appropriate, achievable, and work towards the dogs' rehoming and general wellbeing is of utmost importance, and shares with us some top tips about how to appropriately set goals in your training to benefit all involved - dogs, owners and trainers. The webinar takes place on **Wednesday 24th April, 6.30pm**



To register for the webinar, email admin@dogaid.org.uk

Could you be a Dog A.I.D. Trustee?

Do you have the skills to help us grow and develop our charity?

Dog A.I.D. is a small charity that has a **huge** impact. We change lives by coaching physically Disabled people to train their own pet dog to become an Assistance Dog, enabling independence and increased confidence in our clients.

We are currently recruiting talented volunteers to join our Board of Trustees and to play a vital role in growing and developing our charity. Dog A.I.D. currently has over **500 people waiting to access our services** so growth to meet demand is at the heart of our new three year strategy. We are particularly keen to hear from **people with lived experience of physical disability and/or people with experience in the following areas: legal, marketing, communications/PR and fundraising.**



The Trustees collectively oversee, and have legal responsibility for Dog A.I.D.'s governance, management, values and strategic development. Being a charity Trustee is a responsible role but also an incredibly interesting and rewarding one where you have the opportunity to see your experience and skills make a real difference.



Dog A.I.D.'s Trustees meet at least four times per year, usually online via Teams but we have plans to have some face-to-face meetings and Away Days in the future. Trustees are asked to make a commitment to attend each meeting and to represent the Board on committees where they have specific interests and/or expertise. Trustees are also asked to take part in training and strategic development meetings and contribute to decision making and discussion via email where necessary.

In return for your time and commitment, you will receive full training and support to undertake the role. For an informal conversation please email our Deputy Chair - isobel.michael@dogaid.org.uk