



Guide Dogs of Texas, Inc.

Best Dogs in Sight

Newsletter of Guide Dogs of Texas, Inc.
San Antonio, Texas

www.guidedogsoftexas.org

SPRING 2005

A PUBLICATION OF GUIDE DOGS OF TEXAS, INC. A 501 (C) (3) ORGANIZATION

Guide Dogs of Texas Moves Ahead with Building Plans

By Mike Mason

At a called meeting of the board on March 21, 2005, our directors made a decision to proceed with building the new residential training facility. R.B. Builders will be the general contractor on the revised plans that consist of two buildings, a dog facility, and the administrative offices/client residential facilities. The dog facility will have 1509 square feet, and the administrative/client facilities will have 2710 square feet.

Our fund raising efforts are off to a good start. The invitations for our spring formal, "Dance With A Dog," were mailed in late March and we are hoping for at least \$5,000 in gifts. We have great news from the Arthur L. Johnson in memory of Elaine V. Johnson Foundation. Trustee Dr. David Hammerslag called to say we have been approved for three grants: an outright grant of \$50,000 and two \$25,000 challenge grants. The first challenge grant requires us to raise matching funds of \$25,000 from Texas foundations and the second challenge grant necessitates that we raise \$25,000 in individual and corporate donations. We are making plans to approach some of our donors and to contact



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Keynote Address: Supporters' Day

By Phil Stanley

Supporters' day was held on March 12, 2005, at the San Antonio Women's club. It was a great opportunity to thank everyone who supports Guide Dogs of Texas, Inc. (GDTx)—our clients, our volunteers, our donors, our staff, and everyone else involved in GDTx. We are able to do our important work and we exist as an organization because of all of you. You have helped us to achieve our goals by supporting us and believing in GDTx and what we represent. Thank you!

Our steadily growing number of clients, the recipients of these wonderful dogs, selected GDTx over the many schools throughout the United States. Whatever reason each individual had for choosing Guide Dogs of Texas, he or she showed they had faith in a small school. They have all had to work really hard to achieve greater independence and mobility through the use of a guide dog. They have succeeded, and this gives GDTx credibility. They have been, and continue to be, fine ambassadors for us.

Our Boarders and Puppy Walkers, who so carefully and lovingly raise our dogs, are an incredibly conscientious, tolerant, and patient group of volunteers. I know – based on my years of

(Continued on page 2)

Remember!

Goods and Merchandise can be purchased through our website!

www.gdtx.org



heartworn

Our Newest Board Members

Joseph Ewatuya has nearly two decades of business and professional experience working in the telecommunications industry. He is currently a program manager for SBC, working on the industry's innovative project (Lightspeed), which delivers data, IPTV, high-speed internet access, voice over IP, and all telecommunication needs on a single platform. Joseph holds a Bachelor's Degree from the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, with a concentration in marketing, and an MBA in finance from Mercer University-Atlanta.

Dr. C. Collins "Andy" Anderson, DVM, MBA, 46, was born in Houston, Texas and attended Texas A&M University earning a Bachelor of Science Degree in Animal Science and in Biomedical Science. Following graduation, he attended Harvard University and received a Master of Business Administration Degree. Subsequently, he completed his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine at Texas A&M University and served on the surgical faculty at the University of Missouri Veterinary Teaching Hospital as a resident and researcher. Dr. Anderson is Board Certified by the American College of Veterinary Surgery and is a member of numerous professional organizations, including the TVMA, AVMA, BCVMA, and VOS.

Selected as Veterinarian of the Year in 2000, Dr. Anderson resides in San Antonio, Texas, where he co-founded South Texas Veterinary in a r y Specialists. Currently, South Texas Veterinary Specialists employs over 40 staff and veterinarians a r y specialists in the disciplines of surgery, internal medicine, ophthalmology and physical

(Continued from page 1) Keynote Address

experience as a puppy raiser before starting my career as an apprentice GDMI (Guide Dog Mobility Instructor) 25 years ago in the United Kingdom. I am hesitant about mentioning individuals, but I do think that Officer Steve Clayton and volunteer Larry Gelvin deserve special mention for their work in the Pawsitive Approach program at Dominguez State Jail. This program has been so successful that we have been approached by the Texas Department for Criminal Justice to expand it.

