GATEPATH®

INSPIRE

Summer 2016 Newsletter

THERAPY DOG MAKES WEEKLY VISITS TO GATEPATH

Tucker, a Welsh Corgi therapy dog

Four years ago, when Betsy Grotte adopted a puppy, she had no idea what their future would hold. "Tucker", a Welsh Corgi, was bred for herding dogs, but other greatness awaited him.

As a pup, Tucker started basic obedience classes and within a few months received his "Good Citizen" certification from the American Kennel Club. Tucker was on the road to success before he turned one. "I knew Tucker was special, and thought he might be a perfect candidate as a therapy dog helping children and adults with special needs," said Betsy.

Tucker's résumé has grown incredibly over the past few years as he started attending classes hosted by Pet Partners, a national leader in animal-assisted therapy. Qualifying for their program is not just for the dogs, both Betsy and Tucker underwent a series of training and evaluation tests that included interacting with other dogs, mock role playing with people in wheelchairs and reacting to challenging behavioral situations. Tucker required weekly training and skills evaluation. Betsy took 18 online courses and a class at Stanford to be a handler for a therapy dog. Background checks and letters of recommendation completed the process. After all the tests and role playing, Tucker received the highest level of certification, which allowed him to participate in more complex settings.

Today, Tucker is well-known at Gatepath's Learning Links Preschool where he and Betsy spend time weekly reading to the children. Tucker is also the favorite "table-top" activity in Teacher Monica's special day class. "Tucker really soothes the children, who are on the autism spectrum. The children use quiet voices and sit in a chair while petting Tucker. I can see a difference in the kids when he is around. His presence creates a calming effect," said Teacher Monica.

According to the Animal Humane Association, therapy dogs help people with a variety of disabilities, including visual and hearing impairments, seizures, post-traumatic stress disorder, diabetes and mobility issues. Close interaction with dogs initiates the release of the hormone oxytocin in humans, which "makes us feel good."

Betsy recently added stops at Gatepath's Adult Services centers in Daly City and San Carlos to Tucker's busy schedule. The adults in these programs have the opportunity to play with Tucker and take turns walking him, which is healthy for everyone.

When Tucker isn't working, he's busy winning popularity contests. Tucker was entered in a contest hosted by the California Association of Health Facilities where he won first place for the Best Therapy Dog!

Gatepath is grateful to Betsy and tucker for their volunteer service, which brings smiles, laughter and a sense of tranquility to everyone they meet.

Betsy and some of the adults from Gatepath's Learning & Resource Campus taking Tucker for a walk

Enjoy more of our inspirational stories online:

CEO CORNER BY BRYAN NEIDER

INVESTING IN PROGRAMS FOR ADULTS THAT PROMOTE HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Recent studies indicate that adults with special needs are more likely to suffer from depression when compared to those without a developmental disability or delay. An article in "Disabled World" noted that while it's difficult to find statistics about the connection between disabilities and depression, there are a number of factors that are considered to be important, such as social inclusion, financial stability and freedom of mobility.

At Gatepath, we're working to combat this alarming trend by increasing our investment in high-quality programs that promote physical, emotional and social well-being for the adults we serve. We recently expanded our range of adult programs to include more health and wellness focused classes into our daily curriculum, including Tai Chi, morning meditation, healthy eating and a brand-new art therapy program. I can't wait to share with you some of the amazing art being created in this exciting new program!

We are also collaborating with other community partners to improve the physical and mental well-being of the individuals we serve. The Hillsborough Auxiliary to Gatepath purchased gym memberships so our adult participants can regularly attend exercise classes. We are also grateful for the generosity of the Peninsula Health Care District and the Sequoia Healthcare District for funding multiple wellness programs, including cooking and nutrition classes.

As we all know, a fulfilling life is made up of more than just good programs; it's also about being included and valued in the community. In our Community Access program, we

A Zumba class at Gatepath's Learning & Employment Campus

provide activities for adults close to where they live, which gives them access to community resources for employment, recreation, education and local business opportunities (including paid and volunteer work). The program not only helps people with special needs develop and maintain friendships and social connections, but it also enriches their community interactions, all of which contributes to social inclusion, financial stability and freedom of mobility.

At Gatepath, we care deeply about the health and well-being of the people we serve – and we will continue to do everything we can to expand our services that promote healthy living, full engagement and acceptance in our community.

