

## Meet ... Wilhelmina Moore and Bo Hearing Dog Helps at Work, at Home and in Between

By Camille Webb, Medical School

Bo has a furry black coat with a splash of white on his chest, wags his tail enthusiastically and has the important duty of alerting Wilhelmina "Willy" Moore to common, everyday sounds she can't hear at work at the Medical School.

Moore is severely to profoundly deaf. She gradually began losing her hearing after a viral infection in 1987. Hearing aids help her understand some sounds, but she mainly communicates with people by lip-reading. She works at the Medical School as administrator of the Harris County Jail contract.

Bo is a professionally trained hearing dog from International Hearing Dog Inc. (IHDI). The nonprofit organization in Henderson, Colo., has a mission to train and



Willy and Bo in their office space in the Jesse Jones Library Building.

place hearing dogs with persons who are deaf or hard-of-hearing, with and without multiple disabilities, at no charge to the recipient.

"The dogs are worth over \$6,000 each, but we give them to the people free of charge," said the organization's Bob Cooley, a field representative. The \$6,000 fee covers training and placement of the dogs and is funded through donations to IHDI.

Moore decided that a hearing dog would help her become more aware of sounds and actions going on around her, so she applied for a hearing dog through the nonprofit.

"Getting my hearing dog has been great for the help and secure feeling he gives, so that I will be aware of important sounds," Moore said. "Bo is a wonderful creature to have around, and I feel much more at ease now that I know nothing of importance happens around me that he does not let me know about."

Bo was specially matched to be Moore's companion to help her both at work at the Medical School and in her home. He was trained to alert her to three specific sounds: the doorbell or a knock at the door, the ringing of her specially equipped phone, and the smoke alarm.

In July, Bo and Cooley flew to Houston to meet his new owner and see his new Houston home. The dog spent a day at the Medical School, learning Moore's routine and even taking a ride on the METRORail.



Hearing Dog symbol

"He's listening to everything going on around him," Cooley said, referring to Bo. "He's supposed to take in everything and then decide what she needs to know about."

Moore's office is tucked away in a quiet suite at the Jesse H. Jones Library Building. "Bo warns me when people enter the suite," she said.

"It is pretty isolated, and he alerts me to the phone."

In public, Bo wears an orange cape and leash at all times – the official legal symbols of a hearing dog. At work at the Medical School, he also is outfitted with an official UT badge.

At home, Bo is still hard at work. "He alerts me to the doorbell or a knock, telephone and smoke alarm, as well as to my husband coming in or leaving," Moore said. "While many dogs do this, Bo is trained to lead me to the sounds."

Cooley has trained dogs through IHDI for more than 12 years and said the dogs' abilities to help others are uncanny. "I am still amazed on a daily basis by what these dogs can do," he said.

All dogs trained at IHDI come from animal shelters. Bo is a border collie/labrador/spaniel mix who started the training program when he was a 6-month-old puppy. He trained for one year and was given to Moore when he was 1½ years. He was the 1,000th dog placed through the organization.

"I like that he comes from a shelter – a 'second chance' dog," Moore said.

Moore said Bo is becoming better adjusted to life at the Medical School and in the city of Houston.

"Bo is adjusting very well to life at the Texas Medical Center and city," she said. "Even though he spent most of his life in the IHDI training facility in Henderson, he has become used to the hustle and bustle of city life. He rides the bus and train very well. He sleeps in the office or chews his bone but is always alert and ready to jump up when he hears a sound he feels I should know about."

To learn more about hearing dogs or to donate to International Hearing Dog Inc., visit <http://www.pawsforsilence.org/>. ★



Willy, Bo and Bob Cooley take a "get acquainted" walk around the Medical School and the Texas Medical Center area.

## Second Annual Jimenez Leadership Award Nominations Sought

Faculty and staff at the UT Health Science Center are urged to nominate a deserving colleague for the Second Annual Michael J. Jimenez Leadership in Action Award. The deadline for submitting nominations is **5 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 21**.

The award honors the memory of the late Mike Jimenez, former vice president and chief human resources officer. The award will be presented at the Feb. 7, 2007, STAR Awards luncheon, the annual occasion honoring personnel on their five-year service anniversaries.

