



media *release*

Tuesday 26 April 2016

£58,000 raised for cancer research in dogs by unstoppable campaigners, Zoe's Journey UK

Initiated in January 2015 by a woman whose 13-year-old Golden Retriever, Zoe, was given the all clear from lymphoma, more than 600 Golden Retriever lovers have united to fight cancer in their beloved pets under Zoe's Journey UK.

In just over a year, more than £58,000 has been raised and the committed group show no signs of slowing down. In the words of the founder, Jayne May, they want to "Kick canine cancer's butt".

The facts:

One in four dogs will be diagnosed with cancer in their lifetime.
Cancer is the leading cause of death in dogs over the age of 10.

A cheque for £58,000 was presented to veterinary charity, the Animal Health Trust, by Zoe's Journey UK members and celebrity guest, Mark Labbett, from ITV's The Chase, on Monday 25 April at a special celebration event in Newmarket to mark the milestone.

Unfortunately, for some breeds, like Golden Retrievers, cancer seems to pose a higher risk. Zoe's Journey UK has formed a supportive online community through Facebook for dog owners battling the disease, determined to make a difference through their fundraising efforts which include: an on-going online community auction, merchandise sales, raffles, monthly direct debits and events.

The Animal Health Trust is the only UK charity with a dedicated canine cancer research team and it is putting the Zoe's Journey UK funds towards a new research project into lymphoma, the cancer Zoe had, which is the most common canine cancer. The donation has also supported on-going research at the charity to develop a new prognostic test for vets treating dogs with mast cell tumours, the most common type of skin cancer in dogs.

The charity also has state-of-the-art facilities for treating dogs with cancer in its purpose-built Cancer Centre and trains vets wanting to specialise in veterinary oncology.

Jayne May said: "Initially, I set out to raise £5,000 for the Animal Health Trust. I never could have dreamt that the campaign would achieve £58,000 in just over a year. It's been absolutely crazy but everyone is 100% committed to this cause.

"On our Facebook group, it seems as if dogs are dying of cancer every week. It's devastating. Losing a dog is never easy but if it's a young dog who has lost its life to cancer, that's just not right and we need to do something about it.

"My Zoe survived cancer, and it's only through research that we can find out what makes some dogs different and harness this to one day protect more dogs from this horrible disease. That's what we're fighting for."

Zoe's Legacy

Sadly, Zoe, Jayne's inspiration behind the campaign, passed away of old age at the beginning of April. She was almost 15 years old and free from cancer. Zoe remains the inspiration for many and leaves a lasting legacy behind her - helping to improve the lives of several other dogs in this important fight against cancer.

Dr Mike Starkey, Head of Molecular Oncology Research at the AHT, said: "Cancer affects one in four dogs, and as dogs make up such a big part of people's families, losing a dog to cancer can be a really hard thing to deal with. We're really grateful, and humbled, that Zoe's Journey UK has chosen us as the beneficiary of this fundraising campaign.

“Sadly, cancer research in dogs is quite poorly funded so the Zoe’s Journey UK campaign is a huge boost to our research, especially when you consider that any advancements made in cancer research in dogs could have benefits for people too.”

Mark Labbett, celebrity supporter of Zoe’s Journey UK, added: “I’ve had my Golden Retriever, Baloo, now for the best part of a year and it changes your life. It’s really inspiring what Jayne and this team of people have been able to achieve and I’m happy to be here to help, in any way that I can, something that could potentially help improve the quality of life for Baloo as well as other dogs, and their families.”

Ends

For further information, please contact:

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Additional notes:

- The Animal Health Trust (AHT) is an independent charity, employing over 200 scientists, vets and support workers. It aims to improve the health and welfare of horses, dogs and cats through research. It also provides specialist referral services and continuous education to vets. Visit the website at www.aht.org.uk