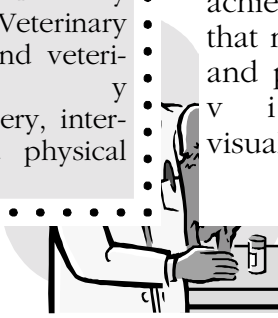
Thanks also to our donors, without whom we would not be able to raise a puppy, train a guide dog, or provide a service. Every cent counts. To those individuals who donate what they can afford, and to the groups, companies, and foundations, thank you. The more money we receive, the more visually impaired residents of Texas we will be able to serve.

I feel there is a new passion, a rejuvenated belief and urgency about our organization. I believe this is in part due to the support and backing of our Board of Directors—that this is a cause they are proud to be a part of and they feel a need to get things done. Thank you to the board members for backing decisions that help us achieve our goals and objectives and keep the organization moving forward

A guide dog provides a level of mobility and independence that is second to none. Sadly, only a very small percentage of visually impaired Texans currently benefit, not only from the enhanced mobility, but also from the companionship and confidence a guide dog can bring.

We need to recognize what has been achieved so far, but there is much more work that needs to be done. We need to take stock and plan for the future. The service we provide to our visually impaired clients is of a high standard,

(Continued on page 9)



test, which looks for the microfilaria and the Antigen test, which looks for the trace amounts of

Kaizen, the Show Dog

By Carlton Brown

I have Retinitis Pigmentosa. I am nearly forty years old, single, and have a son who is ten years old and lives in Oregon. I live in Denison, which is near the Oklahoma border. I own a salon and practice as a Massage Therapist. Three years ago I lost my dog, a 150 lb. McKenzie Valley Blonde Wolf. I was upset. The thought of replacing him went through my mind for a while, and I thought about "killing two birds with one stone" so to speak, by acquiring a useful dog—a GUIDE DOG—both for the work and the companionship. I researched online, finding the San Antonio-based Guide Dogs of Texas and contacted them.

I have to say a whole lot of thanks to Mark for talking me through what I would have to do to qualify, aside from being blind. One year later, I contacted the school and spoke to Mark again, this time with all I needed to qualify. He came to Denison to interview me and asked me what kind of dog I was interested in. I wanted one that would match my personality as much as possible, a dog who was laid back and stress-free. I also wanted a bigger dog, because I was used to my wolf. Finally, I wanted a short-haired lab – a blonde, as I am partial to blondes! I have to say I have about 10% of my vision left, and luckily it happens to be smack dead center. I was concentrating on Mark's face when I was telling him this and I could see his face light up and his mind start working over-time. Then he said he had just the dog I was talking about in mind: Mr. Kaizen! He had been Guide of Texas' "show dog," so to speak, leader of the pack, office hound, etc. Everyone just LOVED him. I didn't know how I was going to feel about taking him away from all of his friends and companions.

About a month later Ariel, one of the guide dog trainers, came to visit me for the first time with Kaizen. Looking at him I thought to myself, "Wow, he's skinny!" He

came into my house all prim and proper, with a little excitement, then proceeded to do what he is most famous for--plopping right down on the floor and just relaxing! I agreed to come to training in San Antonio on Labor Day of that year (2003). I'm sorry, but it was hot as heck the week I was there!

We went through the first week of training in San Antonio doing the standard twice-a-day walk. I thought, "Great, I will definitely lose weight and get in shape in this heat!" WRONG. I have spent a good amount of time during my life training and being around German Shepherds, along with my 14-year-old wolf, so I was used to big dogs and how they should behave. But I had to rely on Mark's and Ariel's point of view as to how I was taking the training, thinking to myself: "I must be missing SOMETHING?"

