



EAC Graduation By Terry O'Rourke

When Early Alert Canines (EAC) awards a scent-trained dog to a diabetic handler at Team Training, the real work has just begun. Before a team earns eligibility for graduation, it must demonstrate that the dog can successfully adapt to its new environment and show an increasing ability to accurately detect and alert on low blood sugar episodes. The human must also demonstrate effective interaction with his/her dog. This period can extend up to six months or more as the teams strive to earn a spot at graduation. As the four graduate candidate teams looked forward to their January 25th graduation at the Early Alert Canines Training Facility in Concord, each of them considered the meaning of this special time.

Laura and Darwin

Jorge and Julia Inestroza, father and mother of four-year old type 1 diabetic Laura, were worried that Laura, while a very verbal child, was not very good at sensing and communicating her glucose highs and lows. With the help of diabetic alert dog Darwin, Laura seems to be honing her ability to sense a high or low, attach the appropriate label, and finally verbalize it. That's quite an achievement for an adult diabetic, much less a four-year old child!



EAC trained Darwin to detect the scent of both low and high blood glucose in a child and then to alert that condition to one of the parents. Darwin adjusted to his new home and continues to perform his alerting job well. Julia tells of Darwin alerting correctly from the soccer field sidelines with Laura playing on the field. "He's a superstar!" exclaims Julia. As the family looks forward to graduation, what are their thoughts? Julia says, "I look forward to meeting all the people who made Darwin who he is."

Emma and Fleur

Fleur paced restlessly along the practice field sidelines. Her handler, Emma Kleck, is a pre-nursing student at the University of Oregon who plays trumpet in the school's marching band. Fleur must have caught a whiff of the telltale scent of Emma's low blood sugar right near the end of a practice session. When practice broke up, Emma approached Fleur pacing back and forth and realized that she needed to check her glucose. Emma confirmed what Fleur considered "old news." She treated the low and rewarded Fleur, grateful for her loyal presence. Emma and Fleur have been a team for most of 2013.

Emma concedes that bringing Fleur into her life has been a big adjustment.

Inside this issue:

<i>Carol's Corner</i>	2
<i>Vet Notes</i>	2
<i>Client Spotlight</i>	3
<i>EAC Events</i>	4
<i>Fun-raising Ideas</i>	5
<i>New Recruits</i>	6
<i>In the News</i>	6

(continued on page 4)

Carol's Corner by Carol Edwards**Notes from the desk of EAC's top dog****Bozeman, Carol, and Radiant**

EAC is excited to announce a pilot Teen Camp Program for our teenage potential partners! We will be offering hands-on training for our potential clients ages 12-17. Teen applicants attend the camp to ensure that they are comfortable working and living with a medical alert service dog. Additionally, the camp gives us an opportunity to assess the diabetic's dog handling abilities, providing important information that can help us when it comes time to match clients up with canine partners.

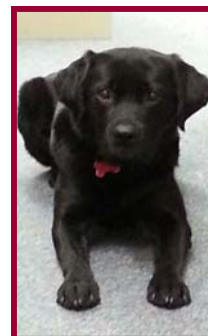
Each attendee will be working with the dogs and learning how to care for these special canines. They'll even have the opportunity to take the dogs home with them for one night or more to really experience life with a medical alert dog.

In addition to learning some obedience commands and proper praise and correction techniques, teen handlers will be socializing the dogs by taking them to restaurants, stores and on public transportation—there are even a few fun surprise outings planned! Emphasis is on challenges and rewards the diabetic will experience in daily life with a medical alert dog.

We know it's going to be a **blast** and we can't wait for summer!

Vet Notes by Dr. Kim Bercovitz**Daily Care**

You make a bigger difference in your dog's life with the things you do every day or every week than I do as a veterinarian during his yearly exam. The studies prove that keeping your dog at an ideal weight extends his life. Dogs should have an obvious waistline behind their ribs when viewed from above, an obvious tuck in the belly when viewed from the side and ribs that can be easily felt. I want the ribs to feel like your dog is wearing a t-shirt, not a parka! Use a measuring cup and feed twice daily. Brush your dog's teeth daily. Give him extra attention or treats to make it a positive experience.

**Fleur**

Don't ever give bones, hooves or horns –they cause tooth fractures. The Veterinary Oral Health Council makes a list of approved food and treats (see: www.vohc.org). If a chew toy or treat isn't on this list it is likely because it could cause tooth fractures.

Brushing your dog's coat is a bonding activity as well as a chance to look for injuries and lumps. The vast majority of lumps are benign, but there are some serious ones. Early detection and removal can make a difference in prognosis.

