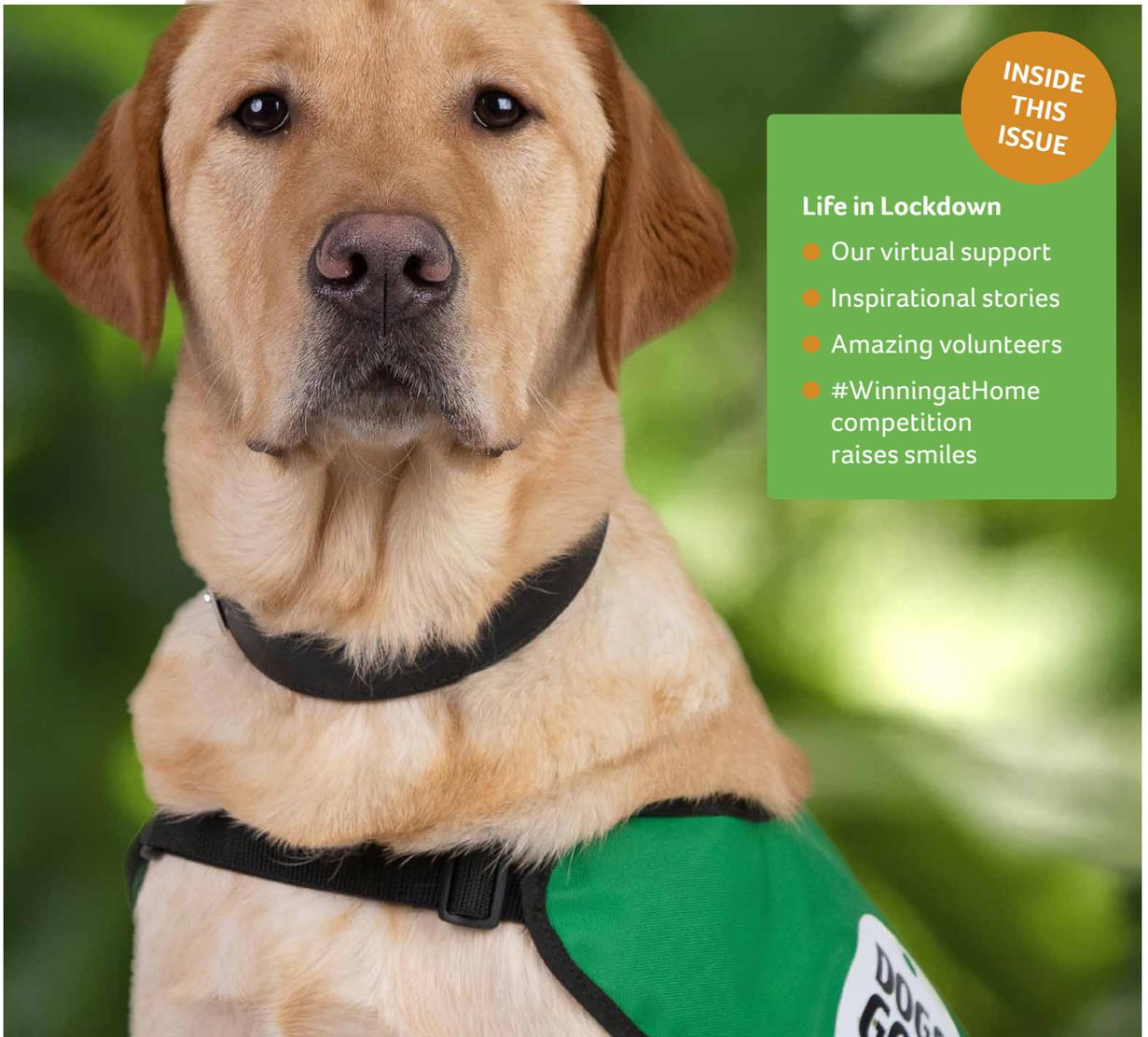

CHANGING TIMES

2020

News and updates
about the positive
impact Dogs for Good
has made over the
last year.



LIFE CHANGING
DEVOTION



INSIDE
THIS
ISSUE

Life in Lockdown

- Our virtual support
- Inspirational stories
- Amazing volunteers
- #WinningatHome competition raises smiles



Luke Carter (12) is partnered with assistance dog, Sunley. During lockdown, Luke's schoolwork included writing a description of something using metaphors. Luke decided to write about Sunley.

