



Therapy Dog Program

2005 Annual Report

Therapy Dog Program

With a history of more than 900 years, St. John Ambulance is one of the oldest humanitarian organizations in the world today. The St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program builds on our proud tradition of community service by bringing the benefits of pet companionship to those who are isolated, ill or residing in long term care facilities.

Therapy Dogs can significantly change a person's life. It has been proven that therapy dogs can improve physical and mental health, improve vocabulary and memory, and increase motivation in those people being visited. More benefits include:

- Reducing stress levels
- Lowering blood pressure
- Calming the distressed
- Comforting the dispondent
- Distracting the pain-ridden



Advisory Committee News

St. John Ambulance is pleased to announce the formation of a new Advisory Committee to help make the Therapy Dog program even more successful. Under the direction of Chairperson Annette Deagle, the committee will be comprised of volunteer coordinators from various districts and Program Coordinator, Tiffany Mullen. The Committee will meet three times a year to discuss topics such as program success and effectiveness, as well as health and safety matters. We are hoping that coordinators will bring their experiences and opinions as well as those of the volunteers in their area.



T.A.I.L.S. Reading Program

In 2005, St. John Ambulance NS/PEI Council piloted a program called **T.A.I.L.S.** (Therapy Animals Involved in Literacy Success), in which therapy dogs help to improve children's literacy skills by making them more comfortable when reading. We currently have one T.A.I.L.S. volunteer in a Lunenburg school, and one volunteer in a Halifax Regional Municipality Library. Cape Breton Therapy Dog volunteers also continue to run the **R.E.A.D.** program in their local libraries.

We expect the T.A.I.L.S. program to grow as more facilities and volunteers become interested.



Respect in the Organization

We are very proud to say that 115 (50%) of our Therapy Dog volunteers have completed the Respect in the Organization Program to date. This program is now a *mandatory* part of new member evaluations, which will certainly continue to increase the number of volunteers completing the R.I.O. program.



Therapy Dog Program

2005 STATISTICS

Total # Handlers 228

Dartmouth	25
Halifax	29
Yarmouth	14
South Shore	26
Mainland North	9
Annapolis Valley	22
Cape Breton	64
Summerside, PE	11
Charlottetown, PE	28

Total # Dogs 247

Dartmouth	23
Halifax	31
Yarmouth	16
South Shore	32
Mainland North	11
Annapolis Valley	23
Cape Breton	66
Summerside, PE	13
Charlottetown, PE	32

Total # Visits 4413

Dartmouth	212
Halifax	469
Yarmouth	163
South Shore	781
Mainland North	69
Annapolis Valley	515
Cape Breton	1,978
Summerside, PE	66
Charlottetown, PE	160

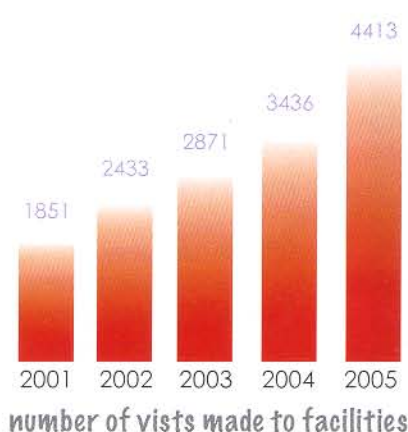
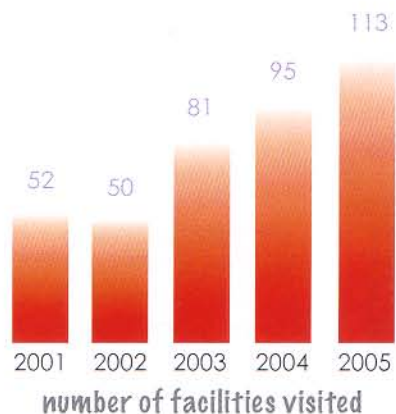
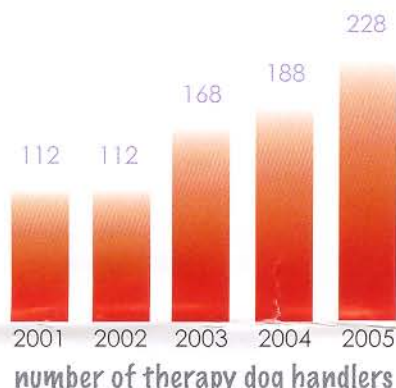
Total # of Hours 12,741

Dartmouth	559.5
Halifax	1,204
Yarmouth	420.5
South Shore	2,328
Mainland North	131.5
Annapolis Valley	1,259
Cape Breton	6,044
Summerside, PE	176
Charlottetown, PE	618.5

Total # of Facilities 113

Total # of Evaluations 14

Therapy Dog



Program Growth

Throughout 2005, the Therapy Dog Program has experienced growth in many areas.

We now have a volunteer coordinator in each region that we have active volunteers. These coordinators help in the recruitment of new volunteers and facilities, assist in evaluations, complete the supervised visits with new volunteers, promote the program and act as a representative for the program in their area. We have already seen an increase in the number of new volunteers and facilities, as well as an increase in overall volunteer satisfaction.

The Therapy Dog program has had a very successful year in 2005 with an increase of 18% in the number of handlers, 16% increase in the number of facilities visited by therapy dogs, and 26% increase in the number of visits made by volunteers as illustrated in the graphs to the right.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to our many volunteers for their dedication to the Therapy Dog program.

Financially Speaking...

In 2005 program costs were a total of \$85,000. These funds bought volunteer uniforms, paid for coordinators, computer systems, and many other items needed to make a difference. We also support the National Therapy Dog program through service fees.

Volunteers contributed over 12,000 hours which if priced at \$12 per hour would account for a \$144,000 plus contribution to the community! Thank you to our many volunteers who are making a difference in their communities.

Facility Partners

We would like to thank our Facility Partners for their efforts to make life better for their clients. Your cooperation and support is greatly appreciated!