Cleaning ears weekly will greatly reduce or eliminate ear infections. If your dog gets frequent yeast ear infections, he or she might benefit from an ear cleaner with ketoconazole (an anti-fungal) in it. Their ear canal is "L" shaped, so make sure you use enough liquid to fill the canal.

Tail wags 'till next time!

Dr. Kim Bercovitz

Client Spotlight



The Inestrozas and Darwin

Client Spotlight

When people ask someone involved with EAC why we work so hard to give highly-trained diabetic alert dogs away, almost all of us mention how touched we've been by the personal stories of the clients we serve and the impact we've seen our dogs have on their lives. In **Client Spotlight**, we ask a team member to tell you a little bit about their experience in their own words.

The Inestroza Family

Jorge, Julia and Laura Inestroza are farmers in central California, growing oranges, lemons, olives, and avocados as well as some specialty citrus. Jorge runs the farm full-time while Julia works as a marketing consultant in the fresh produce

industry as well as teaching Economics part-time at the local community college. Their daughter Laura was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes when she was two-and-a-half years old. For the past two years the family has done everything in their power to ensure that Laura has the happiest, healthiest, most normal life possible. That has included the latest insulin pumps, CGMs from overseas and a trip to diabetic family camp. As Julia explains, Laura embraces her diabetes and has no fear or shame about telling people about her insulin pump...or her new diabetic alert dog, Darwin.

How has your life changed since you received your EAC dog?

My husband and I have relied on each other for the past two years to be vigilant in Laura's diabetic care. As the parents of a 4-year-old Type 1 Diabetic, our lives have changed with the addition of Darwin to the family in that we feel we have another team member to help us manage Laura's diabetes; a team member who is able to give some transparency to the previously unknown highs and lows, a team member who cares about Laura just as much as we do and a team member who helps us not only manage her diabetes but also brings joy to her life in so many others ways.

Can you tell us about your dog's most dramatic alert?

Darwin's most amazing alert happened shortly after Laura had started soccer practice at a busy park. Jorge and I were standing with Darwin on the sidelines when Darwin started alerting me. Laura had just had dinner and her numbers had been fine, so we initially assumed it was a false alert. 90 seconds later and Darwin would not give up. Jorge ran out to the field with the meter and checked Laura in mid run....she was 64 with quite a bit of insulin on board. It took two juice boxes and three glucose tabs to get her back up into range. If Darwin had not been there to let us know something was awry, Laura would have been in extreme danger. That was more than just a "Good boy Darwin," moment. That was a "Thank God we have you Darwin, we love you Darwin," moment.

What advice would you share with someone considering getting an EAC dog?

Make sure you're ready for additional responsibility. While Darwin is a great asset to our lives and the management of Laura's diabetes, he is an additional responsibility. Flexibility is needed. Also, service dogs seem to bring out the best, and sometimes the worst in people. Random conversations get too personal too fast....all because there is a dog involved with the story. One must be prepared to sometimes hover on the edge of being rude or walk away from such situations.

(Continued on Page 5)

EAC Graduation By Terry O'Rourke**(continued from page 1)**

Especially challenging was the initial "umbilical training," a period of time when the human and dog are continuously connected by a six-foot leash. All the effort and training does come with significant rewards, though. "Fleur lowers my stress," Emma says, "I'm more productive with her around." What's Fleur's biggest weakness? "Squirrels," answers Emma, a response that conjures humorous images from the movie, *Up!*

Valerie and Kathy

Valerie Owens lovingly describes her Black Lab blood sugar alert dog, Kathy, as "just adorable." Valerie and her husband have three children and Valerie recently transitioned from full-time mom to real estate sales-person. Getting adjusted to Kathy's new presence in the household took some time, but things settled down. Valerie remembers that it was more work than she expected and felt a bit overwhelmed in the beginning. She recalls, "All of the struggles with adjusting to Kathy were because of me, not her. I love Kathy like a mom loves a child." Considering graduation, Kathy says, "This accomplishment feels huge to me. I feel like Kathy and I are absolutely a team." She warmly added, "EAC feels like family."

Lia and Oshea

Working as a Federal Express customer service center representative, Lia Nelson has long sought to make a diabetic alert dog part of her life. She convinced her work management to allow her to bring Oshea, a Yellow Lab/Golden Retriever mix, to work to help her safely manage her type-1 diabetes.

Lia, Oshea, and her Fedex co-workers all seem to be getting along well. Lia says, "Even if I'm dealing with a difficult customer, I'm happy, Oshea's happy, and people around her are happy. The public likes her."

As Lia considers the upcoming graduation, she's relieved to share with Oshea some of the unending burden of managing type-1 diabetes. She feels happier overall with Oshea in her life.

All four of these teams, humans and canines, worked hard these last many months preparing for graduation. Beyond the alerting, obedience, and public access skills that the teams focused on, they all sought to create that one magical quality of all successful teams: a strong human/dog bond.

