# THE CHANCER CHRONICLES

The Beginning of Life with Chancer, the world's first certified

# **FASD Assistance Dog**



A hopeful furry miracle for our son living with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder

# An E-Book of Insight into the world of Service Dog Training Written by Donnie Kanter Winokur

FASDempowered / The Chancer Chronicles LLC



**Author:** Donnie Kanter Winokur is Iyal's mom and Chancer's handler. Chancer, the first certified service dog for a child with FASD opened the door for others to follow in his pawsteps. Donnie has been a unique presence in Atlanta's communications arena for over 25 years, as a speaker, producer, creative director, and writer. She has now turned her focus to helping raise awareness and prevention of the devastating disorder that affects her son, her family, and every community. Read more about how FASD children can be helped by specially trained service dogs at 4 Paws for Ability, and see more photos of Iyal Winokur with his beloved service dog, Chancer.

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# The Beginning of Life with a FASD Service Dog

(Written 1.26.08)



Our son, Iyal, was born in Astrakhan, Russia over 9 years ago with an irreversible life-long disability called fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD). FASD is an umbrella term used to describe a range of birth defects that can occur when a pregnant woman drinks alcohol. Iyal was adopted at 14 months and was diagnosed with FAS (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome); the most severe form of alcohol exposure on the spectrum, when he was four years and four months. Like Autism, FASD can have a small or great impact on an individual and their family. For more information about FASD,

go to <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/fasd">www.cdc.gov/fasd</a> or <a href="https://www.nofas.org">www.nofas.org</a> .

Because of the nature of Iyal's organic brain injury, most medications do not result in positive outcomes. In fact, they may make his symptoms/behaviors worse. While we have also used Physical, Occupational and Speech therapies...FASD seems to "live" outside the boundaries of these treatments... stubborn to change. Behavior Modification requires short-term memory and an ability to anticipate consequences for actions taken. People with FASD struggle to learn from their

mistakes. Their short-term memory is limited, and, unable to control impulses...they often act before they "think".

Here are just a few ways in which FASD is really "hidden"...not exactly invisible. FASD is like the undertow...it lies beneath the surface of the individual but is marked by coexisting disorders and characteristics, which appear in everyday behaviors. Because





FASD looks so much like Attendtion Deficit Hyperactivity Disorders (ADHD), Autism and other disorders that it is grossly under diagnosed and misdiagnosed. When in fact nearly 1 out of 100 live births in the U.S. are affected by prenatal alcohol exposure. (CDC 2007)

### Often a combination of the following descriptions apply to someone like Iyal:

- hyperactivity (looks like ADHD, but is actually a processing issue)
- poor impulse control
- intellectual disability
- sensory integration disorder
- obsessive compulsive disorder
- oppositional defiance disorder
- perseveration
- poor motor planning
- unable to read "social cues"
- always interrupting conversations
- low frustration threshold
- overly emotional
- low self-esteem



Trying to keep our heads above water, we were always looking for new therapies, ideas...anything to help Iyal feel better about himself and more in control. Often, children adopted from another country have experienced neglect along with the possibility of birth defects. Attachment issues and post-traumatic stress responses became part of our landscape, as Iyal got older. He could not be left alone for any period of time without becoming extremely anxious.

So about two years ago, I had an epiphany! It occurred to me that perhaps a service dog could be helpful to Iyal and us, as well. In truth, it would "legitimize his invisible disability,"



Iyal with his sister Morasha

## Overlapping Behavioral Characteristics of FASD & Related Mental Health Diagnoses in Children

Overlapping Characteristics & Mental Health Diagnoses	FASD	ADD/ ADHD	Sensory Int. Dys.	Autism	Bi- Polar	RAD	Depres- sion	ODD	Trauma	Poverty
	Organic	Organic	Organic	Organic	Mood	Mood	Mood	Mood	Environ	Environ
Easily distracted by extraneous stimuli	Х	Х								
Developmental Dysmaturity	Х			Х						
Feel Different from other people	Х				Х					
Often does not follow through on	Х	Х					Х	Х	Х	Х
instructions										
Often interrupts/intrudes	Х	Х	X	Х	Х		X			Х
Often engages in activities without	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х					X
considering possible consequences										
Often has difficulty organizing tasks & activities	Х	Х		Х	Х		X			Х
Difficulty with transitions	Х		Х	Х	Х					
No impulse controls, acts hyperactive	Х	х	X		Х	Х				
Sleep Disturbance	Х				Х		Х		Х	
Indiscriminately affectionate with strangers	X		Х		X	Х				
Lack of eye contact	X		X	Х		X	X			
Not cuddly	X			X		X	X			
Lying about the obvious	X				х	X	_^_			
Learning lags: "Won't learn, some can't	X		Х			X			Х	Х
learn"										^
Incessant chatter, or abnormal speech patterns	Х		Х	Х	Х	Х				
Increased startle response	Х		Х						Х	
Emotionally volatile, often exhibit wide	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	Х	
mood swings										
Depression develops, often in teen years	Х	Х				X			Х	
Problems with social interactions	Х			Х	Х		X			
Defect in speech and language, delays	Х			Х						
Over/under-responsive to stimuli	Х	Х	Х	Х						
Perseveration, inflexibility	Х			Х	Х					
Escalation in response to stress	Х		Х	Х	Х		Х		Х	
Poor problem solving	Х			Х	Х		Х			
Difficulty seeing cause & effect	X			X						
Exceptional abilities in one area	X			X						
Guess at what "normal" is	X			X						
Lie when it would be easy to tell the truth	X			^	Х	Х				
	X	Х			X	^	X			
Difficulty initiating, following through		^	V	v		v				
Difficulty with relationships	X		Х	Х	X	Х	X			v
Manage time poorly/lack of comprehension of time	Х	Х			Х		X			X
Information processing difficulties speech/language: receptive vs. expressive	Х			Х						
Often loses temper	Х		Х		Х		х	Х	х	
Often argues with adults	x				x		_^_	X	^	
Often actively defies or refuses to comply	X				X			X		
Often blames others for his or her mistakes	X	Х			X		X	X		
Is often touchy or easily annoyed by others	X	^			X		X	X		
					^					
Is often angry and resentful	Х						Х	Х		

Cathy Bruer-Thompson, Adoption Training Coordinator, Hennepin County, MN With much appreciation to the many who edited and contributed

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**Service Animals are legally defined** (Americans With Disabilities Act, 1990) and are trained to meet the disability-related needs of their handlers/clients. Federal laws protect the rights of individuals with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animals in public places.

Service animals are not considered pets.

