

# Animals As Intermediaries

Bringing Nature, Animals & the Arts to People

SPRING BULLETIN

SPRING 2007

## Dear Friends,

It is Springtime at last, the season of change. As I write this, the late winter storm's snow and ice has just melted and newly emerged crocuses prove that spring has arrived. We can all look forward to spending time outdoors, exploring nature's bounty—perhaps on one of AAI's Monthly Walks. We would love for you to join us for these Concord-based morning outings. Please call us to learn more.

This January, Animals As Intermediaries experienced change as well. After commuting from Connecticut to serve as AAI's Program Coordinator for over two and a half years, Susan Foster has become Wildlife Educator at Green Chimneys, a residential farm school in New York. Although we miss her, we are happy to say that Susan is enjoying her new position. AAI is pleased to welcome Kate Crosby as our new Program Coordinator. Kate brings a wealth of experience that will serve her—and AAI—well. Read more about Kate on page 3.

Animals As Intermediaries is thrilled to have begun working with adults at Minute Man Arc for Human Services, a Concord-based agency which serves children and adults with developmental disabilities. Program Coordinator Jude Aronstein has



Carol Kraus

*continued on page 2*

## Dot and Dash Go to School

Animals As Intermediaries has been visiting The Massachusetts Hospital School in Canton, and teacher Beth Little's classroom, for over 20 years! We bring a monthly program to the school's physically disabled children, and through the seasons we've explored nearly every New England environment. Thanks to a supportive staff that assists the students in the care of small animals, Room 8 has been home to exquisitely soft chinchillas, curious mice, a brother and sister pair of lop-eared rabbits named Maddie and Daisy, and—most recently—our pet rats.

Rats, when raised by humans, are extremely interested in people. They are smart, social, affectionate and love to play. Rats also provide an opportunity to talk about prejudice, and reputation: they bear a heavy load when it comes to reputation! The MHS staff, including Principal Janice Feinberg, approached the idea with open-mindedness, and the classroom staff showed a willingness to play a pivotal role in caring for the rats. Last April, a pair of fancy hooded male rats (7 weeks old and growing fast) began living at Mass Hospital School full-time.

The children named them Dot and Dash. With the cage set on a high table, the students are able to pull or roll a chair directly to them. The rats, being naturally curious, come to the front of the cage to greet the children. Using two simple rings children open the cage door, and with a wonderful balance of shyness and curiosity, Dot and Dash venture out and climb onto the children's wheelchair trays. The rats can retreat to their cage or their "cozy bag" when they choose, and students can



Nancy Stillman

easily back away from the table if they prefer to just watch Dot and Dash play. The kids delight and laugh out loud at the rats' antics as they climb up and around their cage, and back in again.

Over time, the children are learning to care for these living creatures. They supervise feeding, replenishing the water, and cleaning the litter box. (Yes, rats can be trained.) With patience, the children have taught the rats that the tapping of a biscuit against the cage means, "Come get a treat." These children, some of whom can move their wheelchair only by using head pressure, now engage in lively relationships with these gentle animals, in an unself-conscious and nurturing manner.

—Jude Aronstein, Program Coordinator

*ANIMALS AS INTERMEDIARIES is a nonprofit organization that brings educational and therapeutic nature-based programs to children and elders at institutions where access to the natural world is limited. Founded over 20 years ago, AAI grew out of a belief that people's connection to nature can provide a sense of wholeness and a sense of place.*

**Current Program Sites**

Boston's Hope of The Home for Little Wanderers, Dorchester  
 Boston Medical Center's Intensive Residential Treatment Program  
 Cambridge Hospital's Elder Service Plan, Central Square  
 Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital, Bedford  
 Katherine Kennedy Senior Center, Natick  
 Massachusetts Hospital School, Canton  
 Minute Man Arc for Human Services, Concord  
 Walden Street School, Concord

**August 2006 – July 2007**

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 Heidi Caro, Sue Huszar, Carol Krauss, Nancy Shepherd, Nancy Stillman, Sophie Wadsworth  
*Photographers*

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**Animals As Intermediaries**

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Sophie Wadsworth

*Spring Environment at Concord's Minute Man Arc for Human Services (L to R): Jude Aronstein, Program Coordinator, and Volunteers Janet Lovejoy and Andrea White.*

*Dear Friends . . . continued from page 1*

tailored multi-sensory programs with fragrant spring buds, bird calls, and soft-furred rabbits. Engaging the senses of people whose verbal communication is limited fulfills an important goal at this site.

I invite you to join us for a wonderful evening of music. On April 28, Livingston Taylor will perform in a concert to benefit AAI. According to Americanaroots.com, "he . . . will brighten your mood if you're having a cranky day!" Livingston will join us for a pre-event reception for premium ticket holders. Come meet him, and enjoy tasty hors d'oeuvres from the Concord Cheese Shop.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has made a gift to AAI recently. We say this often, and I want you to know how true it is. It is because of your generous support that—more than 20 years after our beginnings—Animals As Intermediaries continues to bring nature, animals and the arts to more people.

Sincerely,

Janey Tallarida, *Executive Director*



*A Mass Hospital School resident delights in attention from a therapy dog.*

Sue Huszar



## New to AAI Staff: Kate Crosby

**W**e are excited to welcome Kate Crosby as AAI's new Program Coordinator. Kate, who has experience working with people with a broad range of disabilities, says she is "particularly excited about offering people in need the healing balm of nature—something all of us are nurtured by." She brings to this new role a blend of training as a naturalist and a nurse. Kate, who is an avid hiker and kayaker,

has served as an environmental educator in a variety of settings, including three years as a Ranger at Acadia National Park. Locally, she has served as an original member of Walden Keeping Track, a Concord wildlife monitoring group. A founder of the New View Cohousing Community in Acton (where she lives with her husband and two sons), Kate also manages the community's 20 acre organic landscape. Welcome Kate!



