



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 5, 2002**

**CONTACT: Alysa Slay or Dave Eisendrath  
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## **A Special Breed of Campers "Ruff It" This Memorial Day**

(CHICAGO, IL) - The campers attending Camp Dogwood this Memorial Day weekend will be packing their overnight duffel bags with liver treats, poop bags, and squeaky toys as they prepare to "ruff it" for 4 days and 3 nights in Ingelside, Illinois. More than a doggie daycare or kennel, Camp Dogwood, which turns 14 this year (that's dog years), is celebrating its second session as an overnight camp experience for people and their dogs.

"Last year, we had no idea how much of an impact Camp Dogwood would have on us, our human participants, and the dog community in general," says co-founder Dave Eisendrath, "Camp Dogwood not only provided a bonding experience for people and their dogs, but proved that you *can* teach an old dog (or person) new tricks." Reminiscent of summers spent at sleep-away camp, human connections thrived. As the canine campers slept soundly once the sun went down, the human campers forged new friendships, renewed family bonds, and even found romance.

Campers have been barkin' pretty loud about Camp Dogwood since last fall. This Memorial Day, as weekend travelers cruise the interstates, dogs and their human companions from Capitol Hill, Virginia, Kentucky, Arkansas, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Alabama, and of course Illinois, will be converging in Ingelside, Illinois. Situated on 180 acres of woods, wide-open fields, and wetlands on the shores of Wooster Lake, the Camp Henry Horner Conference Facility serves as the perfect backdrop for the first dog camp of its kind in Illinois.

Upholding the Camp Dogwood motto, "where your dog can be a dog!," the camp offers "Traditional programming like agility, obedience, tracking, Frisbee, and trick training in addition to more unique endeavors such as 'Pet Projects' (paw painting and sand-casting), canine laser tag, and making "pupsicles" in cooking for one's pet," says Alysa Slay, co-founder with Eisendrath. An exciting new event this spring could result in one lucky canine camper ending up as a future cover-dog on a Blizzard's Bones collectible tin of mints for humans. Eisendrath and Slay agree that in addition to a pooped pooch, they want campers to return home more educated about their dog, closer to their dog, and more connected to the dog community at large.

Given the fun and light-hearted nature of camp itself, the community of companion dogs and their people is taken very seriously by Slay and Eisendrath. Camp Dogwood is fully devoted to integrating the camp experience into life year round by: being business affiliates of the Dog Advisory Work Group (D.A.W.G.) a community group devoted to sharing public spaces wisely and prevention of animal cruelty; donating numerous camp packages to area shelters and non-profit organizations, and educating their clientele about local dog-related activities; complimentary health practices; and area dog trainers with positive training philosophies. "Just a year ago, we were nervous to walk into a pet store and ask if we could put out some brochures," notes Slay, "Now, however, we feel fortunate to have been so welcomed and supported by the wonderful network of dog-related professionals in the community. In our effort to strengthen the bond between people and their dogs, we have formed meaningful friendships and partnerships that we expect to last long into the future."

Looking ahead to the near future, Eisendrath and Slay plan on raising the bar even higher for Fall Camp (October 4th-7th, 2002). They have been in contact with the ImprovOlympics for the camp talent show and intend to add even more activities like carting, backpacking, and a new dog sport called Rally Obedience. Eisendrath and Slay's long range dream for "ruffin it" entails establishing a year-round dog camp facility for people and their "best friends." Until then, however, there will be no "cat naps" for these two as they put the finishing touches on Spring Camp.

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## Camp Dogwood Fact Sheet

### Leaders of the Pack-

Passionate dog owners Alysa Slay, Psy.D., Clinical Psychologist, and Dave Eisendrath, Freelance Graphic Designer, marked new territory last year, as founders of Camp Dogwood. Dave and Alysa derived their inspiration for Camp Dogwood by identifying a need within the Chicagoland dog community for a unique place where individuals could spend quality time with their dog in an outdoor setting.

### The Den-

Camp Dogwood, an overnight camp experience for people and their dogs, is located one hour from both Chicago and Milwaukee, in Ingelside Illinois. Camp Dogwood utilizes the Camp Henry Horner Conference Center, situated on 180 acres of woods, open fields and wetlands on the pristine shores of Wooster Lake, a beautiful and rustic setting for camp.

### Unleashed-

For four days and three nights, Camp Dogwood offers its human and canine campers a full range of over 30 activities which include agility, herding, obedience, lure coursing, flyball, tracking, Frisbee, trick training, arts & crafts, canoeing, canine massage, and campfires. Notable camp highlights include Canine & Human Talent Show, Cooking for Your Canine and the S'mores prepared each evening. Daily lectures on topics related to canine health, nutrition, behavior, and community issues are also offered. Campers can choose to participate in any or all of these activities or just relax on the beach, a trail or an open field.

### No Bones About It-

Whether training or recreating, Camp Dogwood's philosophy is rooted in the role of positive reinforcement, motivation, and **fun for dogs and people alike**. This philosophy reflects the values of the Camp Dogwood staff and the high regard placed on a pet as a family member. The staff represent a group of individuals whose collective experience reflect years of work within the dog community as instructors, trainers, and animal rescuers. In order to ensure accessibility between camp sessions, staff members were carefully selected from the communities in which Camp Dogwood participants live.

