

P.E.T.S.

Protesting Environmental Tobacco Smoke

January 2008

Number 72

A NOTE FROM REGGIE

Hi fellow pets. It seems really strange to write to you this month. But as I promised my human companion, I will keep the P.E.T.S. coalition moving forward as long as I can. There is plenty of work we pets still need to do in order to protect our humans from second hand smoke. As mentioned in the letter sent by Emma in December, the January newsletter is a tribute to our founder and my ghost writer, Donna L. Mosley. The following are letters sent in from our fellow pets. I hope you'll enjoy reading them as much as I did. Meow for Now!

Remembering Donna Mosley
You were born to be a fighter
There was nothing you did fear
Your mission -arrest tobacco
Your actions made that clear

Together with pal "Reggie"
You spread the word out fast
You knew that with your efforts
Tobacco wouldn't last

Though Donna you now have left us
Your work was not in vain
You toiled many hours
While afflicted with great pain

You were "Reggie's" inspiration
Together you informed the nation
Tobacco just has to go
You wanted everyone to know

Rest in peace Dear Donna
You'll be at ease knowing
"Reggie" now has Emma
To help her keep things going

Thanks again, your friend Sig Ronis

"Are you out of your mind, you want me to do what?" by Emma Lopez

It was the celebration of a restaurant which had voluntarily gone smokefree back before the New Jersey Smokefree Law. Not one reporter from a local newspaper came to cover the event and Donna was upset. Of course her first comment to me was "Emma, you didn't send out a press release like I told you to do, did you?" But I did, so we decided we needed to touch base with them to see what was going on.

The next day I called one a reporter at her request, okay, demand, and asked why they didn't come out to our event. Much to my surprise, I was told "You're smoking platform is tired, you're not controversial, places are going smokefree all the time, you have to stir up some controversy or think of something unique and then we'll cover it." Well Donna took the advice and ran with it.

I remember like it was yesterday, she called me with her stupendous idea "her cat, would be the chairperson of a pet coalition, she would be charged with leading pets to protect themselves and their humans from secondhand smoke." She would write the newsletter from the view of a cat and only pets could join the coalition. I have to be honest I thought she fell off her rocker. I told her "You do remember we are grant funded, I have to get approval for this idea from the state program director. She said, "Uh huh, I know" and defended the idea some more. I then again said, "You do realize "I" have to pitch the idea not you to have this program funded". And she said "Yep and this is what you are going to say..." I'm not going to say they didn't think I was nuts the looks on everyone's faces when I presented the campaign was "priceless". They didn't know what to say, but they let us try it. And here we are almost 7 years later. We've kept extremely busy, we get the media coverage and recruited pets by the dozens. Our abstract was selected to present our program at a National Tobacco Control Conference in California and even CN8 came to her home to interview as well as local papers. Other programs across the nation have contacted us throughout the years to duplicate our program or take excerpts from her newsletter. Donna had done it, she came up with the most creative mechanism to involve a new group of individuals, pet owners. This project was indeed her pride and joy. She gave her heart and soul to the tobacco control movement. I firmly believe through all the different paths her life took, Donna's mission in life was to help prevent the loss of as many lives as possible, due to this terrible addiction. I only wish she were here longer and had been healthier just imagine what else she could have accomplished.

Dear Reggie,

The first time I met Donna was at the Fitness Connection on Sherman Avenue for a "Communities Against Tobacco" meeting. I was so impressed by what she had to say. As you know, I have been against tobacco for many years. I took a course from Donna; we met twice a week for six weeks. Donna was a great teacher even if I wasn't the best student.

I had a dog by the name of Slick Agnes who visited Donna and Reggie in their home. Slick loved everyone but Reggie would go on top of the refrigerator when we visited her at home. We also visited Donna when she was in the nursing home and hospital the last time she

was really ill. Donna was a cat lover and never had a dog, but she loved Slick Agnes because she acted like a cat. When we visited Donna in the nursing home she wanted Slick up on her bed so she could pet her. Donna always had a yummer for her too. I certainly miss Donna and she will never be forgotten by me.