**We think it's the best bit of homework we've ever seen!
Well done Luke!**

With grateful thanks to the Bernard Sunley Foundation for their sponsorship of Sunley.

Sunley (the best dog in the world)

My dog, Sunley, is a gigantic fluffball.

He is a big scaredy-cat, no literally, he is big and scared of the cat!

He has soft, floppy ears and a wet, black nose.

His tail is a bushy wagging machine and his eyes are as black as space but twinkle like the stars when he is happy.

His fur is as golden as the sun and he is as delightful as a warm summer's day.

He is as big as a giant but as soft as cotton wool.

He is a Hoover, a face-licker, a treat-gobbler and thing of beauty and joy.

He is scared of water but loves chasing a ball.

He likes to sit by me and brings me comfort and he helps me in more ways than he will ever know.

He is a big, soft teddy bear
but best of all,
he is my
best friend!





WELCOME

Peter Gorbng Chief Executive

For many people we work with, disability can make it difficult or even impossible to go out alone and this leads to being incredibly isolated. The impact of the last few months will have left many of us with a deeper understanding of what life looks like for people with disabilities.

Throughout the pandemic, the safety of our staff, volunteers, clients and of course, our wonderful dogs has been at the heart of our planning. People have embraced new ways of working and there are so many wonderful stories that we want to share with you.

We're incredibly proud of everyone for rising to the challenge and also grateful to Westminster Group Foundation and Reading Scientific Services Ltd for the donation of PPE and hand sanitiser which enabled us to re-start our post-lockdown operations.

As we look forward, there are opportunities for us to use this experience to become a more environmentally responsible organisation – something I'm sure we would all love to make happen. It would be fantastic if together, building on what we have learned, we could create a charity that not only supports more people through the power of dogs but also helps the environment.

Inevitably, the pandemic has had a huge impact on our fundraising with many events and activities cancelled this year. We really do value every donation that's made and I want to thank you all for your ongoing support.

Thank you!

HIGHLIGHTS



Thank you from all at Dogs for Good

We've been humbled by the support shown to us by our fantastic band of volunteers, staff, fundraisers and supporters who have all gone above and beyond during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite the challenging financial situation, Royal Canin, No Fear Bridge and NFU Mutual recognised the charity's need and all made significant and generous donations.

Also, Equilaw in Gloucester who chose us as its Charity of the Year in 2019/20 – raising over £20k – has decided to continue its support in 2020/21.

These highlights are just a handful of the incredibly positive things that have kept us smiling.

Thank you all!

Fundraising at Home

Necessity is the mother of invention and while Dogs for Good's 2020 fundraising has been severely impacted by the cancellation of events, many people have continued to help through virtual fundraising initiatives. The 2.6 Challenge undertaken by some, raised over £6,500 and Golf Captain, Ali created a mini golf course in her garden so she could support us! Supporter Groups created online dog shows, got busy crafting and our grateful thanks go to all concerned.



Lockdown Litters

While we had to put our breeding programme on hold during Covid-19, there were some puppies who were already well on the way. In April 2020, we welcomed two gorgeous 'lockdown litters' into the world. Proud mums Star and Nina delivered eight and six future life-changers, respectively. Phew! After eight weeks, the pups were then homed with our wonderful puppy socialisers who all report that their charges are happy, mischievous and busy chewing slippers.



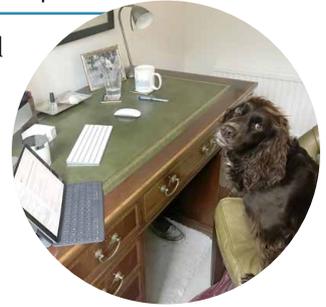
Zoom Puppy Classes

When you can't hold puppy classes because of a pandemic, you have to think outside of the box. Puppy Co-Ordinator, Abbey Chung did exactly that; developing and organising Puppy Classes on Zoom. "It's been lots of work but everyone's been super supportive and we've had great fun," she says. "The main difference has been that most of the puppies are snoozing when we hold the class because they're not together and distracting each other!"



