

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN A NON-PROFIT ANIMAL ASSISTED
THERAPY ORGANIZATION

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE DIVISION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII AT MĀNOA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

IN

EDUCATION

DECEMBER 2014

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to extend my deepest appreciation to my committee chair, Eileen Tamura for her patience, guidance, kindness and encouragement. She made the overwhelming aspects feel manageable, kept me organized, and helped me to set and reach goals during every step of this process. She was always available when I had questions and generously shared her time and knowledge to help me complete my dissertation.

Thank you also to the members of my dissertation committee. Ernestine Enomoto, thank you for your assistance with this study, especially with organizational theory and culture. Xu Di and Clifton Tanabe, I am grateful for the time, expertise and insight that you contributed to my dissertation. Special thanks to Andrew Arno who served as my outside committee member and whose time and feedback I greatly appreciated.

I would also like to thank the animal-assisted therapy organization and participants that were a part of this study. I truly enjoyed working with the organization and am inspired by the dedication and love that each of these individuals has for their animals and the community that they service. This is a wonderful organization that has touched many lives in Hawaii and it was a privilege to spend time with them over the course of this study.

Finally I would like to express my gratitude to my Dad, Mom, grandparents and family for their unconditional love and guidance over the years and for instilling in me the value of education and learning. To my husband Clinton Ono, thank you for your endless encouragement. Without your support and love this dissertation would not have been possible. To my son Caleb, you have provided me with the motivation to further my

education and to make a better life for our family. Thank you to Nikki Balsis for serving as my peer editor and most importantly for your friendship over the years. Finally to the past and present pets in my life: Sparky, Colbie and Sophia Petrillo – thank you for providing me with the inspiration for this study and for allowing me to experience the extraordinary bond between animals and humans.

ABSTRACT

Humans have a strong bond with companion animals. Many studies have indicated that pets have the ability to promote physiological, psychological and psychosocial well-being in humans. However, few studies have focused on the organizational culture of pet therapy organizations. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to describe the organizational culture of a non-profit animal-assisted therapy organization (Hawaii Therapy Animals or HTA) on Oahu and the impact that this organization has had on the community. Observations, field notes and informal interviews were conducted with the organization between 2011-2012. Formal interviews were conducted with 10 HTA members. Hahn's (2003) four levels of coding were used to identify categories and theoretical concepts. I used symbolic interpretivism as my theoretical perspective and analyzed data using Bolman and Deal's (2003) structural, human resource, political and symbolic framework and Martin's (1992) integration and fragmentation perspective. The findings of this study suggested that continued knowledge sharing in an organized manner may help to facilitate long-term effectiveness within an animal-assisted therapy organization as well as expand awareness of the human-animal bond to the general public. Community awareness may help to increase the acceptance of pet therapy programs into facilities, encourage individuals to certify their own pets as therapy animals, and increase donations directed at pet therapy organizations. Pet therapy can be beneficial for individuals confined in facilities because the pet therapy teams bring a piece of the outside world into their lives. Love of animals and benefits that therapy animals provide transcended age and socioeconomic status as similar feelings and emotions were observed from residents, patients and children in various facilities. Results

from this study may be useful for individuals interested in the human-animal bond who study animal centered organizations that service health care, retirement and educational facilities. Data from this study may also be used to help devise innovative ways that companion animals can be used to further promote the human-animal bond.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Humans have a strong bond with companion animals and can derive numerous benefits from interactions with animals (Valeri, 2006). Many studies have found that pets have the ability to promote physiological, psychological, and psychosocial well-being in humans. The act of petting or touching an animal can lower a person's heart rate and decrease blood pressure (Wells, 2009). Pets can facilitate social interaction, decrease muscle tension, anxiety, depression, loneliness, and psychosocial distress and increase relaxation (Friedmann & Son, 2009; Johnson et al., 2002).

According to Willis (1997, p. 78), animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is defined as “the introduction of an animal into immediate surroundings of an individual, or a group, as a medium of interaction with a therapeutic purpose.” Currently some human service professionals and health-care organizations provide animal-assisted therapy programs. According to Willis (1997), animals can be used for therapeutic purposes in three different ways. Animals can serve as companions for people who live in assisted living facilities or in their own home. They can also be utilized in institutions to stimulate and provide companionship for residents. Finally, animals may visit institutions with their handlers to provide a topic of conversation and facilitate residents' interest. Animal-assisted activities (AAA) are often used as a form of therapy. According to The Delta Society (2012), a renowned dog therapy organization, AAA is defined as “the casual ‘meet and greet’ activities that involve pets visiting people. The same activity can be repeated with many people, unlike a therapy program that is tailored to a particular person or medical condition.”

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this case study was to describe the organizational culture and dynamics within a non-profit animal-assisted therapy organization for staff members, volunteers, patients/residents and animals (dogs) at an animal centered organization (Hawaii Therapy Animals or HTA) on Oahu. In order to ensure confidentiality and privacy, pseudonyms were used when referring to organizations and participants throughout the study. I learned about this animal centered organization, the populations serviced, and the structure and strategies used to guide them. It was my hope that I would be able to highlight effective structures and strategies utilized by HTA and encourage innovative ways that companion animals can be used in Hawaii to further promote the human animal bond.

Currently, visitation programs throughout the United States are incorporating trained therapy dogs into hospitals, schools, health, rehabilitation and correctional facilities. According to Melson (2003), companion animals such as dogs can have an impact on cognitive, perceptual and language development, especially in youth. Companion animals can interest and motivate people and can promote curiosity. Animals also provide ideal learning opportunities. According to Melson (2003, p.34), “Animals are predictably unpredictable” and animal behavior symbolizes the “engine of all learning: cognitive incongruity, moderate discrepancy from established schema, and novel information.”

Companion animals also promote psychosocial development. Companion animals, particularly dogs, readily provide unconditional love. Love and acceptance by an

animal can promote self-efficacy, encourage a sense of trust in others, and decrease feelings of inadequacy and rejection (Fawcett & Gullone, 2001). Through interactions with animals, people can learn how to be more empathetic. For example, using an animal to teach empathy to a child is often easier than using another human since animals are more direct when expressing behaviors and feelings and display emotions more purely and intensely than humans (Fawcett & Gullone, 2001; Walsh, 2009). A greater sense of empathy towards animals can lead to more empathy towards other humans (Melson, 2003).

In this study I focused on HTA, an animal centered non-profit organization whose mission is to facilitate the human-animal bond through animal assisted activities and therapy at health, senior citizen, and educational facilities. Organizations of non-profit groups are typically centered on a social mission and promote values such as voluntarism and philanthropy (Sarros et al., 2010). According to Hudson (1999, p. 37), non-profit organizations “are at their most effective when the people involved share common values and assumptions about the organization’s purpose and its style of operation.” According to Acar et al. (2001), non-profit organizations tend to place a greater importance on social responsibility than for-profit organizations. Non-profit organizations find value in achieving a specific social purpose where as for-profit organizations measure their value in financial terms (Thach & Thompson, 2006).

Lettieri et al. (2004) discussed some of the specific challenges that non-profit organizations (NPOs) encounter. Lettieri et al. (2004, p.16) defined the non-profit sector as “all the organizations aimed at creating social value for society as a whole and which do not recognize as their main goal the creation of profit for stockholders.” NPOs are

often heterogeneous which makes it challenging to establish a clear guide as to how these organizations can be successful. Lettieri et al. (2004) identified the ability to appropriately manage available assets, such as knowledge, and creating an organizational culture that facilitates generation and sharing of knowledge as key factors to establishing NPOs that are effective and successful. Due to the high turnover rate and varying experience levels of volunteers that often work for NPOs, “knowledge-capital” (Lettieri et al., 2004, p. 17) within NPOs tend to be widespread, unstable and not formal. Creating a base of knowledge that is centralized, formal, and useable for all members of a NPO is difficult, but necessary in order to create an effective organization (Lettieri et al., 2004).

Research Questions:

In this study, I addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the organizational culture in a non-profit animal assisted therapy organization on Oahu?
2. What impact has the organization had on participants and the community that is serviced?

CHAPTER 2

THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND AND ITS PSYCHOSOCIAL AND PHYSIOLOGICAL BENEFITS

History of the Human-Animal Bond

The concept of the human-animal bond was first identified by Konrad Lorenz (a Nobel Laureate Professor) and Boris Levinson (Hines, 2003). Levinson wrote two books -*Pet-Orientated Child Psychotherapy* and *Pets and Human Development* – which greatly contributed in establishing the field of human-animal bond studies. The concept of the human-animal bond surfaced to a national and international level in the 1970s and 1980s during a series of conferences and publications (Hines, 2003). Positive implications of the human-animal bond were brought to the general public’s attention through various media campaigns, national and local newspapers, television, radio, and feature stories (Hines, 2003). Media coverage of service and therapy dogs has also shed awareness on the importance of the human-animal bond (Hines, 2003). Advancement of research in human-animal studies has been led primarily by those in veterinary medicine. In the past, the importance of the bond between animals and humans was not widely recognized by many professionals (Hines, 2003). Currently, researchers in fields such as sociology, psychology, and psychiatry are beginning to acknowledge the numerous psychological, social, and physiological benefits of the human-animal bond (Wells, 2009).

Psychosocial and Physiological Benefits

Companion animals can promote psychosocial development by providing unconditional love and acceptance. Love and acceptance by animals can increase self-

efficacy, encourage a sense of trust in others, and decrease feelings of inadequacy and rejection (Fawcett & Gullone, 2001). Companion animals also contribute to psychosocial well-being by facilitating social contact and interaction. Companion animals can serve as a “social lubricant” (Wood et al., 2007, p.48). A dog by a person’s side can function as an ice-breaker and provide a neutral topic of interest to facilitate conversation with others (Wood et al., 2007). A study by Lockwood (1985, p.380) found that “the presence of an animal can enhance the impression that others form of a person associated with the animal” by conveying messages about an individual’s personality. People are perceived to be friendlier and more approachable when they are with an animal (Messent, 1983). People who owned dogs also reported laughing more frequently than people who did not own dogs (Valeri, 2006). The actual or perceived behavior of dogs was found to create an enjoyable atmosphere conducive to laughter (Valeri, 2006). Laughter has important social implications and is believed to “reflect a mutually positive relationship between two people and serve to reinforce shared positive, affective experiences” (Valeri, 2006, p. 278).

Companion animals can also promote an overall sense of community. According to Wood et al. (2007, p. 50), “Pets increase the ‘out and about’ presence in neighborhoods and act as precipitants for initial contact and interaction between residents.” The “out and about” presence felt in neighborhoods can create a feeling of community safety. The sight of neighbors walking their dogs and greeting one another portrays a positive community image compared with “deserted streets and parks [which convey] negative impressions about safety, crime, and general sense of community” (Wood et al., 2007, p. 51). Companion animals can also promote reciprocity and

exchanging of favors between people. For example, neighbors may often ask one another to look after their pet while on a trip. Favors between neighbors involving pets may be “particularly symbolic of trust because of the love and attachment vested by people in their pets” (Wood et al., 2005, p. 1161).

Studies have suggested that “pets may hold long-term therapeutic benefits, preventing us from becoming ill, and even facilitating recovery from serious physical ailments” (Wells, 2009, p. 525). Companion animals promote physiological and psychological well-being through a variety of mechanisms. Attachments that humans form with animals are believed to positively affect psychological well-being, thus promoting increased physiological health (Wells, 2009). The process of caring for an animal can evoke a bond similar to the bond formed between a parent and child (Serpell, 2003). In the process of forming bonds with animals, humans often develop positive behaviors and feelings (Nagasawa et al., 2009). Animals can evoke feelings of well-being and create a sense of being loved. Animals “appear to miss us and to be happy to see us. They seek us out to be touched and, perhaps more importantly, to touch us and provide soft, warm, tactile contact with a living being” (Voith, 1985, p. 292).

Animals can also promote well-being in humans by serving as a source of social support. Social support is defined as “information leading one to believe they are loved, esteemed, and [belong] to a network of mutual obligation” (Wells, 2009, p. 531). Companion animals are often viewed as nonjudgmental, dependable, faithful, and providers of unconditional love (Wells, 2009). Positive support and relationships offered by companion animals can benefit human health by decreasing stress responses (Schwarzer & Leppin, 1991). A study of patients who received bone marrow transplants

showed that social support significantly affected patients' physical and emotionally well being (Hochhausen et al., 2007). Social support also had a positive impact on individuals recovering from coronary heart disease (Anderson et al., 1996).

Animals can promote human health and well-being indirectly. According to Friedmann and Son (2009), pet ownership is associated with improved cardiovascular health and function. People who own dogs tend to walk and exercise more than people who do not own pets. Walking with a dog can also stimulate the cardiovascular system more than walking alone (Friedmann & Son, 2009). Companion animals also have a calming effect. The sight of an animal can decrease tension and promote relaxation. Animals can serve as neutral visual stimuli, interrupt our thoughts and draw attention outward (Beck & Katcher, 1996). The calming effects of seeing an animal is one of the reasons behind the incorporation of fish tanks in many medical offices (Furst, 2006).

