



### **Giving Animals Voice Recaps “What Participants Said about Pilot 3”**

*Giving Animals Voice* conducted Pilot 3 to allow participating shelters, rescues, and sanctuaries to consider 2 questions:

**1) Can animal communication benefit the dogs waiting for their forever home?**

**2) Can animal communication be an innovative tool for caregivers?**

Pilot 3 arranged for experienced animal communicators and organizations to participate in a *recorded virtual communication session* with individual dogs. Organizations were then asked to provide “**quantitative**” and “**qualitative**” feedback about each session. Pilot 3 committed to sharing the feedback from all the sessions. Please continue to read a recap of the Pilot 3 Procedure and the Dogs’ Feedback. Or, you may click [Organizations’ Quantitative Feedback](#) to skip to the participants’ quantitative feedback or [Organizations’ Qualitative Feedback](#) to view the organizations’ comments.

#### **Recap of the Pilot 3 Procedure**

An app was created allowing participating organizations to use any computer or mobile device to 1) request a session for the dog they selected and 2) after the session, to respond to 2 short surveys. **8** organizations participated. **14** dogs received a **single** communication session (ranging from *40 minutes to 70 minutes*), and **3** dogs received 2 sessions for a total of **17** sessions.

**Before each session**, the organization identified *general topics* the organization wanted to address; and indicated if they wanted to convey information to the dog for purposes of reassuring the dog or preparing the dog for major events or changes. 24 to 48 hours before the scheduled session, an information sheet containing the dog’s, name, age, approximate length of stay, a listing of the general topics identified by the organization, and a photo of the dog were emailed to both the organization and the communicator.

**During each session**, the communicator connected telepathically with the dog *and* verbally asked each dog about: their preferences for their “forever home and people;” their preferred enrichment; whether they were experiencing discomfort and pain; and the *general topics* previously identified by the organization. The organizations’ representatives were encouraged to ask for clarification of the dog’s responses and to ask additional questions. The communicators verbally relayed all information received from the dogs. Before closing the session, each dog was invited to express anything else that they wanted their organization to know.

**Following each session**, the organizations were asked to respond to questions on 2 surveys, and to “feel free to provide additional feedback about the session and Pilot 3” in text boxes. The organizations could log in to access the audio and video recording within an hour of each session.

#### **Recap of the Dogs’ Feedback**

Communicators verbally relayed all information received from the dog during each session. All **14** dogs responded to questions asked. *Each organization can access ALL of their dogs’ feedback by logging in to the audio and/or video recording.*

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When each dog was asked what they wanted their caregivers to know, all **14** dogs expressed gratitude (many repeatedly) to the organization for the opportunity to “be heard” and many acknowledged appreciation of their caregivers’ efforts.

#### **Organizations’ Quantitative Feedback from Surveys 1 & 2**

- **6** of the organizations agreed they “had no or very limited experience with providing animal communication to shelter animals.” **1** organization disagreed with the statement and **1** replied “I don’t know”.
- The organizations confirmed that they shared information from the session with caregivers for all **14** dogs.
- The organizations agreed that the communication session revealed new insights for **13** of the dogs.
- The organizations confirmed that insights from the session were considered in connection with providing care for all **14** of the dogs.
- The organizations confirmed specific information was conveyed to reassure **10** dogs, to prepare **6** dogs for events and to prepare **8** dogs for major changes.

To assess the organizations’ perception of whether animal communication could be an “innovative tool,” the organizations were asked to review **10** statements and to check a box if they agreed “the *communication session suggested providing animal communication had the potential to provide insights*” relative to each statement.

The number indicates the total number of checks for each statement.

- About the dog’s preferred enrichment practices **13**
- Relevant to improving emotional and behavioral well-being while in the shelter **13**
- Relevant to improving the dog’s sociability **12**
- Relevant to the dog’s mental and emotional condition **13**
- About the dog’s behavior **12**
- About circumstances related to the dog’s reactivity / aggression **6**
- Facilitating better adoption matches **10**
- Revealing whether the dog is experiencing discomfort or pain **10**
- Information about the dog’s circumstances before intake **9**
- Information about sudden changes in the dog’s behavior **8**

Organizations were asked to review the following statements and to check if the box if, *after the session*, they “noticed” any of the following.

The number indicates the total number of checks for each statement.

- Noticeable reduction in behavioral indicators of stress **6**
- Noticeable improvement in dog’s sociability with people **4**



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- Noticeable improvement in the dog’s sociability with animals **2**
- Noticeable reduction in unwanted behavior **4**
- Noticeable reduction in reactivity and/or aggression **0**
- The dog exhibited a more relaxed body posture **5**
- The dog exhibited a calmer demeanor **5**

### **Organizations’ Qualitative Feedback from Surveys 1&2**

Both Survey 1 and 2 invited the organizations to “feel free to provide additional feedback about the session and Pilot 3” in the provided text boxes. The organizations provided additional feedback for all **14** dogs. The comments below were extracted from that feedback, and are more specific, and often more revealing, than the quantitative data. After reviewing ALL comments, the following groupings emerged.