Business Partnerships

Despite the financial challenges facing businesses, many of our corporate partners continue to support us and to keep everyone engaged during lockdown, we adapted some fundraising ideas. Long-term supporters, JM Finn, committed to a whole month of fundraising, challenging colleagues to run or walk 5,000 miles. They and Close Brothers joined in with a slightly revised 'Bring Your Dog to Work Day' with staff from both companies sending us fabulous photos of their wonderful dogs.



Continued Trust Support

We're very thankful to charitable trusts that donate to our work. Particular thanks to 'Ordinary People Interesting Lives' and 'The Rose Adeane Trust' who have generously supported us for a number of years. They are both winding up operations this year and we're one of the charities to benefit from a final donation. Please get in touch with us if you have connections with a trust and would like to know more about our work.



Alvin's on door duty!

Client Andrew taught his assistance dog, Alvin how to close the lounge door during lockdown using guidance emailed to him by his Instructor, Ella McNulty. "It only took two sessions for Alvin to learn it," Andrew says. "He is a very clever boy and I'm really impressed!" Ella says "I'm so proud of Andrew and Alvin. They've worked hard, done a great job and it demonstrates beautifully what a wonderful bond they have."



HIGHLIGHTS

Rita and Amy





Online visits for our Community Dog clients

Our Community Dogs and their specialist handlers work with people with a range of disabilities and individual needs over a series of 'in-person' sessions designed to improve independence, wellbeing and skills.

Because it's a face-to-face service, our work has been considerably impacted by lockdown.

But, our Community Dog team are known for their adaptability and before long, had something new to offer clients.

"We developed online sessions where dog and handler 'visit' clients and carry out new types of activities and games, which help clients meet their wider goals," says Dogs for Good's Hayley Stimpson.

"An adult, supported by specialist charity, Autism at Kingwood, found lockdown very difficult so we set up sessions with Community Dog Rita and handler Amy. The feedback he gave us demonstrates the incredibly positive impact of these visits." Our client said: "I've been thinking about the dogs all week, especially at the moment. I really miss contact with them.

"I have photos of dogs I've worked with on display and I tell people who visit all about them."

Our client identified that Rita had a different personality to other dogs he's worked with and handler Amy says: "We played some games which we adapted to Rita's versions, including noughts and crosses.

"He really enjoyed the session, said he couldn't thank us enough and that 'there were no words.'"

IMPACT



With grateful thanks to Petplan Charitable Trust for their sponsorship of Miller from puppy through to partnership.

The Amazing Mr Miller

It's said that bravery knows many faces and this story demonstrates the courage of one of our clients in saying goodbye to her beloved dog – the aptly-named 'Amazing Mr Miller' – just before lockdown.



Following an injury which left her with a broken leg, Miller's owner was then given the devastating news that her much-loved boy had a terminal illness. Living alone, she recognised she was unable to look after Miller herself and we stepped in to provide palliative care.

Miller's last weeks were spent living with our very own Chris Muldoon who says: "As we prepared to go into lockdown I agreed to take Miller home with me to Scotland. I'd met him in kennels and liked him instantly; lots of personality and a playful zest for life."

Chris kept in close contact with Miller's owner and was able to let her know that despite his illness, Miller was happy, having fun and was largely pain and distress-free. "I want to recognise this lady's incredible courage, resilience, compassion and care for the dog she loved – even to the point of giving him up," says Chris.

The Amazing Mr Miller passed away on 27th May, one day after his ninth birthday. "He had fun on his birthday and enjoyed a birthday cake, a long walk and a swim," remembers Chris.

"Miller was a wonderful Dogs for Good assistance dog and I want to pay tribute to him for his service and thank him for his final gift of allowing me to learn from his journey."

For the full story, go to our website and scroll down to find our blog.

Life-changing Legacy

Many solicitors offer a free will writing service in return for a donation to a charity of your choice. A small change to your will could help us provide more life-changing dogs, so please do consider leaving a gift to Dogs for Good if you choose to use these services.

Visit our website for more information.





Family Dog service celebrates 10th anniversary

In July 2020, we proudly celebrated the 10th anniversary of our Family Dog service.

This innovative, UK-wide, workshop-based service is the only one of its kind in the UK and gives parents with an autistic child advice and long-term support about choosing and training a dog to benefit the whole family.

Over 1,400 families have benefitted from the service since inception and during lockdown, the Family Dog team developed a virtual workshop offering. Instructor, Hannah Beal says: “Virtual workshops are something that we’ve been wanting to do for some time because for some people,

getting to an in-person workshop can be a challenge. We hope they’re a success now and into the future.”

