Our Furry Little Friends

Iris Lopez, Jaime Polito
Mentors: Dr. Barbara Bono, Dylan Steed, Pamela Rose

Abstract
We should care for animals, for animals have cared for us. Since the mid-19th century, organizations like the ASPCA have been dedicated to the prevention of cruelty to animals; today the fields of animal studies and animal rights extend the understanding of our beneficial relationships with them. One example of the good that animals do for us is the success of stress-relief animals in settings such as health-care institutions, schools, airports, and elder homes. Here at UB, librarian Pam Rose, in collaboration with Therapy Animals of Western New York (TAWNY), “Paws for Love” program of Erie County SPCA, and UB Wellness Center, has, since 2011, brought therapy dogs to campus during exam week. Our project will solidify this service through a student survey and publicity effort which already reveals that students approve of but typically have not used it, and through building a volunteer corps to help sustain it.

Animal Abuse
Bad Newz Kennels (2007):
- Football Quarterback Michael Vick guilty for participation in 'dog fighting'
- Vick's Virginia Property: Location of fighting ring & gambling site
- Owned over 50 Pit Bulls
- What he did???
  - Used pit bulls as fighters & fighting bait
  - Killed/electrocuted/hanged/drowned pit bulls that did not pass training
- Afterwards:
  - Served ONLY 2 years of jail & 3 years of probation
  - ASPCA rescued 40-50 pit bulls & distributed them to other animal/rescue organizations
  - Most of the dogs were adopted & others after full recovery were certified as... THERAPY DOGS!!! (Pit bulls: Sox & Hector)

Therapy Dogs
- Therapy dogs help:
  - Lower cholesterol
  - Lower heart rate
  - Decrease stress
  - Develop self-confidence
  - ... and MANY MORE!
- Therapy Dogs:
  - About 60% of students find therapy dogs useful
  - The other 40% might lack information or sincerely feel this way but here are some facts:
  - Interview with Pamela Rose:
    - Animal Advocate
    - Coordinator of Web Services (HSL)
    - Founder of TAWNY along with the help of Sandy M.
    - Feline Behavior Counselor
    - Published: "Guide to Therapy Dog Team Visits at UB"
    - Involved in various therapy dog teams & 'Stress Relief Week'
    - Owner of therapy dog, Sophie

Student Feedback & Survey Results
- Survey taken by: 20 girls & 20 boys at random in the Academies Office
- Purpose: To obtain students thoughts on animal abuse & the use of therapy dog during “Stress Relief Week”

Therapy Dogs
- Top Breeds Used:
  - Labrador Retriever
  - German Shepherd
  - Rottweiler
  - Pug
  - Beagle
  - Poodle
  - Bernese Mountain
  - Greyhound

How Can You Get Involved?

Animal Organizations
- Erie County SPCA
- Paws for Love
- Therapy Animals of Western New York (TAWNY)