A GENEROUS COMMUNITY

Gatepath joined about 1,000 other Bay Area nonprofits to participate in the third annual Silicon Valley Gives event on May 3. Thanks to the generosity of more than 275 donors, we raised over $85,000 to support our programs and provide more inclusive opportunities for children and adults with special needs. This is an incredible 25% increase over last year! The 11 families and board members who created personal fundraising pages were inspirational ambassadors of our mission and integral to our success. We are also grateful to the following matching gift donors who doubled the contributions to Gatepath: Alberta and Bill Aldinger, Diane and Frank Pitre, Janice Uccelli, Kevin Weir and Associates, and two anonymous donors.

Thank you to our entire community of generous supporters!

GATEPATH OPENS DOORS TO OTHER NONPROFITS

In the spirit of fostering and supporting collaboration among nonprofits, Gatepath is proud to announce that processes are now in place to allow other nonprofits and community partners to use its facilities throughout the Peninsula, for FREE. "When nonprofits work together, we all win," said Bryan Neider, Gatepath's Chief Executive Officer. "By sharing of our resources, it provides an opportunity for other other nonprofits to increase their impact in our local communities."

We have five facilities along the Peninsula with a variety of space options ideal for small or large groups and for many different purposes. All facilities have kitchens available, and most have large multipurpose rooms that can be used for activities like physical fitness classes, or presentations to large groups.

The facilities are available on weekday late afternoons / early evenings and the weekends. Times vary by location.

Users must provide certificate of insurance coverage and complete a user agreement. Gatepath will provide user guidelines and instructions upon approval. Interested parties can contact facilities management to learn more and apply.

For the latest information, visit Gatepath.org/Facilities-For-Nonprofits or email hr@gatepath.org.

GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS CELEBRATE FAMILIES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Gatepath's Autism Social Connection students at the Warriors' private basketball clinic

The Golden State Warriors are truly "golden" – an incredible basketball team, but their character and humble nature off the court is even more impressive. Gatepath is one of five nonprofits that have participated in the Warriors' Special Needs Family Appreciation Night for the past few years.

Special Needs Family Appreciation Night was inspired by the NBA's "Spread the Word to End the Word" initiative and the Warriors have continued to support people with developmental disabilities year-after-year.

This year's event kicked off with a private basketball clinic at the Warriors practice facility in Oakland for youth and adults with special needs and disabilities. The attendees enjoyed one-on-one time learning drills and fundamentals with youth basketball coaches from the Warriors. The clinic ended with a free-throw contest, and everyone left with a backpack filled with Warriors swag, and more importantly, a sense of inclusion and acceptance.

On game night, a select group of children and families entered the Warriors tunnel and "high-fived" coaches and players as they entered the court. The children's faces lit up as they stood only feet away from the players and cheerleaders, collecting high-fives, smiles, and an occasional fist pump as they passed. They enjoyed additional perks at the game including the opportunity to sit courtside and watch the Warriors warm-up, and a special half-time presentation honoring families that have created positive change for individuals with special needs.

Todd his and son Henry

This year, Gatepath and the Warriors were honored to recognize Todd and Henry Gemmer with an impact award on the court during half-time. Todd has served on Gatepath's Board of Directors for six years and his son Henry, who has Down syndrome, received services at Gatepath.

"When Henry was on the court for the national anthem, he was between the choir and the players; he couldn't decide which was more exciting," said Todd Gemmer. "We all watch the Warriors games as a family. After that special game, we feel a bit more like a part of the team. It just added an extra attachment to what is already an easy team to root for!"

Gatepath is grateful to the Warriors for the continued partnership and their dedication to supporting individuals with special needs.

UPCOMING EVENTS

July

5	Autism Support Group
8	Burlingame Dragons' Day of Service
11	Cerebral Palsy Support Group
20	Grupo de Apoyo Para Padres

August

2	Autism Support Group
8	Cerebral Palsy Support Group
17	Grupo de Apoyo Para Padres

September

6	Autism Support Group
12	Cerebral Palsy Support Group
12	**Gatepath Golf Classic**

For more information visit: Gatepath.org/calendar

Stay Connected:

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12th Annual
GATEPATH GOLF CLASSIC

Benefiting Infants and Children with Special Needs

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12, 2016
STANFORD UNIVERSITY GOLF COURSE

NOON SHOTGUN START | SCRAMBLE FORMAT
FOURSOMES AVAILABLE

QUESTIONS? CONTACT JEANNE BERUBE AT JBERUBE@GATEPATH.ORG

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