



# B.A.R.K. Annual Report

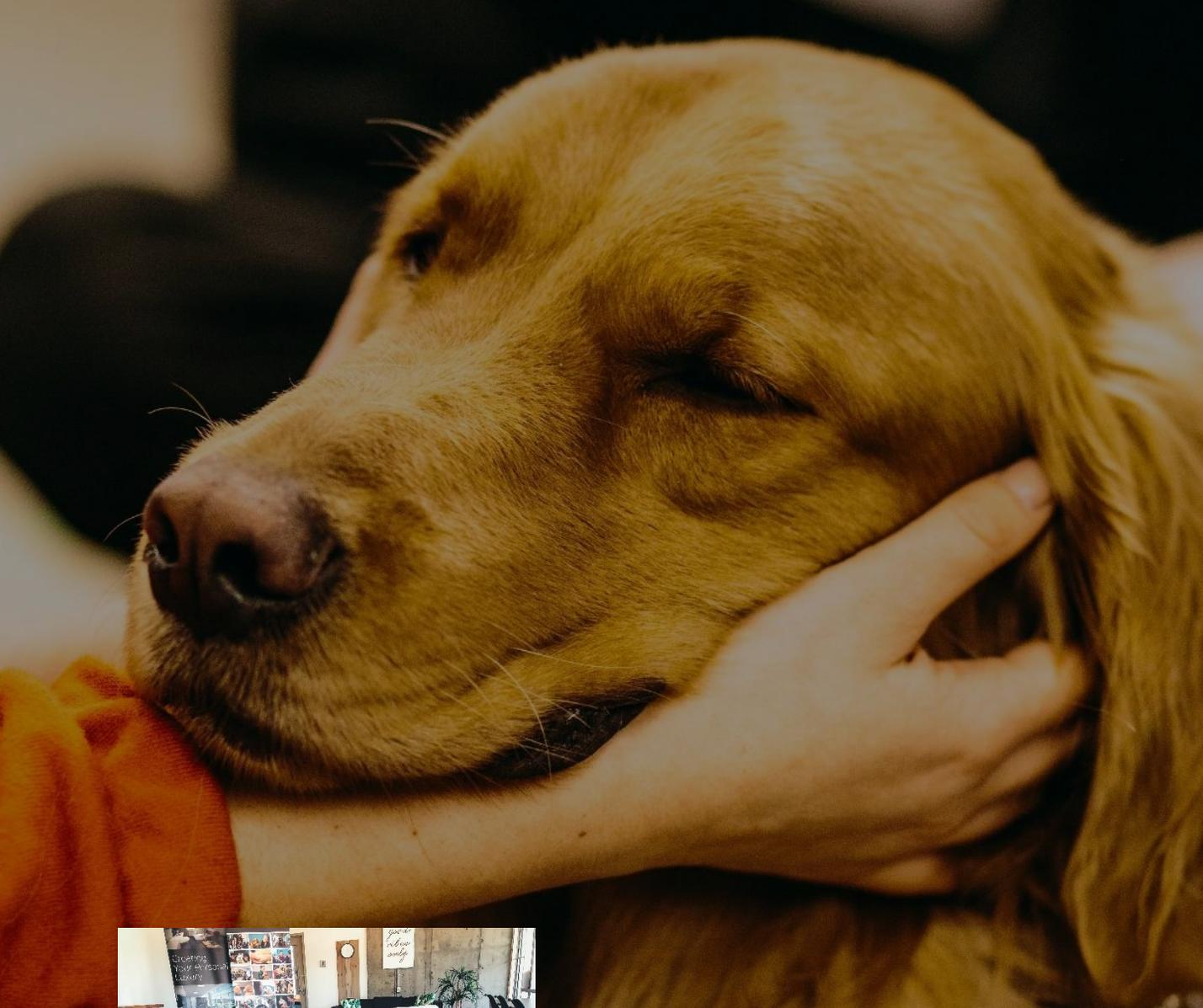
Year 9  
2020-21



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

**BARK**  
BUILDING ACADEMIC RETENTION THROUGH K9S





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# Message from the Director

Ever flexible and able to pivot on a dime, B.A.R.K. rose to the challenges presented by COVID-19 and with help from student volunteer and tech wizard Ashkat Singal and videographer Adam Lauzé, developed “Canine Comfort Modules” to provide remote and virtual access to therapy dogs (stay tuned for the forthcoming publication). Thanks to Freya in the B.A.R.K. Office, handlers were updated throughout the pandemic and some participated in these virtual sessions while others honed their skills through virtual professional development opportunities facilitated through the office.

Year 9 of B.A.R.K. saw students of B.A.R.K. receive recognition for their hard work including Nicole Harris receiving the Okanagan School of Education’s Outstanding Master’s Thesis Award, Camille Rousseau receiving the Vicki Green Award, and Madisyn Szypula receive the CEMF Dillon Award. Adding to this list of accomplishments, Freya Green successfully defended her Master’s thesis research and is hard at work ensuring it moves forward to publication following the footsteps of Nicole whose study on the Okanagan Boys & Girls Club program in B.A.R.K. was published in the [Journal of Research in Childhood Development](#). Rounding out this year’s publications, we saw Camille Rousseau and colleagues from both B.A.R.K. and Brock University publish a study on handler well-being in the journal Pet Behaviour Science. Last, thanks to hard work from statistician Zak Draper, our Canine Contact study was accepted for publication in the top journal Anthrozoos. You can read about some of these publications in a new blog I’m writing for Psychology Today titled [Canines, Kids, and Kindness](#).

As always, we’re grateful for the financial support we receive and this year we were fortunate to receive funding from both the Green Ribbon Sweater initiative by the Student Legacy Project and Alumni UBCO and from Giving Day 2021. Funds raised through these campaigns will be earmarked to help us reboot our in-person drop-in and BARK2GO programs on campus this fall once we’re given to the green light to return to campus.

