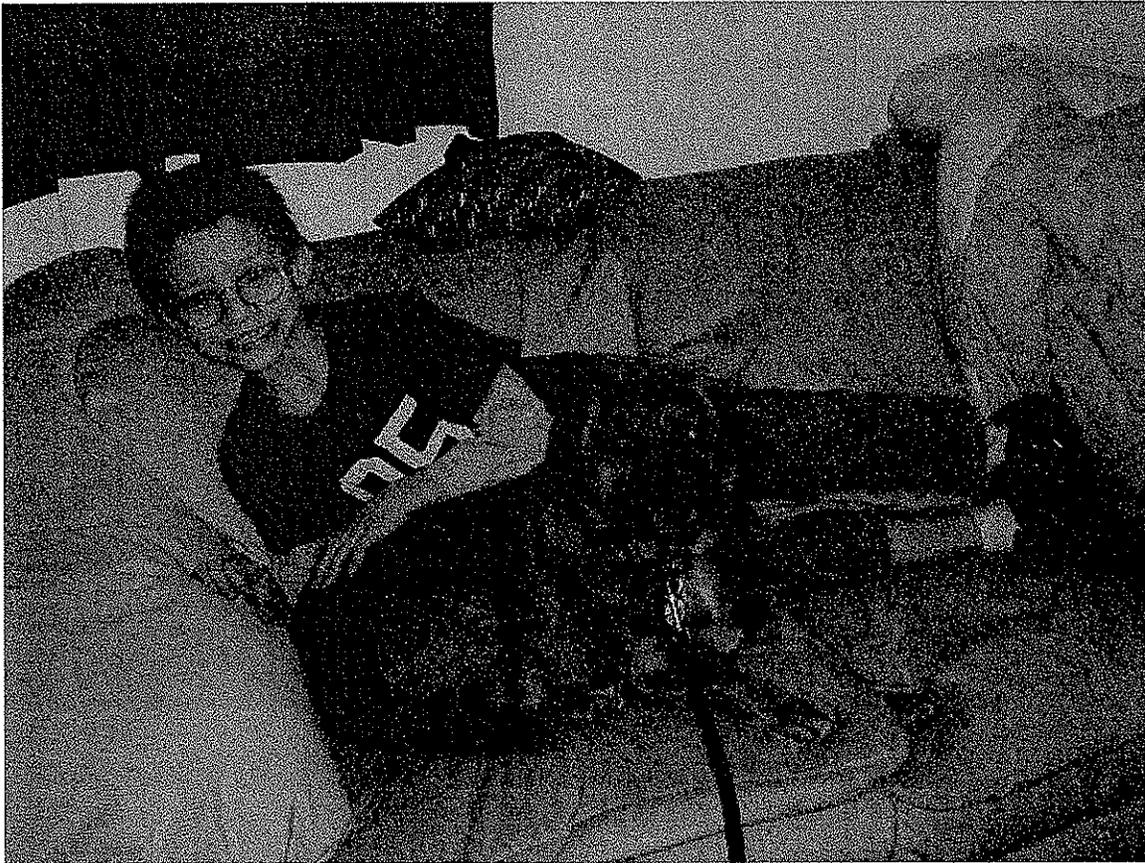


SB 878

② Kate  
Mico V

# ANNUAL REPORT 2008 SOUL FRIENDS, INC



Healing the hearts of children one wagging tail at a  
time ....



SOUL FRIENDS

Annual Report 2008

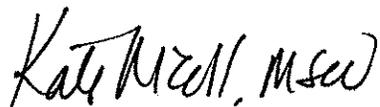
Dear Friends,

Our last year of service has brought many changes – fresh new faces and ongoing challenges: since as Executive Director, I continue to creatively try to manage programming while living with a disability. However, it has been a wonderful reminder and lesson in how the children we serve make daily sacrifices in their attempts to change behavior, learn new lessons and reflect on how the wonder of the human-animal relationship can help us heal.

The last few months of this year, Bear was my constant companion. And as the founder of a nonprofit based on my experiencing love from a dog named, Sam. The mission of Soul Friends was personally re-instilled in me through my day to day interactions with Bear, my imperfect corgi-shepherd mix. This should have come as no surprise to me. Since our team has grown in the last year with all our new canine and equine pals with close to 550 individual clinical visits made in our office in Wallingford and over 444 children served in group therapy over all of Connecticut. The mission continually comes to life – and clearly, at this point, depends on the truth of its healing ability rather than from the passion of the founder.