Join the EAC community at the following events:

Crab Feed February 8th	Saint Stephen's Church 451 Eucalyptus Drive • San Francisco • CA 6:00—9:00 pm Dinner at 7:00PM Tickets available on our website now!
2-4-1 Walk May 17 th	Life Technologies 6055 Sunol Blvd • Pleasanton • CA Registration 9:00am / Walk 10:00am
Graduation June 21 st	Location to be determined Save the date!



Also, feel free to stop by and visit us at the [TCOYD Conference on March 8](#) in Sacramento and The [Bay Area Diabetes Summit March 17](#) in Hayward!

Client Spotlight The Inestroza's

(Continued from page 3)

In addition to alert work, what is the best thing about having Darwin?

I have been most surprised at how easy it was to adapt to having a dog in our lives. We had not had a dog before, and EAC does such a great job training not only for diabetic alerting but also overall behavior that he's just been a pure joy.

Fun Ideas to help keep EAC's coffers full

By John Alecca, EAC Organization Development Consultant

Though we always appreciate your donations and attendance at our fundraising events, there are many exciting ways to support Early Alert Canines. Following are a few you may not have known about.

Leverage your personal donations through your employer's Work Place Giving Program

Many companies have matching gift programs that will donate a percentage or double a donation you have made to us, whether directly or through a payroll deduction. If your company will match your gift, please be sure that you designate "Early Alert Canines" on your employer's gift forms and that the forms are mailed directly to our office: Early Alert Canines, 1641 Challenge Drive #300, Concord, CA 94520.

Every gift is tax-deductible and the donor receives an acknowledgement of his or her donation. Early Alert Canines is a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation with the Tax ID #27-4237968.

Go to our website to see a partial list of Bay Area companies that offer gift matching programs to employees. If you're not sure whether or not your company participates in a matching gift program, ask your human resources department.

Leverage your Amazon.com shopping experience.

We know you shop, and if you shop online, you probably use Amazon.com from time to time. Now when you do, EAC can directly benefit.

Next time you're picking up a few items through Amazon, log onto the site through smile.amazon.com and enter "Early Alert Canines" as the charity you wish to support. Your shopping experience will then continue as it normally does, including automatic access to your prime account and Amazon purchase history, but Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price of the items you buy to EAC. Amazon recommends bookmarking smile.amazon.com to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at AmazonSmile.



Bookmark smile.amazon.com

Support your favorite organization every time you shop.

Wear EAC Colors proudly....

Football season is over, so it's time to put away your team jerseys and join Team EAC. We have officially launched our own EAC Store through Queensboro.

Our store can be found at: <http://eacstore.qbstores.com>

The entire vast selection of clothing, accessories, fleece, towels, hats and much more are now available with custom colored stitch logos. There are many colors, styles and items to choose from. When you log on, you will also see a special Instant Savings Award waiting for you.

Please Bookmark this link as well: <http://eacstore.qbstores.com>. And go Team EAC!

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In the News

Want to keep your tail wagging?
Check out our EAC-client Diabetic
Alert Dog blog, or start one of
your own (and let us know about
it)

Darwin the D.A.D.: [http://
darwinthedad.com/](http://darwinthedad.com/)

Meet our Recruits

By EAC Training Supervisor Mo Vashel

*Curious about the dogs of EAC? Let us help you bone
up on a few of our new trainees!*

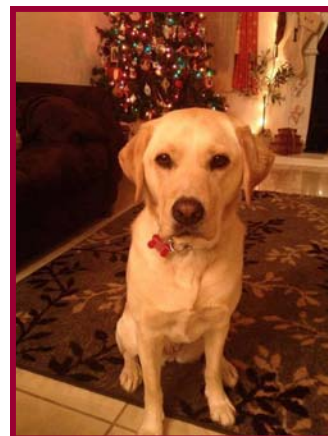


Remi (AKA Ransome): This sweet souled canine recruit has come to us from Canine Companions for Independence. Don't let her understated demeanor fool you—this one has a natural talent for alerting.

She is currently perfecting her personal alerting style to have a gentle paw as well as direct eye contact. Favorite pastime: having her head held by one of your hands while your other hand rubs her ears.

Pasha: This honey-colored candidate from Guide Dogs for the Blind also comes with a sunny disposition. She adds gentleness to her attentive alerting style.

"Tenderness," is her middle name. Favorite Pastime: taking a long walk with you that is capped off with you giving her a lengthy neck and ear massage.



Bianca: This raven haired furry ball of fire is one eager learner. Newcomer Bianca has been enlisted from Canine Companions for Independence.

She also enthusiastically answers to the name, "Sweet B." Favorite Pastime: allowing her curious nature to blossom - the world is her oyster.