As we look forward to returning to offering in-person sessions, returning handlers will be participating in refresher training to reclaim their well-honed skills when supporting students. The B.A.R.K. dogs will need to reacclimate to working on campus as we look ahead to welcoming old and new friends to Year 10 of B.A.R.K. at UBC Okanagan. If you have ideas on how we can celebrate B.A.R.K.’s 10th anniversary next year, be sure to let us know!





## Mission Statement

Now in its ninth year, Building Academic Retention through K9s (B.A.R.K.) is a research-driven program designed to support the emotional well-being of university students grappling with challenges around homesickness, social isolation, and integration into the university community. B.A.R.K. programming consists of both intervention studies and community drop-in services.

### **B.A.R.K. upholds the following core beliefs and values:**

1. Community members play a key role in enhancing research initiatives on campus. B.A.R.K. volunteer dog handlers contribute enormously to both student enrichment and research studies carried out through the B.A.R.K. lab.
2. B.A.R.K. research and drop-in programs provide a framework for mentoring student scholars and volunteers.
3. B.A.R.K. is committed to supporting diversity and strives to create working climates where everyone is welcome, recognized, and invited to contribute.
4. B.A.R.K. is committed to community partnerships and supports the efforts of local animal-welfare groups (e.g., Paws it Forward, Kelowna SPCA).
5. B.A.R.K. is committed to upholding the highest standards of research. This includes adhering to both Human Behavioural Research Ethics Standards and to Animal Welfare Ethics Standards, using experimental designs that include the randomization of participants into treatment and control conditions, and including follow-up assessments of treatment effects as part of methodological designs.
6. B.A.R.K. is committed to giving back to the university community and pledges to have an active presence in student and university initiatives.