We’re so grateful to Pets at Home which generously continues to support the Family Dog service with a donation from the proceeds of its carrier bag sales and also donates to us via its VIP Lifelines programme. In such uncertain times, support like this is invaluable.

Liz, who attended Family Dog workshops says:

“I couldn’t believe it when the Instructors went through what they could teach us and how it might help my son. I sat there and cried, thinking ‘this could be life-changing.’”



SEPARATION ANXIETY ADVICE

During lockdown, dogs have loved having their people at home. As restrictions ease and people start to get back to work, we conducted a survey asking dog owners what they are most concerned about as the lockdown eases.

The main findings revealed that 54% of dog owners said they worry about their dogs experiencing 'separation anxiety'.

We've put together some tips to help:

- Bring back the old routine gradually
- Start talking to your colleagues/ managers about how to manage your dog responsibilities when you return to work to minimise distress
- Take a note of your dog's behaviour and think about how this may change when you're out of the house
- Your dog might bark more when you're not at home so consider letting people like the postman know you're going back to work and your dog may bark at them
- Reintroduce old routines, such as not leaving food on counters, to prevent scavenging when you are out
- Re-install baby gates that may have been taken away during lockdown and make sure doors are closed when you go out

To find out more, go to our website and scroll down to find our blog.

We're keen to know more about your experiences with your dog and how we might be able to help.

Visit our website to take part in our short survey about understanding your dog and helping them lead happy, healthy lives.

More info at [dogsforgood.org](https://www.dogsforgood.org)



A Winning Combination

We were absolutely thrilled when sports commentator, Andrew Cotter agreed to work with us on a competition we devised during lockdown called 'Winning from Home'. Andrew brought happiness to dog lovers worldwide with videos of his own gorgeous Labradors, Olive and Mabel.



Entrants sent us footage of their dogs, hoping to win the coveted prize; Andrew commentating on their video.

We hoped the competition might help us reach new audiences and bring in a few donations. And goodness, did it deliver! We saw over 1.2 million impressions on Facebook and Twitter, £2,600 donated, more website visits/social media interactions and engagement with new supporters worldwide.

Joe Daniels' video of his Cavapoo, Nala (unsuccessfully) stalking a bird proved a hit with Andrew and his witty commentary noted that Nala displayed 'the stealth of a sofa' in her quest.

Many thanks to our ambassador, Sarah Stirk and of course to Andrew himself for being such a sport!



Competition winner, Nala, and her family.



Volunteer Puppy Socialiser 'Lockdown Life'

Like other puppy socialisers, Vicki Meakins provided a loving home for two Dogs for Good puppies – Jet and Dante – during lockdown.

“Jet arrived just before lockdown and Dante was due to leave on March 23rd. A big date for us and, as it turned out, for the rest of the country.

“Because of the situation, Dogs for Good asked if Dante could stay longer and I didn't skip a beat before saying, 'No problem!'”

“Having Dante and Jet has helped structure our lockdown days and it's been lovely watching the interaction between them and my children.”



Meet The Team – Instructor Jen Protheroe-Minett

Instructor, Jen Protheroe-Minett recently employed the skills of her own dog, Jake, to teach task work to clients online.

“I was working with Rachel whose son has assistance dog, Hinkley to refresh Hinkley's training around a door pull which he hadn't done for a while,” explains Jen. “I got Jake to demonstrate what I was explaining.”

Jake is a miniature Jack Russell and Jen had to adapt things slightly! “Jake's size meant that he wouldn't be able to open a proper door, so I used the oven door instead. I guess you could say that he made short work of it!”



Client Neil with assistance dog, Sage

Neil Jowitt received a diagnosis of MS in 2015 and as his illness progressed, he wasn't able to enjoy family outings and felt the walls closing in.

In 2019, he was matched with a little black Labrador called Sage. "Right from the moment Sage wagged her way into my life, the walls that had been closing in started to recede. I could clearly see how she was going to open up my world again."

During lockdown, Neil was told to stay at home because his immune system is severely compromised but says that "Sage opens up doors, even in lockdown."