# We Found A Service Dog!

Finding 4 paws for Ability (written 1.28.08)



In the spring of 2006, I began to research Service Dogs (SD). Of course, I was aware of the support that Guide Dogs for the Visually Impaired and Mobility Assistance dogs could provide. I had also heard about Seizure Alert Dogs and those that were trained to help individuals with Hearing Impairments. At some point, a few articles made their way across my path explaining about how Service Dogs were now being trained to support those with "Invis-

ible Disabilities" like Autism, Psychiatric, and Behavioral Disorders. Dogs were even being used to aid those that experience Schizophrenia and Panic Disorder.

While researching about service dogs on-line, I discovered the following resources:

Assistance Dogs International

http://www.assistance-dogs-intl.org/

"ADI, Inc. is a coalition of members representing organizations and individuals training and placing Assistance Dogs. The purpose for ADI is to improve the areas of training, placement, and utilization of Assistance Dogs. Members of ADI meet annually to share ideas, attend seminars, and conduct business regarding such things as educating the public about Assistance Dogs, and the legal rights of disabled people partnered with an Assistance Dog, setting minimum standards and guidelines for the training of these dogs, and improving the utilization and bonding of each team. ADI also publishes a quarterly newsletter for members and subscribers."

And I discovered not all are fully accredited. The following are fully accredited Assistance Dog member Organizations of Assistance Dogs International, Inc.

1. 4 Paws for Ability, Inc. <a href="http://www.4pawsforability.org">http://www.4pawsforability.org</a>

2. Canine Companions for Independence <a href="http://www.caninecompanions.org">http://www.caninecompanions.org</a>

3. Canine Assistance <a href="http://www.canineassistance.org">http://www.canineassistance.org</a>

4. Dogs For the Deaf, Inc. E-mail: <u>info@dogsforthedeaf.org</u>

5. Assistance Dog Institute E-mail: <u>infor@assistancedog.org</u>

6. East Coast Assistance Dogs E-mail: <u>ECAD1@aol.com</u>

7. KSDS, Inc. E-Mail: <u>ksds@ksds.org</u>

8. Loving Paws Assistance Dogs E-Mail: <u>info@lovingpaws.org</u>

9. New Horizons Service Dogs E-Mail: <a href="mailto:newhorizons@cfl.rr.com">newhorizons@cfl.rr.com</a>

10. Pacific Assistance Dog Society E-Mail: <a href="mailto:paws@pawswithacause.org">paws@pawswithacause.org</a>

11. Susquehanna Service Dogs E-Mail: <u>lesentier@aol.com</u>

12. Top Dog E-Mail: topdog800@theriver.com

And more assistance dog provider information

can be found at: <a href="http://www.adionline.org">http://www.adionline.org</a>

# And then there were other organizations:

1. Autism Service Dogs of America <a href="http://www.autismserviedogsofamerica.com">http://www.autismserviedogsofamerica.com</a>

2. My wonderful Dog <a href="http://www.wonderfuldogs.org">http://www.wonderfuldogs.org</a>

3. Working Dogs <a href="http://workingdogs.com">http://workingdogs.com</a>

4. Service Dogs of Virginia <a href="http://www.servicedogsofvirginia.org/">http://www.servicedogsofvirginia.org/</a>

5. Delta Society <u>www.deltasociety.org</u>

6. Morris Animal Foundation <u>www.morrisanimalfoundation.org</u>

7. American Association of Pet Dog Trainers (APDT)

Pet Dog Trainers (APDT) <u>www.apdt.com</u>

8. Animal Behavior Network (ABN) <u>www.AnimalBehavior.net</u>

9. International Association of Assistance Dog Partners

http://www.iaadp.org

In all my research with interventions and treatments for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, I had yet to come across a mention of Assistance Dogs trained for this specific lifelong disability. The more I learned about the skills that were taught to dogs to help children with Autism...the more excited I became about the possibility of a SD learning to assist Iyal!

After reading several books and researching online, I decided that we should submit an application to an agency in Xenia, Ohio, called <u>4 Paws for Ability</u>. They were the first agency that began to train dogs to help children with Autism among other disorders. The Executive Director, Karen Shirk, started the agency in 1999 after experiencing firsthand the limitations a disability could bring. Karen is affected by Myasthenia Gravis, a rare neuromuscular disease. Her first S D, Ben, became the model she developed to begin what is now a literal lifeline for many families.

The philosophy of 4 Paws for Ability includes every dog being trained for several weeks at a correctional facility. The win-win nature of this arrangement held so much meaning along with all the other ideals the agency represented. You can see videos of inmates training the dogs on the 4 Paws website as well as read life-altering testimonials by these inmates.

One of the things that struck me about 4 Paws was the extent to which the dogs were trained for their clients. In the U.S., a Service Dog can only be certified for public access by receiving a minimum of 120 hours of training over a period of no less than six months. The dogs trained by 4 Paws, receive upwards of 500 hours of training, with the handlers being trained for over 60 hours. Very few SD agencies even allow dogs to be placed with individuals under the age of 18. Because of the laws pertaining to this field, an adult must be the "handler" and accompany the dog and child at all times when the dog is out in public "working".

### How do Service Dogs help children with Autism and hidden disabilities like FASD?

Service Dogs for such children assist in several ways: they provide the child challenged with this type of disability an opportunity to safely access different environments, which result in improved communication and social skills. The dog's presence offers a calming influence and provides a sense of security to the child and the parents. Research shows that abstract and concrete thinking advance, focus improves, and the length of attention span increases. Emotional outbursts occur less often. The important role of the SD is affording the individual more independence and autonomy, helping those individuals become a viable part of the community at large.

The other factor that convinced me that 4 Paws was the right agency for us is that the dogs are trained case-specific. Beyond the minimum of 6 months of Public Access training, another 4 to 6 months of training takes place using video of your child. 4 Paws provided us with a script of scenarios they wanted us to video tape. These situations included Iyal having meltdowns, tantrums, interacting with Morasha, the cats, other dogs, etc. This video then becomes the tool used to communicate to the dog what signals it will learn to assist its "human," Many children with Autism and FASD have sensory issues causing involuntary repetitive movements. These movements thus become the "signal" or "command" taught to the dog. The dog is then trained to interrupt the behavior by nuzzling the child or putting a paw on the child.



Chancer with his summer romance, Lucky.

Many children like Iyal require Deep Pressure to calm down an over-aroused regulatory system. An 88-lb. dog like Chancer will provide much needed weight to help calm Iyal when he (Chancer) is lying on top of him! Up until now, I had "squished" Iyal on the couch by making him the middle of a "sandwich".

