

CAROL OUHL, Cottage Grove, MN.

Carol trained her first dog at the age of 7. From then on there was a constant "family of pets" in her life. The majority of her pets came from shelters or were friends' "give-aways". There were dogs, cats, parakeets and in 1970 acquired her first horse.

Carol has owned and trained German Shepherds since 1965. She started competing with her horse in 1974 and has shown dogs since 1981. She has competed in obedience, tracking, conformation, drill teams and is training in agility. One of her German Shepherds was the Number 5 obedience dog in the country. In 1985, Carol joined the Minnesota Purebred Dog Breeders Association and yearly presents her German Shepherds and Schipperkes to thousands of people at the MN State Fair. She has been a member of the German Shepherd Dog Club of Minneapolis/St. Paul since 1981. She has held many officer and committee positions for the Club and in 2008 was made an Honorary Member for her years of Club service and of promoting the German Shepherd in the public.

Carol began therapy animal work in 1994 with her cats, horse and shepherds. She subsequently started 7 different visiting groups in the Twin Cities area. She also developed the first class curriculum for 3 levels of therapy animal training and began the first therapy dog handling classes in 1996. Today many metro Twin Cities schools use Carol's curriculum for teaching classes.

In 1998 she became a licensed Therapy Team Instructor, Evaluator and Instructor of other Evaluators for Delta Society. Carol developed Policies and Procedures for visiting groups as well as for facilities' visiting animal programs. She also developed an educational seminar curriculum to introduce the world of therapy animals and Animal-Assisted Activities/Education to the general public. In 2001 she worked on the Delta Society committee to revise the Team Evaluation and begin pilot testing the new evaluation. She is a 2009 member of Delta's national committee setting standards for evaluators nation-wide. She has consulted on animal selection with the University of Minnesota's Veterinary Outreach Program for facilities moving towards the Eden Alternative model. She also traveled with and consulted for Caroline Schaeffer, DVM, Tufts University, on live-in animals in long-term care facilities. Carol has evaluated over 1500 therapy animals primarily dogs but also cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, llamas, pot-bellied pigs, miniature and standard horses, cockatiels, cockatoos, parrots and chickens.

Carol, her dogs and cats have given many presentations on radio, television, U of M programs and classes, Mayo Clinic in Rochester and appeared in Animal Planet's "K-9 to 5 Working Dogs Series" and presented with former television anchor, Colleen Needles, at the Mall of America. Carol, her dogs, cat and her Morgan horse spent three years mentoring advanced high school students in the art of clicker training.

She spent 4 years working her dogs under a grant funded program to provide Animal-Assisted Therapy working in rotation with Physical Therapists, Speech/Language Pathologists and Occupational Therapists. Through this program she developed and trained animal behaviors specific to the goal-directed rehabilitation plans for the therapists work with their clients. She and an associate received two consecutive grants from CENSHARE at the U of M to produce manuals for developing AAT curriculum in these multi-disciplinary professions.

Carol has studied animal behavior and the human-animal bond under Drs. R.K. Anderson and Gail Peterson of the University of Minnesota, Dr. Susan Friedman of the University of Colorado, Dr. Aaron Katcher of the University of Pennsylvania, and Mrs. Ruth Foster, nationally known animal trainer and behaviorist.

Carol is a "cross-over" trainer having started training in the days of choke chains, prong collars and police force training. Having attended the first Minnesota workshop on Operant Conditioning ("clicker training") taught by Dr. Karen Pryor and Gary Wilkes in 1992, she has been "clicking" her animals to happy compliance every since. Her first "clicker" dog learned a "breed stack" in 20 minutes and 150 behavior "words" in one year. Today she uses a combination of non-force, motivational classical and operant conditioning to train her animals and help others find easy solutions to frustrating training problems.

Carol's day job that buys the animal food is as a legal compliance analyst in the law department of a Twin Cities based national insurance company where she has worked for more than 40 years.