This is, indeed, an exciting time of continued growth and service. It is continually awe-inspiring and our team remains committed to the children over the coming year with our ongoing mission “to heal the hearts of children one wagging tail at a time”.

With warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kate Nicoll, M.S.W." The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kate Nicoll, LCSW  
Executive Director

## INDIVIDUAL THERAPY AND TEAM MEMBERS :

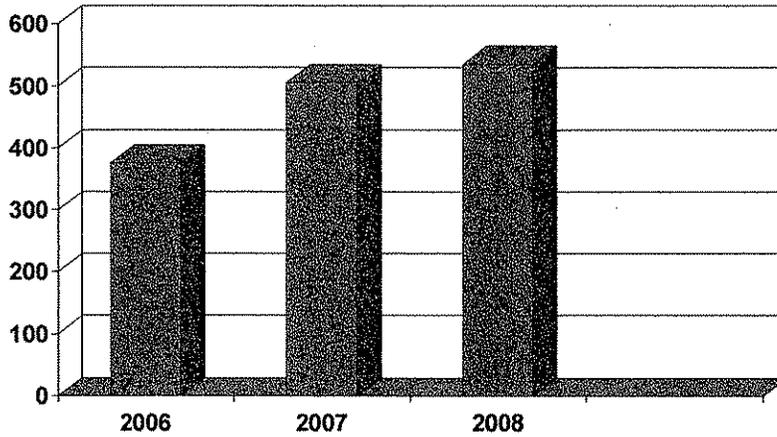
Our team of therapists have changed over the last year with the exciting new addition of Megan Giesen, LCSW; Alyssa Wetzel, LCSW; Rich Smalley, MSW. Each brings their own expertise and knowledge – Megan, a bilingual clinician ; Alyssa, a clinician specializing in group therapy and Rich, specializing in attachment disorder, while also fluent in sign language. The three joined our team of Bonnie Cecarelli, LCSW, Yvonne Burke, LCSW and Jodi Teitelbaum-Milardo, MSW - the veteran organizer of the group. Alli van Hof Behnke, the creator of the Horses Inspire!, remains a consultant for equine assisted group therapy programs.



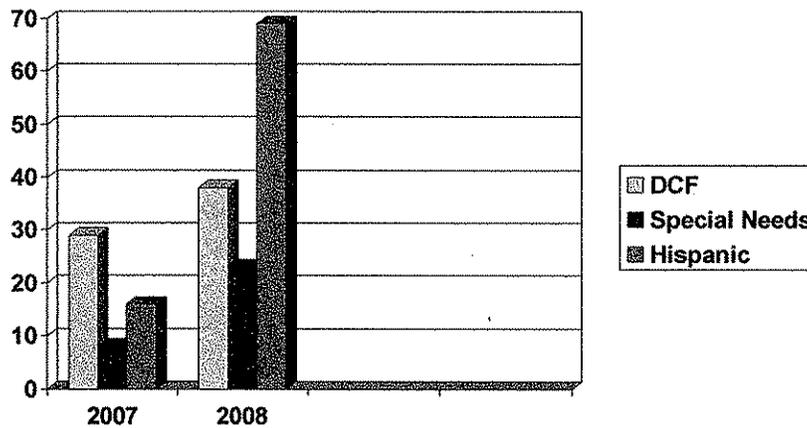
Megan with Caesar

With the addition of staff, we made technical adjustments in office software and began the fun process of introducing all these new canine friends to each other as well. Over the last year, our canine office mates and clinicians provided over 540 hours of visits to children in need. Secondary to the benefits of learning at my Annie E Casey Fellowship for Nonprofit Leadership, Soul Friends has begun to embark on utilizing Results Based Accountability for our program efforts. Below review an example of our ongoing efforts to demonstrate the effectiveness of our programming and to help “turn the curve” when we identify challenges such as the availability of office space and funds for infrastructure support including an office manager.