Concerns of Human-Animal Interactions

Although the human-animal bond can provide numerous psychological, social and physiological benefits to humans, the incorporation of animals into facilities may be met with concern and objections. The most common concerns of incorporating an animal into a facility are sanitation issues, safety considerations, allergies, cultural differences, and fear of dogs (Jalongo et al., 2004). The threat of transmitting zoonoses (infections and diseases that can be passed from animals to humans) is slim if proper measures are taken to ensure that the animal is clean, groomed, trained, and healthy and if humans adhere to safety measures such as washing their hands before and after interacting with the animal

(Brodie et al., 2002). Therapy dogs that are allowed into hospitals, schools, and other public facilities are typically evaluated to ensure that they are highly trained and have a nonthreatening temperament (Jalongo et al., 2004). Therapy dogs are also meticulously groomed and bathed prior to entering schools and hospitals in order to reduce the amount of animal dander, a common allergen. The amount of time spent with a dog can also be limited in order to minimize allergic reactions (Jalongo et al., 2004). Professionals who wish to incorporate dogs into their facilities need to realize that not all cultures view animals in an affectionate manner. Most people will react positively to a dog. However, care should be taken if an adult or child has a fear of dogs. A trained therapy dog that is gentle and calm may help to alleviate a person's fears, but interaction with the dog should never be forced (Jalongo et al., 2004).

Factors Influencing Attitudes towards Animals

An individual's reaction to a dog can be shaped by a variety of factors. According to Serpell (2004), people's attitudes toward animals are primarily influenced by affect and utility. Affect represents "people's affective and/or emotional responses to animals," while utility represents "people's perceptions of animals' instrumental value" (Serpell, 2004, p. 146). Factors such as specific animal characteristics, sex, education, urbanization, upbringing, religion, culture, socioeconomic status and the media can impact a person's affective or utility orientation towards animals (Herzog & Burghardt, 1988; Serpell, 1985).

Specific characteristics of an animal can influence people's perception. Animals that are perceived to be vulnerable (e.g., rare, sensitive, fragile) and animals that are aesthetically appealing or "cute", are often viewed in a positive manner. Animals that are phylogenetically close to humans, or animals that have a similar appearance, similar cognitive abilities, or behave in a human-like manner have a greater positive affect than animals who do not share these types of characteristics (Serpell, 2004).

People's perceptions of animals can also vary by gender, education level and prior experiences. According to several international studies, women's feelings towards animals tend to be influenced by affect, while men's attitudes are strongly influenced by utility (Kellert, 1980; Nakajima et al., 2002; Pifer et al., 1994). Individuals who have obtained higher levels of education and live in urban areas have attitudes towards animals that tend to be influenced by affect rather than utility (Serpell, 2004, p. 147). Affect and utility orientations are also influenced by exposure to animals at a young age. Children who experience positive relationships with animals early in life, tend to develop a stronger affective orientation and a weaker utility orientation towards animals (Serpell, 2004).

Religion may also impact people's perceptions of animals. A weak positive affective orientation towards animals appears to be connected to individuals who associate strongly with religion. These individuals typically have a greater utility orientation toward animals (Serpell, 2004). In the past, many religions tended to view dogs as "embodiments of the impure and the profane" (Menache, 1997, p. 37). A study by Menache (1997) found that dogs have traditionally been viewed in a negative manner in pagan, Christian, Moslem, and Jewish cultures. A human's attachment to dogs was

believed to be detrimental to the submission to God. It was also believed that “the emotional link between person and dog might weaken the former’s dependence on the clergy” (Menache, 1997, p. 25). In the Pagan tradition, dogs were viewed as “both loyal and treacherous, intelligent and stupid, vigilant and negligent” (Menache, 1997, p. 25). Kuon, the word for dog in Greek, was an insult and conveyed ideas of immodesty, cowardice, and arrogance. Transmission of rabies from dogs also evoked fear and hatred towards dogs (Menache, 1997). On the other hand, canines were also believed to hold therapeutic value. In other Greek mythology stories, dog meat and blood were thought to have curative effects, and were used to keep evil spirits at bay and ward off illness (Menache, 1997).

In Rabbinical literature, people were warned of owning an “evil dog”. An evil dog was considered one that “bites and barks” (Menache, 1997, p. 30). Evil dogs could cause harm to others, and cause their owner to violate a prohibition in the Bible (Deut, 22:8); “Do not place blood in your home” (Menache, 1997, p. 30). Owning pets was permitted only if it served a protective or economic purpose. Casual ownership of an animal that served no purpose was seen as a waste of time (Menache, 1997, p. 30). In the Jewish religion, “dogs were used to symbolize the pandemonium predicted to precede the coming of the Messiah and were placed in the unpleasant company of whores, witches, and schismatics” (Menache, 1997, p. 30).

Similar to Rabbinical literature, in Medieval Christendom, dogs were often looked down upon. Dogs were associated with the “repulsive instincts of people” and were identified with human sins such as “envy, sloth, gluttony, and lechery” (Menache, 1997, p. 33). Dogs were often associated with death and as “tools of divine punishment or as

messengers from the after-life” (Menache, 1997, p. 30). Dogs in medieval Islam were viewed as unclean. Black dogs in particular were believed to be symbolic of “demonic emanations of evil spirits” (Menache, 1997, p. 34).

Aside from the historical literature, other scholarly literature indicates that cultural factors can contribute to the perception of animals. Norms within cultures affect people’s attitudes and determine “socially unacceptable” and “socially sanctioned” treatment of animals (Herzog & Burghardt, 1988, p. 217). Serpell (2004, p. 148) divides cultural factors into four categories: “history, cultural/religious beliefs and values, culturally defining practices, and cultural representations.”

Another factor that can contribute to the perception of animals is their economic value. Serpell (1985) found a distinct link between the amount of affection towards a dog and the economic function of dogs. Serpell (1985) surveyed 43 cultures and found that about 75% of cultures viewed dogs in an affectionate manner. Dogs in these cultures often were not used for utilitarian purposes. When dogs were viewed affectionately, they were typically used for tasks that they performed instinctively such as hunting, guarding or herding livestock. Cultures that did not view dogs in an affectionate manner often used their dogs for utilitarian purposes. Dogs in these cultures tended to be used as a source of food, or used for tasks that involved hard labor, such as pulling sledges (Serpell, 1985). Serpell (1985, p. 114) concluded that “emotional attachments for dogs and the moral obligations they create can seriously interfere with our ability to exploit these animals either for food or arduous physical tasks.” People are typically reluctant to mistreat or consume an animal to which they have formed an attachment. This may explain why cultures in which dogs are viewed in an affectionate manner typically do not consume

dogs or use dogs for hard labor, while “non-affectionate” cultures generally do not have strong emotional attachments to dogs, consume dogs, and use dogs for strenuous labor (Serpell, 1985).

The socioeconomic status of a country also affects attitudes toward companion animals. In poor countries, providing basic necessities and care for humans is a higher priority than providing care for companion animals (Al-Fayez et al., 2003). It is difficult to shift attention to companion animals and their welfare when there are people starving in a country (McCrinkle, 1998). A quote by Bill Morrison stated: “The western dog has the purchasing power of 67 Third World children. Keep a dog and kill a couple of children” (Johns, 1992).

The media also has an impact on people’s attitudes towards animals. “The different ways in which animals are represented (or misrepresented) in art, language, literature, science, the media, and so on, are, at least to some extent, cultural constructs,” (Serpell, 2004, p. 149) and can influence people’s attitudes towards animals. For example, specific breeds of dogs found in the United Kingdom were viewed in a negative light as a result of how the print and broadcast media portrayed these animals to the public (Podberscek, 1994).

There are many factors that can influence attitudes towards animals such as liability and hygiene concerns, specific animal characteristics, upbringing, religion, culture, socioeconomic status and the media. Since the earliest research of the human-animal bond in the 1970s, studies have indicated that animals can provide a variety of psychological, physiological and social benefits to humans. These benefits include

unconditional love and acceptance, serving as a source of social support and facilitating learning and interaction with others. Professionals in various fields are beginning to acknowledge the capacity of animals to promote well-being in humans.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Organizational Theory

According to Gibson Burrell, a British sociologist, and Gareth Morgan, a British organizational theorist, organizational theory can be approached from multiple perspectives. In their book, *Sociological Paradigms and Organizational Analysis* (1979), they stated that different paradigms form the basis from which knowledge is created. Every person carries a set of beliefs, knowledge, and assumptions about the world that will affect how he or she goes about their research, manages organizations and interacts with other people.

There are three main perspectives of organizational theory: modernism, postmodernism, and symbolic interpretivism (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). In this study, I use the perspective of symbolic interpretivism. In order to gain an understanding of how symbolic interpretivism is similar and different to other organizational theory perspectives, background information on modernism and postmodernism will be briefly discussed. Comparing symbolic interpretivism to the modernist and postmodernist perspective will also show why the symbolic interpretivist perspective is the best fit for the purpose of my study.

Those from a modernist perspective believe that knowledge is objective. Truth and knowledge can be validated through information, facts, and reliable tools of measurement. From the modernist perspective, organizations are objective entities. “When well-designed and managed they are systems of decision and action driven by norms of rationality, efficiency and effectiveness for stated purposes” (Hatch & Cunliffe,

2006, p. 14). According to modernists, the goal of organization theory should be to establish universal techniques, laws and methods of organization and control based on standardized procedures, rules, and rational structures.

Postmodernists believe that reality is dynamic. Reality is continually shifting and changing; therefore, postmodernists do not seek truth. Knowledge is not an accurate representation of truth because meanings are not fixed. Postmodernists believe that there are only interpretations, and facts do not exist. Postmodernists do not subscribe to any ontological or epistemological beliefs. They believe that support of any type of philosophical belief would privilege one form of knowledge over another. The ethics of postmodernists have been strongly influenced by the works of Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida. According to postmodernists, organizations are places where irrationality, oppression and power relations occur. The goal of organization theory should focus on “reflexive and inclusive forms of theorizing and organizing” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006, p.14) so that viewpoints that are often oppressed or marginalized can be exposed.

Symbolic interpretivists believe that knowledge is subjective and shifts over time. Meaning and interpretation are derived by assessing the context in which they occur. Symbolic interpretivists believe that organizations are not objective entities, but are socially constructed through multiple perspectives by members and are “continually constructed and reconstructed by their members through symbolically mediated interaction” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006, p. 14). According to symbolic interpretivism, the goal of organization theory should be to assess how people derive meaning and give order to experiences that occur within a specific context.

Symbolic-Interpretivism

The roots of symbolic-interpretivism started with concerns from the field of anthropology in the 1980s. Questions arose as to whether anthropologists were accurately representing indigenous cultures. Rather than hearing the voice of indigenous cultures, many believed that anthropologists were imposing their own cultural understandings and agendas in their representations (Clifford & Marcus, 1986). *The Interpretation of Culture*, by anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973), helped to shape the way that symbolic-interpretivists began to study organizations. Geertz's ideas stressed the importance of context and thick description when studying cultures. Organizational theorists began to apply Geertz's interpretive ethnographic methods to studies of organizations (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

The core of symbolic-interpretivism is centered on the belief that as members of an organization interact and make sense of their experiences, organizational realities are produced. Symbolic-interpretivists examine specific situations and observe how people communicate and derive meaning. It is crucial to study context and look at multiple perspectives since meanings can be interpreted differently by various individuals. According to Hutch and Cunliffe (2006), meaning is embedded in artifacts, symbols and in human interactions. Verbal and/or written language is one of the most common ways that individuals communicate their understanding of reality. When taking a symbolic-interpretivist approach, it is important to address how meaning is created by members of an organization through interpretations of interactions, rituals, symbols and stories. Symbolic-interpretivists also address how individuals within a group produce multiple interpretations and what influence their own cultural context has on these interpretations.

Finally, symbolic interpretivists study how multiple interpretations of individuals come together to produce an organizational reality that is socially constructed (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

The symbolic-interpretive perspective in organizational theory was strongly influenced by the sensemaking and enactment theory, the social construction theory, and reflexivity. Karl Weick, an American social psychologist, contributed to the idea of social construction in organizations with his sensemaking and enactment theory. Weick (1995) suggested that members of an organization form cognitive maps and images of experiences in their minds. They form images and maps in order to make sense of experiences. According to Weick (1979), the purpose of sensemaking is to order experiences in our mind in a way that helps us to make sense of our lives and navigate our way through the social world. According to Weick's (1979) enactment theory, members of an organization socially construct organizational realities as they attempt to make sense of their experiences as it is happening and in retrospect. Members of an organization then act, based on their analysis and understanding of what has occurred.

Two of the most influential sociologists to contribute to the social construction theory were Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann. Berger and Luckmann (1966) suggested that our social world is constructed, organized and negotiated through people's interpretations of what is occurring around them. Social reality is created and maintained through symbolism, such as conversation and language. Symbolism creates the area in which intersubjective meaning can be developed. The process of social construction consists of externalization, objectification and internalization. Through social interaction with other people, humans "externalize meanings as both personal and shared realities"

(Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006, p.44). Through intersubjectivity of those who have externalized meanings, realities are perceived as objective. Members within an organization internalize the social constructions of the group and will socialize new members to follow these social constructions of reality. New members in turn will continue this process by externalizing, objectifying and internalizing the group's social constructions and encouraging future members to do the same, thus perpetuating this construct of reality (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

Reflexivity in organizational studies focuses on the need for researchers to study their beliefs, conduct, and how they make sense of their findings. Researchers need to examine how organizational and social realities are constructed and how meaning is derived from interactions and use of language. James Clifford and George Marcus were anthropologists who emphasized the need for reflexivity in their book, *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. According to Clifford and Marcus (1986), research accounts are considered partially fiction because they are written from the perspective of researchers who have their own interests, vocabulary, perspective, and interpretations. This can be problematic if the members of the organization that was studied do not share the same vocabulary, have the same values, or have the same interpretations as the researchers.

