



ELDERDOG
CANADA

REGISTERED CHARITY-832404057RR0001

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**“Histories are more full
of the examples of
the fidelity of dogs
than of friends.”**

- Alexander Pope

About Us

Our History

ElderDog Canada grew out of Dr. Ardra Cole's research on caregiving and Alzheimer's disease—which revealed much about the significant role dogs play in the health and well-being of both people with dementia and their caregivers—her volunteer experience with animal-assisted therapy for seniors in long-term and palliative care, and a personal experience of human loss and love for an old and ill dog. Each of these experiences had a profound impact on her and, together, called her to take action. Her research-informed knowledge and professional commitment for research to make a difference in people's lives, a life-long commitment to volunteerism, and her personal knowledge of the power of the human-dog relationship gave birth to ElderDog Canada in 2009.



The sudden death of Ardra's older brother prompted an adoption into her family and canine pack of Mister Brown, an ageing Chocolate Labrador Retriever and her brother's companion. Laden with an inoperable, cancerous growth on one of his legs, Mister Brown eventually succumbed to the disease but not before enjoying a reawakening to life in the country. Other old dogs like Mister Brown typically are not as lucky. Considered unadoptable, ageing animals like Mister Brown often have doubtful futures. Ardra and her family's care of Mister Brown was as rewarding for them as it was enlivening for the old dog. He became the poster boy for the ElderDog "project" and his photo has become a symbol for ElderDog Canada.

Ardra Cole, the founder of ElderDog Canada, is a university professor with a background in educational psychology, teaching and learning, research methodologies, and adult education and community development. She has been a faculty member in universities for more than 30 years and has had a career-long commitment to making her research matter in people's everyday lives. Through her volunteer work in animal-assisted therapy with her beloved, now deceased, Tattoo, she observed the power of animal companionship at late and end of life. Ardra also has specialized training in pet loss and bereavement.

Other ElderDog directors and officials have lifelong experience with canine companions as well as a range of other, invaluable expertise including, for example, financial planning, journalism, community development, teaching, writing, and researching. Each is committed to making ElderDog a resounding success.

So it is that ElderDog Canada represents a coming together of two things: a recognition of the vital connection between older adults and their dogs and the importance of preserving the lives and dignity of older canines.

ElderDog Canada was federally incorporated as a non-profit organization in 2009 and became a registered charity in 2016.

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[ElderDog Newsletter – Summer 2012, 11 July 2012](#)

[ElderDog First Newsletter, 27 February 2012](#)