After the first week, Ariel, Kaizen, and I drove to Denison through a thunderstorm and tornados, too! There we finished the next two weeks learning local routes that I could possibly use around here. I was TRULY concerned that since I didn't have a continuous, regular, regimented lifestyle, I was not going to need nor actually qualify to use Kaizen properly. Ariel and Mark both eased my worries, concentrating instead on what I can do with him and all the space I have here in my home for him and the casual lifestyle we both would live. I was very sad to see Ariel return home after I graduated; I was so used to that voice in my ear as I was walking Kaizen, that I think he and I both missed it! I also was worried about the departure of his life-long companion and how he would react to me eventually, worried if he would lead me into a ditch or in front of car at first chance to get rid of me!

Well, for the next year and a half, things changed, just as I was told they would. Kaizen is definitely MY baby now. He won't have anything to do with anyone else, and if I walk out of a room or the house, he gets so worried. His work is

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3) Kaizen

impeccable and I don't just say that lightly; his work is smooth as butter. I may correct him once a month, if that much. Having been with t h bigger dogs all my life, I had N with dog obedience at all. He hates to raise my voice at him, so he aims

I just spent the last 10 days with Kaizen for spring break with The trip was flawless, actually a t h r o u security WITH him than without with the family up in Oregon was They loved Kaizen, as does every son that has ever seen him. We ra literally) another guide dog and his t h e t r i p a n d a greyhound that was being used as assist guide dog. Kaizen was the t tleman on the trip, especially on rides! We had one incident--appa zen has never been in a glass ele totally freaked out when we rode o a mall in Oregon! Otherwise th great and Kaizen did nice work for got a chance to just go off by mys help. No issues ever with breaking t the dog)...never! I am lucky that w

Now we are at home with c 4 guinea pigs. (I have included a one of the guinea pigs with Kaizen, Zelda!) Back to the normal stressec o f d o i n g h a anything! He loves it! But when i



Kaizen and his new friend Z

Heartworm Disease

A Lucky "Dawg"

By Steven Clayton
guez State Jail

By J. Dan McIlhany, D.V.M.
Town North Animal Hospital

What is a heartworm? It is a worm that lives inside your pet's heart. These worms can cause both direct clogs and/or severe thickening within the wall of the blood vessels, which reduces blood flow. Death may occur from congestive heart failure, blood clots to the lungs, or liver failure if treatment is delayed or unsuccessful.

How does my pet get them? Heartworms spawn little, itty-bitty worms called microfilaria. These micro worms circulate through a pet's blood stream and can be picked up by a hungry mosquito. Once the microfilaria has been sucked up into the mosquito it can be passed into another animal very easily. If an infected mosquito bites your pet it can be passed into another animal very easily. If an infected mosquito bites your pet i t c a n p a s s t h i s microfilaria into the pet's bloodstream. The micro worms then start to migrate and invade the right side of your pet's heart, as well as the main artery traveling to the lungs, where they grow into adult worms and multiply. This process takes on an average of four to six months.

How to I prevent this? There are many products available for your pet to take either daily or once a month. Once you have your pet tested for heartworms and it is negative, these medications need to be prescribed by your veterinarian. Some of the medications will prevent other types of worms also. These worms are preventable so do not delay. Do not give heartworm prevention to pets that have not been tested or tested positive.....it could be fatal.

How do your test pets? There are two types of tests: the Filter test, which looks for the microfilaria and the Antigen test, which looks for the trace amounts of



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(Continued from page 4) Dawg

h a v e t o w a l l - o f f their emotions. Officers that show their emotions might be called “friendly,” another slang term meaning weak.

We don’t live in this world, we only work in it. We live in the “free world,” another prison term. It can be hard to separate these two worlds, to switch back and forth between the two. That is why many officers get burnt out and leave the prison system.

I had been working for the prison system for just over six years and was feeling burnt out when, in the last part of 1999, I saw a flyer asking for officers to volunteer to work with a Guide Dog program. This seemed just so perfect for me. For one thing, I had seven years of experience in the Army as a Veterinary Technician. I had worked with the Military Working Dogs, Secret Service Dogs, and I had even worked with the first President Bush’s two dogs, Millie and Ranger. So this just seemed perfect for me—it was going to combine my last 14 years of work experience into one job. So I applied and was accepted.