Research in Organizational Culture

According to Connor (1980, p. 3), “formal organizations are social instruments for accomplishing goals.” The culture of an organization can be defined as the meanings and worldview that are shared among members of the organization. The worldview of an

organization helps to dictate the activities in which an organization engages. Factors that influence the culture of an organization can include norms, assumptions, artifacts, and beliefs (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). The culture of an organization is dependent upon the relationship between the organization and the environment that they operate in as well as the members who belong to the organization. Members who belong to the organization bring with them a set of unique values, skills, and identities.

Within an organization, a subculture may exist. Subcultures within an organization may arise around shared interests or similar occupational, ethnic, gender or racial identities. Subcultures may also arise through the frequency of interactions between members in an organization (Van Maanen & Barley, 1984).

According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2006, p. 244), “organizational identity refers to members’ experiences of and beliefs about the organization as a whole.” Organizational identity is shaped by past actions and future goals of the organization and is also impacted by impressions that stakeholders have of the organization. The identity of an organization can be uncovered by asking a member of the organization questions such as ‘Who are we?’, ‘What do we want to be?’, and ‘What business are we in’ (Albert & Whetten, 1985). According to Hatch and Schultz (2002), organizational identities are dynamic and change over time. Increased and advanced technology has led to easier access and greater scrutiny of cultures and identities of organizations. As a result members of organizations hear judgments, opinions, and feedback from stakeholders with a greater amount of frequency than in the past (Hatch & Schultz, 2002).

Clues of the identity, culture, and social structure of an organization can be uncovered by observing physical elements of an organization. Physical structures of an

organization can have important symbolic implications and can impact a person's thoughts and feelings about an organization. Symbolic messages transmitted through physical structures can be intentional or unintentional. A physical element that is commonly assessed by organization theorists is organizational geography.

Organizational geography refers to the distribution of the organization and the features of the location in which it exists. The distribution of an organization encompasses all the locations where business is conducted. These locations can include facilities where members of the organization visit, as well as locations or facilities visited by suppliers, clients, and other stakeholders. An organization with a large distribution has a large geographic extent. Organizations with larger geographic extents require a greater amount of time to coordinate activities and communicate with members than organizations with smaller geographic extents (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

Geographic features and human geography can also impact an organization's identity. Population density and the presence of various ethnicities and demographics are examples of geographic features that are commonly assessed when studying an organization. Geographic locations and groups of people often are connected with specific images and reputations that may influence the way that they are perceived (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006).

Part of the identity of an organization is how it is run. There are various sources of power that exist within an organization. Power, according to Robert Dahl (1957, p. 203), is defined in the following manner: "A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that he would not otherwise do." One source of power that exists within organizations is authority, which is frequently connected to hierarchy within an

organization. A main distinction between authority and alternative sources of power is that within an organization, authority is directed downward. Alternative sources of power can be directed downward, upward and laterally. Alternative sources of power that can exist within organizations include expertise, such as knowledge, information and skills that may be in demand and personal characteristics such as a strong work ethic or charismatic personality. Other sources of power include coercion and the ability to exert control over critical or scarce material resources such as raw materials, budgets, physical space, or technology. Opportunity or the ability to access people in powerful positions is also a source of power (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). According to Melville Dalton (1959), individuals at lower levels within an organization often hold substantial power in their relationships with individuals in higher levels or in positions of authority by utilizing alternative sources of power.

According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2006, p. 251), “conflict is a manifestation of the continuous struggle over control that power relations imply.” Karl Marx strongly influenced power theorists who believe that the basis of organization is conflict and not cooperation. According to Walton and Dutton (1969), conflict in organizations may arise due to several conditions. Conflict may arise when members in an organization have individual differences. Individual differences could pertain to gender, ethnicity, beliefs, socioeconomic status, age, or differences in personality. When individual rewards and distinguishing individual performance are strongly emphasized, the performance of the organization as a whole may suffer. Conflict may arise as members of the organization seek individual recognition rather than working together collaboratively as a group. Conflict can arise when members of an organization are forced to rely on one another in

order to complete a task. Interdependence on one another, and the lack of contribution from one member of a group can cause feelings of resentment within the organization. Scarcity of a shared pool of resources can also create conflict. Resources can include funding, equipment, space, or support services. Acquiring scarce resources can also be indicative of the amount of power or status an individual has which can further contribute to conflict within an organization (Walton & Dutton, 1969).

Along with analyzing the identify of an organization, the effectiveness of an organization is often assessed. One way to examine the effectiveness of an organization is to look at whether the goals of the organization are being met. A key component that facilitates long-term effectiveness within an organization is the ability to learn and share knowledge among members of the organization. Sharing of knowledge can help members of an organization to reflect on their actions and behaviors, gain insight into the environment in which they operate, and help members to act and respond appropriately in accordance with the goals of the organization (Jones & Munro, 2005). According to Yang (2007, p. 83), “knowledge sharing occurs when an individual is willing to assist as well as to learn from others in the development of new competencies.” A study by Yang (2007) determined that there was a positive relationship between sharing of knowledge and organizational learning. Yang also determined that organizational learning and knowledge sharing were significantly related to the effectiveness of an organization. Studies by Li and Gao (2003) and Caddy et al. (2001) also indicated similar findings between organizational effectiveness and knowledge sharing. Yang (2007) noted that it is important to establish a mechanism for storing knowledge and information that members of an organization have collectively learned in order for an organization to be effective.

Sharing of knowledge can promote advanced learning and greater insight that in turn can lead to a more effective and innovative organization. Knowledge sharing was a key component in the organizational culture of HTA and was frequently observed during this study. Knowledge sharing within HTA will be discussed further when analyzing the organization.

One way that knowledge can be shared among individuals, groups, and organizations is through the use of stories and storytelling. Tobin and Snyman (2008, p. 133) defined a story within a business context as “a sequence of decisions, actions or events (past, present or future, real or imaginary), which involve characters (named or unnamed), in an organization where a business challenge or opportunity must be addressed.” Storytelling is defined as the method in which a story is told (Tobin & Snyman, 2008) and may occur in a written and/or oral format with or without the aid of various media tools. There are several benefits of using stories and storytelling to convey information. Stories are an effective method to convey tacit knowledge (Swap et al., 2001), reason, emotion and meaning (Kaye & Jacobson, 1999). The act of storytelling enables individuals to communicate in a natural, entertaining and interactive manner (Denning, 2000). Stories convey knowledge in a form that is more memorable than abstract ideas alone (Wilkins, 1984). Tobin and Snyman (2008) completed a case study of storytelling and knowledge sharing in a large South African mining community. Tobin and Snyman (2008) found that storytelling was used to achieve a number of objectives such as building and improving teamwork and productivity, creating a visionary focus, and facilitating customer relations and improved leadership. Storytelling occurred frequently during the course of this study. Storytelling was used by participants to relay

information about their experiences with HTA and pet therapy. Storytelling was also a technique used by HTA participants to form connections with patients, residents, and other members within the organization.

Multiple Perspectives in Organizational Culture

When examining the culture of an organization, a greater understanding can surface when the organization is viewed from more than one perspective. Martin (1992) details three social scientific perspectives that can be used when studying organizational culture. Martin's three perspectives include integration, differentiation, and fragmentation.

The integration perspective focuses on cultural unity. According to Martin (1992, p. 45), the integration perspective is based upon the following defining characteristics: "organization-wide consensus, consistency, and clarity." Members within a culture share a set of content themes such as basic assumptions or values. These shared content themes are consistently exhibited through a diversity of cultural manifestations. Members of the organization are knowledgeable of what they are doing and why they are doing it.

The differentiation perspective explores power and conflict that can exist in organizations. According to Martin (1992, p. 83) the differentiation perspective is based upon the following defining characteristics: "inconsistency, subcultural consensus, and the relegation of ambiguity to the periphery of subcultures." The differentiation perspective recognizes that practices, forms, and themes can be inconsistent in an organization. Those from the differentiation perspective are wary about consensus that

appears to occur throughout the organization. According to this view, it is more realistic to believe that subcultural consensus exists rather than organization-wide consensus.

The fragmentation perspective looks at the complexity of cultural relationships. According to Martin (1992, p. 130), the fragmentation perspective is based on the following defining characteristics: “a focus on ambiguity, complexity of relationships among manifestations, and a multiplicity of interpretations that do not coalesce into a stable consensus.” Unlike the integration perspective that ignores ambiguity or the differentiation perspective that pushes ambiguity to the periphery of subcultures, the fragmentation perspective places ambiguity in the spotlight. Rather than coming to a clear consensus, the fragmentation perspective often offers a variety of interpretations. While the differentiation perspective identifies clear subcultures in organizations, those from the fragmentation perspective view the boundaries of these subcultures as fluid and changing in response to the environment around them. Organizational culture is viewed as a “web of individuals, sporadically and loosely connected by their changing positions on a variety of issues” (Martin, 1992, p. 153).

In this study, I use the integration and fragmentation perspective when analyzing the culture of HTA. The differentiation perspective was not included in my analysis of data for this study. A main focus of the differentiation perspective is on subcultural consensus and inconsistency. After conducting observations and collecting data, the amount and extent of subcultures in HTA did not appear to warrant analysis using the differentiation perspective. Inconsistencies and differing perspectives are explored using the fragmentation perspective. The fragmentation perspective was also used to discuss the complexity of cultural relationships and conflict within HTA. Using the integration

perspective I look at themes and issues that are prevalent within the organization. Data from this study using these two perspectives are discussed further in the analysis section of this dissertation.

Frames for Analysis

Bolman and Deal (2003) suggest different frames that can be used to study organizations. According to Bolman and Deal, a frame is a set of assumptions or ideas that an individual can use to help clarify and understand a particular issue or topic. Frames can also be used as a navigation tool. Bolman and Deal detail four types of frames: the structural frame, the human resource frame, the political frame and the symbolic frame.

The structural frame focuses on the social architecture of an organization. The structural view is based upon six assumptions. First, the existence of organizations is based on the need to attain established objectives and goals. Second, efficiency within an organization can increase and performance can be enhanced through division of labor and specialization. Third, appropriate types of control and coordination are needed in order to ensure that efforts of members within the group come together. Fourth, rationality, not outside pressures or personal preferences, should always be at the forefront. Fifth, the structure of an organization should be designed to appropriately match the circumstances of that organization. For example, structures should fit the objectives, environment and workforce of an organization. Finally, structural deficiencies, which can lead to

performance gaps and other problems, can be fixed by careful analysis and restructuring (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

The human resource frame focuses on the relationship between characteristics and members of an organization. The human resource framework is based on the following assumptions. First, the existence of organizations is based on the need to meet human needs. Second, people and organizations have a mutualistic relationship. People bring their energy, ideas and talents to organizations. In return, organizations provide people with salaries, opportunities and careers. Third, a poor fit between an individual and the organization can have a detrimental impact on both parties involved. An ideal fit between an individual and an organization is mutually beneficial to both parties. The individual can find fulfillment in the work that he or she puts forth, and in return, an organization can thrive due to the energy and talent put forth by the members (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

With the political frame, organizations are perceived as locations where a diverse mix of individual and group interests exists. The political frame is based on the following assumptions. First, organizations are made up of a variety of interest groups and individuals. Second, interests, values, beliefs, perceptions of reality, and information among members within an organization can vary. Third, the majority of crucial decisions within an organization center on the allocation of resources that are scarce. Fourth, allocation of scarce resources and differences among members within the group lead to conflict. Conflict is central to the dynamics in an organization. Therefore the most valued asset in an organization is power. Finally, competing stakeholders determine goals and

decisions through “bargaining, negotiation, and jockeying for position” (Bolman & Deal, 2003, p. 186).

The symbolic frame examines how humans make sense of the world that they live in. The symbolic frame focuses on beliefs, meaning, and faith. The symbolic frame is rooted in the following assumptions. First, value is placed on meaning and less on what actually happened. Second, multiple meanings can be derived from an event because people will not interpret experiences in the same manner. Third, symbols are created by people to help provide predictability, clarity, direction, and increased faith in times of ambiguity or uncertainty. Fourth, processes and events are often valued not for what is produced, but instead for what is expressed. For example, cultural ceremonies, rituals, myths and stories can provide people with a sense of passion and purpose in their lives. Finally, shared beliefs, values, and culture are the binding factor in an organization that helps bring people together (Bolman & Deal, 2003).

In the analysis section of this dissertation I use the structural frame to look at the social architecture of the organization and the human resource frame to examine connections between characteristics of the organization and its members. I use the political frame to explore allocation of resources, conflict and the variety of interest groups within HTA. The symbolic frame is used to analyze how individuals create meaning in the world around them.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

Site of Study

Hawaii Therapy Animals (HTA) is the organization that was used for this study. HTA was selected for the services it provides to the community as well as its location on Oahu. HTA is a non-profit, animal assisted therapy program located in Honolulu, Hawaii. The goal of HTA is to facilitate the human-animal bond through animal assisted activities and therapy at schools, hospitals, hospices, private homes, nursing homes and libraries. HTA also offers other services such as finding homes for pets that have lost their owners, assisting the homeless population and their animals, and assisting animal organizations during the event of a natural disaster or emergency.

Since HTA members visit numerous facilities through their work I observed and gathered data from as many different facilities as possible. According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2006), organizational geography includes all locations where business is conducted. Facilities visited during this study included state-run care homes housing residents of various socioeconomic status and private care homes catering to the most affluent residents on Oahu. I also conducted observations in public and private schools and visited several hospitals located throughout Oahu.

