



Powered by Clickability

Click to Print

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Peace Arch News

Dog owner starts a league of her own



Keryn Denroche visits with a few four-legged friends at Dogwood Park.

Brian Giebelhaus photo

[Buy Peace Arch News Photos Online](#)

By [Hannah Sutherland - Peace Arch News](#)

Published: July 14, 2009 8:00 AM

Updated: July 14, 2009 11:48 AM

Keryn Denroche has been bringing Montana to Dogwood Park for six years.

The off-leash park is the place the Labrador retriever has played since he was a puppy, and where Denroche has gotten to know countless other dogs and their owners.

It has also served as inspiration for Semiahmoo Animal

League Inc. (SALI), a non-profit organization Denroche started two years ago to address the lack of animal programs in Surrey and White Rock.

"I've met such wonderful people here and it brought me back to how wonderful it is to connect with animals," she said.

Currently earning her degree in humane leadership from Pittsburgh's Duquesne University and the Humane Society of the U.S., Denroche learned of successful animal programs in other countries, and borrowed their models to create similar initiatives locally.

Still in the planning stages, the projects are based on the principle of people and animals helping each other.

"A lot of animal rescue organizations are not too keen on people because they think people are part of the problem, but we're taking the other view that it's people who help animals."

The first initiative, guardian programs, is meant to help safeguard pets of seniors, homeless people and women fleeing violence.

"We will help those people keep their pets if they are at risk of losing them," Denroche said. "We want to prevent animals from going to shelters."

She wants to work with government ministries to make SALI a resource women experiencing violence are referred to.

"Women in violent home situations, often they won't leave because of their pets," she said, noting animals are also affected by violence at home. "We will be a resource for women in a crisis."

Denroche said SALI would help women place their pets in foster homes (for which volunteers are needed), or provide money to cover medical costs.

The same aid would be offered to the homeless and seniors.

"Pets are so crucial in seniors' lives," she added. "If they're at risk, if they can't afford pet food, can't afford the vet bill, if they're going into hospital, we'd like to help."

The second project, SALI's Farm, would be a place for at-

risk youth and children healing from emotional trauma, such as abuse, to interact with animals.

As with the guardian programs, Denroche wants to work with government agencies so children are referred to the property, which would house gentle farm animals such as llamas, ducks, pigs, sheep, lambs and donkeys.

The concept is based on Forget Me Not Farm, established in California by the Humane Society and SPCA of Sonoma County in 1992, which SALI volunteers plan to visit in September.

"Animal-assisted therapy helps children in the healing process as part of treatment," Denroche said.

She wants to introduce SALI's Farm in the South Surrey area, and is asking the City of Surrey to donate farmland.

The city's help is also needed for SALI's third program, a members-only off-leash dog park.

Denroche hopes to go before council this fall with the request they donate farmland for the park, which members would pay an annual fee to use.

Unlike Dogwood Park, the area would have standardized rules and offer a bath station, coffee cart, clean swimming pond and recreational activities such as an agility course.

It would also be used to host events, such as dog adopt-a-thons.

Once established, Denroche said membership fees would go towards SALI's non-profit efforts.


The organization's funding comes from fundraisers; its most recent, a dog wash, raised \$1,600.

Denroche hopes to expand by working alongside other, already established, animal organizations, such as the SPCA.

For more information about SALI, to become a member or to fill out a survey on the off-leash dog park, visit www.sali.ca

Find this article at:

http://www.bclocalnews.com/surrey_area/peacearchnews/community/50728327.html

 [Click to Print](#)

[SAVE THIS](#) | [EMAIL THIS](#) | [Close](#)

Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

© Copyright Black Press. All rights reserved.