# The B.A.R.K. Team

Running all of the varied B.A.R.K. programs would not be possible without the hardworking, dedicated team of student and community volunteers. The B.A.R.K. Team in 2020/21 consisted of the following members:

**49**

Therapy  
dogs

**48**

Volunteer  
Handlers

**22**

Student  
Volunteers

**Total in-kind volunteer hours = 471**





# Program Report

## Virtual Sessions

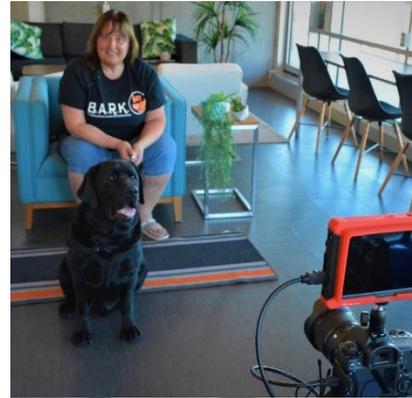
In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, and thanks to the sponsorship of VEDA Exclusive Student Living, B.A.R.K. transitioned to hosting sessions on a virtual platform.

17 handler-therapy dog teams were involved with small-group sessions via Zoom and recorded a series of videos.

In addition, we were thrilled to be involved in sessions with VEDA and UBC's Exam Jam.

- Total number of sessions = **37**
- Average number of participants per session = **14**
- Total number of visits = **504**

“UBC is an innovative place that welcomes new research and the way we've tried to be innovative is to respond in a virtual way. We want to meet the needs of students who are seeking to reduce their stress through a connection with dogs.” - Dr. Binfet





# Other Updates

## Website Renovation

In 2021, the B.A.R.K. team redesigned the [B.A.R.K. website](#) to improve reach and better serve its readers.



## Psychology Today

Congratulations to Dr. Binfet who, in January 2021, was invited to be an author for Psychology Today! Check our social media for his latest article!

## Student Awards

In addition to our students who graduated this June, we want to congratulate some of our students who won prestigious awards this year.

- Nicole Harris – Outstanding M.A Thesis
- Camille Rousseau – Vicki Green Award
- Madisyn Szypula - Dillon Undergraduate Engineering Ambassador Award



## ‘Green Ribbon’ Sweaters

The B.A.R.K. team are very grateful to the Student Legacy Project and Alumni UBCO for their design of the Green Ribbon crewneck. This beautiful forest green sweater was designed to raise mental health awareness and support B.A.R.K. Programming.

## UBC Homecoming

B.A.R.K. was thrilled to be involved in the first ever University-wide Giving Day and our therapy dogs modelled the new homecoming bandannas with pride!





# Financial Report

## FINANCIAL REPORT 2020/21

Revenue	
Carry forward from 2019/20	20,597.22
Funding from VEDA Exclusive Living	10,000.00
Funding from AVPS	7,000.00
Donations	4,609.00
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>42,206.22</b>
Expenses	
Student Salaries & Benefits	4,868.11
Conferences & Professional Development	4,246.12
Gifts/Tokens of Appreciation	1,958.93
Sponsorships	1,349.58
Telecommunication Charges	495.53
Books/Subscriptions/Memberships	151.65
Food/Beverage Supplies	115.98
Printing and Copying	76.44
Postage and Courier	60.55
Office Supplies	13.02
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>13,335.91</b>
Carry forward next fiscal	28,870.31
<b>Total</b>	<b>42,206.22</b>



# Sources of Support



The B.A.R.K. program is supported on UBC's Okanagan campus by the AVP Students Office and the Okanagan School of Education's Innovative Learning Centre. We are also grateful for the continued sponsorship from VEDA Exclusive Student Living (<http://www.vedaliving.ca>), and the many individual donors who participated in our fundraising campaign this year.

Donations to B.A.R.K. made be made at [www.barkubc.ca](http://www.barkubc.ca).

# News and Media

Each year, B.A.R.K. generates a variety of media which helps to expand the reach of the program. A full list is included on the website, but here is a sample of the media from the 2020/21 academic year.



Digital Journal (2021, May 21).

*Don't end up in the doghouse.*

Psychology Today (2021, May 1). A

*Kid's Guide to Meeting a New Dog.*

Earth.com (2021, Feb. 20). *Dogs*

*help children improve their confidence and social skills.*

News Break (2021, Feb. 19).