### Another significant concern of ours is Iyal's safety; physical and emotional.

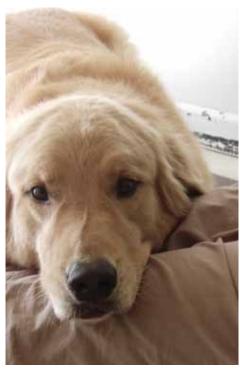
Because of Iyal's impulsivity, he often darts out into the street or a parking lot without looking. Chancer will be trained to be tethered to Iyal. A dual leash attached to a vest on Iyal and to me, will afford an opportunity to keep Iyal from running out into danger. This particular skill is also used for kids who tend to wander away from their parents. (Search and Rescue dogs are taught how to find their child for many families where this is a great concern.) Iyal's emotional safety is intertwined with a great sense of vulnerability. Individuals with FASD are easily taken advantage of and exploited. Iyal will do virtually anything to make a friend. We know that between 70 and 90% of individuals with Developmental Disabilities will be abused at some point during their lifetime. (Reynolds, 2001)

It is my hope that while Chancer will provide "social lubrication" easing Iyal's way into social interactions...hopefully the presence of a large dog will deter someone with less than honorable intentions.

We settled on 4 Paws For Ability. It was their remarkable love for dogs and differently-abled children that captured our minds and hearts.









# The Miracle of a Service Dog

### It has begun!

We will be in training at 4 Paws beginning this Tuesday, January 29, 2008 and continue for 10 days straight from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. through the 7th of February. February 8th will be our Public Access Certification Test and Graduation! On Friday, the 9th we will head back to Atlanta.

There is so much more to tell you about the miracles these service dogs are bringing to families all over the world. If you have time visit the 4 Paws website at <a href="www.4pawsforability.org">www.4pawsforability.org</a>. The testimonies will blow you away!

So we begin our travels to Ohio on Sunday, January 27th and will arrive in Xenia on the 29th. My cousin, Adair, arrives from Missoula, Montana Monday evening to begin the training with us on Tuesday.

### As if this adventure weren't enough...

Syndrome (MOFAS) actually started a pilot dog training program

I'm excited to report that one of the foremost experts on parenting children with FASD, Jodee Kulp, will be joining us at our training. Jodee, a international well-respected author, lecturer, and advocate in the FASD field has also been breeding poodles at her facility, Knarlwoods. Jodee, a Founding Board of Directors Member for the Minnesota Organization of Fetal Alcohol



Jodee Kulp

in her area. She has been training "Limey" to work with a 21-year old young man living with FASD named Ken. Until just a few weeks ago. I had not heard of anyone using a SD for someone with FASD! Now, not only will we be returning with our new miracle for Iyal and our family...but Jodee and I will have a chance to meet, brainstorm, and hopefully collaborate with our FASD efforts. Jodee has been my "FASD Guru" since I first read her book, *Our FAScinating Journey; Keys to Brain Potential Along the Path of Prenatal Brain Injury*, many years ago. This book has more information about the challenges and triumphs of raising a child with FASD than any other of which I am aware. To find out more about Jodee and her work visit her website at www.betterendings.org.

# Day One Life with Chancer, a FASD Service Dog

Our first Day (written 1.29.08)

#### Do the words even exist?

Imagine walking into a building and being greeted by the sound of over 50 dogs saying



"Are *you* my human?" at the same time. We didn't know where to look first.

# Of course, our initial focus was to find Chancer!

We scurried through the first room filled with crate after crate of dogs of every size and shape...into the training area at 4 Paws. On our left were 8 crates lined up against the wall containing our new buddies. Chancer was in a crate half way down the aisle. In a flash, there was chaos with the children and families running to find their dog. Kids squealing with

delight as parents whipped out their video cameras to record the memorable moments. The training area was divided in half. One half had a huge circle of chairs for the actual training class with the other half housing the same amount of space dedicated as a play-place for the kids. 4 Paws has been gifted with many donations of therapeutic toys and games. Things to climb and of course the usual game cube, video stuff and art supplies.

## We began our training with Jeremy, the head trainer.

The families introduced themselves and proudly announced the name of their SD. There were 8 families in total, with children ranging in age from 2 to 15. The majority of kids experienced Autism and many had additional challenges such as seizure disorders or immobility. Two-year-old Ryleigh is medically fragile and has a feeding tube. She is unable to hold herself up and looks as though lshe is only six to eight months.



Jeremy Dulebohn, head trainer, 4 Paws

Our class consisted of one each of the following breeds: and over 60% were rescued dogs given a second chance!

Chancer—Golden Retriever Tinsel—Australian Shepherd mix

Jedi—Yellow Labrador Claire—Boxer

Hero—Standard Poodle Lady—German Shepherd

Ray—Collie

Keno—Great Pyrenees, all white and probably 100 lbs!

An incredible assortment of amazing canines. Today was spent covering some fundamental issues of training; how to use the training leashes, treats and the beginning of Basic Obedience. Jeremy taught us how to correct the dogs and reward them with the appropriate motivators. We learned, "Sit," "Down" and by the end of the class were able to put our dogs in a down and walk away from the dog for about 10-15 seconds without the dog moving from his position.

### What a wonderful feeling to be successful the first day!

Chancer is a LOVE—.affectionate, responsive, and confident. At the end of the day today, we took Chancer home with us back to our hotel. 4 Paws loaned all the families crates for the duration of the training. We were given food and any other necessities for the night.

Iyal was much more self-initiating with Chancer that I had expected. He kissed and pet Chancer a lot.

After the first training day is over, the evening is comprised of me running errands, while the kids and Chancer are supervised by my cousin and dad. I'm practicing the commands we learned that day with Chancer while attempting to stay conscious! I was exhausted. During the training class, Iyal is playing with other kids and video games and is not staying involved in watching the training. I had not expected he would be able to sit and listen for more than maybe 7 seconds. Thus, after class it is vitally important that we provide time for just Iyal and Chancer to share some bonding. I fear cumulative fatigue has already set in. I just am not sleeping well at night. I suppose too much excitement mixed with anticipatory anxiety.

# Day Two FASD Service Dog

Posted 1/31/2008 6:36 AM

### But here are the highlights from Day 2:

This is how the day started. When I awoke I crept inside the room where Iyal is sleeping in bed with my dad. Chancer is sleeping in his crate in the same room. I peeked in the crate and Chancer was still in La-la land (labrador-labrador land), so I went to take a shower. Eviden tly while showering, Adair (my cousin) and Dad let Chancer out of his crate. Adair was able to videotape most of

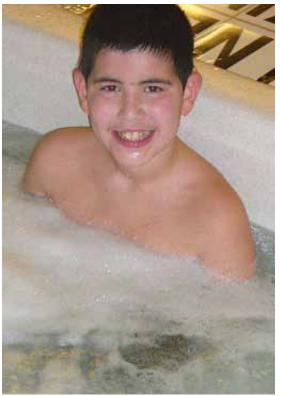


what happened next, as I did not witness this in person. Chancer leapt up onto the bed and immediately began licking Iyal's face with "Good Morning" kisses and much enthusiasm. Iyal, who is typically quite cranky when first awakened in the early morning, seemed to enjoy his Chancer kisses. Probably somewhat taken aback...at least he was not put off and welcomed the attention. Yessess!