Nancy Shephard

AAI Staff (L to R): Jude Aronstein, Kate Crosby, Janey Tallarida, Sophie Wadsworth



*A woman at Cambridge Elder Service Plan reaches toward a flowering plant*

Heidi Caro

### ***Thanks and Appreciation to our most recent Grantors:***

John W. Alden Trust  
John W. Boynton Fund  
Robbins-De Beaumont Foundation  
Fieldstone Foundation  
Fuller Foundation  
Massachusetts Cultural Council  
Red Acre Foundation

### ***Special Thanks to All Who Give In-Kind Support and Professional Advice, especially:***

Dr. William Sager, Sager Animal Hospital, veterinary care  
Joe Mondello, videography  
Leslie Hartwell, graphic design  
Kathy Costello, website design  
Emerson Umbrella Center for the Arts

### ***Our Appreciation to Supporters of the Livingston Taylor Benefit***

Cambridge Trust Company  
Concord Cheese Shop  
Emerson Umbrella Center for the Arts

### ***To our Many Generous Individual Supporters and To our Devoted Volunteers . . .***

***Thank you!***



*We have made every effort to be accurate and complete. Please accept our apologies and call us with corrections at (978) 369-2585.*

*Yes, I can help bring nature, animals and the arts to people!*

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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State \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

\$75     \$150     \$300

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**I would like to help AAI by:**

Volunteering

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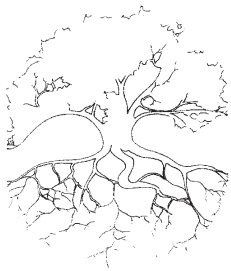


Animals As Intermediaries  
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Concord, MA 01742

*Animals As Intermediaries, Inc. is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization.*

### ***Wish List***

- High quality business phone, with speaker and hold button
- Laptop PC Computer (40G+, 512 Ram, please call for details)
  - Flat sheets, dark green or brown

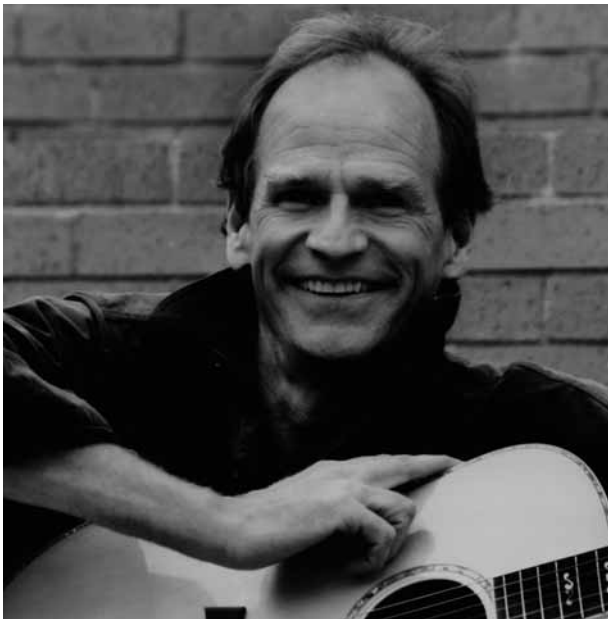


## *Animals As Intermediaries*

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www.aai-nature.org

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Ron Pownall

### **Livingston Taylor in Concert to Benefit Animals As Intermediaries**

**Saturday, April 28, 8:00 p.m.**  
**Tickets: \$35 General Admission;**  
**\$150 Premium Seats & Reception**  
**Emerson Umbrella Theatre,**  
**40 Stow Street, Concord MA**

**J**oin us for Livingston Taylor in concert to benefit Animals As Intermediaries. Premium Seats include front row reserved seats and a pre-concert reception with guest appearance by Livingston. Call AAI or order tickets on-line at [www.aai-nature.org](http://www.aai-nature.org).

## *Calendar*

### **Nature Walks with Animals As Intermediaries**

**Last Monday of Each Month, 10:30 a.m.-Noon**

**April 30, May 21, June 25, etc.**

**Meet at AAI, Emerson Umbrella, 40 Stow Street, Concord MA**

Guided by AAI staff and volunteers, these monthly outings explore the beauty and richness of local habitats. Come with your interests and knowledge, and see what others bring. A great way to learn about nature, rejuvenate, and meet new friends. All are welcome! For more information, please contact Sophie Wadsworth at: (978) 369-2585 or [sophie@aai-nature.org](mailto:sophie@aai-nature.org).

### **AAI Annual Meeting**

Our Annual Meeting is a great opportunity to learn about our nature programs, meet our staff, volunteers and board, and get to know friends & neighbors. Date to be determined.

### **Nature Walk: Seeing With New Eyes**

**Co-sponsored by Concord-Carlisle Adult & Community Education**  
**Friday, May 18, 10 a.m. - Noon, \$15 (\$20 for parent/child)**

Experience the natural world with new eyes! Guided by AAI Naturalists & Program Coordinators Jude Aronstein and Kate Crosby, we'll explore Concord conservation land, inviting in the beauty of spring through our senses—smelling the leafing trees, touching spring buds, looking and listening for wildlife. Adults and children (ages 6+) are welcome. Optional brown bag lunch to follow at AAI's activity room. To register, please call Concord-Carlisle Adult & Community Ed at: (978) 318-1540.