It was a sunny and windy day in January of 2000 when into this prison world, into the walls of the prison, and right through the w a l l s o f t h e offenders and the officers walked Smithy, a small yellow fluff ball. The first year was difficult. This was the first puppy to be raised in a Texas prison to be a Guide Dog. The offenders raised and cared for Smithy, and I took Smithy out of the prison for his walks in the malls and downtown. Smithy won over many people and changed many peoples’ view of what the prison life was. Shortly after Smithy came Lester, Ranger, Chip, Yukon, and currently Tucker, Elmo, D.J (short for Dominguez Jail), and Beau. Three other dogs have also finished their puppy training at the prison with us: Sherman, Louise, and Autumn.

The Guide Dog program at the jail was called “Pawsitive Approach”, and “Leading beyond the bars” was the slogan for the pro-

gram. It wasn’t until November 2003 that this slogan really became true. In November 2003, low-risk offenders were allowed to leave the prison and start walking the dogs in downtown San Antonio. There had been offenders leaving the prison for years working at the San Antonio Food Bank and Habitat for Humanity. However there was still some separation from the local community. There was still a wall.

With Pawsitive Approach, there weren’t going to be any walls. The offenders and the dogs, with myself close behind, walk around the Alamo, past the tourists, and into River Center Mall. We walk in North Star Mall right past the morning mall walkers, in the King W i l l i a m n e i g h b o r h o o d past houses that have seen much of San Antonio’s history.

I admit I was very apprehensive about this working. I wasn’t sure about what quality of walks the puppies would get with the o f f e n d e r s . J u s t

“Smithy won over many people and changed many peoples’ view of what the prison life was.”

taking a puppy into the mall has created a disruption before. My thoughts were,

“What kind of a disturbance was going to be created walking down the street with the offenders in their white prison clothes and me following along behind in my Correctional Officer Uniform.” My worries were in vain though. People had seen the television and newspaper articles on the program and ask in passing, “Is that Tucker? I read about you. How is he doing?” The Mall walkers asked about the program at first, and n o w w e g e t comments like, “My, he is growing!” and “That is such a good program!” To the offenders they say, “You should be so proud doing s o m e t h i n g s o important.”

The program has helped provide more puppies as candidates to be Guide Dogs. It has also provided a great deal for the offenders in the program. The offenders have commented that the puppies have helped them get out of the prison world and show them what they are missing in the free world. Raising the puppies has taught them patience and

Our 18th Team Louann and Bonney

By Sandy Morrill

Congratulations to Louann and Bonney, our new guide dog team! They have become the eighteenth team graduated by Guide Dogs of Texas, Inc. Louann is a schoolteacher in Antonio who works with pre-school children with disabilities. Bonney, a clever Labrador, was raised and trained by Carol Deil. Louann and Bonney's training was unusual in that it was conducted at Louann's home and often consisted of a full day at work. This inflexible training class is a good example of what makes Guide Dogs of Texas, Inc. unique.

In addition to the usual training, Bonney was specifically prepared for her work through the thoughtful efforts of Louann and her family, and through experience with disabled children in a local hospital. Louann was prepared for future travel with Bonney working through airports flying to Dallas.

Bonney has settled quickly into elementary school life. She enjoys sitting in front of the school as the children get on their buses and resting in the bright classroom as the children go about their day. Louann and Bonney both seem to enjoy their journey home as well as taking evening walks in the neighborhood. Together they look comfortable and at ease. Thanks again to everyone for your support, and special thanks to Carol Deil for raising a lovely little dog.



Mikey and Me

By Ernie Landy

Heartworm Disease

By J. Dan McIlhany, D.V.M.
Town North Animal Hospital

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Mikey and his new owner Ernie Landy

(Continued from page 6) Mikey

During that time I had to give up driving and I took mobility classes with a long cane to get around. Needless to say, I could not continue to run my remodeling business and I started substitute teaching. I had to rely on my wife and others to get around town and to do what I had done for myself all my life. It was a lot of trouble to get out of the house: I would run into people, trip over things, and sometimes fall down. The only person that I trusted to give me sighted guide was my wife.