Role of Researcher

Since this is a qualitative study, I served as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. My role as a researcher was to give participants of the organization a voice and to make sense and interpret the meanings that animals hold for

them. As a researcher, I needed to establish a rapport and develop trust with participants. According to Patton (2002, p. 366), rapport is based upon “the ability to convey empathy and understanding without judgment.”

I viewed myself as both an insider and outsider in this study. I was an insider because I am a long time pet owner and have experienced the various emotions often associated with the human-animal bond. I related and empathized with many feelings that participants felt towards the animals in the organization. I was also an outsider because I only spent a few months volunteering with HTA and did not have any knowledge or experience with the organization prior to the start of this study. My dogs are not certified therapy dogs and I have not spent a lot of time volunteering at hospitals, care homes or retirement facilities.

Since this was a qualitative case study, generalization could not be made in the same manner as in a quantitative study. Generalization will most likely be done by interested practitioners rather than myself (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). My role as a researcher was to draw conclusions that presented ideas that can be discussed, shared and further investigated by other researchers, as such, focus was more on transferability rather than on generalizations.

My Background and Beliefs

Before conducting my study, it was important to explicitly state my background, beliefs and biases. According to Jones et al. (2006, p. 102-103), “Understanding one’s standpoint and position before entering into a research project is imperative so as to guard

against hearing, seeing, reading, and presenting results that conform to the researcher's experiences and assumptions about self and other, rather than honoring the participants' voice in the study." Hatch and Cunliffe (2006, p. 47), suggested that reflective researchers ask the following questions: "what are the assumptions underlying my research design; how do they influence the way I see the world and carry out my research; what impact does this have on knowledge in general and on those studied?"

Animals have always been a part of my life. I grew up with a variety of pets ranging from dogs and rabbits to Jackson chameleons and frogs. My love for animals has carried on into my academic and professional life. I obtained a Master of Science degree in Animal Science and a Bachelor of Science degree in Zoology. I was also a volunteer at the Hawaiian Humane Society for several years and as a college student I worked with Hawaiian monk seals and completed my thesis research on Alaskan harbor seals. I currently work as a marine science teacher at a public high school.

My past experiences have led me to strongly believe in the capacity of animals to provide physiological, psychological and social benefits to humans. I believe that humans can learn many life lessons from all animals, especially from dogs. Dogs can teach us about responsibility, patience, loyalty, and unconditional love. My dogs have reminded me about the importance of enjoying and appreciating the simple things in life, living in the present moment, showing affection to those you love, and not judging a person based on outward appearance. I believe in the beneficial impacts that animals can have on humans both physically and psychologically. This is one of my main personal biases that I brought into this study. Throughout the course of the study I attempted to bracket out my feelings and approached the study as reflectively as I could.

Study Design

I used a case study approach when conducting my research. In case study research, “the investigator explores a bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information” (Creswell, 2007, p. 73). The goal of a case study is to create a detailed description and analysis of a case or multiple cases (Creswell, 2007).

Specifically, I used an intrinsic case study. An intrinsic case study is used when the case presents a situation that is unique or unusual (Creswell, 2007). An intrinsic case study is appropriate because the composition of volunteers, members and animals that make up HTA and the populations that they serve are unique. HTA is one of the few animal assisted therapy programs that can be found on Oahu.

Symbolic-interpretivism was the perspective that was best suited for the purpose of this study, specifically to examine an organization from multiple viewpoints and learn how the organization functions. I also looked at the population that the organization services and focused on the structures and strategies that are used to guide them. I did not follow the modernist view that knowledge is “objective”. Instead I took the position, like postmodernists, that knowledge is not an accurate representation of truth because meanings are not fixed. Even more I used the approach of symbolic-interpretivists who believe that reality can be comprised of experiences that cannot be smelled, tasted, touched or heard. Like symbolic-interpretivists, I believe that meaning and understanding should be assessed in the context in which they were produced. Data collected during this study are not easily replicated. Rather than focus on generalizability, symbolic-

interpretivists believe that the value of their findings is verisimilitude or “the resonance of one’s own experience with the experience of others” (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006, p.15).

Conducting the Research

Research conducted within organizations pose several unique features.

Organizations are bounded systems and in order to conduct a study, a researcher must gain access into that system. Ethical issues may also arise when conducting research within an organization since the researcher is often interacting with individuals who work within a formal structure. Organizations consist of different levels such as the overall organization, departments within the organization, and individuals who work in each department. Assessment between and among these different levels within the organization may pose additional problems for researchers (Bulmer, 1988).

According to Buchanan et al. (1988), there are several important factors to consider when conducting research with an organization. The first factor is gaining access to the organization. Buchanan et al. (1988) suggest ways that a researcher can effectively gain access to an organization. Gaining access to an organization may take a great deal of time, therefore, the researcher should plan appropriately. When possible, Buchanan et al. suggest that the researcher utilize acquaintances, friends, and family members to help gain access into an organization. When explaining the purpose and nature of your study it is important to use language that is not threatening. Words such as “research”, “interview” and “publish” may carry negative connotations. Phrases such as ‘learn from your experience’ and ‘write up an account’ may come across as less

threatening. As a researcher it is important to be mindful of concerns and reservations that participants may have. Organizations may be hesitant to participate if they believe that their normal operations will be disrupted by the researcher's presence, or if they feel that confidential material will not be secured. Researchers may also want to offer a report of the findings to the organization after the conclusion of the study.

In order to gain access for my study, I contacted the founder and president of HTA and explained that I was a graduate student and that I was interested in pet therapy and learning more about her organization. She invited me to come down to observe some of their visitation sessions and talk with some of the volunteers there. After sitting in on a few visitation sessions, I asked her if she would be open to having me observe visitations at other facilities and talk with HTA members about their experiences with pet therapy and the organization itself. The founder was very open and receptive about inviting me into the HTA community.

The second factor that Buchanan et al. (1988) identified when conducting research in an organization was establishing effective relationships between the researcher and members in the organization. The researcher should possess a sincere desire to learn more about the lives and experiences of his or her participants and the organization that is being studied. Personal questions concerning participants' experiences, feelings and opinions may need to be asked. The researcher should be aware that members within an organization will be speaking from different points of power and influence and may feel vulnerable at times. When communicating and responding to participants, the researcher should take a non-evaluative stance. Buchanan et al. suggest that the researcher ask the organization to select a link person. The link person should be

contacted to help arrange interviews with participants and help the researcher collect pertinent documents from the organization. The link person can serve not only as an important source of information, but also as a representative who can communicate the progress of the researcher to members of the organization.

Forming relationships with members of HTA came naturally. The majority of people I interacted with were open and easy to talk to. I shared a love for animals with them so this similarity made it easy to form connections. Initially I became close with a few HTA members and would shadow them on their visits to various facilities. As we got to know each other better they would suggest others who might be useful to interview and observe as they could provide different perspectives. The majority of data were collected during the summer months. I had volunteered with an HTA member during the summer a year prior to beginning my study. This HTA member served as my link person due to my prior relationship and experiences with him. He was an experienced member of the organization and had a close relationship with many of the other HTA volunteers. He was also an invaluable source for providing documents and other sources of information that were used in this study.

Eventually the researcher will need to find an effective way to withdraw from the organization. Data collection can continue indefinitely. Therefore Buchanan et al. (1988) suggest setting a date when the researcher will stop collecting data. The researcher should inform the organization of the date when the study will end and should establish a way to return back to the organization if necessary to gather additional data or clarify information that was previously collected. If a follow-up visit to the organization is necessary, it is important that the researcher renegotiate an appropriate time to return.

Researchers should not assume that they have been given permanent access to an organization.

Withdrawing from HTA was a gradual process. Once the majority of data had been collected, I returned to work as a full-time teacher and within a few months had given birth to my first child. HTA participants were aware of the purpose of my observations, my job, as well as the upcoming arrival of my child. They also knew that I did not have a suitable dog to participate in visitation sessions and that I would no longer be involved with HTA once I had finished collecting my data. Before concluding my time at HTA, I made sure to personally thank everyone who participated in my study. I also asked if it would be alright to contact them should I need additional information. There are a few HTA members who live in my neighborhood and one member who I knew prior to beginning my study. I have run into some HTA participants after the conclusion of my study and have talked with them about their dogs and also about the current activities that HTA is involved with. I enjoyed my time with HTA and intend to volunteer with them when I have a suitable therapy dog.

Data Collection

Diverse perspectives were desired for this study so maximal variation sampling was used. Maximal variation sampling involved purposefully selecting individuals that represented a variety of characteristics and perspectives (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). Individuals selected for this study included the founder of the organization, volunteers, and members of the community impacted by HTA. Informal interviews and observations

were conducted with numerous HTA volunteers. However, only 10 formal interviews were recorded. Participants included males and females and varied in age. All participants were at least 18 years or older. Limiting the number of participants in the study allowed me to have an adequate amount of time to gain a deep understanding of each participant's point of view. Below is a description of the 10 participants that I interviewed formally. All names of people, animals and organizations are pseudonyms.

- "Gabby": Gabby is the founder and director of HTA. Gabby oversees all events and manages the day-to-day activities. Aside from managing HTA, Gabby also works full time in the administrative department at "Kokua Care Home", a nursing home facility located on Oahu. Gabby is in her 50s, is not married and does not have children.
- "Jake": Jake is a retiree in his 60s who previously worked for the state of Hawaii. In college, Jake received a degree in medical technology. Jake grew up with animals as a child but became involved with therapy work when his mother was in hospice care. Aside from volunteering with HTA since 2009, Jake enjoys surfing during his spare time. Jake recently got married, but has no children. Jake volunteers with his dog, Harper.
- "Lily": Lily grew up with dogs her entire life. Prior to volunteering with HTA beginning in 2009, she was involved in a number of other volunteer organizations including hospice care and search and rescue organizations. She has a full time job and spends much of her time taking care of her elderly mother who has dementia. Lily is approximately 50 years old. She was

previously married but is currently divorced and has no children. Lily volunteers with her dog Simba.

- “Kailey”: Kailey had one dog as a child but did not feel a close connection with the animal. It was only after she began working with animals in college and became involved with dog training that she began to experience the close companionship that pets had to offer. Kailey moved to Oahu as an adult from Japan. Although Kailey is proficient in English, she speaks with an accent and sometimes cannot find the appropriate English word to express herself. Kailey is in her 40s, married, but has no children and is not employed. Due to restrictions in her apartment, Kailey does not have any pets. She has been involved with HTA since 2010 and volunteers with her friend’s dogs Amy and Gia.
- “Madison”: Madison did not have pets growing up and only became involved with volunteer work because her dog, Bailey, loved interacting with people. Madison joined HTA in 2010. Madison is approximately 50 years old and works full time in the medical field at a local hospital. She is married and has two adult children.
- “Stacy”: Stacy is in her 60s and works full time as a teacher at a local public high school. Stacy has always had animals in her life. Prior to joining HTA in 2011, Stacy was already using her previous dog Callie for therapeutic purposes at the school where she was teaching. Stacy is married and has three adult children. She volunteers at HTA with her dog Bronx.

- “Jase”: Jase has been with HTA since 2008. Jase is a married retiree in his 60s. Jase volunteers with his dog Bella who was born without her two front legs. As a child, Jase had numerous animals and dogs. He did not think about becoming involved with pet therapy until he got Bella.
- “Jenny”: Jenny is a senior at a local public high school. She began volunteering with HTA to fulfill a requirement for a senior project that she was completing on pet therapy. Jenny volunteers with her guinea pig, Bean.
- “Lauren”: Lauren is a recent retiree in her 50s. She has been volunteering with HTA since 2012. Prior to volunteering at HTA, Lauren volunteered for many years with her dog Isla at a military hospital on Oahu in their pet therapy program. Lauren spends much of her time caring for her mother who has Alzheimer’s disease. Isla is a representative of the kid’s chapter of the American Red Cross Heart Walk. Both Lauren and Isla participate in events hosted by the American Red Cross.
- “Kacy”: Kacy is the daughter of a resident who received visits from HTA members. She is in her 50s. Kacy’s father Randy was a resident at “Elite Senior Care”, an affluent care home on Oahu. Kacy spent numerous hours with HTA members and their dogs during visits with her father. Kacy is also a volunteer at the Elite Senior Care facility and helps to care for the residents. She has first hand interaction with the residents and is knowledgeable about residents’ experiences with the HTA pet therapy program and visitation teams.

Prior to officially beginning this study I volunteered and shadowed some members during the summer of 2011 to learn more about the organization. Formal interviews and the majority of data were collected from participants during the months of June 2012 – November 2012. Additional information and follow up observations were conducted through the end of the year.

During the months of data collection, I immersed myself in the organization. I attended as many visitations with HTA members as I could fit into my schedule. I observed interactions in as many different environments possible such as care homes, hospitals, public schools and private schools. I attended fundraising events, seminars and other public events hosted by HTA. During these events, I talked to and observed various HTA participants. I collected data primarily through interviews and observations. I conducted interviews in person with each of the participants to find out more about their views on HTA.

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009, p. 395), personal interviews are “probably the most effective survey method for enlisting the cooperation of the respondents.” During personal interviews, I was able to establish rapport and easily answer questions and clarify what I wanted to do. A tape recorder was used to record formal semi-structured interviews and I used Microsoft Word to transcribe the interviews. I conducted informal interviews in person but did not record them. After conducting informal interviews I immediately transcribed my notes and observations on my computer. Participants had the opportunity to view my report to ensure that their information was accurately represented. During and after the interview, I also asked follow up questions to clarify statements that were made by the participants. Additional

data were collected through documents, reports, archives, newsletters, articles and publications from HTA.

