

BARK
BUILDING ACADEMIC RETENTION THROUGH K9'S



Annual Report

YEAR 6

2017-2018



BUILDING ACADEMIC RETENTION THROUGH K9's



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA



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

We have had a busy year at 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 50 therapy dogs this year, B.A.R.K. was able to offer both “Drop-In” and “BARK2GO” on campus as well as a number of new community programs. This year, we conducted two key studies:

- 1) In conjunction with biology honour’s student Haley Silas and biology professor Dr. Adam Ford, we explored whether participating in sessions increased the stress of working therapy dogs in an effort to answer the question: Does the very intervention designed to reduce stress in humans, augment the stress of therapy dogs?; and
- 2) Thanks to funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC-PEG), we examined the effects of spending time with therapy dogs on law enforcement personnel stress at the Kelowna RCMP Detachment.

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. I would like to thank all of the dedicated B.A.R.K. volunteers who make this program possible.

There are a number of ways to support B.A.R.K., and donations are always welcome (see the “DONATE” button on our website). For more information, contact the B.A.R.K. office at bark.dogtherapy@ubc.ca.

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

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“Thank you so much. This really helped with my stress.” *B.A.R.K. Participant*



“You guys are amazing. My day is made.” *B.A.R.K. Participant*



“I feel full of peace and love.”
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 community drop-in services.

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

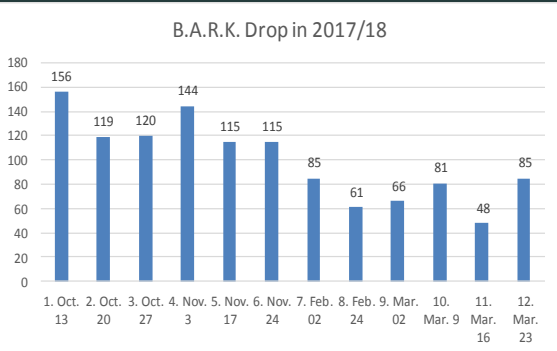
This year, B.A.R.K. tracked 3690 interactions between students and B.A.R.K. therapy dogs on campus. 20 new dogs and handlers were admitted and trained, which increased the total number of therapy dogs participating in the program to 54. In addition to the Friday drop-in and the Wednesday BARK2GO sessions, 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.

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 10 student volunteers. Approximately 100 UBC students visit the lab each Friday and interact with therapy dogs and handlers for approximately 30 to 45 minutes each visit.

- Total sessions offered **12**
- Average number of participants per session **100**
- Total number of visits to the drop-in **1,195**

BARK Drop-in 2017/18

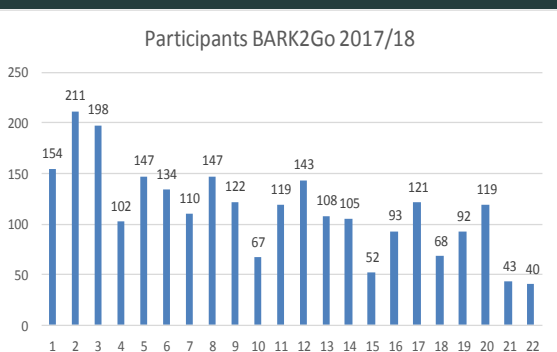


BARK2GO

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 **22**
- Average number of participants per session **113**
- Total number of visits to the program **2,502**

BARK2GO 2017/18



On-campus Program Visits

Drop ins + BARK2GO = **3697**





PROGRAM REPORT

Building Confidence through K9's: A Pilot Project with the Okanagan Boys & Girls Club

Thanks to funding from the TELUS Thompson Okanagan Community Board, 22 students from the Okanagan Boys & Girls Club participated in a 6-week program designed to build their confidence and leadership skills by working with B.A.R.K. dogs, handlers and UBC students. Under the direction of B.A.R.K. educators Nicole Harris, Carson McKay, and Pam Robertson, students came to campus each week and were assigned a therapy dog/handler team. With the help of UBC volunteer student mentors, the Boys & Girls Club students practiced a variety of social and leadership skills that included: introducing oneself with a strong handshake, the importance of eye contact, learning to give and receive compliments, showing initiative, and understanding what it means to demonstrate leadership. At the end of the 6 week program, parents were invited to watch their children demonstrate the skills they'd learned and to meet the therapy dogs who made this program possible. Students were also presented with a participation certificate.