GOOD IDEAS

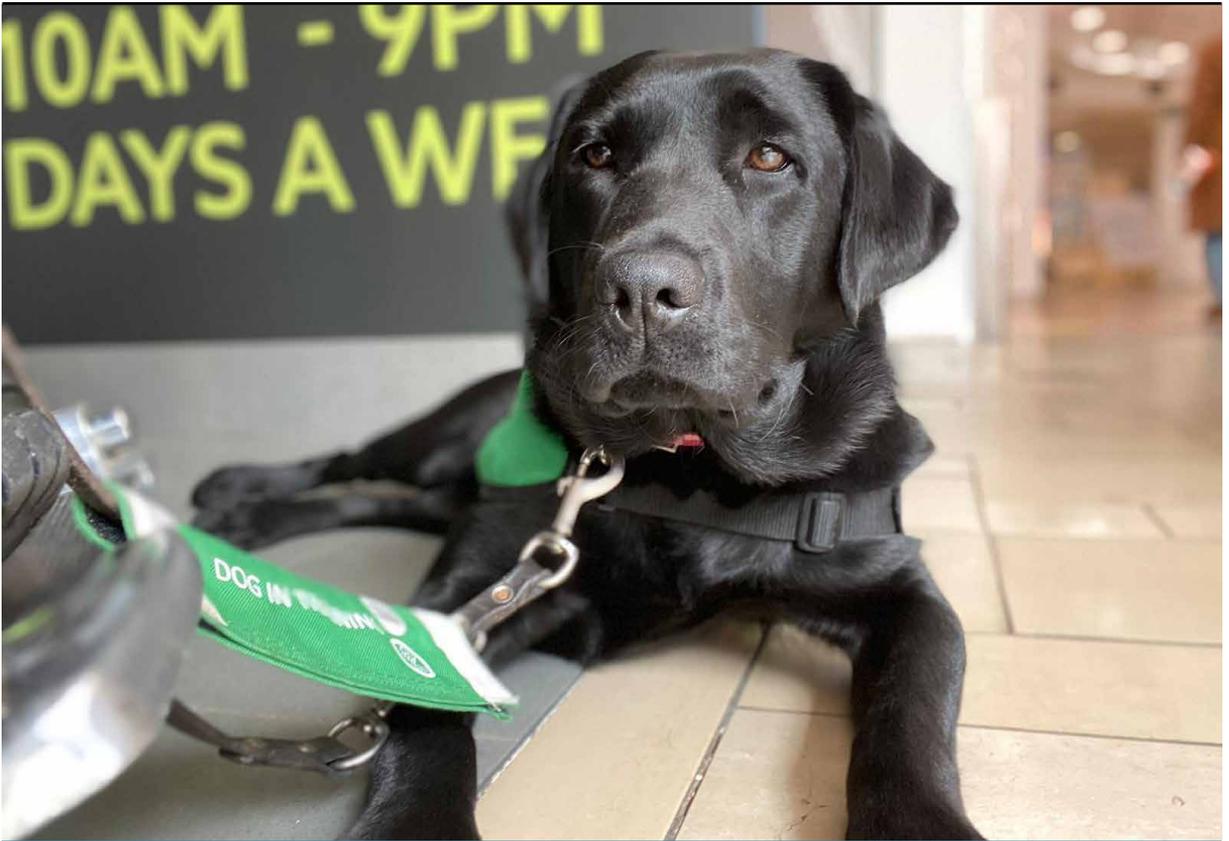
BRAIN GAMES FOR HAPPY DOGS

During lockdown, keeping our dogs entertained and happy was more important than ever. Our clever training team put together some advice sheets and short videos on lots of topics such as making a snuffle mat and how to play a game of noughts and crosses with your dog.

Our Operations Manager, Chris Muldoon says "stimulating your dog's mind by playing a game together for 10 minutes can provide just as much enrichment as a brisk 30 minute walk."

Our 'Good Ideas' proved really popular and are available on our website for anyone to use now and into the future.

To find out more, go to our website and scroll down to find our blog.



We hope you enjoy supporting Dogs for Good and reading here about how we're navigating these challenging times. Do you know someone who might also like to support us? If so, please pass on this copy of Changing Times and let them read about the life-changing work we do.

Thank you!

If you'd like find out about other ways you can get involved with our work, we'd love to hear from you.

Get in touch

Call: 01295 252600

Email: info@dogsforgood.org

Visit: dogsforgood.org

Find us on



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