Interview questions explored participants' perceptions of HTA and the services that are provided by the organization. Sample questions asked to participants are listed in Appendix B and C. The majority of the questions that I asked were open-ended experience and opinion questions. According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2009, p. 448), experience questions "elicit descriptions of experience, behaviors, or activities." Opinion questions focus on "what people think about some topic or issue" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 448) and "call attention to the respondent's goals, beliefs, attitudes or values" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009, p. 448).

I also used observations and field notes to collect data. Observations were made at every HTA event that I attended. I observed numerous pet visitations with each of the 10 participants in this study. I also took observation notes during a seminar, and at fundraising and community events hosted by HTA. The purpose of my observations was to examine how participants and members within the organization interacted with one another, with people in the community, and with their animals. Participants were aware that observations were being made and I also explained the purpose of the study. I attempted to be discreet when doing my observations to ensure that participants were not uncomfortable and were behaving naturally. All data were recorded and coded using pseudonyms so that personally identifying information from participants and the organization were not revealed.

Data Analysis

I analyzed information as I collected data each day. I continued with my analysis of the data after I concluded my observations and formal interviews with the participants. I used Excel and Microsoft Word to transcribe, organize and analyze my data. After collecting data and summarizing my field notes, I identified codes. According to Creswell (2007, p. 148), coding data entails “reducing the data into meaningful segments and assigning names for the segments.” During coding I used *a priori* codes and emerging codes that appeared during analysis. *A priori* codes are pre-existing or prefigured codes that were developed from the literature or theoretical models (Creswell, 2007). Additional codes that emerged during the process of analyzing the data were also used.

Data were analyzed using the coding process outlined by Hahn (2003). Hahn’s process of data analysis involved using four levels of coding. During Level 1 coding, phrases and thoughts pertinent to my research questions were identified. During Level 2 coding, groups of Level 1 codes were organized into categories. Data were further consolidated and broader code descriptions and themes were created during Level 3 coding. Level 3 data were reduced into theoretical concepts during Level 4 coding.

I examined my data using symbolic interpretivism as my theoretical framework. I also used Martin’s (1992) integration perspective and fragmentation perspective. The integration perspective focused on consistency and consensus within the organization while the fragmentation perspective highlighted the complexity of cultural relationships and ambiguity within the organization. Data were also analyzed using Bolman and Deal’s (2003) human resource, structural, political and symbolic frame. The human resource

frame looked at relationships between characteristics and members of an organization. The structural frame focused on the social architecture of the organization. The political frame examined conflict, resource allocation and interest groups. The symbolic frame looked at beliefs, meaning and assumptions in the organization. Along with using Martin's social scientific perspectives and Bolman and Deal's frames, I also looked at the physical elements of the organization, power dynamics, leadership, and knowledge sharing within the organization to learn more about HTA's culture.

Ensuring Quality and Credibility

According to Merriam (2009, p. 228), "the validity and reliability of a study depend on the ethics of the investigator." In qualitative research, the researcher is the tool in which data are collected and interpreted (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). My interests, experiences and values affected every aspect of my study. Therefore it was important for me as the researcher to address and clearly describe my biases. According to Jones et al. (2006, p. 107), "Goodness requires researchers to recognize themselves, their relationships with those involved in the study, and their relationship with the topic itself. This occurs through reflexivity." Throughout the process of collecting and analyzing data, I took the time to reflect on my own experiences. I wrote down reactions, feelings or thoughts that I had while interviewing participants, and while collecting and analyzing data. I looked back on these reflections when analyzing data from this study.

In order to address validity and reliability issues, I used some of the strategies suggested by Merriam (2009). Prior to beginning this study I already knew that I had a

great love for animals and strongly believed in the healing power that animals can bring. I knew that my observations may have been biased, so I utilized strategies to ensure reliability. These strategies include triangulation, member checks, adequate engagement in collecting data, peer review/examination, audit trail, and rich, thick descriptions. Triangulation involves the use of various data sources, investigators, theories, and methods to confirm findings (Merriam, 2009). For this study, I confirmed findings using different methods of data collection (e.g., observing, interviewing, and documenting). I also used member checks to ensure that my interpretations were reflective of participants' feelings and intent. I spent an appropriate amount of time collecting data from participants and attended as many HTA visitations, seminars and community events as I could. A peer reviewer also helped to ensure that my findings and interpretations were plausible and that I was not incorporating my biases into the study. My peer reviewer was a teacher who has experience in the field of education but has minimal knowledge of pet therapy. She read through my analysis of data, identified areas that were unclear and asked questions to clarify findings and conclusions in this study. In my audit trail I described how I collected data, created categories, and how I made decisions throughout my study. According to Merriam (2009, p. 227), a rich, thick description refers to "a highly descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting and in particular, the findings of a study." Rich, thick descriptions used in my study can help to enhance transferability.

To ensure that my study was ethical, I informed the participants of the purpose of my study, had them sign a consent form, minimized any risk or harm to participants, and provided them with the option to drop out of the study at any time (Appendix A). I

ensured confidentiality of research data by assigning participants a pseudonym. My study was also approved by University of Hawaii's Institutional Review Board.

Limitations

Since this was a case study of a specific pet therapy organization, caution should be taken when attempting to generalize results to other pet-centered organizations. Due to time and feasibility, the number of participants formally interviewed in depth in this study was restricted to 10 individuals. By limiting the number of participants in the study, there was a chance that I may not have captured the full spectrum of feelings, experiences, and perceptions of individuals that are involved with Hawaii Therapy Animals. My unfamiliarity with HTA prior to beginning this study may also have caused me to miss certain key events, or interpret data incorrectly. I did member checks in order to minimize misinterpretations. Another possible limitation was the collection of data. Data were collected over the course of a few months and served as a snapshot of HTA at a particular point in time. Organizational culture and dynamics among participants at HTA may shift over the course of a year or even a few months.

CHAPTER 5

CULTURE OF HAWAII THERAPY ANIMALS

One objective of this study was to examine the organizational culture in a non-profit animal assisted therapy organization on Oahu. According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2006), the culture of an organization can be defined as the meanings and worldview that are shared among members of an organization. An organization's worldview impacts the activities of an organization. Other factors that impact the culture of an organization include assumptions, beliefs, norms and artifacts. The relationship between the organization and the environment that they operate in as well as the members all shape the culture of an organization. The culture of HTA and the findings discussed in this chapter will be further analyzed in Chapter 7 using Bolman and Deal's (2003) structural, human resource, political and symbolic framework and Martin's (1992) integration and fragmentation perspective.

Hawaii Therapy Animals (HTA)

HTA is an all-volunteer animal assisted therapy organization on Oahu. In a handout given to all volunteers, HTA defines animal assisted therapy (AAT) as "a goal directed intervention in which the therapy animal is an integral part of the treatment process. AAT is directed and/or delivered and documented by a health/human service professional with a specific clinical goal in mind." HTA members also participate in animal assisted activities (AAA), which they define as "meet and greet activities that involve pets visiting people. This can be done in a group setting or individually."

According to HTA, the benefits of AAA and AAT include positive physiological effects such as decreased blood pressure and heart rate, and improved speech. Other benefits include mental stimulation, feelings of acceptance, increased motivation and an opportunity for nurturing, entertainment and socialization.

The day-to-day operations of HTA are run from Kokua Care Home, the facility where Gabby, the founder works. Kokua Care Home is a nursing home located on Oahu which provides long-term care, short-term rehabilitation, and adult day care services. Gabby's full-time job is separate from her work with HTA. Due to financial constraints, HTA does not have an official office or space to call their own. HTA documents are stored in Gabby's work office or with other HTA members. Meetings, seminars, visitations and certification of therapy dogs take place at Kokua Care Home. Gabby and other HTA members have expressed that they would like to have their own space from which HTA could operate.

HTA has a positive reputation in the community having received numerous awards and recognitions. From 2005-2009, HTA received the United States President's Volunteer Service Award. In 2006, HTA received the American Kennel Club (AKC) Canine Good Citizen Outstanding Program Award, a Harry and Jeannette Weinberg Foundation Gift and the Hills Science Veterinary Nutritional Advocate Award. In 2006, HTA was also a Pacific Business News Healthcare Hero Volunteer finalist. From 2006-2009, HTA was recognized by the United Animal Nations for its efforts in emergency animal rescue services. HTA also received the American Management Association's 2007 Innovation Award for Professional Administrative Staff and the 2007 Positive

Promotions, Western Region 2nd Place Award for Volunteers. In 2009, HTA was also the recipient of a grant from the well-known dog food company, Pedigree.

Volunteers report having positive experiences with HTA. Prior to volunteering with HTA, Lily had heard no complaints, only positive comments regarding HTA. Lily was looking to certify her dog as a therapy animal and a search and rescue organization on Oahu had recommend HTA. Madison agreed that HTA has a positive reputation. Madison decided to volunteer with HTA after meeting with Gabby and interacting with other HTA members. Kacy, whose family members benefited from HTA visits, said that she highly recommends HTA and has made generous donations to help support the organization.

When asked how HTA was different from other pet therapy organizations, members had various responses. Jenny, who has a guinea pig as her certified therapy animal, says that HTA opened opportunities for all types of animals while other organizations just allowed dogs. HTA has therapy animals, which include dogs, cats, horses, and guinea pigs. Lily felt that HTA has more animal assisted programs whereas other pet therapy organizations on Oahu are geared more towards service dogs. HTA also has a broader avenue of different programs provided. A few members such as Kailey, volunteered at the local humane society before coming to HTA. Kailey said that the humane society was too big and it was impossible to know everyone. Jake who also volunteered at the local humane society said that it was hard to coordinate visits with them. Jase said that in his experience, with other organizations, it was hard to get anyone to assist him when he was trying to get Bella certified as a therapy animal. Gabby and HTA were helpful and the process was simple.

Services Provided by HTA

Volunteers from HTA visit numerous facilities throughout Oahu. HTA promotes the human-animal bond through animal assisted activities and animal assisted therapy at nursing homes, hospitals, hospices, schools, libraries and private homes. Visitation is the activity to which members of HTA currently devote most of their time. Visitations can occur in several different ways. During large group visits, participants – typically senior citizens or a group of school children- gather in one room. Several HTA pet therapy teams will visit the facility at the same time. HTA members and their pets circulate around the room. Large group visits typically range from 30 minutes to 1 hour. HTA teams also do small group visits. For example, during the course of the study, I observed three pet therapy teams visit a special education classroom with children who were severely disabled. The three pet therapy teams and their dogs spent time circulating around the classroom and interacted individually with each of the five children in the room. HTA members also do individual visits. One HTA member and his or her dog will visit a facility, such as a care home on a weekly or monthly basis. During the visit, the HTA member will go to each of the different rooms and interact with residents or patients who expressed interest in the pet therapy program.

HTA provides additional services to the community. HTA finds homes for pets who have been surrendered due to an owner's death, illness, placement into nursing homes or circumstances which no longer allow the family to provide proper care for their pets. A sanctuary has been established by HTA to care for animals not currently placed in permanent homes. During times of emergency or natural disasters, HTA provides

assistance to other animal organizations. When funds are available, HTA also assists the homeless in caring for their animals.

A main draw of HTA is that it is one of the few places on Oahu where pet owners can have their animals certified as a therapy animal for free. Other organizations that certify pets as therapy animals typically charge a fee. Gabby is the only member of HTA who has been specially trained to conduct testing for pet therapy certification. People who would like to certify their animals and join HTA bring their dogs to Kokua Care Home to be evaluated. Dogs are the main animals that are certified. However there occasionally have been other animals such as cats, miniature horses and guinea pigs, which Gabby has assessed.

Dogs need to receive passing scores on ten behaviors in order to be certified as a therapy animal. Dogs are tested on their reactions to various settings, such as interactions in large groups of people, response to other canines, basic training commands (sit, stay, down, come), and interactions with people with walkers, canes, and in wheelchairs. These tests simulate real life situations experienced as therapy animals and gauge their reactions.

Establishment of HTA

The driving force behind HTA is its founder, Gabby. Gabby has always had a great love for animals. She grew up on a sugar plantation on Oahu with every kind of animal imaginable such as koi, chicken, canaries, and ducks. There was never a point in her life when Gabby did not have a pet in her household. Thirty years ago, she began working at Kokua Care Home as an administrative secretary. Gabby noticed that some of

the residents really missed pets that they had left behind at home. This was the main reason why Gabby started HTA.

Gabby realized that the residents had many activities, like Bingo, to keep them busy but yet lacked socialization and stimulation. Gabby used to bring injured birds to work with her and put them under her desk so that they could recuperate. The residents would hear the chirping of the birds and would ask Gabby to see them. She began to notice that some residents would stop by her office every day to visit the birds and see how they were doing. Gabby thought that if injured birds were generating this much interest among residents, having other animals might generate more. She asked her supervisor if she could bring a rabbit into the facility. He allowed Gabby to bring the rabbit into Kokua Care Home on the condition that the rabbit was healthy. She secured the proper vet paperwork, brought the rabbit into Kokua Care Home and set the rabbit's cage out on a table. According to Gabby (personal communication, August 12, 2012), the rabbit was like a "rock star." The hallways were packed with residents in wheelchairs who wanted to see and touch the rabbit. Gabby was encouraged by the positive response to the rabbit. She brought in more birds and a chinchilla and received the same positive response. State surveyors who frequented the facility also welcomed the idea that residents were being stimulated in a different way. Gabby found that residents would tell the animals secrets that they would not divulge to other people. Seeing residents crying by the cage, Gabby would go over to ask if they were okay. The residents would explain that it was a personal issue and they just wanted to talk to the rabbit. With all of the positive feedback from residents, Gabby felt motivated to learn more about pet therapy. She enrolled in online courses at the University of North Texas to become an animal

therapist. Taking online courses allowed Gabby the flexibility to remain in Hawaii and work full time at Kokua Care while furthering her education in pet therapy.

