

**BARK**  
BUILDING ACADEMIC RETENTION THROUGH K9'S



# Annual Report

YEAR 5

2016-2017



**B.A.R.K.**  
Photography



**BUILDING ACADEMIC RETENTION THROUGH K9's**



**THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**



## Message from B.A.R.K. Director, Dr. John Tyler Binfet

Welcome to UBC Okanagan’s dog therapy program “B.A.R.K.”! (Building Academic Retention through K9s). Established in 2012, B.A.R.K. provides social and emotional support to students on campus seeking to reduce their stress and homesickness and to increase their sense of community on campus. With over 40 therapy dogs, B.A.R.K. is able to offer both “Drop-In” and “BARK2GO!” programs.

Students are encouraged to check out website ([barkubc.ca](http://barkubc.ca)) and to follow us on Facebook ([BARK UBCO](https://www.facebook.com/BARKUBCO)) for scheduling and for updates.

B.A.R.K. is entirely volunteer run and you will see volunteers in their B.A.R.K. shirts do everything from janitorial duty in the lab after a Drop-in to presenting as a co-author on a research paper at a big conference.

Though B.A.R.K. is a community-driven initiative at UBC Okanagan, providing support to students, its primary focus is to conduct high-quality research that advances the field of animal-assisted therapy.

There are a number of ways to support B.A.R.K. Donations are always welcome (see the “DONATE” button on our website) as are dedicated volunteers. For more information, contact the B.A.R.K. office at [bark.dogtherapy@ubc.ca](mailto:bark.dogtherapy@ubc.ca).

*Dr. Binfet  
Assistant Professor  
Faculty of Education  
University of British Columbia, Okanagan*

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B.A.R.K.  
Photography



“I love this program so much. It is so calming to pet an animal when you are stressed.”

*B.A.R.K. Participant*



“So happy—Reminds me of home  
-Just diagnosed with anxiety-  
LOVE THIS.” *B.A.R.K. Participant*



“I love the people just as much as the dogs.”

*B.A.R.K. Participant*



## MISSION STATEMENT

B.A.R.K. is a research-driven program designed to support the emotional well-being of university students, primarily first-year students, grappling with challenges around homesickness, social isolation, and integration into the university community. B.A.R.K. programming consists of both intervention studies and a community drop-in service.

### **B.A.R.K. upholds the following core beliefs and values:**

1. Community members play a key role in enhancing research initiatives on campus. B.A.R.K. volunteer dog handlers contribute enormously to both student enrichment and research studies carried out through the B.A.R.K. lab.
2. B.A.R.K. research and drop-in programs provide a framework for mentoring student scholars and volunteers.
3. B.A.R.K. is committed to supporting diversity and strives to create working climates where everyone is welcome, recognized and invited to contribute.
4. B.A.R.K. is committed to community partnerships and supports the efforts of local animal-welfare groups (e.g., Paws it Forward, Kelowna SPCA).
5. B.A.R.K. is committed to upholding the highest standards of research. This includes adhering to both Human Behavioural Research Ethics Standards and to Animal Welfare Ethics Standards, using experimental designs that include the randomization of participants into treatment and control conditions, and including follow-up assessments of treatment effects as part of methodological designs.
6. B.A.R.K. is committed to giving back to the university community and pledges to have an active presence in student and university initiatives.

## PROGRAM REPORT

This year, B.A.R.K. tracked close to 4000 interactions between students and B.A.R.K. therapy dogs on campus. 21 new dogs and handlers were admitted and trained, which increased the total number of therapy dogs participating in the program to 42. In addition to the Friday drop-in and the Wednesday BARK2GO sessions, the B.A.R.K. program also took part in numerous events both on campus and in the community, which helped to raise awareness about the program and extend its reach with community partners.

### B.A.R.K. Drop-in

B.A.R.K. offers regular drop-in sessions every Friday from 4:30-6:00 pm in EME 1123, the Faculty of Education's Innovative Learning Centre. Each session involves 12 to 15 dogs and their handlers and up to 8 student volunteers. Participating UBC students typically stay in the lab and interact with therapy dogs and handlers for approximately 30 to 45 minutes.

- Total sessions offered **13**
- Average number of participants per session **117**
- Total number of visits to program **1,523**

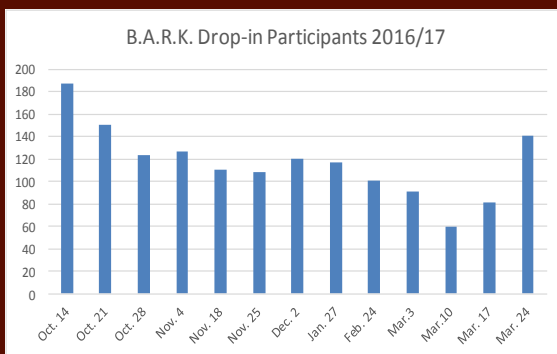
### BARK2GO

BARK2GO strategically situates dogs throughout the university campus with teams consisting of a B.A.R.K. dog handler, trained therapy dog, and a volunteer student facilitator. BARK2GO provides opportunities for students to connect with canines on campus in the Library and the Fipke building every Wednesday afternoon from 2:00 to 3:30 pm. Students typically interact with therapy dogs for short visits from 5 to 20 minutes in length.