The curriculum developed for this program will be presented at the prestigious International Society for Anthrozoology Conference in Sydney Australia (July 3-5, 2018). Participation in this conference will allow other educators to see how therapy dogs can help facilitate social and emotional growth in children.

“Having a therapy dog as their common ground kids were able to create bonds that they maybe never anticipated seeking before. Quiet children spoke what was on their mind, high energy children were calm and receptive around their animals, and negative energy was turned into positive. The changes that we saw in some of our children were outstanding.”

Samantha Steenwyk, Program Leader- After School Program
Martin Avenue Community Centre, Okanagan Boys and Girls Clubs.



Boys & Girls Clubs
of Canada





PROGRAM REPORT

B.A.R.K. Dogs at the Kelowna RCMP Detachment

Over the course of 8 weeks, dogs from UBC's B.A.R.K. program visited the Kelowna detachment allowing both city employees and RCMP members to spend time with therapy dogs to reduce their stress. The study saw 7 dog-handler teams from B.A.R.K. visit the precinct each week including Emmi the Newfoundland, Max the Black Lab, Inch the Greyhound, Cali the mix-breed rescue, and Goldens Dash, Doogle, and Nava. Using a protocol to assess stress similar to what is done at UBC, employees reported their arrival and departure stress levels and indicated how long they spent interacting with the dogs and handlers.

251 employees made use of the B.A.R.K. program and, on average, visitors stayed just under 11 minutes. Across participants, significant reductions in stress were identified and findings from this study contribute to the body of research attesting to the benefits of spending time with therapy dogs.

This study was the first of its kind and helps us understand how stress within a detachment might be reduced through innovative programming. Dr. Binfet and his team thank the Kelowna detachment for both the warm reception and the weekly support they received throughout the study. The next steps for Dr. Binfet and his team are to share the findings at a law enforcement conference and to write up the results for publication.

“We’ve enthusiastically welcomed these trained therapy dogs into our very dynamic workplace, which is often prone to stressful situations, with employee health and wellness as our highest priority.”

Supt. Brent Mundle, Officer-In-Charge, *Kelowna Regional RCMP* (Canada Police Report)



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 2017/18 consisted of the following members:

54 Trained Therapy Dogs

58 Community Volunteers (669 hours)

38 UBC Student Volunteers (606 hours)

Total in-kind volunteer hours = 1275



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 grateful for sponsorship from VEDA Exclusive Student Living (<http://www.vedaliving.ca/>) and the many individual donors who participated in our fundraising campaign this year. Specific project support was contributed by the TELUS Thompson-Okanagan Community Board and the Kelowna RCMP.



AVP Students



PUBLICATIONS: Blind Peer-Reviewed Manuscripts

- Kjellstrand-Hartwig, E., & Binfet, J. T. (in press). What's important in canine therapy? An investigation of canine- assisted therapy program online screening tools. *Journal of Veterinary Behavior: Clinical Applications and Research*.
- Binfet, J. T., & Struik, K. (2018). Dogs on campus: Holistic assessment of therapy dogs and handlers for research and community initiatives. *Society & Animals: Journal of Human-Animal Studies*.
- Binfet, J. T., Silas, H. J., Longfellow, S. W., & Widmaier, K. (2018). When veterinarians support canine therapy: Bidirectional benefits for clinics and therapy programs. *Veterinary Sciences*. (early online edition). doi: 10.3390/vetsci5010002
- Binfet, J. T., Passmore, H. A., Cebry, A., Struik, K., & McKay, C. (2018). Reducing university students' stress through a drop-in canine-therapy program. *Journal of Mental Health*. (early online edition) doi: 10.1080/09638237.2017.1417551
- Binfet, J. T., & Passmore, H. A. (2017). The who, what, and where of school kindness: Exploring students' perspectives. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, (early online edition), 1-16. doi: 10.1177/0829573517732202.
- Struik, K., & Binfet, J. T. (2017, Aug.). Child-canine bonding in children with ASD: Findings within and across case studies. *Animalia: The Anthrozoology Journal*.