Gabby's certified therapy dog, a yellow Labrador named Hooper, was the first founding canine member of HTA. Gabby and Hooper would visit residents' rooms and soon residents were coming down to talk to Hooper so often that Gabby had to put a gate up. Residents could talk to Hooper, and Gabby could finish her work. After some time, some of her coworkers at Kokua Care Home began to object to having Hooper at the facility. Gabby felt that there was some jealousy regarding all the attention that Hooper was receiving. She was not given a definitive reason as to why Hooper was not welcomed in the facility. Staff thought that it was not a good idea so Gabby eventually stopped bringing Hooper to work with her.

After Hooper passed on, Gabby had another certified therapy dog, Fido. Since some time had passed and there were some new people working in the facility, she began bringing Fido with her to work. Again, Gabby felt that the staff became jealous and once again there was no concrete reason provided as to why her coworkers opposed having Fido come to work with Gabby. They simply did not like that Gabby had a dog there. As a result, Gabby stopped bringing Fido with her to work. Gabby's concern was not about what the staff thought about HTA, but rather she felt very sad seeing the decline in the residents after she stopped bringing Fido.

Gabby believed that part of the reason why it was so difficult to bring Fido into work with her was that she worked in administration and was not a doctor. When the medical director began bringing his dog (who did not do any visits) with him there were no objections even though the dog served no specific purpose for the residents or staff.

When Gabby questioned the corporate office they said that it was because he was a doctor and Gabby was not.

People in the corporate office were hesitant to allow Gabby to bring animals into Kokua Care Home. She needed to prove that the animals were clean and beneficial for the residents. It took Gabby 4-5 years to get approval from the corporate office to officially start a program because there was so much resistance to having an animal therapy program there. Gabby felt that Hawaii was behind the mainland on its outlook and understanding of pet therapy. According to Gabby, pet therapy on the mainland is more accepted and people understood the benefits of having animals in various care environments.

HTA was established in 1994 and has continued to use Kokua Care Home as its home base. Prospective members are asked to meet at Kokua Care Home during one of the two visitation sessions held there each month. Meetings with all HTA members, seminars, pet certification and paper work and documents are all held at the facility. Some workers at Kokua Care Home as well as in the corporate office had previously expressed objections to Gabby bringing in an animal to work everyday. Although HTA uses Kokua Care Home as its home base, the organization only meets for an hour twice a month on the weekends with their animals. The brief duration that the animals are there as well as people witnessing the benefits of pet therapy first hand may have contributed to the decrease in resistance of animals within the facility. However Gabby has continued to face some opposition with incorporating therapy dogs into different programs offered by Kokua Care Home such as the rehabilitation program. Eventually, Gabby would like to expand the use of dogs into the physical and occupational therapy program. She stated

that some of the resistance is a “generation thing” (personal communication, August 11, 2012) where some may view dogs as dirty and may be concerned about infection control. Gabby has been seeing a change in view of pet therapy among physicians so she is hopeful for the future.

The establishment of HTA in 1994 as a formal non-profit organization brought some changes to the program which Gabby did not seem to see as very significant from how they were previously running the program. According to Gabby (personal communication, August 12, 2012), “basically, it was the same.” Yet there were some changes. For example, Gabby had to form a Board of Directors, have meetings, open a checking account and write bylaws. When HTA first became a non-profit organization, HTA had no donations since Gabby was not accepting any at the time.

Gabby hopes to expand and build up the program, and extend HTA’s services to other facilities. One area that Gabby would like to pursue is working with military men and woman suffering from posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Gabby would like to open up the program to anyone with a disability who is willing to train a potential service dog that is specially selected for them. After watching other therapy programs, Gabby has come to believe that when a person trains their own dog, the bond is so much greater and the chances of the dog becoming a service dog is much higher when compared with having someone else train the dog. According to Gabby, who has researched and connected frequently with other pet therapy and animal service programs, (personal communication, August 12, 2012) in a class of potential service dogs, 50% graduate and go on to become service dogs. In comparison, when owners train their own dog, the graduation rate increases to 70%. There are a lot of potential people out at Oahu’s army

base who have expressed interest in a potential PTSD program. For the PTSD program, Gabby would like to select dogs from the Hawaiian Humane Society or Oahu's American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) and match the dogs up with individuals based on their medical background and needs. Gabby would then send both owners and their dogs to specific dog training classes taught by instructors whose training style she approves.

In the future, Gabby hopes to delegate more of the roles in HTA to willing team members. HTA is involved in reading and special education programs. There are three team members who consistently volunteer at facilities and schools with children and could take on leadership roles in the areas related to youth. Another team member, Lauren, has experience in personal relations work as well as connections in the community. She could help promote HTA to a wider volunteer base. HTA team member, Jax, not only has his own service dog, but also has years of experience running a dog training program. Gabby hopes that Jax will take the lead in expanding the PTSD and service dog component of their program.

Gabby's hope is that HTA eventually becomes known as "the program" to go to for any of the pet therapy programs that they have already started. Currently, there are a few high profile individuals that belong to HTA, who can help publicize the work they are doing and promote their pet therapy program. Gabby says, "Right now we're tapping into people who can give us the right resources we will need in the future. So hopefully things will fall into place." Gabby says that in order for HTA to continue to grow, she needs more team members that are willing to spearhead projects and take on different

roles. She has found that taking a leadership role for some team members can be daunting. According to Gabby,

“They’re afraid to fail. I tell them it doesn’t matter. If we do well then we do well and if we don’t that’s fine too. I think a lot of them come into the program and are afraid that we’ll be too critical of them. Once they’re here it takes them awhile to really believe and understand.”

Recruiting young team members is another key component Gabby hopes to develop. She believes younger team members may help HTA develop quickly as they bring new energy and progressive ideas to the table (Gabby, personal communication, August 12, 2012).

According to Gabby, there are some challenges that HTA faces. HTA’s home base is Kokua Care Home rather than a separate facility since Kokua Care Home does not charge HTA a fee. After looking at office spaces for rent, and seeing how expensive space is, Gabby has also tried to look for storage units that might be able to serve as a temporary office space. She has found that no one has offered to give HTA a discount despite being a non-profit organization. Gabby does not want the money that HTA has to go towards rent. Instead she would like the money to go towards other programs that HTA is trying to establish and expand upon.

Leadership Style

Gabby (personal communication, August 12, 2012) describes her leadership approach as “low key”. She says that she tries to be flexible and let team members grow into the positions that are needed and believes that the strength of HTA is members’ openness and ability to be frank with one another. Disagreements and conflict often arise among HTA members, but Gabby feels that the conflict that occurs is healthy. After each

visit, Gabby likes to have all of the team members informally meet to talk and address any issues. Sometimes team members won't address issues during the meeting but instead will talk to Gabby privately or send her an email at a later time. Since some team members are afraid to approach another team member directly, she at times serves as the intermediary. Preferring to address problems directly, HTA members are encourage to let her know right away if there is something bothering them so a resolution can be reached.

In one incident, a HTA member was trying to sell her dog's clothing line at HTA events. Gabby explained that selling of merchandise was not allowed. The team member understood, the problem was addressed quickly, and the team member is still part of HTA today. There have also been a few team members who quit suddenly. For example, team members have said things that other team members find offensive. It may be as simple as a comment that does not seem to be significant, such as telling a team member about his or her dog's behavior. However, because it is their dog, they take comments very personally. The particular team member involved did not say anything to Gabby for a year, during which time, resentment built up.

Gabby reaches out to these team members because she wants to know their thoughts and reasons for not returning to HTA, and will address these issues with the other HTA members. Occasionally, some members take the feedback in a negative way, but most team members take constructive feedback and learn from past mistakes and problems. The way that team members react and learn from problems indicates to Gabby which team members are ready to "step up to the next level" (personal communication, August 12, 2012).

Gabby is clear on her expectations when it comes to the types of volunteers that are a part of HTA. First and foremost she expects people to volunteer from the heart, not because they want recognition. Gabby feels that potential volunteers are drawn to the program because HTA members are encouraged to show compassion and to be humble. Arrogance, which Gabby has seen in other pet therapy programs, goes against what she believes in. Believing that it is important for HTA members to stay grounded as much as possible, Gabby (personal communication, August 12, 2012) is constantly reminding her team to “be nice to everybody and treat everybody like your family.” She realizes that

“If you’re not nice to people they’re just going to shut down. They’re not going to want to [volunteer]. I mean they’re going to want to volunteer, but if they don’t see a willingness from the other person to help them in the program, they’re not going to get volunteers. I think that’s the main reason why I stress that more than anything else.”

With her job as an administrative secretary, Gabby is used to the pressure of constantly having to multitask.

“I think it’s because I work as an administrative secretary. Having things thrown at me all the time is not, ... I don’t see it as pressure. I see it as a daily thing. There are times during the day when I can be doing three or four different things. I’m hooked up to three or four different printers. So I can be printing one thing, printing another thing, working on another thing so it’s for me, my mind working that way is normal. If I don’t work that way I get bored. Yeah, so everything is in my head which is not great, so I’ve started to write things down, and I have also started to delegate which is great” (Gabby, personal communication, August 12, 2012).

There are mixed feelings regarding Gabby’s leadership style and the direction that HTA is heading. Criticisms include the lack in communication and disconnect among members, minimal delegation of work throughout the organization, the top down management style of HTA, and the varying levels of dedication of HTA members. In

Chapter 7, I will discuss these issues further using Martin's (1992) fragmentation perspective.

Gabby has stated that she wants HTA members to grow at their own pace and participate in activities and at facilities of their choosing. Since HTA is an-all volunteer organization, she is grateful for the time that each member can contribute. Gabby's flexible leadership style has resulted in a core group of members who are consistently involved with activities outside of visitation such as fundraising events and other engagements out in the community. This has led to some resentment by individuals like Lily and Jake who frequently take the lead in HTA activities.

Lily and Jake, who have both spearheaded several events, have found that it is difficult to get people involved. They noted that getting people to sign up, get involved, and follow through on their commitments has been challenging. After seeing the same people always show up, Lily feels that volunteers need to do more than just go on visits, but should come out to support HTA at fundraising events or take the lead on different projects rather than relying on the same individuals. Lily and Jake both feel that it is a weakness of HTA members to not understand that it takes more than just visits to be a part of the organization. They believe that the need to support HTA outside of visits is not a concept that is strongly expressed throughout the organization or to new members.

Kailey also believes that there is a disconnect in communication amongst members. Kailey is an active HTA member, but she often does not know what other people are doing or what facilities they are visiting unless she talks to them. Kailey would like to see more organization within HTA so that new members who join can have a

central site in which they can get information on facilities and which members frequent those facilities.

HTA members agree that more new members can help the organization move forward. The majority of HTA members have full time jobs and are only able to volunteer on the weekends. Many facilities ask for volunteers during weekdays, so having volunteers who can fill those slots would allow HTA to increase their presence in the community. Kailey feels that more public awareness is necessary in order to raise more funds and donations for the organization. As Kailey stated (personal communication, August 15, 2012) “If no one knows about us, no one will help us.”

Gabby is aware of the concerns addressed by some HTA members such as the need for new members, raising public awareness, improving communication and the need for more HTA members to get involved with HTA events. Gabby has tried to address some of these issues by networking with individuals out in the community and participating in public events as an organization. As for communication, Gabby personally sends out information about HTA via email to all members and communicates with members directly if there is a concern. The need for more HTA members to get involved with the organization has been a challenge. Gabby knows that this issues exists, but does not want to force any member into a position or take a leadership role if they are not comfortable.

HTA’s Philosophy

Group members do not share one clear philosophy of HTA, although some of the goals and beliefs are echoed among team members. When questioned about the

philosophy of the organization, Gabby (personal communication, August 12, 2012), the founder, stated that “the main thing is that people volunteer not out of wanting recognition, but that they volunteer from the heart, and that they’re compassionate to those that they work with.” Gabby believes that “a goal for the program would be to always meet the needs of others. If we can do that then we will always be successful.”

Jenny, one of the newest members of HTA, believes that HTA’s philosophy is “to promote a purposeful life for both humans and animals, to bond, and provide emotional and physical benefits to each other” (personal communication, July 29, 2012).

Additionally, she felt that HTA’s philosophy was also to “share the knowledge of using the animal assisted therapy approach in various alternatives to contribute improvement in health, socialization and the environment.” Jake is unsure about HTA’s philosophy and said, “I don’t know the exact words. Changing one life at a time or something to that effect” (personal communication, August 1, 2012). Initially Lily was also unsure about HTA’s philosophy and admitted that she hadn’t really thought about it. After a few moments, Lily mirrored Gabby’s thoughts by stating that HTA’s philosophy was to “be there for anyone who needs assistance and just help out as much as possible” (personal communication, August 11, 2012). Kailey felt that HTA’s philosophy was to make people laugh and promote a positive feeling. Jase had a similar belief of HTA’s philosophy stating, “If we can make somebody smile and be happy and comfortable and bring some happy moment for them, then that is the greatest thing that we can do” (personal communication, August 11, 2012).