Soul Friends Individual AAT Therapy Clinical Visits 2006-2008



Soul Friends Individual Therapy Case Loads :  
Demographics



In review of a three year history of serving children with individual therapy completed in the Fall of 2008, we have some heartening indicators to share that demonstrate how many children served in our office (111 clients treated); how well did we do it ( 100% of clinical staff and volunteer staff trained in animal assisted interventions) ; and what difference did we make - (70% of clients

successfully discharged and 18% children referred on for other therapies and 32 children were still actively involved in treatment at the time of the review). Of the 111 seen in the office, only 13 clients dropped out of therapy, many of these children were under the care of DCF and moved unexpectedly to a new foster home.

In our office, Soul Friends continues to work both as the only serving agency and in collaboration with many statewide agencies including: the Child Guidance Center of Central CT; Wellpath of Waterbury; Clifford Beers Clinic; Yale Child Guidance Center; Wheeler Clinic of Plainville; Rushford Center; Gaylord Hospital; Middlesex Hospital and Department of Children and Families offices statewide.

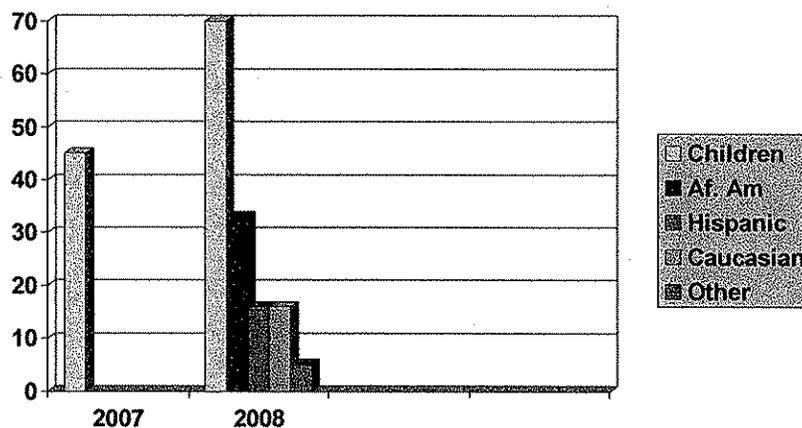
All of our clinicians have had more than 20 hours of extended training in how to integrate animals into clinical work. Four of our staff have also had specialized training in the treatment of children of youth who have abused animals and/or been witnesses to animal abuse. The children referred to Soul Friends come for healing from around the corner to help cope with divorce; from across the city line to cope with the death of a parent and from 45 minutes away for specialized service because of a special need. However, our commitment to each child remains the same – with a true belief in the ability for children to heal, to develop new coping skills, to practice new behaviors and to find hope – all from the love of a new animal friend.

With growth, comes some growing pains. And in response, we are setting a new system for intakes to be as creative and responsive as possible to serve the needs of children of Connecticut. However, we remain committed to the flexibility to respond to each child's referral in an individual way. Our staff has been known to see a child who is grieving on the day of referral. And it is our strength in the belief of mission – that the staff of Soul Friends has provided hours of consultation and service at no cost to many children who may never walk through our door.

## GROUP THERAPY

Our four group programs were put to work across Connecticut this year. The Healing Hearts program, thanks to support from the Laura J Niles Foundation and the James H. Napier Foundation, served over 60 children at a variety of sites ; ACES of North Haven; Children's Center of Hamden; Hill House Music Academy; Yalesville School and in our office. A review of our programming over the last two years is seen below, with a more consistent attempt in our collaborations to collect data, which demonstrates our commitment to serve those most in need.

Soul Friends Healing Hearts Group Program : Children Served and Demographics



We have also had great success in our Come, Follow Me! Program in partnership with Middletown Park and Recreation Adaptive Service Program; Family Advocacy program of Middletown and Aces at Village School in North Haven. Funding to support the programs this year came from Ronald McDonald House Charities, utilization of DCF flex funding serving a total of 30 special needs children with the benefits of social skill building and dog training.



Our last active group program, Horses Inspire! had a small year secondary to the program developer's leave for personal reasons. However, on a hot August night, we began a girl's group at the Hunter's Glen Morgan Horse Farm with six girls. The work was powerful and in future programming we have identified qualitative measures to demonstrate program effectiveness.