"Eligible persons are those individuals

among our faculty, A&P staff and classified staff members who have demonstrated the traits that we so admired in Mike and in Dr. Bob Emery, recipient of the first Jimenez award," explains James T. Willerson, M.D., president.

"The continuation of this award will offer great honors to deserving current and future campus leaders. The \$5,000 cash prize underscores the importance of leadership within the health science center community," Willerson added.

The selection committee comprises various faculty and staff who serve on the university's

Work/Life Council and are appointed by Willerson.

Nominations should describe the nominee's demonstration of the following leadership traits:

- excellent two-way communication skills;
- a commitment to enhanced collaboration and productive relationships with faculty and staff at all levels of the organization;
- energy and enthusiasm for the work of the university;
- appreciation for the contributions of others;
- a commitment to the professional development of others;

- a consistently positive attitude; and
- a commitment to do the right thing.

Please use a Word document to make the nominations using any format that you choose, but not to exceed five typewritten pages (12 pt. type). Multiple nominators may support a nominee as long as the complete nomination does not exceed five pages.

Nominations should be sent directly in a Word document attachment via e-mail to Work/Life Coordinator Sam.Hester@uth.tmc.edu. For more information or any questions, please contact Hester, 713-500-3013. ★

## SPH Programs Receive National Awards

### CATCH Program Garners 'Innovation in Prevention Award'

A UT School of Public Health program that successfully tackles childhood obesity has received a prestigious 2006 Secretary's Innovation in Prevention Award from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

CATCH (Coordinated Approach To Child Health), part of the school's Michael & Susan Dell Center for Advancement of Healthy Living, is a proven, school-based effort promoting physical activity, healthy food choices and tobacco prevention in elementary age children.

The award was presented Oct. 25 at the "National Prevention Summit: Prevention, Preparedness and Promotion Luncheon" in Washington, D.C. Steven H. Kelder, Ph.D., co-principal investigator of CATCH and professor of epidemiology and behavioral sciences at the UT School of Public Health, accepted the award on behalf of the program.

"CATCH is an example of how health education for children can be interesting, sustainable and highly effective," said HHS Secretary

Mike Leavitt. "Their comprehensive approach to teaching and increasing general childhood health on this scale is a blueprint for success."

The award is part of "STEPS to a Healthier US," an HHS initiative that advances U.S. President George W. Bush's goal of helping children live longer, better and healthier lives. It celebrates outstanding organizations that have implemented innovative and creative chronic disease prevention and health promotion programs.

"The honor recognizes that CATCH has taken research and translated that into a proven program in communities across Texas," said Deanna M. Hoelscher, Ph.D., director of the Dell Center for Healthy Living and associate professor of health promotion/behavioral sciences and nutrition in the UT School of Public Health.

The CATCH program reaches approximately 900,000 children in 1,911 elementary schools across Texas. It is the largest school-based health promotion study ever funded in the United States (through the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute).

A launch of the CATCH program is currently underway in Travis County with funding from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation.

— Deborah Mann Lake

### HEADS UP Multimedia Efforts Receive Award of Excellence

The UT Health Science Center at Houston has won a prestigious Award of Excellence from the 2006 Accolade Competition. The award was given for the exciting videos in HEADS UP Advanced Genetics, a multimedia curriculum module that explores the use of animal models, genes, and stem cells in human disease research. Advanced Genetics features exceptional content, career stories, classroom activities, and ethical and policymaking considerations with the goal of exciting middle and high school students about health science.

"We are absolutely thrilled with this recognition and are proud to share this honor with a phenomenal team of researchers, teachers, students, production and curriculum special-

ists, and collaborators who contributed countless hours of their time and expertise for this project," said Nancy Murray, Dr.P.H., principal investigator of HEADS UP and assistant professor of behavioral sciences at the UT School of Public Health.

The Accolade Competition was created to honor and give recognition to outstanding craft and creativity in film, video, television and commercials. Entries are judged by highly qualified individuals in the film and television industry. In winning an Accolade, the health science center joins the ranks of other high-profile winners of this most sought-after award. Thomas Baker, PhD, competition chairperson, said, "The judges are pleased with the exceptionally high quality of entries in the Accolade Competition. The winners of this coveted award are truly among the best in the industry. The Accolade sets standards for creativity and craft."

In addition, segments of HEADS UP Advanced Genetics were featured at the American Public Health Association Film Festival in Boston in early November. ★