### S'More About Camp-

- Camp Dogwood's 2002 season will hold two sessions: SPRING: May 24-27 and FALL: Oct 4-7.
- An expanded 2003 camp schedule will be announced this Summer
- Camp packages include all lodging, meals, and activities.
- A vet will be at camp to triage emergencies and treat minor injuries.
- Human campers must be at least 18 years of age, puppies at least 3 months old are welcome.
- Accommodation options include cabin, lodge, or tent camping. Daily passes are available.
- On-line registration is available at [www.campdogwood.com](http://www.campdogwood.com)

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## Camp Dogwood Personalities

### **Alysa Slay, Co-Founder & Co-Director of Camp Dogwood**

Dr. Alysa Slay is quite familiar with terms like “behavior management,” “positive reinforcement,” and “shelters.” She has a doctorate in Clinical Psychology and currently works as the Director of Psychological Services for a child welfare agency, as well as a consultant in the Clinical Division of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services. With over 10 years of experience working in, and consulting to, many summer camps for children, Alysa is excited to bring the “joys of camp” to dogs and their human companions. Alysa’s prior camp experience and knowledge of behavior has served as a strong foundation in the development of Camp Dogwood. Over the years, she has discovered many parallels between children and dogs. Primarily, both groups thrive when given love, opportunities for play, positive attention and a consistent environment. Although Alysa is new to life as an entrepreneur, she is excited to be incorporating her passion for dogs into her professional life. She derives pleasure and inspiration from her 4-year-old dog Forrest, a born camper. Together they volunteer in the Rainbow Animal Assisted Therapy program for children. Alysa’s writings have been published in [Chicagoland Tails](#) and the American Camping Association’s [Camping Magazine](#).

### **Dave Eisendrath, Co-Founder & Co-Director of Camp Dogwood**

Until the passing of his first four-legged love, Bitsy, Freelance Art Director Dave Eisendrath shared his office space freely with both of his dogs. Now, as he works, he knows that at any given point in time, Muddy is sure to be seated directly behind him, ready for anything. Dave’s wide variety of local and national clients provides him with a full range of projects in which to apply his creativity and unique “style.” His talents can be seen in logo development, publication & advertising design, as well as event marketing and promotion. Dave’s successes with publication design ([INSider Magazine](#), [Velocity](#)) and his avid love for his pets, allowed him to combine his passions by collaborating with publisher, Janice Brown, in creating the award-winning pet magazine, [Chicagoland Tails](#). Much like Camp Dogwood, this one-of-a-kind magazine is dedicated to “celebrating the relationships between pets and their people.” Regardless of how busy such projects may be for Dave, he always finds the time to pack up his car, alert the troops and get away from it all, by going camping. Knowing the joy camping brings to his dogs, and seeing the charge that dogs get from a change of pace, made any challenges in developing Camp Dogwood all worthwhile! Dave’s anticipation of any session is bittersweet, as he knows how much Bitsy—an inspiration for camp itself—would have loved the experience. As a best friend to “man’s best friend” and a true outdoorsman, these thoughts reaffirm his belief in the importance of a place “where a dog can be a dog.”

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## The Bark About Camp Dogwood

"[Camp Dogwood] feels like a family reunion with cool relatives you never knew you had."

*Chicago Tribune*

Nov. 4, 2001

"Camaraderie and bonding are important elements of the camp, both in terms of dogs, and their owners, and the fellowship among dog lovers."

*The News Sun*

Oct. 13 & 14, 2001

"We came here with limited expectations and left with the joy of knowing that this is the best experience we've had with our Kira."

*J. Polakoff*

Inaugural Camper

"...They offer just about every activity to give you and your winter-weary dog a great workout, from agility to lure coursing to swimming and canoeing-just an hour north of the city."

*The Bark*

Spring 2002

"The Directors of Camp Dogwood have been dedicated to dog related community organizations since day one. Their positive support of shelters, volunteer groups, and advocacy organizations shows a commitment to people as well as animals."

*Karen Okura*

Director of Behavior & Training  
Anti-Cruelty Society

"Dave and Alysa are taking the appropriate measures to ensure the safety and health of their canine campers while at Camp Dogwood."

*Jane Lohmar, DVM,*

Family Pet Animal Hospital

"At first we thought Dave and Alysa had gone a little crazy... maybe loved their dogs a little too much, but now seeing the success of Camp Dogwood, we think they're onto something."

*Sharon & Peter Eisendrath*

Dave's Parents

"The inaugural session of Camp Dogwood - billed as an overnight camp experience for people and their dogs - drew rave reviews from people from Oak Park to Vernon Hills to Milwaukee and as far away as Atlanta, Georgia who found yet another way to bond with their canine friends."

*Pioneer Press*

October 18, 2001

"Owners be prepared; the quest to win "best in show" is expected to be a dog-eat-dog competition."

*North Shore Magazine*

October, 2001

"It's truly a dog's life here, with wide-open fields, wet-lands, the beach, the woods, so much to see and do."

*Chicago Skyline*

August 9, 2001

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