- The session provided **new insights** about the dog.
  - Arabella – “We will be managing her social sessions with dogs a bit differently based upon the insight that was shared about her preferences for smaller dogs and ones that she can teach and be a big sister to.”
  - Cheyenne – “provided helpful insight into Cheyenne’s feelings, wants/needs, thought process and behavior... and all questions were addressed.”
  - Puddin – the session “helped us get to know her better and understand the ways we can best help while she’s here.”
  - Christopher – “The communicator revealed interesting insights ... answered all our questions, and addressed items we had a concern about.”
  - Blackie – the communicator did “a great job in giving me a good sense of Blackie’s personality and needs.”
- The session also **reinforced** some of the organizations’ inferences and care decisions.
  - Arabella – “ I found this session to be reinforcing (with regard to how we have been reading Arabella) but also informative for us to shift our approach with her a bit.”
  - Sunshine – the session was more reinforcing than revealing
  - Odin – The session revealed Odin’s “perspective about himself.” “Sadly for Odin, his session reinforced our concerns in being able to safely place him based upon his preferences and struggles.”
  - Cheyenne – Some of the information was” new “(scent focusing with people) and other info some “helped to solidify” what we know about her “sociability” (dogs, cats, and humans” and “enrichment.”
- Comments about questions relating to **discomfort and pain**.
  - Hulk – “In the beginning of the session she mentioned his ears. This is something I didn’t mention (past injury and ongoing issues) and it’s not published anywhere so I was impressed. I would definitely recommend. Very professional and easy to communicate with.”



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- Cheyenne – the session communicated new info on “discomfort locations.”
- Christopher – “We were glad to hear he is not in pain.”
  
- Comments relating to **stress and stress reduction**.
  - Blackie – in the week after the session Blackie “seemed calmer, happier, and more willing to go on walks. Those were all very positive changes for him.”
  - Buzz – “with changes to both his food and walks routines, he has been less stressed.”
  - Auggie – “when my stress levels went down, Auggie was a calmer dog.”
  - Cheyenne – “during the session Cheyenne was very relaxed and seemed to enjoy the process.”
  - Kilmer – “This session was amazing...Kilmer seems more relaxed since being heard.”
  - Chance – “In the last few weeks Chance [a blind dog] seems less disoriented, more settled, and is navigating the spaces he is in with more awareness. He is also less restless at night and responding to more of the verbal cues we give him.” “...I feel the communication session is a big part of the positive changes we are noticing with him!”
  - Happy Boy – He “was offered 2 new bed choices (at his request) and it immediately made a difference.” He got on the “elevated bed right away and appeared to relax.”
  - Puddin – Changes made after the session “seemed to reduce Puddin’s stress level overall.” When other dogs are out, “she is less reactive and more responsive to directions from volunteers.” Also “she stopped peeing in the indoor area.”
  
- Organizations made **changes based on information** from the session.
  - Weott – as a result of 3 points the communicator mentioned, we “changed a few things”.
  - Buzz – As a result of the communication session, we implemented his “requests “regarding his food, outside time, and socializing with other dogs and people while he is here.”
  - Chance – “I took the key points from the communication with Chance... and made an information sheet that is hanging on his kennel for volunteers to read before interacting with him.”
  - Christopher – “We felt the session was beneficial in helping Christopher with his needs.” Changes relating to eating and a ramp were “extremely helpful in supporting his needs and making him more comfortable.”
  - Puddin – the “communication session with Puddin was phenomenal in helping us have a better understanding of her behavior and needs and we made several changes because of it.” “Volunteers now take her in and out of kennels so she doesn’t have to cross by kennels of other dogs and take her outside when other dogs aren’t out.”
  
- Organizations **shared information from the session** with staff, volunteers, and fosters.
  - Blackie – the session was “extremely helpful for guiding Blackies’ treatment and also conversations with his foster family.”
  - Buzz – shared audio and notes from session with “entire team” to implement Buzz’s requests regarding food, outside time, other dogs, and people.



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- Chance – posting the key points from the session on his kennel door “prompted a lot more discussion with volunteers and is helping them be more aware.”
- Cheyenne – “I felt the info received and shared by the Communicator was clear, provided good insight and all questions were addressed. I look forward to sharing this info with Cheyenne's care team.”
- Happy Boy – shared session with foster and “his caregiver – the foster is more “attuned to meeting Happy Boy’s individual needs.”
- The sessions provided information that **facilitated foster/adoptive placements**.
  - Blackie – “the session provided great insights that we can use in looking for a potential foster or adoption placement ...approximately a week after the communication session Blackie went into a foster to adopt situation...Blackie won them and I feel there is strong correlation from Blackie being heard...( and this foster to adopt situation happening for him.”
  - Buzz – “the information we received about the person/home that would be ideal for him will be so helpful to us as we screen potential adopter for him.” “When Buzz was meeting with a few people the day after the communication session, he showed us clearly what he had communicated the day before as he gravitated towards the two calm men in the room.”
  - Puddin – in the session, she shared that in past she lived in a home with older couple with a fenced back yard and she’d like that again.
  - One organization commented – “This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> dog that has had a communication session with this pilot project. Each time shortly after the session a foster or adopter has come forward for the dog that was a match for the dog’s request for an ideal home expressed in the communication session. This has happened to many times to be a coincidence. It’s been miraculous to see this and these sessions have helped us tremendously in finding successful matches for hard to place dogs.”

### **Closing Comments from the Founder**

Pilot 3 advised the organizations that the communicators’ responsibility was to relay information received from the dog to the organization, and that each organization retained *complete discretion as to what, if anything, they **did** with the information*. Their comments indicate that they **did** a lot with the information received from **a single 40-70 minute communications session** for 11 of the 14 dogs and from two sessions for 3 dogs.

**The organizations’ feedback is a testament to the skill, training and brilliance of the communicators who volunteered to participate.** During the Pilot 3, all communication went through *Giving Animals Voice*. Now that Pilot 3 has wrapped up, and with these communicators’ permission, their names and website addresses are listed below. Organizations and others are encouraged to contact these communicators directly to thank them, to find out more about animal communication, or to arrange for future services.

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For more information about Pilot 3 or to share ideas about how animal communication can benefit shelter animals, organizations, fosters and adopters contact us at [www.givinganimalsvoice.org](http://www.givinganimalsvoice.org) or email me at [denise@givinganimalsvoice.org](mailto:denise@givinganimalsvoice.org).