I'm jumping forward to the end of the day and will fill in the middle as soon as I can. Again, I was otherwise engaged as I was at Sam's Club and filling up the van with gas. Cousin Adair took Iyal and Chancer out to "Go Potty." That's the actual command for Chancer to pee and poop! The event was unproductive as nothing biological occurred outside. However, we had previously made plans to meet another family or two at the indoor swimming pool. Adair had let Iyal go ahead and get in the pool with his new friend Aiden, before taking Chancer outside. There were already adults present in the pool area. On the way back up to the room, Adair took Chancer into the pool area, because she saw two of the other SDs inside.







Chancer couldn't wait to go night night with Iyal.

So...the moment Chancer spied Iyal in the Whirlpool (big hot tub) he darted into the pool to join/rescue/retrieve him!

This took Adair quite by surprise and being that the pool floor area was wet, she had no traction to stop Chancer. So Chancer had his first "rescue" even though he hasn't even been trained for this!

Needless-to-say *Wet Dog* smell permeated our hotel room for the evening. This was even after a mini-spa experience for Chancer of a rub down, massage and facial. Gotta get a handle on the right products to use!



# Day Three and Four with Chancer our FASD Service Dog

Posted 2/1/2008 10:28 PM

Whew! An amazing 48 hours has come and gone with so much progress.

Just 4 days ago when we first met Chancer I could never have imagined we would have come this far this fast! Without my copious notes in front of me, I cannot even remember all the commands we've learned and practiced. The training system at 4 Paws is so comprehensive it is mind-blowing.

Yesterday we learned 2 major commands: "Come" and "Place." We each received a special mat for our dogs and that is Chancer's "Place" at our home. The rule that the dogs have learned is that they must always have at least 2 paws on the mat for them to be "legally" in "Place," I have no idea how they taught this to the dogs, but every single dog knows the boundaries.

We practiced having our dogs in "Down" while distracting them with noises, stepping over them, pulling on their tails, ears, waving our hands in front of them, etc. Then, more for the children for whom the dogs are trained, all the SDs know several tricks, which we were taught yesterday; "High Five," "Wave," "Shake," and the all-time favorite, "Play Dead." Yesterday we started working on behavior interruption, for which our command

Jeremy teaches 'over'











is "Nuzzle." When Iyal is upset or melting down, Chancer goes over to him and licks his face or "noses" him to interrupt the behavior. Any repetitive motions can be disrupted using this command. "Lap" also brings Chancer over to lay his head on Iyal.

Yesterday afternoon we ventured out into public for the first time with our dogs. 3 of us accompanied by our dogs and one trainer had a field trip to Lowes Hardware Store. We "Heeled" the dogs around the store, stopping to shop, and talk with people and make sure that the dogs would "respect" us outside the classroom as well as they did during training. Chancer was brilliant. He would check in with me every few seconds by looking up at me to make sure he was doing the right thing. Many of the commands become "implied," As the trust develops between the dog and the handler, they automatically go into "Sit" or "Down" when you stop "Heeling," They have learned to anticipate what is expected of them and we have already started to drop off vocal and hand commands for certain things.

**Today (Day 4)** we reinforced basic obedience and learned "Under" for taking the dogs into restaurants. Tonight, back at the hotel room, we had a visit from some very special friends of ours. Rabbi Sam Joseph and his wife, Dori, visited us from Cincinnati. Sam was my husband, Harvey's, roommate during their first year of rabbinic college at Hebrew Union

College (HUC) in Israel. He is now a professor at HUC in Cincinnati. We had a wonderful visit and they were so excited to meet Chancer and learn about the training program. I had to prompt Chancer a few times to "Leave" the food alone that was out on the table in the hotel room. But without prompting him, Chancer put himself "Under" the table where we were sitting and went into the appropriate "Down," That, was very cool!



During the afternoon, we learned how to "Tether" Iyal to Chancer using the harness on the dog and special vest that Iyal wears. Basically, the dog is put into "Down" and does not move. Jeremy, the trainer, used Chancer as the example for the class. He literally dragged Chancer across the floor of the classroom, to show how Chancer was not disturbed by being pulled. It was pretty hysterical...and we have it all on video tape! We wanted Chancer trained in this because Iyal's inability to think through an action to a consequence can play itself out by running into the street without looking. Should I see Iyal take off, I heel Chancer by my side, and the 2 of us together serve as a strong anchor. Iyal is attached to Chancer's harness through one leash and I am attached to Chancer by another. Iyal also has his very own 2-foot leash that he holds when we walk Chancer. Really amazing.



And to tell you the truth...I am so much more excited to take Chancer in with me...that I don't even care if I see "Clearance" signs in the windows of the stores!

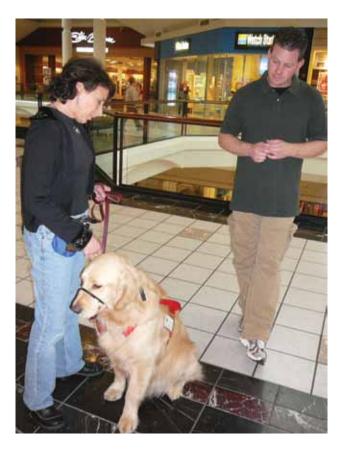






# Day Five Chancer the Kid Magnet

Posted 2/2/2008 4:12 PM



Today, only Iyal, Adair, and I went to 4 Paws for the training session. Morasaha and my Dad stayed at the hotel to do about 5 loads of laundry! The morning was spent with Jeremy covering many topics including travel, the laws pertaining to service dogs and several other issues. This afternoon the class met at the indoor mall near our hotel. I dropped off Iyal and Adair at the hotel and immediately went to the mall. Jeremy spent about 20 minutes following each team to offer suggestions, corrections etc. We met at the Food Court, which was mobbed!. This was a very realistic way to practice obedience and make sure the dogs were continuing to respect us.

I realized that we will now have to give

ourselves an extra 15 minutes wherever we go, just to give us time to answer questions and allow people to pet Chancer. **He is such a kid magnet!!** Chancer was very good except when I could not get him to stop sniffing a woman's rear-end who was in line at a register in front of me! He wouldn't take "**No!**" for an answer.