Carol Lidke

Dear Reggie,

I was never a smoker and don't like people smoking around me, but I never took into consideration just how unhealthy secondhand smoke was until Donna opened my eyes to it. Her knowledge and expertise educated me on a monthly basis on so many things. Her hard work and dedication has truly paid off for New Jersey. In thinking about what I remember most about Donna I chuckle. My contact with Donna was mostly over the phone, I usually answered the phone when she called to talk to the tobacco control staff at the Health Department and when I would ask her "How are you doing?" she'd always say she was "FINE AND DANDY". I've heard her say that for so long and so many times I now find myself telling others I'm "FINE AND DANDY".

Love, Regina Lopez

Dear Reggie,

I first met Donna when I was the Executive Director of the American Cancer Society (ACS) almost 18 years ago. Donna was one of the many volunteers I had...and later she became an employee of ACS. When Donna walked in the door, everyone knew she was there. She took right over...her dedication to smoking cessation programs was true. She went on and accomplished a lot in that area. I learned more about Donna at her memorial service, things I didn't know about her childhood, her love for music and writing music, her artistic abilities and her love for her friends and family, especially Reggie. Of course anyone who knew Donna knew she was always up for a joke and played jokes on others. She loved to laugh and loved to live. She lived her shorten life accomplishing what she wanted to...if she had more time and was in better health who knows what she would have accomplished. Donna will be missed by everyone who knew her and she has left bits and pieces of things to remind us all that she was here!

Love, Gina Biagi

THE VINELAND HEALTH DEPARTMENT IS LOOKING FOR A TEENAGE VOLUNTEERS

Do you know a teenager between the ages of 14 and 18 who would be interested in volunteering for the Vineland Health Department in the Tobacco Age of Sale Enforcement (TASE) program. Young people are needed for two days each year to help inspectors enforce tobacco age of sale laws. If you know of a young person who is interested and you would like more detailed information regarding the program and the youth volunteer responsibilities, please contact Chris Gross at 856-794-4000 ext. 4254. The Tobacco Age of Sale Enforcement Program is a component of the Comprehensive Tobacco Control Program that is responsible for promoting New Jersey's Tobacco Age of Sale laws. An effective way to stop the sale of tobacco products to minors is to eliminate their access to tobacco products. Although the sale of tobacco

products to minors has been illegal for years, until 1996 there was no agency or funding available to enforce the laws. The 1996 Tobacco Age of Sale Enforcement (TASE) legislation named the Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) as the agency responsible for enforcement activities and funding was provided by increasing the fee for New Jersey retail tobacco licenses. Before the TASE program began, noncompliance rates exceeded 80%, meaning that most vendors routinely sold tobacco to minors. Currently, our noncompliance rates are under the mandated 20%. Under TASE, DHSS provides funds and technical assistance to local health departments (LHDs) to conduct the random compliance check inspections of licensed retail tobacco vendors. LHD participation in this program is voluntary and 82 of the 111 eligible departments do participate. In non-participating health jurisdictions, public health representatives conduct compliance checks. Each year, 9,500 of 18,000 licensed vendors are inspected. Clerks caught selling to minors are fined, while storeowners face fines and possible suspension or revocation of their licenses. The Vineland Health Department has participated as a local health department since the program began with great success. Young people are supervised at all times during their volunteer efforts.

GET YOUR RABIES SHOT

The Vineland Health Department (CCHD) has set up a series of rabies clinics.

Saturday January 12, 2008

Dogs only 9-11 am. Cats only 11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Locations:

South Vineland Fire Hall 876 W. Sherman Ave, Vineland
Public Works Building East and Wood Streets, Vineland
North Vineland EMS Station 1676 N. West Ave. Vineland

Saturday, February 23, 2008

Dogs only 9-11 am. Cats only 11-12 noon

Locations:

South Vineland Fire Hall 876 W. Sherman Ave, Vineland
Public Works Building East and Wood Streets, Vineland

If you want more information on where the shots are being given, call the VHD at 794-4000 or go to their website at www.vldhealth.org.

CHANGES

We have a new email address please forward all questions and comments for the Dear Reggie column or requests for letters to encourage smokers to quit to the following and/or correspondence:

The Kitty CAT Project
Vineland Health Department
P.O. Box 1508
Vineland, NJ 08362-1508
reggie415@comcast.net
www.kittycatproject.org