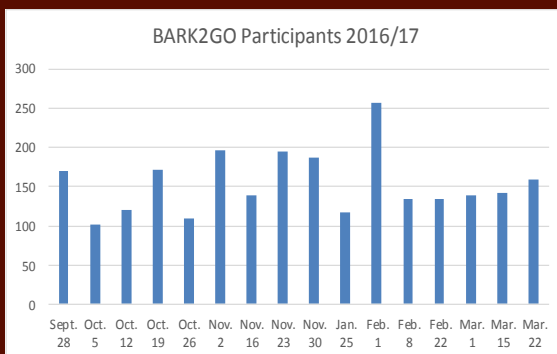
- Total sessions offered **16**
- Average number of participants per session **155**
- Total number of visits to the program **2,475**



### BARK Drop-in



### BARK2GO



## THE B.A.R.K. TEAM

B.A.R.K. would not be possible without the dedicated participation of our many volunteers. The B.A.R.K. Team in 2016/17 consisted of the following:

**42** Trained Therapy Dogs

**48** Community Volunteers (598 hours)

**28** UBC Student Volunteers (650 hours)

Total in-kind volunteer hours = **1248**



Drop ins + BARK<sub>2</sub>GO + Community Initiatives = **>4,258**  
*participants*

## SOURCES OF SUPPORT

The B.A.R.K. program is supported on UBC's Okanagan campus by the AVP Students Office and the Faculty of Education's Innovative Learning Centre. We are also extremely grateful for the sponsorship from VEDA Exclusive Student Living and the many individual donors who participated in our fundraising campaign this year.



AVP Students



## PUBLICATIONS

- Binfet, J. T. (in press). The effects of group-administered canine therapy on first-year university students' well-being: A randomized controlled trial. *Anthrozoos*, 1-32.
- Binfet, J. T., & Struik, K. (in press). Dogs on campus: Holistic assessment of therapy dogs and handlers for research and community initiatives. *Society & Animals*, 1-30.
- Binfet, J. T. & Passmore, H. A. (2016). Hounds and homesickness: The effects of an animal-assisted therapeutic intervention for first-year university students. *Anthrozoos*, 29, 441-454.
- Binfet, J. T., Passmore, H. A., Cebry, A., Struik, K., & McKay, C. (in press). Reducing university students' stress through a drop-in canine-therapy program. *Journal of Mental Health*
- Binfet, J. T., Trotman, M. L., Henstock, H. D., & Silas, H. J. (2016). Reducing the affective filter: Using canine-assisted therapy to support international students' English language development. *BC Teaching English as an Additional Language*, 1, 18-37.



**"I can not say enough about the incredible passion and professionalism that was brought to each session by the members of the B.A.R.K. team. The sessions aligned perfectly with the sense of stress-relief and home-away-from-home we wanted for our VEDA residents."**  
*Kate Belton, VEDA Exclusive Student Living*

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- Binfet, J. T., Passmore, H. A., Cebry, A., Struik, K., & McKay, C. (2017). Reducing university students' stress through a drop-in canine-therapy program. Paper accepted for presentation at the annual conference of the *International Society of Anthrozoology*, Davis, California (June 22-25).
- Kjellstrand-Hartwig, E. & Binfet, J. T. (2017). Best practices for screening and selection of potential therapy canine teams: Preliminary findings from a systematic review of U.S. and Canadian AAT programs. Poster to be presented at the annual conference of the *International Society of Anthrozoology*, Davis, California (June 66-25).
- Tardiff-Williams, C. & Binfet, J. T. (2017). Fostering agents of change: Laying the foundations for professional advocacy through participation in an undergraduate course on human-animal interactions. Poster to be presented at the annual conference of the *International Society of Anthrozoology*, Davis, California (June 66-25).
- Trotman, M., & Binfet, J. T. (2016). Reducing the affective filter: Using canine-assisted therapy to support international students' English language development. Paper presented at the annual conference of the *International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations*, Paris, France (July 57).
- Binfet, J. T. (2016). The effects of single-session animal-assisted therapy on first-year university students' well-being: A randomized controlled trial. Paper presented at the annual conference of the *International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations*, Paris, France (July 11).
- Binfet, J. T., & Passmore, H. A. (2016). Hounds and homesickness: The effects of an animal-assisted therapeutic intervention for first-year students. Paper presented at the annual conference of the *International Society for Anthrozoology*, Barcelona, Spain (July 9).



## FINANCIAL REPORT

### REVENUE

UBC Okanagan AVP Students	7000.00
VEDA Exclusive Student Living	7000.00
Individual Donations/ Fundraising	3506.55
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>17506.55</b>

### EXPENSES

Salaries (Academic Assistants)	2568.27
Travel/Conferences	569.89
Operational Supplies & Onboarding new dogs	3577.04
Books and Subscriptions	309.11
Printing, copying, signage	199.19
Food and Beverage	1067.37
Parking passes (volunteer handlers)	1114.25
Media	1700.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>11105.12</b>
<i>Balance carry forward</i>	6401.43
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17506.55</b>

## COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- CREATE Orientation
- B.A.R.K. Session at VEDA Exclusive Student Living (x4)
- Lulu Lemon Fundraiser
- School Visit SD #22
- Thrive Week, UBC Okanagan
- Student Visit from Stepping Stones
- Therapy dog sessions with HOPE Outreach (x2)
- Experience UBC Recruitment event
- CAS Workshop
- Wellness Gathering UBC Student Union



## IN THE NEWS

Dog therapy helps students with homesickness, study says. (2016, Sept. 8). *CBC News*. Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/programs/radiowest/dog-therapy-helps-students-with-homesickness-says-study-1.3755583>

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Preidt, Robert. (2016, Sept. 19). Dogs chase away college students' homesickness. *WebMD*. Retrieved from <http://www.webmd.com/parenting/news/20160919/for-college-freshmen-four-legged-friends-chase-away-homesickness>

Pullen, Laura. (2016, Sept. 8). Dogs help university students fight homesickness: Study. *Global News*. Retrieved from <http://globalnews.ca/news/2927906/dogs-help-new-university-students-fight-homesickness-study/>

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