I sat at home most of the time or I became what some call a “shut in,” afraid to go out. Church was too crowded, Wal-Mart too full of people and things to trip over, and don’t even think about changing classes at school. This was not a good prospect for my life. I decided

I could not live that way. I started looking into guide dogs. I came across the website for Guide Dogs of Texas and talked to my wife about getting a guide dog. I decided to apply.

It was an exciting day when Ariel called and said that they thought that they had

“...I did not think a dog could actually do for me what Mikey was doing, and this was on my first

a match for me. His name was Mikey and she told me all about him and arranged for a visit. Mikey and I were set up for a blind date. I liked him the minute he came and ate dog food out of my hand. We set up a time for me to go to San Antonio for training, and the training date came quickly. Now, remember that the only person that I really trusted to guide me around was my wife. Now I had to trust a dog and be away from home with a group of strangers.

Training could not have gone better. Ariel, Sandy, Phil, Michelle, and all of the volunteers that came to help made me feel right at home. The volunteers made great food plus they stayed and ate and visited. I hope they realize the positive impact they make in peoples lives.

On my first trip out with Mikey, I thought Ariel was playing a trick on me. I did not think a dog could actually do for me what Mikey was doing, and this was on my first day. The rest of my training flew by.

“The volunteers made great food plus they stayed and ate and visited. I hope they realize the positive impact they make in peoples’

I know that you are probably thinking, “So he has a pet dog-- what difference could that make?” Let me tell you. Mikey and I now go to church again, we go to the mall, we even get around well in Wal-Mart. I can change classes at school without

(Continued from page 2) Keynote Address

but there is room for improvement. There are many, many more visually impaired Texans; in fact, there are approximately a half million visually impaired people in Texas—people who need to be told about GDTx. Many could benefit from the services we offer.

How do we move towards reaching the people that can benefit from our service? Well, it is only achievable through the hard work and concerted effort of all of us. We have to work together: guide dog users, volunteers, staff, and board members. We must spread the word: inform and educate the public, not only about GDTx and the service we provide, but also about our need for financial and volunteer support. And we need to emphasize the number of potential guide dog users that are not benefiting from guide dog mobility and companionship, because they either don't know about guide dogs or there is a shortage of resources to provide them.

We have to use whatever resources and contacts are available to us to raise the profile of GDTx, educate the public, and get that vocal support converted to practical and financial support. It may be through someone you know who works for a newspaper or radio station. It may be a business contact or a member of a club or organization of which you are a member.

We have to get our name out there in whatever way and medium we can. It is only by doing these things that we will attract the support we so desperately need and reach those people who will benefit from our services. We have to educate the public about guide dogs and visual impairment.

We have to be innovative and proactive. An example of this, on the training and dog care side, is the recruitment of voluntary boarders and caretakers for dogs in training. Most if not all our dogs in training are collected each evening and delivered back to the training annex each

morning by boarders. The dogs spend nights and weekends in a family environment. This is certainly good for the dogs—and it is equally beneficial for the hard-working training staff.

Of course there are still areas at which we need to work. We need to reduce waiting times from the receipt of an application to the date of interview and eventually to the provision of a dog. We recognize that some areas of service provision are not what we would wish them to be, but we are working on these.

Plans are well along for a new training facility, where all departments will be located at one site and where facilities are purposefully built. I believe this new training facility will make an enormous difference to staff, clients, volunteers and the public. It will lend credibility to

Justin and Larry — Our 19th Team

By Ariel Klawitter

Our nineteenth team is stepping out in historic Nacogdoches, Texas. Congratulations to Justin and Larry for successfully completing their training course! Justin is a student at Stephen F. Austin University. He has done a great job helping Larry settle into life as a dorm dog. Each day the new team navigates crowded campus paths, the cafeteria, and a busy main street. When they are not in class or on the move, Justin and Larry can be found behind a drum set with the church band. Justin is a talented and dedicated percussionist, and Larry has adapted very nicely to the sometimes noisy environment. Larry is happy to be by Justin's side, even if it is on a stage in front of 200 people. We would like to extend a special thanks to the Becks for



Remember!

Goods and Merchandise can be purchased through our website! www.gdtx.org



The Bakers Move on...

