

## Bancroft Walk for Dog Guides raises over \$5,000 locally



**By Michael Riley**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Bancroft Lions Club Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides, which happened on May 25, was a barking success. Now in its 40th year, the walk raised money to train dog guides for Canadians with various disabilities. Last year's walk raised nearly \$3,000 while this year they raised over \$5,000, according to Laverne Stapley with the Bancroft Lions Club. Stapley and Diane Slopek-Weber, interim director of marketing and communications with the Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides, comment on this event.

Starting at Riverside Park at the Santa House, the Bancroft Lions Club had a barbecue with hot dogs and refreshments for all attendees and their furry friends. A couple of representatives from Pet Valu, the walk sponsor, Diane and Rachel, were there with a backdrop to get photos of walkers and their dogs, and they also handed out gift bags. As of 1 p.m., Stapley informed Bancroft This Week that they had raised around \$4,000 with 53 donors, and had five dogs with their owners participating in the walk.

Bancroft Lions Club treasurer Kevin Anderson says that Lions Club member Herb Doran was one of the biggest donors they had.

?He collects scrap metals from three different businesses, mostly aluminum, and takes it to the recycler and he gets paid for it all. That money goes to the dog walk,? he says.

The Lions Foundation of Canada Dog Guides is an accredited not for profit that relies on its largest fundraising event the Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides, by providing Canadians with disabilities dog guides at no cost, to empower them and provide support. All proceeds from walks in Bancroft and across the country go towards the \$35,000 cost to breed, train and place a dog guide.

The LFCDG supports local communities like Bancroft with their Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides in the planning and execution of the walks and are given one on one support from the fundraising team, including promotional materials, liability insurance and any other assistance they need.

There has been a high demand for dog guides for many years, with one in five Canadians living with a disability, providing safety and independence they would not have otherwise. Thanks so sponsor Pet Valu, all the proceeds go directly back to dog guide programs. These programs are; canine vision, hearing, service, seizure response, autism assistance, diabetic alert, and facility support. Each walk is organized by local volunteers, in the spring and fall, with support from the LFCDG. To date the walks have raised over \$21 million. For more information, go to [www.dogguides.com](http://www.dogguides.com).

Slopek-Weber told Bancroft This Week a couple of weeks ago that the walk, being held in 200 plus communities across the country, is hoping to raise \$1.6 million this year, building on the \$1.3 million raised in 2024. She thanked Bancroft This Week for their support and for following up on May 28.

?There were many successful walks over the weekend. We're still calculating so I will get back to you once I speak with our events manager and find out when we might know the total,? she says.

Due to the incessant rain the day of the walk on May 25, attendees walked from the Santa House at Riverside Park to Pet Valu just down the road on Station Street, for a group photo and then back, forgoing a longer walk due to the elements.

When contacted by Bancroft This Week on June 2, Stapley said they were still tabulating the final numbers raised locally. By June 8, that total had reached \$5,197. Stapley thought the walk went extremely well.

?It was one of the best ones we've had,? he says.

Slopek-Weber told The Bancroft Times on June 3 that they are still waiting for all the money to come in and she's told they won't know the final amount until July.

?I can say this; we are thrilled and thankful to the thousands of Canadians (and their dogs!) who walked, organized, volunteered and donated to the 40th Anniversary of the Pet Valu Walk for Dog Guides! The funds raised go directly to the breeding, raising, training and matching of our Dog Guides, because of Pet Valu's generous sponsorship of the Walk,? she says. ?This means more Canadians living with physical and medical disabilities can receive these amazing Dog Guides at no cost, allowing them to live more independent, confident and safe lives.?