*Therapy dogs can help teach kids life-long social skills.*

Nostro Figlio (2021, Feb 18). *Il*

*doppio beneficio della dog therapy.*

Hobbs Online News (2021, Feb 18).

*Fur Friends Help Build Learning Vital Social Skills.*

Castanet (2021, Feb. 17). *Friends fur*

*life help build skills for life.*

Florida News Times (2021, Feb 17).

*A Friend's 'fur' life help build skills for life.*

HelloBARK (2021, Jan. 13). *Dr. John*

*Binfet On B.A.R.K At University Of British Columbia.*

# Publications & Presentations

## Publications

- Binfet, J. T., Draper, Z. A., & Green, F. L. L. (2020). Stress reduction in law enforcement officers and staff through a canine-assisted intervention. *Human Animal Interaction Bulletin*, 8(2), 34-52.
- Binfet, J. T., & Struik, K. (2020). Dogs on campus: Holistic assessment of therapy dogs and handlers for research and community initiatives. *Society & Animals: Journal of Human-Animal Studies*, 28(5-6), 489-509. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685306-12341495>
- Harris, N. M., & Binfet, J. T. (2020). Exploring children's perceptions of an after-school canine-assisted social and emotional learning program: A case study. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*.
- Rousseau, C. X., Binfet, J. T., Green, F. L. L., Tardif-Williams, C., Draper, Z., & Maynard, A. (2020). Up the leash: An investigation of handler well-being and perceptions of volunteering in canine-assisted interventions. *Pet Behavior Science*, 10, 15-35. doi: 10.2107/pbs.vi10.12598



## Presentations

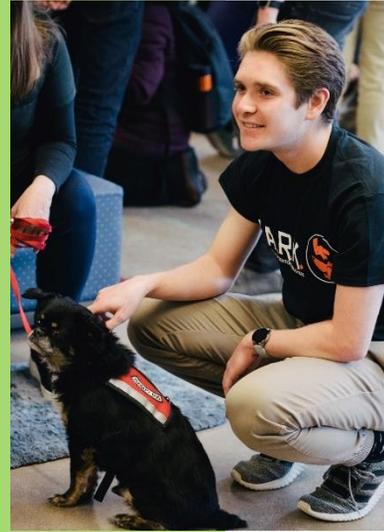
- Binfet, J. T., Kjellstrand Hartwig, E., & Green, F. L. L. (2020, September). Taking off the vest: When should a dog be Retired? Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for Anthrozoology, Liverpool, UK.
- Green, F. L. L. & Binfet, J. T., (2020, September). Uncovering the views of law enforcement personnel who participated in a canine-assisted intervention: A case study. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for Anthrozoology, Liverpool, UK.
- Harris, N. M., & Binfet, J. T. (2020, September). A case study exploring children's experience participating in a canine-assisted social-emotional learning program. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for Anthrozoology, Liverpool, UK.
- Johnson, C., Winston, K., Mills, D., Davenport, R., & Binfet, J. T. (2020, September). The Effects of a Canine-Assisted Intervention on Occupational Therapy Graduate Students' Perceptions of Well-being: A Randomized Controlled Trial. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for Anthrozoology, Liverpool, UK.
- Rousseau, C. X. & Binfet, J. T. (2020, September). When it comes to animals, what are scholars publishing about?: A bibliometric analysis of publications across three HAI journals. Poster presented at the annual meeting of the International Society for Anthrozoology, Liverpool, UK.

# Under the Spotlight

## Student Spotlight: Lucas Spielman

Lucas began volunteering with B.A.R.K. in 2018. During his time with B.A.R.K. Lucas volunteered in the Friday drop-ins, assisted with research and, in 2019, took over the position as BARK2GO program leader. Lucas graduated from UBC in June 2021 and has gone on to fill a Faculty Assistant position at Selkirk College. We wish him all the best in his new position.

