

SIX DEGREES OF SEPARATION

by Suzi Beber

Suzi Beber founded The Smiling Blue Skies® Cancer Fund in 2001, after losing her Golden Retriever, Blues, to lymphoma. To honour his memory, and in gratitude for the care he received at OVC, Smiling Blue Skies has raised more than \$1.95 million to support Pet Trust's quest to find more and better ways to deal with canine cancer.



In these days and times, there are really no "six degrees of separation." We are all joined together, sharing the gifts of each day, despite life's challenges, and our pets are with us, every step of the way, to help shepherd us on this journey.

Often, I catch myself daydreaming about the myriad of past events, smiling and shedding happy tears when photographs of events, big and small, are posted on Facebook and Instagram. In May 2020, we would have been celebrating the 18th anniversary of the Calgary Walk, and sadly, the walk had to be cancelled due to COVID, but right now, plans are underway for Calgary's 2021 walk, whose "shape" has not been determined yet, but it promises to be extra special. I am also so thrilled with the work that the Smiling Blue Skies Toronto Community has been doing

during these challenging times, including the creation of wonderful Smiling Blue Skies masks, thanks to Kim and her team. As I ponder the past, I think about all the wonderful volunteers from coast to coast, who have made such a difference to my life and to the lives of so many others over the past 20 years.

Smiling Blue Skies is no different today than any other day. We offer 24/7 support to anyone whose life has been touched by cancer, but what is different, is that we are reaching out in more creative ways, learning together, to ensure that our dogs are getting the help they need, despite the uncharted waters that we are all trying to navigate. We are all in this together.

Our dogs are so remarkable. There are no would haves or could haves or should haves for our dogs. They live in the moment, and each of those moments is bursting with love and

devotion, all for us. There is an old quotation that says, "A dog is one of the few remaining reasons why some people can be persuaded to go for a walk." They teach us to always look up to the sky and to look at the flowers at our feet. They teach us to take a breath and bolster our courage. Every day we have our dogs is a precious gift. They truly are our miracles with paws, and with our dogs by our sides, we are better able to cope with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you to all the veterinarians and wonderful vet techs and all the other wonderful people in the veterinary world who continue to provide care and essential services to our pets.

Long live blue skies, where Hope is a kite and dreams really do come true. 🐾

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