By Gail Walden

It is coming up on a year (September 2004) since Debra Baker and her husband Ken resigned from Guide Dogs of Texas. During that time, as is typical of the GDTx's co-founders, the Bakers have not been sitting still. Rather, they have moved on to bigger and perhaps more challenging projects and goals.

Case in point – missionaries Bill and Diana Upchurch are building a hospice orphanage in Guyana, South America for children with HIV/AIDS. The very sad story behind this mission is that Guyanese children diagnosed with HIV/AIDS are often abandoned on the streets of Georgetown, Guyana. The Upchurchs are building what they hope will become a template for other churches to follow.

It is not surprising that Debra's attentions and energy are now being directed toward mission work at home and abroad. The Bakers are doing what they can to further this very worthy cause by helping coordinate information for American mission teams who are going to Guyana to work on the hospice orphanage. Debra's goal is to help raise money for the building through grant writing and fundraisers at local United Methodist churches. "I feel a very strong call to this new mission", she says, "but Guide Dogs of Texas and the wonderful work they do will always be in my heart".

And how could it not? The Bakers put 15 years of their life, blood, sweat and tears into the founding and development of Guide Dogs of Texas. Certainly all the clients, past, present and future, will be eternally grateful. We at Guide Dogs of Texas, Inc. have no doubt that the Bakers new 'mission in life' will be no less successful!

In between the demands of her new endeavors, Debra still finds time to work in her garden and pursue creative outlets. During



(Continued from page 1) Building Plans

corporations that have been generous to us in the past.