*"In his time in B.A.R.K. he proved himself reliable, dependable, and ever willing to step in at the last minute to help out. From drop-in entrance greetings to organizing the closet area to entering data, Lucas was ever-willing to help and he will be sorely missed."* – Dr. Binfet



## Therapy Dog Spotlight: Oakley

Known for being one of the most fluffy therapy dogs in the program Oakley has been involved in drop-ins with university students, social-emotional learning workshops with children aged 5-12, and, most recently, in stress reduction sessions at the local RCMP. He's demonstrated his popularity with little children, students, and senior RCMP personnel. Oakley will be hanging up his vest this year, but we wish him a wonderful retirement at home with his family!

*"This statesman has been a staple of the B.A.R.K. program for years. He is a drop-in favourite who leaves visitors smiling (and covered in dog hair!). 😊"* – Dr. Binfet



## Handler Spotlight: Dr. Evelyn Jensen

Evelyn volunteered with B.A.R.K. with her dog Sitka as a passionate and dedicated handler and UBC student. Evelyn volunteered for a number of years until she graduated with a PhD in Biology in 2017.

We've kept in touch with Evelyn since and were thrilled to hear that, in 2020, Evelyn emigrated to UK is currently a Lecturer at Newcastle University! Her research interests include the evolution and conservation of Galapagos giant tortoises and native UK wildlife. We wish Evelyn all the best in her new position in the UK and look forward to hearing more about her important research in the future!



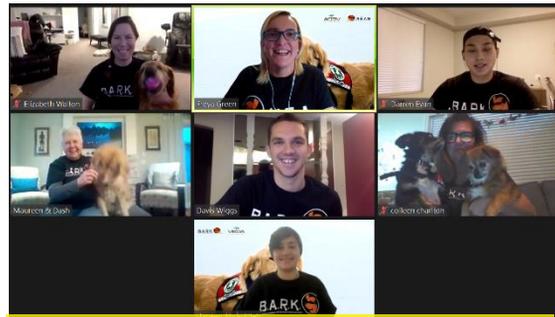
# Highlights: In pictures



Virtual Conferences: Dr. Binford and Craig filming a podium presentation



On a filming break: Haneen and Frida



Team photos after virtual events



L to R: Wrigley and Forrest wearing Homecoming bandannas; Camille and Akshat after a virtual canine session with dogs Punim and Nava; Baylee and Jersey on Pink Shirt Day; and Amelia with Dash post-zoom session.



A tender moment between handler Geri and her dog, Doogle.



L to R: Maureen and Dash during a Zoom session; Layla and Adam during a break from filming virtual canine comfort modules

**“** *[B.A.R.K. Virtual sessions] make me feel that there are staff at the university who really care about the physical and mental health of UBCO students*

**“** *I feel lighter, less stressed, and more optimistic having attended a virtual session today!*

**“** *I feel more connected to my campus community and I feel relieved knowing that someone else cares and wants to know how I'm doing.*

**“** *This session really helped lift my spirits! I've been feeling completely disconnected learning back at home and so my motivation was slipping a bit. This is the first time this semester that I have felt reconnected and I want to say thank you!*

**“** *I really admire the people that are running the BARK program because this is a stressful time in many people's lives and I'm sure this program helps a lot of people.*

**“** *{The Virtual B.A.R.K. session} made me forget about the stresses of life briefly. I felt a stronger tie to my community because I got to hear about other student's experiences with online school and I appreciated the effort the B.A.R.K. people were putting in.*



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Facebook: BARK UBCO  
Twitter/Instagram: BARKUBC



## CONTACT

**Freya Green, Program Coordinator**

As Program Coordinator, Freya assists with the administration and implementation of on-campus and community-based B.A.R.K. programs. Any questions regarding volunteering for B.A.R.K., requesting B.A.R.K. visitation, or general inquiries should be directed to Freya Green at [bark.dogtherapy@ubc.ca](mailto:bark.dogtherapy@ubc.ca)