# I also recognized the amount of space Chancer takes up.

A lot!!

Before I forget—one of the evenings early on in the training, we were back in our hotel room. I had brought several small snack bag type treats for the kids for the trip. I also had purchased a variety of dog treats for the training class. And of course, all the grocery bags filled with our stash of snacks were on top of the refrigerator. Well my dad, being the "snacker" that he is, reached up and grabbed some goodies from a small bag and started munching. I caught him out of the corner of my eye and asked him nonchalantly, "Dad, how were the Charlie Bears?" He did one of his famous gestures indicating "so-so/not great, not wonderful." I took out the bag of Charlie Bears and asked him would he prefer liver over chicken? We had a good laugh!







I see the "Social lubrication" Chancer provides. This allows my son safety and courage to challenge his world.

# Day Six Super Bowl Sunday with Chancer

Posted 2/3/2008 7:40 PM

This morning we reviewed several of the commands and learned how to tell the dogs to "Speak".

In all of the 5 days, I have heard Chancer bark maybe 4 times! I don't think we even heard his voice until Day 3. He's really only barked when he's wanted to play. Poor guy...he's had little recreation since the training class began. There is a pen at 4 Paws where he can romp and we're trying to give him this opportunity twice a day while we're at the facility. Once we get back to Atlanta, there will be another adjustment getting him used to our environment and his new home. Behind our house we have a fenced area where he will



learn to "Go Potty" by himself and have some space to run around. This week of training has taken all the dogs out of their routine. They have all been sleeping much less than they are accustomed to. You can see how tired they are by the end of the day. Not to mention me.

After class, Morasha and I took Chancer with us to the mall again to visit a pet store. Chancer was so well behaved. Literally, at his nose level was an entire wall of unpackaged dog treats ...and he was able to stay in "Down," I was so impressed! The mall was much less crowded this afternoon and I was much more relaxed, therefore so was Chancer. Morasha has been amazing with the amount of information she has absorbed. She volunteers all of these service dog facts to the folks who stop to pet Chancer. I can't wait to take her with me on the road to do advocacy work. She will be awesome—little did I know two years later she would author and have published a national award winning book

Our entire class is downstairs at a Super Bowl/Valentine's day Party. We invited the only two families not staying here at the Residence Inn to join us. So there were nine families (one visiting family for some training pointers) with nine service dogs in a special room. The dogs took up more room than the people! It was so much fun for us to be together in one place just to chill out.

We have been accumulating some great things for our scrapbook. Adair has been videotaping and taking photos every day. It feels so important to be able to document this experience and to share it with v'all. More tomorrow. I hope!



#### **SNEAK PEEK!**

Iyal and Chancer 2 years later in our living room.

# Day Seven Polish for Chancer

Posted 2/4/2008 8:49:09 PM

Today was spent polishing command work with the dogs. We practiced a "moving sit" and "a moving down," These are basic obedience commands but we're getting our dogs to respond to them consistently no matter where you are. This also continues to reinforce my relationship as the "handler" or parent. Chancer has been just amazing in class. I am able to put him in a down on his mat and walk away out of his sight for at least 15 minutes now and he stays in "place".





Iyal helped us practice behavior interruption with Jeremy, the trainer. He's been completely fixated on the game boy at 4 Paws and has made fast friends with the other boys. Getting him away from the game and kids has been a challenge every day. Iyal is afraid he'll lose his turn and has little patience for training. But once he is "present" with us, he's doing well. Chancer definitely knows that Iyal is "his."



What a joy to watch this relationship unfold... and it's only been 7 days!

Often, when Iyal is very hyperactive I will offer to "squish him" on our sofa. I lie on top of Iyal and let my body weight put deep pressure on him to help lower his arousal system. I learned how to train Chancer to do this. We have to do all new commands in small increments to allow the dog to adjust and process these new ones. The interesting thing about doing the deep pressure the way Iyal is accustomed, is that it's on the sofa. Chancer has been trained to stay off furniture so he was a little confused about getting up on the sofa to begin with!

# Day Eight Brand New Friend in the FASD World

Posted 2/5/2008 11:06:09 PM

### Day 8 of Training

A cold is trying to sneak up on me but I pretend that it really isn't there. I've been fighting a stuffy nose, scratchy throat for 3 days now along with about 3 other people in the class. I was paranoid about the kids getting sick before the training because of the medically fragile children in the class. So Iyal and Morasha seem to be fine. I'm the one who caught the bug.

Today was a transition day as Adair left Ohio to fly back home. I don't know how I would have managed without her physical presence and moral support. It was so wonderful to spend a week with my lovely cousin. She was able to observe me and give me some pointers after class when I would be giving Chancer commands back in the hotel room. There has been so much to keep track of during the last 9 days. Every time we go somewhere, I have to manage 3 adults, a large dog and 2 kids who think they are squids...tentacles reaching into places they should not be...slithering out of the spot I thought I had placed them. It's just a lot of logistics to maneuver in and out of a vehicle with so much stuff! Definitely a flashback to my days of being on the road shooting video for Caterpillar machines. I would be managing a crew of several people, but also be in charge of some major equipment that needed to make it intact from our departure to our destination!.

My brand new friend, Jodee Kulp, from Minnesota arrived in Dayton last night and we arranged to meet at 4 Paws. Jodee has been exclusively training poodles over the last several years. She designed a pilot program that includes working with a poodle trained to assist a young man who has FASD. Jodee spent the evening with me, my dad and the kids, just schmoozing and talking "shop," I would love to pick her brain more as it pertains to some of the FASD



research she has accomplished. Jodee is currently working on 3 new novels! It is truly a gift to have her come to observe our training and get to know Jodee and her work in the field of FASD.

#### Back to 4 Paws.

I took Chancer and Iyal out with me to Wal-Mart to have one of the other trainers observe. Jennifer, the trainer, was able to provide pointers and suggestions. Maneuvering a boy who is literally one step ahead of you, or on you, along with a big dog and a grocery cart isn't as easy as it looks. It felt like a 3-ring circus! We did a lot better today than the first day I took kids, Chancer and the shopping cart with me. Chancer was great and Iyal wasn't too bad when he wasn't trying on shoes all over the place.

Iyal has obviously accumulated a taste for shoes or an obsession for feet. Not sure which.

And last night while sleeping, Morasha rolled into me in bed and yells out in her sleep-talking voice, "Chancer, get down!" I laughed out loud!

