Research Spotlight: Dr. Erika Friedmann

The WALTHAM® Center for Pet Nutrition and the International Society for Anthrozoology (ISAZ) are delighted to announce that Erika Friedmann, PhD, professor of Organizational Systems & Adult Health at the University Of Maryland School Of Nursing, is the recipient of the 2010 ISAZ/WALTHAM Human-Animal Interaction (HAI) Collaborative Award. These competitive awards are reviewed by an independent scientific panel that unanimously chose Dr. Friedmann's proposal. Dr. Friedmann is the current president of ISAZ and an editorial board member for the journal Anthrozoös.

In her research, Dr. Friedmann aims to develop new and practical approaches to improving functional status in assisted living residents and, specifically, older adults with dementia. Her research will use the pet assisted living (PAL) intervention to assess the feasibility, medium-term outcomes and initial sustainability of a dog visiting/walking program for assisted-living residents with mild to moderate dementia. The PAL intervention to be studied will consist of 60 to 90 minute sessions with a therapy dog for each resident twice per week for a six month period. The skills taught and reinforced with the dogs will include small motor skills, such as feeding and grooming the dog, attaching a leash, opening a container of treats and giving one to the dog; social skills, including talking to the dog, giving commands, petting the dog and talking about the dog to other people; and large motor skills, which include taking the dog for a walk, teaching the dog to walk on a leash and teaching and practicing commands.

WALTHAM® spoke to Dr. Friedmann about her current work and her long-term interest in human-animal interaction (HAI) research:

What sparked your interest in HAI research?
"I'm a biologist by training, and I started my career by looking at the influence of social and psychological factors on cardiac health. I became more interested in looking at pets as a form of social health when I published a paper in 1980 and presented to the American Heart Association that found people with pets who had been hospitalized for a heart attack were more likely to be alive one year later than those without pets. We learned that pets helped moderate patients' physiological responses. From there, my research has moved from the lab to more real life settings."

Upcoming Events

2010 ISAZ and IAHAIO Conferences

The Annual Meeting of the International Society of Anthrozoology (ISAZ) and the 12th International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO) Conference are just days away in Stockholm, Sweden. The events, being held 30 June - 4 July, provide an opportunity for leading HAI researchers and practitioners from around the world to gather, listen and learn more about exciting developments in the field.

2nd Canine Science Forum

Extend your stay following the ISAZ/IAHAIO conferences and attend the 2nd Canine Science Forum taking place in Vienna, Austria, 25-28 July. The Forum brings together scientists with a range of expertise on canines.

2010 HAI Book Releases

"How Animals Affect Us: Examining the Influence of Human-Animal Interaction on Child Development and Human Health," edited by Peggy McCordle, PhD, MPH, Sandra McCune, PhD, James A. Griffin, PhD, and Valerie Maholmes, PhD, CAS. The findings in this volume deepen our understanding of human and animal behavior, including the impact that pets can have on children’s development and the efficacy of animal-assisted therapies. With its interdisciplinary approach, this book will appeal to a wide range of researchers and practitioners interested in what happens when people meet and engage with animals. Available 15 October 2010 from APA Books. A pre-order form is available at http://www.apa.org/pubs/books>
**What impact do you hope the studies you're doing will have?**
"The impetus for my research is showing that animals play a role in promoting physical function. I'm hoping these studies will help change practice and policies and allow more people to benefit from interactions with animals and other aspects of the natural environment."

**What's next for your research?**
"I'm just starting the new project, so I'm not sure where my research will take me next. When it comes to the HAI research field, I think it's important to note that one intervention is not going to be effective for everyone and we can't expect animals to cure all. We need more research to target interventions and therapies for people who will see the most benefits."

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Dr. Friedmann will be formally presented with the research award at the ISAZ Meeting in Stockholm, Sweden on 30 June 2010. Learn more about Dr. Friedmann and the University of Maryland School of Nursing >>

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**HAI Research in the News**

- **Colleges Extend the Welcome Mat to Students' Pets** - 4 June 2010, *The New York Times*

- **More Proof that Pets are Good for our Health** - 20 May 2010, *San Francisco Chronicle*

- **The Power of the Pet** - 20 May 2010, *iafrica.com*

- **American Parents Going to the Dogs After Human Kids Leave the Nest** - 7 May 2010, *The Wall Street Journal*

- **Dogs All Ears for East Bay Students Learning to Read** - 4 May 2010, *KPIX-TV San Francisco*

- **Canine Communication: Survey Results Reflect Bond Between Owners and Pets** - 3 May 2010, *Zootoo.com*
HAI Research & Funding Opportunities

**Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD):**

Last year, NICHD accepted research grant applications seeking to study the impact of human-animal interactions (HAI) on children’s health and development, and to test the efficacy of therapeutic uses of HAI with children. Expect to hear more about the research awards soon, and learn more about NICHD’s ongoing HAI work at the International Association of Human-Animal Interaction Organizations (IAHAIO) meeting in Stockholm, 1-4 July 2010.

**ISAZ/WALTHAM® HAI Research Grant:**

Dr. Friedmann will officially receive the ISAZ/WALTHAM® award grant for HAI research at the 2010 ISAZ Conference in Stockholm, Sweden. Get more information about the award and the upcoming ISAZ meeting >>

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**About Mars, Incorporated and the WALTHAM® Centre for Pet Nutrition**

Mars, the world’s largest producer of pet food, has long conducted research on the nutritional needs of pets and more broadly in the area of Human-Animal Interaction. The WALTHAM® Centre for Pet Nutrition has been a leading scientific authority in pet nutrition and well-being, advancing the frontiers of scientific research into the nutrition and healthy longevity of companion animals for nearly 50 years. Located in Leicestershire, England, the renowned state-of-the-art science institute focuses on the nutritional and behavioral needs of companion animals and their benefits to humans, enabling the development of innovative products which meet these needs in a practical way. WALTHAM® has, in collaboration with world leading scientific institutes, pioneered many important breakthroughs in pet nutrition, that support leading Mars brands such as WHISKAS®, PEDIGREE®, NUTRO®, TRILL®, CESAR®, SHEBA®, KITEKAT®, AQUARIAN®, WINERGY® and the ROYAL CANIN® Brand.

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