Guidelines, expectations and the mission statement are outlined for new members in the HTA handbook. HTA’s mission to promote the human-animal bond through

animal assisted therapy and activities encompasses what the organization does. Policies that should be followed such as time commitment, confidentiality, communication, waivers and volunteer guidelines are also included. Prior to joining HTA, each new member is given an HTA Culture Agreement packet written by Gabby, which outlines expectations for communication and conduct for all HTA members. Gabby emphasizes that each team member is there to advocate for animals and promote the human-animal bond.

All team members are expected to establish “a humane and healthy relationship” with other HTA members. Gabby suggests several ways in which to do this. First, all team members are asked to honor and respect differences in the organization and at the facilities that they frequent. Team thinking, the need to eliminate competition mentality, and to “include, rather than exclude” are encouraged. Gabby further emphasizes the need to embrace diversity and practice open-mindedness. Team members should expect differences; rather than trying to identify a different attitude as being wrong, team members should look at the contribution that each person is trying to make to help HTA, and that “disagreements are not necessarily a hindrance – they keep HTA dynamic.” Secondly, collaboration, cooperation and coordination are essential. Team members should encourage participation of other team members, provide access to information regarding decisions, decision-making processes, and keep others informed of their activities. Third, all members should practice open, direct and prompt communication. This means practicing proactive listening, seeking understanding, and making an effort to stop gossip. Team members are encouraged to deliver and receive complaints and suggestions responsibly and maturely. Fourth, Gabby asks team members to deal with

conflict responsibly, proactively and constructively. Conflicts should be resolved promptly and all parties involved should deal with each other directly, treat one another respectfully and take an active and constructive approach in finding a solution. Disagreements should be viewed as an opportunity to explore differences and increase understanding. Fifth, HTA members should promote trust by taking responsibility for themselves and being accountable for their actions. Members should trust that team members are “making decisions for the animals in good faith.” Sixth, respect should be demonstrated at all times. Team members should respect people’s differing opinions, decisions made, and should reserve the right to disagree. Compassion, courtesy and consideration should be extended to others. Seventh, members should acknowledge feelings and the emotional aspects of pet therapy. Members should find healthy ways to release or reduce stress and ask for help when needed. Members need to find appropriate ways to express and deal with sadness, grief, anger, and other feelings that may arise throughout visitation sessions. Eighth, members should work towards creating and maintaining a safe environment. This means finding safe ways to accomplish tasks, committing to following safety procedures, knowing your own limitations, and taking the initiative to help others when needed. Finally, members are asked to show appreciation. Gabby encourages members to remember why they chose to volunteer, show appreciation to all people and animals they encounter, and acknowledge others for a job well done (HTA Volunteer Handbook, 2012).

Atmosphere at HTA

Most group members describe HTA's atmosphere as friendly and relaxing. They meet the first two Saturdays of every month at Kokua Care Home where visitation sessions occur with the residents for approximately one hour. Although there was initial resistance expressed with bringing animals into the facility, the staff members who help the residents during visits seem to enjoy interacting with the animals as much as the residents. Nurses and doctors in the facility were often observed laughing and interacting with the animals and talking with HTA members.

Visitations at Kokua Care Home are held in the center's large recreation room, where residents are wheeled down from their rooms. All visiting HTA members bring their animals into the recreation room at the same time for one large visiting session. After visitation, meetings are sometimes held, although on most Saturdays, the volunteers and their pets linger in the recreation room to catch up and talk with one another, letting their dogs play together. It is also during these Saturdays at Kokua Care Home when new volunteers are introduced into HTA and where Gabby performs certification with dogs and their handlers who are interested in joining. In addition to the twice-monthly meetings at Kokua Care Home, members visit various schools, hospitals and care facilities around the island throughout the month. HTA members are able to choose which facilities at which they would like to volunteer. Most of the visits outside of Kokua Care Home are done individually or in small groups and are dependent upon the availability of each volunteer.

High school student Jenny describes the atmosphere at HTA as friendly, welcoming and an enjoyable experience. Kailey also describes the environment at HTA

as friendly, and feels that HTA members are easy to talk to. She believes that HTA is a good place to see others and exchange information. Stacy (personal communication, July 15, 2012) feels connected with her team members and “joyous. Everyone is on the same page. You’re here for the benefit of the human spirit. We’re all pioneers.” Madison (personal communication, July 10, 2012) also feels that a love for animals is what helps to connect them. “I guess because we all have the universal bond, it’s been wonderful to be around them. It’s good to be around people that feel the same way about animals and what they do. You meet all kinds of people but the one thing that we have in common is love for the pets. We all know what kind of benefit they can provide.” Jase (personal communication, August 11, 2012) echoes this sentiment.

“They are all dog lovers just like you. They are fantastic. They’re all good people you know. You have to be. They have a lot of heart. I came to the point where if I’m talking to someone and they don’t like animals or dogs, then I’m like, “Whoa! What’s wrong with you?!”

The comradery and relaxed atmosphere when HTA members come together is evident. They welcome one another and their dogs when entering the room. Many treat their dogs like children; dogs, especially smaller breeds sit in their owner’s lap, while other dogs wear clothes and arrive being pushed in strollers. When entering a room, owners like Madison, Jase, and Kailey ask their excited dogs if they want to see their dog friends. Dogs are welcomed by name and are often give an affectionate pat. Among HTA members, dog owners are referred to as “Dad” or “Mom”. While dogs play with one another like old friends, their owners spend the time catching up with one another and filling each other in on their dog’s latest antics or achievements. Even male members who appear serious and stoic upon first glance are openly affectionate with their dogs and will shower them with hugs and kisses.

Skills Needed to be a Therapy Dog Handler

Most HTA members agree on the types of skills needed to handle an animal used in a pet therapy program. All who were interviewed agreed that the handler must know and be able to control their animal. Dogs should know basic training and obedience skills and should not be overly rambunctious, since visitations and other HTA events often put dogs in situations that are new and may be uncomfortable for some dogs. According to Lily and Stacy, handlers must be attentive and keep in mind that anything can happen. Therefore, it is imperative that a handler can sense when their dog may feel fearful or uncomfortable and be able to take the necessary steps to ensure the safety of their dog and all participants involved. Stacy adds that handlers must be aware of how students, patients and residents react, and must take a proactive approach.

Jenny and Kailey believe that patience is also essential for a handler. Madison, Jake, and Jase feel that basic commonsense, friendliness and social skills are necessary as well. Jase believes that the skills and talents necessary for becoming a handler take time and come from experience. It is important that the handler not only love animals, but love people as well in order to connect with the students, patients and residents that they are visiting. Jake notes that it is helpful to know your audience and to have the skills set needed to interact with young children, individuals with disabilities, or the elderly.

Despite the diverse personalities of HTA members, the aforementioned skills are essential to be an effective dog handler. Some skills such as having control over the animal are necessary to acquire prior to joining HTA. Other skills such as learning how to read your audience, patience and social skills can be learned over time with experience.

HTA Members

HTA is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization, which means that there are no paid staff. According to Gabby, there are 50-60 members. Only 20-25 of those members are active and participate regularly in visitations and other HTA sponsored events. The majority of volunteers are 30 years old or older, have full-time jobs and volunteer on weekends or their days off. There is also an older group of members who have retired from their jobs and volunteer during the weekdays. HTA also has the occasional high school or college student interested in pet therapy, who spends time volunteering to fulfill a project or graduation requirement. Jenny, a participant in my study, was a high school student completing her senior project.

Without volunteers, HTA would not be able to function. The underlying consensus as to why members volunteer is their love for animals, and their desire to contribute to the community in a meaningful way. Jenny (personal communication, July 29, 2012) believes that HTA is her “type of volunteer work because it allows [her] to understand that [she] can contribute to the community through various activities, such as the hospital or school visits, with the involvement of animals.” Madison thought that her affectionate Golden Retriever, Bailey, would be perfect as a therapy dog. “She can’t get enough petting,” Madison (personal communication, July 10, 2012) said, “so I thought hey, there’s enough loving to go around. It’s only because of Bailey that I started doing this.”

Other members have been encouraged to volunteer due to past experiences with their own family members or friends. After seeing the positive and healing effects of animals on their loved ones, they felt that others could benefit from the human-animal

bond. Volunteer and HTA board member Roxy, started visitations with her dog Trix, after a family member became a resident at Kokua Care Home. Jake first started volunteering with his dog Harper, after his mother went into hospice care. His mother really missed Harper so Jake managed to sneak Harper in to see her. He began to get interested in pet therapy after seeing the joy that Harper brought to his mother. Stacy, a high school special education teacher, started volunteering with HTA after witnessing the positive effects that a therapy dog had on her students. Stacy taught community based instruction, which was the lowest functioning of all special needs populations. She found that having a therapy dog in the classroom enhanced her students' learning processes and eliminated behavior problems. Through HTA, Stacy was able to reach other students outside of her school.

Jase's reasons for volunteering started after he adopted Bella, a special needs dog born with two front legs. Initially, Jase had no intention of getting into pet therapy. However, his friends and family thought that Bella would be a good inspiration for the handicapped especially those individuals without limbs. Having just retired and needing something to keep him active, he started volunteering with Bella and discovered that his friends and family were right. He really enjoyed volunteering and found it gratifying. As Jase (personal communication, August 11, 2012) puts it, "everyone loves Bella."

Reasons for starting volunteering may differ, but it is the personal satisfaction that HTA members feel during and after their visits which keep them coming back. When asked about the most satisfying aspect of volunteering, many participants said seeing patients and residents smile and feeling like they made a difference, even if it was only temporary. Kailey, who often works with young children with special needs, says that it's

a good feeling to bring something positive into lives which are typically filled with daily challenges. Jase, who volunteers at hospice homes describes the experience as gratifying, sad and remarkable. According to him, many patients are extremely appreciative, since they are often confined to beds all day with limited outside social interaction. Jase says (personal communication, August 11, 2012), “They are just in bed 24/7. That’s the ones that I see. I see more tears coming out of their eyes than anyone else.” Gabby (personal communication, August 12, 2012) feels happiest witnessing “those special moments when a team member and a resident actually make that special contact or seeing a resident cry because they’re so happy.”

Favorite Memories of HTA Members

Each HTA member has a special memory of a patient or a visit that stands out, and it is these memories that help team members know that they are making a difference in the lives of patients and residents, and reaffirms their commitment to worthwhile volunteering. Gabby, who has worked full time at Kokua Care Home for many years has seen her fair share of residents come and go. She recalled her favorite memories of patients who found love and acceptance after strokes.

“I had a bird that was injured and this gentleman was here. He was slightly mentally challenged, but a super happy gentlemen. He was here because he was getting hospice care. Out of the cats and everything that I bought, he loved them all. But this little bird with a broken wing, he would let the bird go on his hand, head, just... I told him you know the bird’s going to poop, but he didn’t care. It’s odd that, a little after he passed so did the bird. He was one, his face would light up, he hardly spoke. When he was with the animals he would speak a lot, other than that he would hardly speak.”

Gabby also spoke of another patient who formed a connection with her therapy dog.

“For some reason he came down and he started to pet my dog and started to cry. I thought oh my God something happened. I got one of the staff and said, oh my God, something happened, maybe he’s upset. He spoke a foreign language so I didn’t understand what he was saying. So the staff told me, no he’s crying because he’s happy. I said why is he happy, we didn’t really talk, he just pet the dog. It just so happened that the dog licked his hand. He was so touched that the dog licked his hand after he had a stroke, he felt accepted. That was really a good moment” (Gabby, personal communication, August 12, 2012).

Madison’s favorite memory involved witnessing the bond between Kacy and her father. Madison and her dog Bailey frequently visited Kacy’s father during his time at Elite Senior Care, where she recalls watching the whole family get involved in the pet visitations. Kacy would take pictures of Bailey and Madison with her father and gave the pictures to Madison after her father passed away, creating a meaningful bond between the two that goes on to this day.

Stacy has many fond memories during her time working in pet therapy. When questioned about her favorite memory, she responded, “It would be hard to pick out one in particular. But uh, I would have to say that the instances when the students were able to overcome their fear of dogs and actually be able to show affection to the dog in such a short time. Those are probably my most triumphant moments” (Stacy, personal communication, July 15, 2012).

Jake’s favorite memories involve both the big and small reactions that he has seen from residents. Jake finds it especially rewarding when he has staff members approach him after a visit to comment that they had never seen a particular patient talk before. While watching new patients interact and talk with Harper, he has no concept of the normal engagement level of a patient until speaking with doctors and nurses. Jake (personal communication, August 1, 2012) says that it is:

“extremely rewarding to see the patients light up. Even sometimes in having these patients that are more severe where you can barely perceive any kind of recognition or facial expression, and yet the staff talks to them like they understand and so often you find out that they do understand what is being told to them but can’t respond. But having them in that condition, taking Harper and putting her there, and just seeing that little twinkle in their eye, that little corner of their mouth turn up, that little smile, or just the hands moving to feel Harper’s hair. That in itself is so rewarding knowing that that’s all that they can do, but they’re enjoying it.”

Jase has numerous vivid memories that stand out in his mind. When asked to share his favorite memories, he recalled three stories, each involving the ability of his dog to connect with a patient on a level that no human or doctor could. Jase’s (personal communication, August 11, 2012) first memory involved a patient who did not speak. “He wouldn’t speak to anybody, wouldn’t talk to anybody. I gave him the dogs and he started talking. I saw the caretaker just lay back in shock and say that’s the first time in three months I’ve heard him speak.”