Heart Disease

By J. Dan McIlhany, D.V.M.
Town North Animal Hospital

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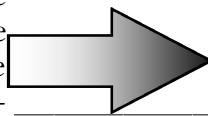
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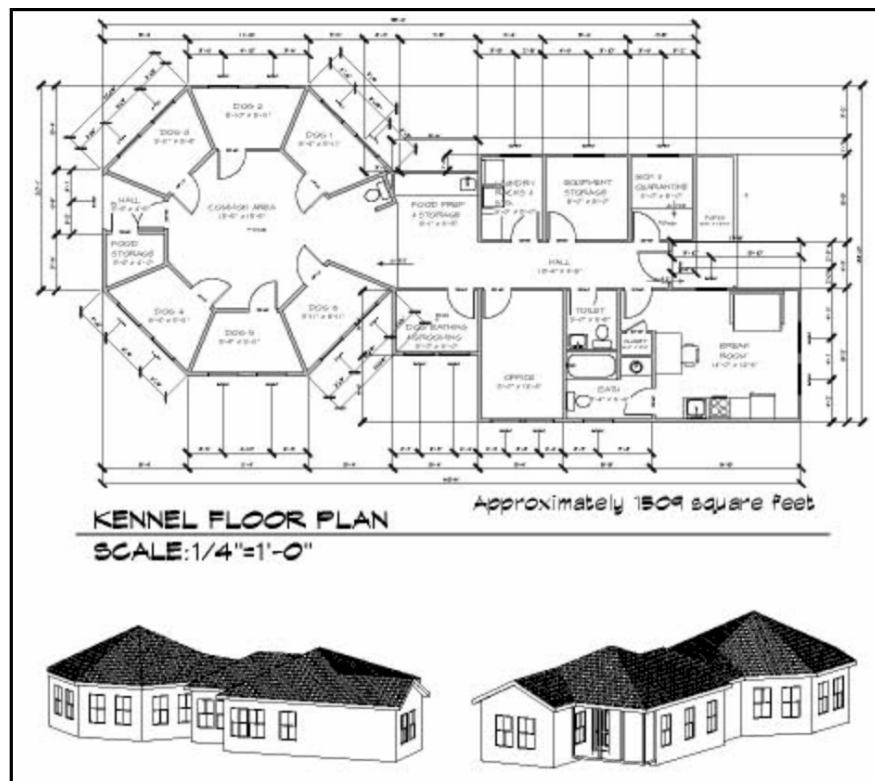
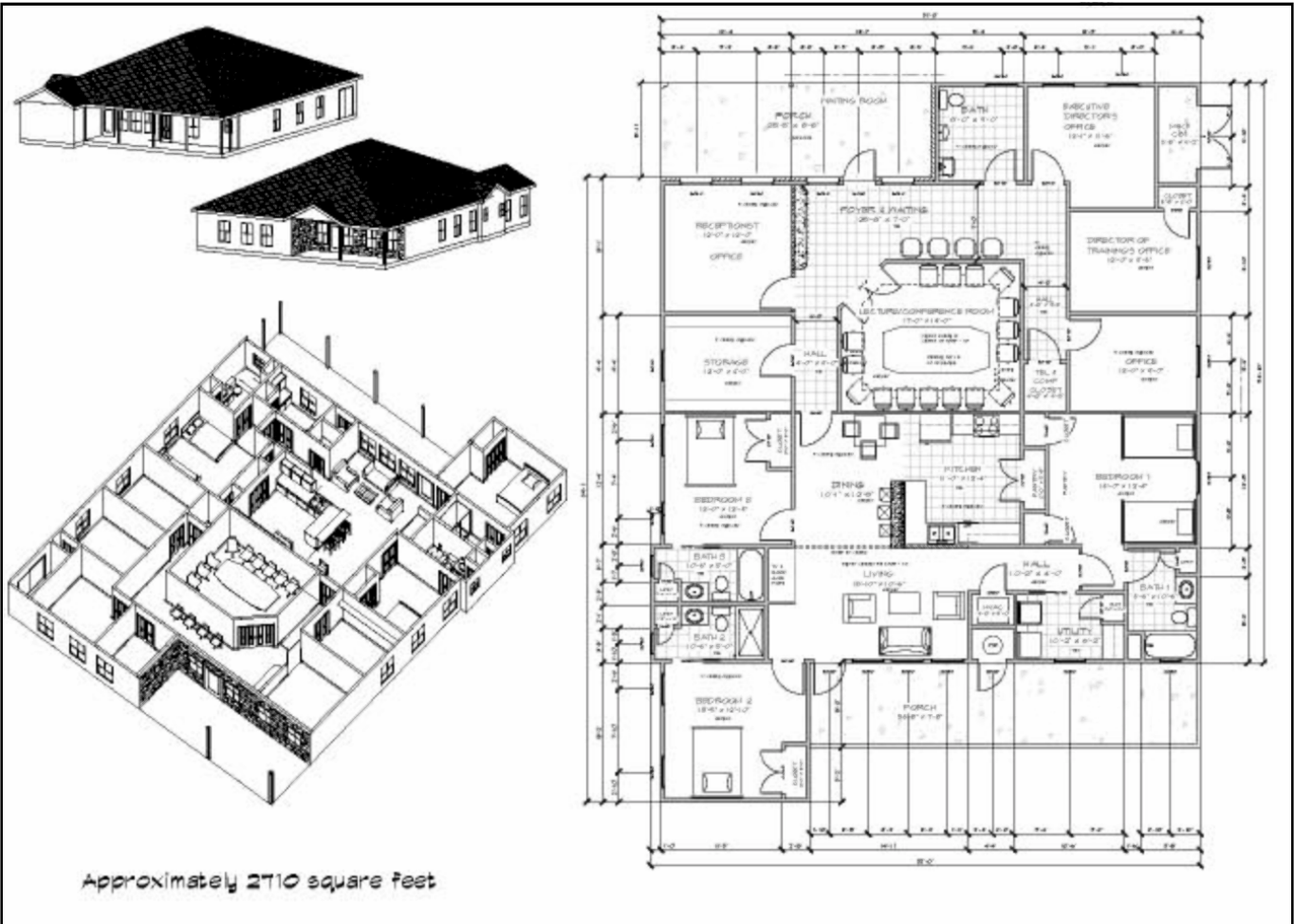
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to raise money we have submitted a petition to the city of Dallas. We are pleased to exceed the progress with continue to support her and outside of build and fur-

und breaking the middle of the year-in date of are very excited to the "home" that will number of guide visual impairment-ness of who enlarge the count on to ended to the please do so ar-marked for ie it to obtain the Johnson our Septem- n a m e n t



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Who? YOU!

Heartworm Disease

Who?

By J. Dan McIlhany, D.V.M.
Town North Animal Hospital

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