

Assistance Dogs International Board Report June 2008

Members of the International Board

Peter Gorbing (Chair), Janet van Keulen (Vice Chair), Corey Hudson (Secretary), Wells Jones (Treasurer), Richard Lord, Linda Jennings, George Choi.

The Board has been working on a number of issues over the past year including:

1. Regional Development

ADI already has two active regional chapters – ADINA (North America) and ADEu (Europe). Both these chapters have their own boards which are engaged in developing a series of regional initiatives, most notably on access issues. The Board of ADINA are organizing a conference for January 2009 and the ADEu Board are working on setting up some trainer workshops in Autumn 2008 and a European conference in 2009.

The ADI Board have been supporting the development of three new regional chapters in Asia, Australia/NZ and Latin America. A number of programmes from Asia are meeting at the June conference and it is planned to hold a meeting for all programmes in Asia in late Summer 2008 with a view to setting up a regional chapter. This work is being led by George Choi and is supported by other members of the board. Richard Lord expects ANZAD (Australia/NZ Assistance Dogs) to be set up by Summer 2008 with at least six active members. Peter Gorbing is working with Teo Mariscal from the Bocalan Foundation in Spain to bring together programmes in Latin America. It is anticipated there will be a meeting for Latin American groups in Chile in early October and it is hoped to have a regional chapter in place within a year.

The regional boards will report on specific regional activities to their own members.

2. Animal Assisted Therapy Working Group

The AAT group has continued to work over the past year supported by the Board. A paper on the future of AAT will be discussed with the members during the conference.

3. Newsletter

The Board has continued to oversee the production of a regular members newsletter. Particular thanks must go to Nancy Olivas from Guide Dogs for the Blind (U.S.A.) for her work on the production of the newsletter.

4. Website

The website has been re-designed over the past year and now has more up-to-date information which can be more easily changed as required. Thanks go to Nancy Fierer for all her work on co-ordinating this development. There is still work to do to develop the website, including pages for the regions and this work will be led by the PR Committee.

5. Membership

Following the vote to make full membership of ADI dependent on being accredited after 2010, the Board have worked through many of the issues that this decision throws up. A paper from the Board on this issue will be discussed at the members meeting.

6. Accreditation

The Board have supported the work of the Accreditation Committee under the leadership of Corey Hudson to ensure that the infrastructure is in place to meet the 2010 deadline for compulsory accreditation. This has been a massive undertaking and Corey and his Committee are to be commended on their work throughout the year. The Accreditation Committee has worked hard at unifying the ADI and ADEu accreditation manuals as well as ensuring that good practice from the IGDF process is also incorporated.

7. Committees

Many of the ADI Committees are active throughout the year under the guidance of the Board to develop their areas of work. The Committees will report to the Members during the conference and Committee reports will be circulated to all Members once they have been compiled.

8. Election Issues

There will be no elections for the ADI Board this year. The three 'at large' members (Richard Lord, George Choi and Linda Jennings) have a four year term which ends in 2010. The other four members of the Board are elected by the regional Boards. Of these, Corey Hudson (North America) and Janet van Keulen (Europe) have a four year term which expires at the end of 2010. Peter Gorbing (Europe) and Wells Jones (North America) agreed to take an initial two-year term which expires at the end of 2008, enabling some overlap to be built into the Board. Both have expressed their willingness to stand for a further four-year term and this will be decided by their respective regional boards. It is hoped the Board membership will be extended during the next year by the appointment of representatives from the new regional boards in Asia, Australia/NZ and Latin America once they are operational.

9. Harmonisation

The Board has worked on a number of things to facilitate the development of the new structure, particularly the bringing together of ADI and ADEu. These include:

- Consolidation of the finances and accounts
- Worldwide insurance coverage for the existing ADI and ADI-NA boards. Members are not covered. ADI and ADI NA have Directors and Officers insurance and liability insurance in case, for example, someone trips on a dog and suffers an injury.
- Realignment of the membership fee year
- Implementation of the By Laws and procedures by the regional chapters.

ADI's Treasurer, Wells Jones will produce a separate Finance Report.

10. Small Programmes

The Board is aware of concerns from small some programmes that ADI does not meet their needs. The Board is actively trying to support small programmes through the following initiatives:

- The presentations given at the ADI Conference will be collated and made available to all ADI members.
- The Membership Committee is developing a comprehensive mentorship programme for all new members which will support small programmes develop their work, particularly in relation to the accreditation process.

- The new regional Boards are committed to the ongoing organisation of training such as Spirit Conferences and trainer workshops – and this will continue to benefit small programmes which may not be able to get to the biennial international conference. In addition, regions will hold a conference, or similar event in the years when there is not an international conference.

With regards to small programmes being active in ADI, the new structure means that there are now close to twenty people involved in the various regional and international boards and that number will grow considerably once new regional chapters are set up. This will give much greater opportunity for small programmes to get involved, and indeed, there are already regional and international board members from small programmes. It is hoped that other representatives from small programmes will come forward and take a leadership role in ADI.

11. The Role of an Executive Director

The Board is aware of the need for ADI to have an Executive Director as soon as possible and the proposed new fees structure is part of a plan to develop this role. The ADI workload on individual members of the Board is substantial and is not sustainable in the long-run without additional support.

12. Access and Advocacy

ADI is committed to advocacy work, particularly in the area of access. The Board has supported this work where appropriate, although the focus of this activity is, as envisaged in the re-organisation, at the regional level. We continue to work closely with IAADP on many access issues.

13. Conference Organisation

The organisation of the 20th ADI Conference has involved the Board in a lot of work. The work this year has been compounded by the fact that we are organising our conference in tandem with the International Guide Dog Federation which has required extensive liaison and communication. We are indebted to The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association in the UK who have been hugely supportive as the host organisation. To make the idea of a joint conference workable has required some changes to the way ADI structures the conference package and this has involved a considerable amount of work.

As ever, the Board is very grateful to Suzi Hall, ADI Co-ordinator, for her unflinching enthusiasm and work both during the conference period and throughout the year.

ADI Board
June 2008