

ROCK STAR RESIDENT 10 THINGS YOU DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT CHAPPAQUAS BARBARA JENKEL



BARBARA JENKEL

By Chris Serico
cscrico@ohnd.com

As a longtime volunteer, Barbara Jenkel has a caring nature that has been appreciated by sick kids, at-risk teens and veterans throughout the region.

For the past five years, she's had a little help in her work from her friend Blip, a 6-year-old golden retriever who serves as a therapy dog.

Together, they've brought smiles to thousands of people at The Children's Village in Dobbs

Ferry, Northern Westchester Hospital Center in Mount Kisco and the James J. Peters VA Medical Center in the Bronx.

At 71, the Chappaqua resident volunteers four days a week. One day might find her at the hospital visiting ill children with Blip in tow. "A 3-year-old had just had surgery, and was crying; she saw Blip and just threw her arms around him, kissed him, rolled on the floor with him and stopped crying. Her smile was a winner." Blip's also been a welcome presence at The Children's Vil-

lage, where Jenkel's volunteered for the past 15 years. Through the Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities program, the tandem has helped more than 600 at-risk boys train dogs for people with autism, multiple sclerosis, muscular dystrophy, traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder and lost limbs, among other conditions.

"(I love) seeing the boys grow by working with the dogs," Jenkel says. "They learn unconditional love, patience, self-control, flexibility, following through and par-

enting skills."

Children's Village is a residential program that helps at-risk youth with education, employment and social acclimation.

But children aren't the only ones to respond to Blip.

Jenkel says one veteran she met was slow in recovering from an arm injury, but Blip inspired him to heal. "He now brushes Blip and plays catch with him," Jenkel says.

Under Jenkel's guidance, some

See JENKEL, 7B

JENKEL: She knows the value of volunteering

Continued from 1B

of those veterans are visiting The Children's Village every week to help train dogs and mentor the boys.

Even before her work involved dogs, Jenkel volunteered three days a week at The Children's Village's Sanctuary Shelter.

Here are 10 things you didn't know about Barbara Jenkel.

1 She survived cancer — twice. She was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1989 and thyroid cancer in 2000. After a mastectomy

and thyroidectomy, she is cancer free. "Nothing is forever," she says. "I have been a survivor. I am very lucky and grateful. The lesson I have learned is: I am not in charge, be positive — if you can — and live each day as if it is the last."

2 Blip's full name is "Blip on a Radar," because Radar is his mother's name. And he's the proud papa of 34 pups and 11 grandpups, all of whom are being trained or working.

3 Jenkel is a native of Winnetka, Ill.

4 She majored in American studies and minored in secondary education at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs.

5 When she isn't volunteering, you can find her gardening at home, working out at Prescriptions for Fitness in Chappaqua, and walking Blip in Gedney Park in Chappaqua.

6 Her hobbies include reading, travel and exploring the great outdoors.

7 She won't give up on children who got off to a rough start. "All (kids at The

Children's Village) want is love and understanding — just like any child," Jenkel says. "They want someone to listen, give them direction, be a friend but also be a caring and fair adult."

8 She knows how priceless a \$1,000 donation to The Children's Village can be. "(It can) allow an at-risk teen to take the classes necessary to get a certificate as a pet technician," she says.

"One of our pet techs just got a job in an animal hospital, and we're very proud of him."

HELP THE CAUSE

Barbara Jenkel hopes more people will help The Children's Village in Dobbs Ferry and Educated Canines Assisting with Disabilities place dogs for veterans and other clients. Donations

always are a plus, but money isn't the only way to help. "Volunteers can help at The Children's Village's residential school by acting as tutors.

9 She's frustrated by the government's reluctance to pay for veterans' service dogs. "(Veterans) want to be independent," she says. "And the dogs help make that happen."

mentors, cottage sponsors or sharing a special skill," she says. "People can support (ECAD) by volunteering, becoming home handlers, advocating for service dogs and sponsoring a service dog team."

For more information, visit www.childrensvillage.org and www.ECAD1.org.

10 She hopes others see the value in volunteering. "There are a lot of people doing good work," she says. "There is more to be done, and we all can help. Don't assume the government or someone else will."