This afternoon I took just Iyal and Chancer with me to the mall, for some review. Jeremy followed us around and ultimately said he, "thought we were in pretty good shape," Our certification test for ADA Public Access will be one half hour in length. We'll be given the

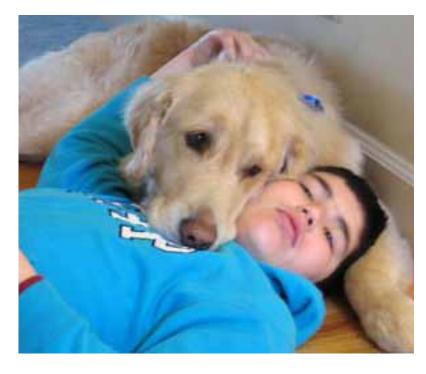
commands and Jeremy will determine if he feels we are in control of the dogs at all times in public. It sounds as though they try to keep it low-key without extraordinary stress on any of the teams. Some parts of what we're doing feel totally natural, other issues require a concerted effort to think through the steps of a command.



Hopefully we can practice again in the mall tomorrow evening after class.

# Day 9 The Gestalt of the Dog — Dogs 101

So while my cousin intuitively knew me through hereditary history and DNA and could support me in numerous ways, my new BFF, Jodee Kulp, rose to the challenge admirably. Sharing the common bond of living with a child who experiences FASD, Jodee instinctively knew how to pre-empt *my* melt-downs. Nearing the end of the training period, I had become greatly fatigued physically



and emotionally. For the 10 months prior to going to Ohio to obtain Chancer, I had diligently read the Parent's Listserve for 4 Paws on a daily basis. It was like a life-line to me...staying connected with families who had already received their children's service dogs or like me, counting the days and minutes until it happened. Many families clearly wrote about the intensity of the training period. While ultimately exhilarating, it was also exhausting. In many ways, I felt like I was learning a new language, "the language of dogs"!

Never having had a dog before, I had a huge learning curve to navigate. I loved every minute of each class, practicing and witnessing the progress of all the families and their dogs. However, the combination of cognitive fatigue, a persistent sore throat and managing Iyal's increasingly difficult tantrums and rages was taking its toll. I tell people today, that Jodee and I never had the "cocktail conversation" or "first date nonsense" of the beginning of our relationship. She was catapulted into my world the minute she stepped into 4 Paws. And she was ready.

Having spent months training Limey, a beautiful large standard poodle for Ken, a young man living with FASDs, Jodee seamlessly slipped into the rhythm of the service dog facility. She gracefully negotiated my urgent needs as a stressed-out mom helping to handle Iyal,

and also was held captivated by Jeremy and the other trainers at 4 Paws. What a relief not to have to say anything to explain Iyal's roller-coaster moods, not to mention my own. Jodee "got it" and never needed a word of apology. Her calming presence allowed me to focus on the last few days of training and getting ready to take the certification test.

We learned the basics of dog grooming including how to give a "mani/pedi" with the appropriate tools. An overview of daily healthcare and maintenance was provided with recommendations for specific products. Like a new mom, I was even excited about brushing Chancer's teeth for him. I regret to say, that my enthusiasm for some of these important and necessary details waned when the reality of my "other" life threatened my dog-care exuberance. Really. I had every intention of doing all sorts of organic and healthy treatments for Chancer! Life got in the way.



Iyal practices high fives with her new BFF!

# Taking the Dog out of Service Dog – can you?

So we reviewed everything we had learned up to this day. Of the "Dog Ten Commandments" – understanding how your dog is motivated, is key. It is either going to be with: food, a toy or praise. Chancer, while initially loving to catch a tennis ball...became increasingly food motivated over the ten months of training at 4 Paws. So a bag of treats became velcro-ed to me.

With service dogs you want to stay away from competitive games, like tug-of-war, wrestling and roughhousing. You want their toys to be plastic or rubber and not made to look like other animals so you don't engage their primitive instincts unnecessarily. Also, no real bones, hooves, or pig ears. These meat products bring out the carnivore in their carnivorous background.

To increase Chancer's tolerance of possible tail pulling, being shoved or yelled at... we would practice being "not nice" to him, but "praise him up" with happy talk, treats and lots of "good boys," This is a method of child-proofing a dog. In essence, rewarding him for being so forgiving of the possible trespasses when Iyal has a tantrum. One way of reinforcing this was for Iyal to always have treats for Chancer.

In retrospect, I am struck by the similarity of dog training to understanding some individuals with special needs particularly with cognitive impairments. It is of utmost importance that when I am training and working with Chancer I am doing so in love with positive, clear, concise and consistent direction. And as soon as anything begins to head in an inappropriate direction I have learned to redirect Chancer with careful guidance and small steps. I have had to learn to be very aware of our surroundings and the social interaction of other people to protect Chancer and my son.

It surprised me when I thought back on all the learning Harvey and I had done to parent Iyal differently from how we effectively parent Morasha... And I make this comparison with the utmost respect. When an unusual behavior occurs with Iyal, I've learned to ask myself, "What does he need right now?" "What is the unmet need?"

With dogs, you understand that you correct *the thought*, before *the action*. If you motivate the thought, then you can praise the action. "Be consistent." Another of the 10 commandments for dogs and children with special needs. Iyal thrives with consistency and predictability. It keeps his anxiety levels lower. Repetition and consistency are

crucial in dog training.

# **Dogs** 101

Important life lessons for dogs:

- 1. Did you know that normal body temperature for a dog is 101-102 degrees?
- 2. Did you realize that the first 3 ingredients in your dog's food should be meat?
- 3. And when you are travelling with your dog, you should acclimate to the change in the water?



This is accomplished by the following ratio mixing the current water with the newer tasting water, if the newer water is tap water.

90-10

70-30

60-40

The "water switch" should occur over a period of 10 days.

- 4. Before you fly with your service dog, they should not eat for 24 hours. Water and treats are okay. If you have a lay-over, call ahead to the airport and arrange for a security officer to escort you to a safe area outside where your dog can relieve him or herself.
- To preempt any behaviors you do not want your dog to engage in, say "Leave It." Simply and sternly. No hysterics. Just say it like you mean it.
- 6. My favorite: When your dog is doing "the right thing at the right time"... "Love 'em up!" Praise like crazy.
- 7. And this goes for any human being for whom you care.

Day 10 Graduation Day



Guess what? We passed!