“In first year, you tend to be with people in the same program, not meeting many people outside your faculty. The great thing about B.A.R.K. is students are not all from the same program or faculty—that’s what builds the sense of community so much” *Haley Silas, B.A.R.K. Student Volunteer and Researcher*

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

1. Tardiff-Williams, C., Binfet, J. T., & Rousseau, C. (2017, October 12). Connections between preservice teachers' conceptualizations of child-animal interactions and views about promoting humane education in the classroom. Paper presented at the 2017 Conceptualizing Children and Youth Conference, St. Catharines, Canada.
2. Binfet, J. T., Passmore, H. A., Cebry, A., Struik, K., & McKay, C. (2017, June 24). Reducing university students' stress through a drop-in canine-therapy program. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Society of Anthrozoology, Davis, USA.
3. Tardiff-Williams, C. Y., Binfet, J. T., & Xinmei-Rousseau, C. (2017, June 24). Fostering agents of change: Laying the foundations for professional advocacy through participation in an undergraduate course on human-animal interactions. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Society of Anthrozoology, Davis, USA.

Peer-Reviewed Conference Presentations – Posters

1. Kjellstrand-Hartwig, E., & Binfet, J. T. (2017, June 23). 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 presented at the annual conference of the International Society of Anthrozoology, Davis, USA



FINANCIAL REPORT 2017-2018

Revenue

AVP Students Office (UBC) Operational Grant	7,000.00
VEDA Exclusive Student Housing- Grant	7,000.00
TELUS Community Board Grant -BYGC Program	5,000.00
Carry Forward (2016.17 Fiscal)	6,064.00
Fundraising / Donations	3,942.00
Kelowna RCMP Program Grant	3,869.00
Work Study (UBC) Funding	2,689.95
Total	35,564.95

Expenses

Honoraria / Professional Fees	800.00
Salaries and Benefits (student positions)	7,026.99
Conferences and Travel	1,765.60
Operational Supplies and Expenses	7,066.49
Office Supplies/Postage	602.25
Books/Subscriptions	259.15
Printing and Copying	260.52
Food and Beverage	2,856.26
Gifts/ Volunteer Appreciation	879.67
Volunteer Parking Passes	1,600.00
Total Expenses 2017/18	23,116.93
<i>Carry forward next fiscal</i>	<i>12,448.02</i>
Total	35,564.95

COMMUNITY INITIATIVES

- CREATE Orientation
- Nursing Students Trauma Event
- B.A.R.K. Session at VEDA Exclusive Student Living (x6)
- Lulu Lemon Fundraiser
- School Visit SD #22
- Thrive Week, UBC Okanagan
- Therapy dog session with HOPE Outreach



IN THE NEWS

The B.A.R.K. Program was featured in numerous media stories this past year. A sample of these is included below.

- 1) *Psychology Today*, August 2, 2017 <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/animals-and-us/201708/therapy-dogs-homesick-college-students>
- 2) *CBC Radio*, August 2017 <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/therapy-dogs-to-comfort-travellers-at-vancouver-international-airport-1.4258320>
- 3) *UBC Okanagan News*, August 31, 2017 <https://news.ok.ubc.ca/2017/08/31/stressed-for-back-to-school-find-a-furry-friend/>
- 4) *Kelowna Now*, November 20, 2017 https://www.kelownanow.com/watercooler/news/news/UBCO/Building_confidence_through_K9s/
- 5) *Global News*, March 8, 2018 <https://globalnews.ca/news/4070961/kelowna-rcmp-using-animals-to-reduce-work-stress/>
- 6) *Canada Police Report*, March 2018 <http://www.canadapolicereport.ca/2018/03/08/ubc-b-a-r-k-dog-therapy-program-unleashed-in-the-kelowna-rcmp-detachment/>
- 7) *UBC*, March, 2018 <https://ok.ubc.ca/okanagan-stories/unleashed-potential/>

GRANTS AWARDED

Binfet, J. T. (2017-2018). Canine therapy to support RCMP constable well-being. Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Partnership Engage Grant. \$24,684

Binfet, J. T. (2017). Building confidence through K9s: A pilot project with the Okanagan Boys & Girls Club. TELUS Thompson Okanagan Community Board. \$5,000





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