



[www.playfulpooch.org](http://www.playfulpooch.org)

# The Playful Pooch Program

## October 2008 News

I'm glad that you have discovered the new website for the Playful Pooch Program. I have lots of plans to add more information, book reviews, and topics of interest to people who work with their dogs in therapy and other contexts. Animal-assisted play therapy is fascinating, and as we develop ideas, standards, and research, it has great promise! The more I learn about it, the more I learn of people doing fascinating work in the field. I hope we can eventually do more sharing with each other!

There is a wonderful video online that may be of interest to you. It's on Dan Marino's website about autism. The 15-minute video shows a talented occupational therapist involving an Australian Cattle Dog in the treatment of a young boy with autism. The OT is skillful in her use of playfulness and the involvement of the dog. It's well worth the time to watch:

[http://www.childnett.tv/videos/therapies/effects\\_animal\\_assisted\\_therapy\\_child\\_autism](http://www.childnett.tv/videos/therapies/effects_animal_assisted_therapy_child_autism)



The March 2008 *National Geographic* magazine had a wonderful article in it about the cognitive abilities of animals. People often underestimate them. The article is currently available online at the following link:

<http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2008/03/animal-minds/virginia-morell-text>

You can also order this back issue from NatGeo for \$6 (the number to call is on their website).



One more interesting article is about the things that dogs can teach children. You can find it at:

[http://wondertime.go.com/life-at-home/article/dogs-teaching-kids\\_PF.html](http://wondertime.go.com/life-at-home/article/dogs-teaching-kids_PF.html)

This past week, 12 people participated in our 2-day training on the involvement of dogs in play therapy. Not only did we have a great group of participants with diverse experiences, we also had a guest performance by Koty, an English Lab who belongs to Gayle Kohr (who assisted with the training). Koty treated us to his musical abilities playing the bass drum, cymbals, honking horns, and ringing bells. He showed us how much dogs can learn! This same training in a 3-day format will be offered in March 09 (only a couple seats left) and in August 09 (several seats left). The August dates coincide with a large dog show in Harrisburg, too. Mary Thompson will be assisting with the March program. More information and registration is available at [www.playfulpooch.org](http://www.playfulpooch.org).



Mary Thompson and I presented a paper/poster on Canine-Assisted Play Therapy at the annual conference of the International Society for Anthrozoology in Toronto in August. We showed DVD clips of Mary's Shelties and my Border Collie mix doing their thing in both nondirective and directive play therapy sessions. Our information was well-received by attendees from all over the world. Interest in this field is growing rapidly!

With best wishes for a wonderful fall season,

Risë

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