There are many more journeys since this graduation visit us at:

www.TheChancerChronicles.com

# www.4PawsForAbilities.org



# **FASD Service Dogs**

In 2008, 4 Paws for Ability placed their first FASD Service Dog with then 9-year old, Iyal Winokur. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) is a life-long birth defect that occurs when a pregnant woman drinks alcohol. This "hidden disability" leaves an individual with neurological, behavior and emotional impairments. Up to 94% of children prenatally exposed to alcohol will also fight mental illness. Most people don't know that FASD is the leading preventable cause of cognitive disabilities. And while more and more people have become aware of the prevalence of children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. The CDC estimates the prevalence of FASD is equal to or greater than Autism. In the United States, nearly one out of every one hundred live births is affected by prenatal alcohol exposure.

While the organic brain damage of FASD occurs even before a baby is born...some symptoms and behaviors associated with this disability look very similar to Autism or Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder, (ADHD). As 4 Paws for Ability continues to be the largest organization in the U.S. placing skilled Autism Service Dogs, it was a natural progression to train a service dog for a child affected by FASD.

### "Social lubrication"

Similar to the ways in which a service dog assists an individual with Autism, FASD Service Dogs provide support in a variety of environments which result in improved communication and social skills.

The term "social lubrication" was developed by researchers, Mugford and McComisky to describe the phenomena where the presence of animals increased social interaction between people. Other social scientists suggest that the attractiveness of a child's pet to other children may, as a secondary gain, enhance the attractiveness of the child as a friend or playmate. Makes sense!



Shortly after Chancer joined the Winokur family, Iyal's mom informed us,

"Iyal asks us if we can take Chancer with us whenever we are going out. He is so proud of Chancer and tells other kids immediately that Chancer is his working dog."

## How a 9-year-old boy became an "ambassador" for service dogs:

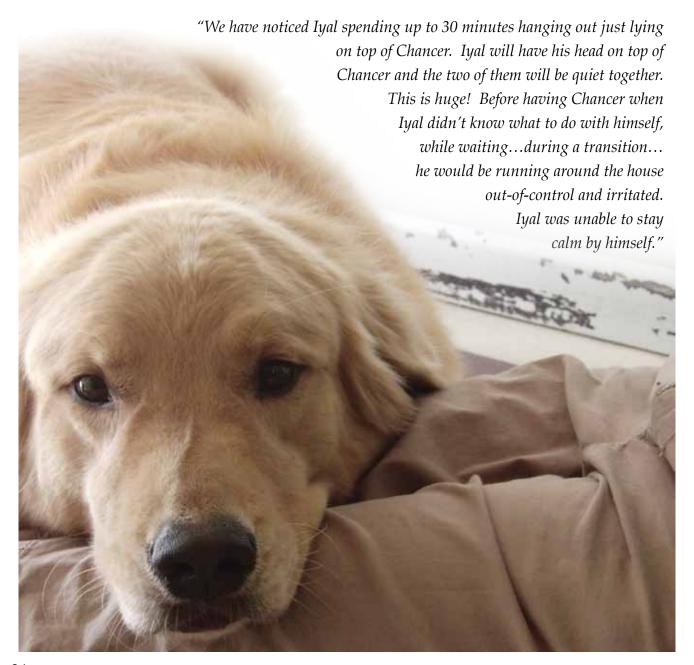
"While waiting to enter an exhibit at the World of Coca-Cola in Atlanta, Iyal spontaneously introduced his service dog, Chancer, to a family standing next to us in line. Iyal grinned and said, 'Chancer is my service dog and my best friend...my brother. He makes me feel better when I'm upset. And if I'm crying, he comes over and gives me kisses all over my face! I don't feel as lonely with Chancer.' I could not have written a better script for Iyal. I was thrilled to hear him say these words to folks he had just met!"

Generally people love dogs and naturally want to interact with them. This interaction often transfers to children and offers opportunities to improve social skills. Further, the desire to

give verbal commands can increase expressive language. 4 Paws teaches the children how to command simple tricks from their service dogs. The kids love to show off how smart their special friends are which also improves the child's self-esteem.

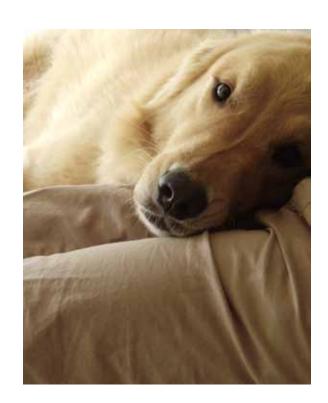
## **Calming**

A FASD Service Dog's presence offers a calming influence. Like children who are affected by ADHD, many children who experience fetal alcohol exposure have difficulty sitting still, staying at the table or being able to focus. Due to an over aroused nervous system; children with FASD have trouble settling down and not becoming agitated.



## **Sensory Overload**

Many children with FASDs have sensory issues causing involuntary repetitive movements or behaviors that seem out of place in a social context. These movements thus become the "signal" or "command" taught to the dog. The dog is then trained to disrupt the behavior by nuzzling the child or putting a paw on the child. Many children require deep pressure to quiet an over-aroused regulatory system. A large service dog can provide much needed weight to help calm a child when he or she is lying on top of the child. A dog is much more interesting than a weighted blanket! For those children who need sensory input—the physical presence of the dog offers tactile stimulation and "contact comfort".



## **Better thinking**

Some of the significant benefits that a FASD Service Dog bring to children are; an advance in abstract and concrete thinking, focus improves, and the length of attention span increases.

"Perhaps the most profound 'untargeted behavior' that changed after obtaining Chancer was an emergence of language. Within two weeks after our return from our training at 4 Paws...we noticed that Iyal was now using multisyllabic words in complex sentences. This was a significant difference in the way in which Iyal communicated prior to having Chancer with us! Not only was he using more sophisticated language, but his words showed self-reflective thinking...a different self-awareness was also emerging. In many children with developmental disabilities, their sense of identity is often compromised. We could never have anticipated this sort of transformation for Iyal."

### **Self-Confidence**

An important role of the service dog is giving the individual more self-confidence which promotes independence. For children who also have attachment issues or fear of abandonment, the unconditional companionship offered by the child's service dog is dramtically healing. Often children with disabilities are generally dependent and may feel powerless due to their disability. The experience of some control over their service dog may provide a sense of mastery and self-assurance.

"Sometimes when Iyal doesn't know I'm watching I see him command Chancer to do tricks. After Chancer does the tricks, Iyal gets him a treat all by himself and rewards him. This usually occurs several times a day. It is a great example of gained independence" says Iyal's mom.

## **Understanding others**

Children living with fetal alcohol exposure, like children living with Autism may have difficulty in putting themselves "in other people's shoes," Taking care of a service dog offers a chance to develop nurturance and practice people skills.

Iyal's mom reports that "the relationship with Chancer helps Iyal to become more other-directed. Chancer provides immediate feedback as an animal lets you know clearly when it needs something. Interacting with Chancer helps to shift Iyal's focus off of himself and cultivates thinking about others."