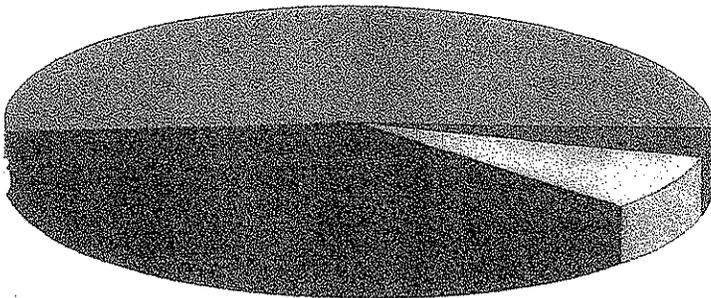
## FUNDRAISING

In a tough economic climate our fundraising effort did not quite meet our budget expectations— and a plan has been put into place for the following year to grow in this area. A total of \$4,276 was raised with the majority of the amount from two events the Horvath's Whiffleball Tournament and Our 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Chilly Dog Walk. We have been cautious in our marketing expenses with a plan to utilize the support and suggestions of our growing Board of Directors.

## FINANCIAL REPORTS AND WELL-BEING

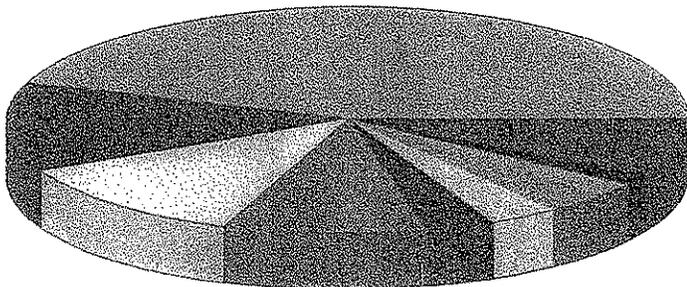
In a year of financial turmoil in our community at-large and of personal challenges in leadership secondary to disability, Soul Friends has continued to remain financially solvent. Several items have been identified as technical challenges in the coming year: increase the timeliness of billable hours received; investigate ways to improve communication between accounting software components and to improve the process of recertification for clinical visits. With close to 48% of our clients under the care of DCF and the largest component of our caseload on Husky insurance, we have identified a continued difficulty with the timeliness of payment and a high rate of rejections for service. A plan of an identified clinical insurance contact and efforts to utilize an office manager for insurance verification should help these areas.

Income Summary  
January through December 2008



4170 · Program Fees	%51.78
4110 · Grants	36.71
4080 · Fundraising Income	7.68
4000 · Contributions Income	3.83
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$54,483.04</b>

Expense Summary  
January through December 2008



6560 · Payroll - Administration	%44.45
6290 · Rent	12.88
6180 · Insurance	11.96
62100 · Contract Services	5.45
6340 · Telephone	4.21
6280 · Utilities	3.41
6670 · Program Expense	3.41
6550 · Office Supplies	2.96
6565 · Payroll Tax Expense	2.09
6270 · Professional Fees	1.88
Other	7.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$51,674.18</b>

## LEADERSHIP

Our Board of Directors:

Kate Nicoll  
Founder and President  
Soul Friends

Kathy Queen  
Vice-President  
Wallingford Community Day Care

Mary Nescott  
Treasurer  
Birmingham Health Group

Patricia Ryiz  
Secretary  
UCONN School of Buisness

Betsy Quitko, RN  
Bethany Public Schools

David Telesca  
Asst. Superintendent – Plainville

Brian Horgan  
United Illuminating

Elaine Clement  
Foster Parent

Norma Charette  
Animal Control Office

Donna Urbanski  
Second Vice President – Discover Re

Carolyn Singer, LPC  
Serra Creative Staffing

## FUTURE PLANNING

In the coming year, Soul Friends will continue to remain committed to the mission of “healing the hearts of children one wagging tail at a time” Our ongoing efforts to collaborate with agencies statewide will continue to provide a specialty service to promote the healing benefits of the human-animal bond in partnership with children who are hurting, looking for answers, finding a way to redefine their lives and to find hope in the future through the eyes of an animal friend.



## 2008 Supporters and Friends

Laura J Niles Foundation  
James H. Napier Foundation  
Petco Foundation  
Wallingford Education Foundation  
Take Another Step  
Sandbank Veterinary Hospital

Horvath Whiffleball Tournament  
Chilly Dog Walk Sponsors  
Webster Bank  
Cheshire Veterinary Hospital  
Friends of our Pawtry Reading  
Labs4Rescue