For children who are challenged by interpreting the facial expression of others or understanding behaviors, the opportunity to evoke compassion is critical. Developing empathy also pertains to a child's sense of self and the feelings and emotional investment in something other than themselves.

Children learn empathy in their relationship with their service dogs as they must learn to read nonverbal cues. And in a non-threatening way, the child learns to assess the needs of their service dog and then learn to choose behaviors that will presumably meet that need. This unique nonverbal mode of communication sharpens the child's ability to decode nonverbal signals.

### Safety

Parents of children living with prenatal alcohol exposure have significant concerns for their children's safety; physical and emotional. Most children with FASDs have extreme impulsivity. They may dart out into the street or a parking lot without looking. FASD Service Dogs like Autism Service Dogs can be trained to be tethered to a child increasing a sense of security for both parents and child.

Iyal's mom shared with the staff at 4 paws, "Iyal's emotional safety is intertwined with a great sense of vulnerability. Individuals with FASD are easily taken advantage of and exploited. Iyal will do virtually anything to make a friend. It's our hope that if people around Iyal know of Chancer's existence, the presence of a large dog will deter someone with less than honorable intentions."

Families whose children have FASDs are often told that their children need "external brains" to help them navigate through life. Abstract concepts like telling time feel much more complicated. The combination of impulsivity and lack of judgment leave children with this disability extremely naïve. Research suggests that external supports are put in place to allow alcohol-exposed children more chance to succeed. A FASD Service in essence provides another external brain.

### The Bond

Children experiencing brain damage or psychiatric disabilities may have difficulty in creating intimacy with others. Trust is a big issue for those with attachment disorders. A Service Dog becomes a form of grounding for a child with fetal alcohol exposure. The dogs serve as an emotional and sometimes physical anchor for a child who lives in a world that feels disorienting and confusing. When unexpected change or transitions easily offset the emotional balance of a child...the consistency of a service dog's behavior helps that child be more able to cope with the unexpected.

Iyal's mother has said that, "in a store or other places in public, Chancer becomes agitated if Iyal moves too far away or goes into a restroom. He will alert the second Iyal is out of his sight."

Iyal's dad says, "If Chancer hears Iyal getting upset, he gets up wherever he is in the house to go and find him and lies down near him. When Iyal is having a tantrum, he comes over and tries to nuzzle without being told. Chancer is so tolerant!"

# FASD: It's Not Just A Phase

# A Fresh Look at Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

by Donnie Kanter Winokur



Morasha, Iyal and Chancer

It's going to last a lifetime. Everyone said "Don't worry, he will outgrow that." Your gut told you otherwise. Family members consoled you, "Oh, every boy acts like this at four!" That's not what you thought.

Friends offered, "That's nothing! You should see my son." While said with good intent, you are left feeling dismissed and unheard. Invalidated. Still worried and no diagnosis in sight! What's going on?

Babies exposed to alcohol while in their mother's womb may be born with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD). Similar to the Autism Spectrum Disorder, FASDs range from mild to severe in their impact on an individual and family's life. The effects may include physical, mental, behavioral, and or learning disabilities. Ninety percent of fetal alcohol-affected kids look just like your neighbor's kids. Until you spend time with them.

FASDs are "hidden" disabilities. The prevalence of FASD is nearly 1 out of 100 live births in the U.S. Yet this lifelong disability is greatly misdiagnosed and only rarely recognized for what it is. Other disorders can accompany organic brain damage from alcohol exposure means there are usually other disorders, such as:

- Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD)
- Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
- Sensory Integration Disorder (SID)
- Oppositional Defiance Disorder (ODD)

Average or above I.Q. disguises impaired intellectual disability, creating false impressions of capability. Because FASD is so unfamiliar, many kids go undiagnosed when early intervention can be so helpful!

The cultural stigma attached to alcohol prevents many doctors from informing their patients about the risks of drinking while pregnant. There is no known safe amount, time, or kind of alcohol that can be consumed during pregnancy. And this disability is 100% preventable.

As a mom of a child with FASDs, I advocate for my son every day. Through him, every aspect of our life is shaped with unique questions. We struggle finding answers.

What helps? Some people think that labels signify worth or value, and don't want one attached to their children. In my mind, as with clothes, a label or diagnosis of FASD tells others that my child needs to be "handled with care." Without the appropriate label, others unsolicited provide inappropriate labels such as::

• Lazy • Defiant

DumbDifficult

Sharing the truth allows others to support my son and strengthen his self-esteem. You can only empower your children when you yourself are comfortable with your own reality.

There is never any shame in telling the truth. And that...lasts a lifetime.

As a direct result of obtaining the first FASD Assistance Dog in North America for her son in early 2008, Donnie Kanter Winokur presents to international experts on the unique benefits of providing service dogs for children with FASDs.

# **FASD Online Resources**

- Centers for Disease Control
- National Organization on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism
- National Birth Defects Prevention Network
- Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies
- Canadian FAS Internet Support

We believe there is Hope for persons living with FASD

Visit our websites!

- FASDempowered
- The Chancer Chronicles
- Better Endings New Beginning







#### We offer educational programs for ages three through adult

### BETTER ENDINGS NEW BEGINNINGS

building sustainable lives for persons with hidden disability



Ages 3-5 **Pre-K S.M.A.R.T. Curriculum** (Core, More,

Themes & Masters)

by Cheryl Smythe and Leslie Giese,

A Chance to Grow

Ages 6-8 NUZZLE - love between a boy and his service

dog (available in Audio and Print) by Donnie Kanter Winokur

Ages 9-11 MY INVISIBLE WORLD - life with my brother,

his disability and his service dog

by Morasha Winokur

Ages 12+ THE BEST I CAN BE - living with fetal alcohol

spectrum disorders (available in English,

Ukrainian, Russian) by Liz Kulp

Ages 14+ THE WHITEST WALL

by Jodee Kulp

14+ THE LONG WAY TO SIMPLE - 50 years of

living, loving and laughing with FASDs

by Stephen Neafcy

17+ BRAIDED CORD - tough times in and out

by Liz Kulp

Adults OUR FASCINATING JOURNEY - Keys to brain

potential along the path of prenatal brain injury

by Jodee Kulp (3rd Edition)

FAMILIES AT RISK - A guide to understanding and protecting children involved in out-of-home or adoptive care

by Jodee Kulp

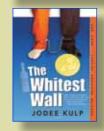
TINY TITAN - Journey of Hope

by Ann Yurcek

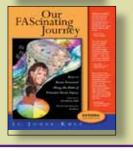












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