Another recollection was about an elderly woman in her 90s who was bedridden and whose doctors were unable to get her to even rotate her arms out of her bedcovers. She was at the facility for a week and because she spent the whole time staring up at the ceiling, not talking to anybody, the doctors were not sure if she had a voice. Jase assumed that her family and friends had all passed away since no one came to visit her. While visiting other patients, a doctor approached Jase and asked if he would mind seeing this particular woman. The doctors could not get her to respond and therefore could not give her antidepressant drugs. Jase approached the woman with Bella and asked if she wanted to pet the dog. When she showed no signs of resistance, Jase put Bella on top of her covers. As Jase recalls (personal communication, August 11, 2012), what happened next amazed him.

“She brought her hands up from under the sheets and started playing with Bella, talking perfect English, asking all kinds of questions. So I’m talking story with her and she’s just like any normal intelligent woman and she was not depressed at all. Just so happens, we’re talking story and she’s playing with the dog. I look behind me and see about five nurses and doctors staring through the door in total shock. But one thing I noticed, they all had tears in their eyes. That’s the kind of moments that I see and cannot forget. It’s really, really unbelievable.”

The last story Jase recounted was another incident when he had been waiting in the lobby of a facility for other HTA members to begin a visit. A young woman approached him and asked if he could visit her mother who really loved animals. Since Jase was waiting for someone, he offered that she could take Bella up to see her mother. After about 15 minutes, the woman came back with Bella, crying profusely. She thanked Jase and said that her mother, who had previously refused to get up out of bed, got up, kissed Bella and went back down. She was so happy just for that moment and it made the woman so happy to see her mother react. Jase (personal communication, August 11, 2012) said, “That’s the kind of stuff we constantly came across and that’s why I know that this kind of therapy assisted program really works. We experience these kinds of moments. It’s incredible. Everybody’s got stories, everybody’s experienced that.”

Challenges Associated with Volunteering

There are some challenges associated with volunteering. Jenny who was a high school senior had to juggle her schoolwork with volunteering obligations. For her, a challenge was consistently going on monthly visits. Jake sometimes found it difficult to put his best foot forward during visits when he was tired or not in the best mood. There were times during visits when Jake did not feel very communicative, but felt a strong sense of obligation to follow through with his committee to visit various facilities every

week. For Jase, his introverted personality was a challenge that he had to overcome. Describing himself as not being an open person, getting comfortable during visits and interacting with people out in the public was difficult for him. Over time, Jase grew more comfortable and confident by gaining experience. Now he is one of the most active volunteers and a frequent visitor at a variety of facilities. During his time at HTA, he has visited elderly patients with Alzheimer's disease, amputees, and convalescent homes and hospices. Because Jase has been volunteering for so long, he has admitted to feeling burnt out and wants to cut back a bit. Out of all the facilities that he frequents, Jase admits that hospice is emotionally challenging because it is common to lose patients from month to month. Jase grows close to some of these patients and "It's tough because you see them one weekend and the next weekend you don't" (Jase, personally communication, August 11, 2012).

Future Involvement with HTA

All HTA members interviewed spoke positively about their future with HTA. Many said that they intended to be involved with HTA for as long as they could. Lauren said that she is happy to be a part of HTA and that it has made her a better person. Volunteering at HTA is dependent on having an appropriate therapy dog. Therefore, although HTA members may want to continue volunteering with HTA ten years from now, the temperament and health of their dog will determine whether or not they are able to continue with the organization.

CHAPTER 6

PET THERAPY IN HAWAII

Benefits of Pet Therapy: Personal Stories from HTA Members

The benefits of pet therapy are well documented. Pets can provide therapeutic benefits and promote physiological and psychological well-being (Wells, 2009). Pets can serve as a source of unconditional love and acceptance, aid in social interaction, decrease tension and promote relaxation (Beck & Katcher, 1996; Fawcett & Gullone, 2001; Wood et al., 2007). Experiences as told by HTA members confirm the numerous positive benefits of pet therapy in a variety of settings. The stories discussed in this chapter will be further analyzed in Chapter 7 using Bolman & Deal's (2003) human resource frame. This study suggests several implications regarding pet therapy in Hawaii. First, pet therapy can be beneficial for people of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds, from elementary students to elderly residents in nursing and care homes. Second, pet therapy touches not only the patient, but the family of the patient as well. Third, while therapy animals can provide numerous benefits, there are also many challenges in the field of pet therapy.

Kacy is a volunteer at Elite Senior Care. Elite Senior Care is an exclusive retirement community that services some of the wealthiest senior citizens on Oahu. Kacy works closely with the residents and patients, and sees first hand how people can benefit from interactions with animals. Kacy said that the residents loved seeing all kinds of dogs, and that residents enjoyed the dogs so much they would say (personal communication, July 1, 2012), "Can you come home with me?", wanting the dogs to go back to their rooms with them. Residents laughed and clapped when the dogs performed

tricks and would perk up when dogs came walking into the room. “Animals have a real effect not only with the elderly, but those with illnesses and those that are dying” (Kacy, personal communication, July 1, 2012). Kacy felt that the dogs really helped to get residents and staff into the holiday spirit whether it was Christmas, Halloween or St. Patrick’s day. Many of the dogs came dressed in festive costumes during the holidays.

Jase observed similar positive effects on elderly patients in the hospices, hospitals and care homes that he visits. During his visits to facilities, patients start to open up when interacting with his dog Bella. Patients want to pet Bella, ask Jase questions about her, and tell Jase stories of their own childhood and past pets.

Kailey is an HTA member who often visits schools, along with her dogs Amy and Gia. Together they have visited general education children as well as children with severe disabilities. Kailey has seen the benefits therapy dogs can have on children with severe medical disabilities. According to Kailey, therapy dogs encourage children to talk, walk, and do other challenging activities they normally would not attempt. With general education children, Kailey has found that therapy dogs can help children to be more vocal. The dog serves as a starting point for conversations. According to Kailey, (personal communication, August 15, 2012), “Kids have tons of questions for you and your dog.”

Lauren, who has also spent time working with children adds that dogs can brighten up a child’s world. The excitement of the children is evident on their faces when a dog enters the room. Many children smile and eagerly await their opportunity to interact with the dog. Several children with severe medical disabilities smiled when the

therapy dog was next to them or when an adult helped to lift their hands to pet the dog. Although the children could not communicate their happiness in words, the teacher remarked that she saw positive changes in her students when the therapy dog was in the classroom.

Stacy, who works with both special education and general education students has witnessed the benefits of therapy animals first hand. Stacy's experiences were similar to those reported in a study by Melson (2003) which found dogs to have a positive impact on cognitive, perceptual, and language development in youth. Stacy taught community based instruction, which she said was the lowest functioning of all special needs population at a local public high school. After approval from the administration, Stacy brought her therapy dog, Bronx, into the classroom for a year and a half, where she saw firsthand how Bronx enhanced students' learning process. One benefit was that students learned how to care for another being other than themselves. This was particularly significant in Stacy's eyes, as many of her students were considered medically fragile with diagnosed conditions such as cerebral palsy, limited mobility, and autism.

Bronx also helped struggling students with their reading skills. In high school, the achievement of some students was between the first and third grade reading levels. Stacy would sit a student beside Bronx in the corner of the room and ask the student to read to Bronx, assuring them that she would not listen to every word that was read. Stacy would stand at the other side of the room and would listen for the sound of the student's voice. Every time a student turned a page, they could reward Bronx with a small treat. Stacy saw her students transform into willing readers after reading to Bronx, who they viewed as a nonjudgmental listener.

According to Stacy (personal communication, July 15, 2012), “Dogs aren’t going to tell you that you’re wrong or made a mistake or to read that over again. So, in that environment the students become willing readers. We have success in the classroom doing that.” Research also indicates that companion animals can promote psychosocial development by providing unconditional love and acceptance and serving as a source of social support (Wells, 2009). A study by Friedmann et al. (1983) found that children’s blood pressures decreased when reading aloud to a dog. Reduced anxiety levels in children were also documented when reading aloud to a dog compared to reading aloud to a friend or adult (Friedmann et al., 2000).

Students with limited mobility also benefited from having Bronx in the classroom. Often, these students did not want to do exercises. However, when asked to take Bronx outside to relieve himself, Stacy’s students would eagerly take the leash. Assisted by an adult, students would lead Bronx outside and watch him relieve himself. Students took great joy and found it comical when they realized that the dog needed to relieve himself, just like they did. According to Nagasawa et al. (2009), in the process of forming bonds with animals, humans often develop positive behaviors and feelings.

Having Bronx in the classroom also taught students how to behave around a dog. Stacy taught her students to let the dog smell them, to remain still and not to act fearfully. Learning these behaviors was beneficial and practical especially for her highly autistic students, many of whom lived in apartment buildings where dogs were permitted. Prior to learning about proper dog behavior, some of her students would refuse to ride in an elevator with a dog or become scared if a dog got too close to them. After spending time with Bronx, Stacy’s autistic students would be able to ride with a dog in an elevator and

eventually got to a point where they would say hi to the dog. Stacy was impressed by how quickly students were able to get over their fear of dogs.

Stacy also taught students with learning disabilities and saw how Bronx encouraged them as well. Although learning disabled students do not present any obvious physical disabilities, these students do face other challenges, such as having lower writing and reading abilities, emotional problems or becoming violent or easily frustrated. These were the students no one wanted to teach because they were so disruptive and argumentative. They often used foul language, exhibited bad behavior and always wanted to fight in other classes. After bringing Bronx into the classroom, Stacy saw none of these behaviors. According to Fawcett and Gullone (2001) and Walsh (2009), people can learn how to be more empathetic through interactions with animals. Compared to humans, animals are more direct when expressing feelings and behaviors and will display emotions more intensely and purely than humans.

Although her classroom was located at the far end of campus, Stacy saw an improvement in attendance and punctuality which she attributed to Bronx serving as motivation for her students. She found that students with learning disabilities were able to connect with Bronx. She explained to the class that Bronx was a pedigree American Kennel Club (AKC) boxer, but because of Bronx's white color, he was not considered show quality. Stacy explained that Boxer puppies who are white are sometimes put down at birth because the Boxer standards say that nothing more than one third of white markings can be shown or bred. Therefore, according to AKC standards, there was something "wrong" with Bronx. Stacy explained to her students that although Bronx can not be bred or shown, he can be useful in other ways, by being a faithful companion and

serving as a watch dog for Stacy's property. Stacy proceeded to show her students all of the commands that Bronx could do. Her students were impressed and immediately bonded with him because there was "something wrong with them as well." Many of her learning disabled students experienced being labeled with their disorder. However after seeing all that Bronx could do and accomplish they realized that although AKC standards deemed that there was something wrong with him, in their eyes, he was a perfect dog. This led to greater self-efficacy in students' perceptions of themselves. Feelings expressed by Stacy's students were similar to those found in a study by Fawcett and Gullone (2001) who determined that acceptance and love by an animal can promote self-efficacy and decrease feelings of inadequacy and rejection.

Bronx not only benefitted Stacy's students, but was a positive presence in the school community and increased school morale. The presence of a dog can enhance the impression of a person by conveying positive messages about a person's personality and making him or her appear friendlier and more approachable (Lockwood, 1985; Messent, 1983). Walking down the hall with Bronx, Stacy found that teachers and staff would stop them to talk. According to Stacy (personal communication, July 15, 2012), they would say, "I need a Bronx hug." They would kneel down to give him a hug and Bronx in return would lick them and wag his tail, creating a very pleasant atmosphere. One of the staff members went as far as to get her ID picture taken with Bronx. Incidentally, Bronx had his own ID picture and badge that he would wear on his therapy vest.

High achieving students also benefitted from Bronx's presence. A teacher who taught these students offered to watch Bronx during lunchtime. These high achieving students were often under a lot of stress dealing with their AP classes and other academic

challenges. Having Bronx in the room helped to calm students down and put them in a good mood. Numerous studies have indicated that animals can benefit human health by decreasing tension and stress responses and promoting relaxation (Beck & Katcher, 1996; Schwarzer & Leppin, 1991).

When new administration came into the school, Stacy was asked to stop bringing Bronx due to liability reasons, upsetting the teachers, staff, and students who had benefitted from Bronx's presence. According to Wood et al. (2007) companion animals help to promote an overall sense of community. This clearly seemed to be the case at Stacy's school, where students were very upset and even started a petition to bring Bronx back into the school. According to Stacy (personal communication July 15, 2012), students would tell her, "Junk come your class now no more dog." After Bronx was removed, Stacy began to experience many of the aforementioned behavioral problems with her students that had previously not been an issue. She was calling parents and writing behavioral referrals weekly, creating a stressful classroom environment.

Stacy believes that pet therapy is not just for special needs children; it's for anybody. She says that the whole reason to have a pet is to lift your morale and make you happy. Stacy firmly believes that school is a stressful place and having the presence of a friendly, calm dog there can be beneficial for the entire population. Her take of pet therapy is described in the following statement (personal communication, July 15, 2012):

"It's creative and touches people at their very basic human need to belong. When you have a friendly animal that accepts you when you're obviously ostracized by the rest of society because there is something wrong with you, that somebody accepts you is the biggest and first step. It makes students happy to come to school in the first place because there's a reason. The fact that the learning disabled students would come to class on time, that tells you a lot."

Impact of Pet Therapy: A Family Member's Perspective

The benefits of pet therapy touches not only the patient, but the families as well. Kacy's own father, Randy, benefitted from frequent HTA visits before he passed away. Randy loved animals. When he had to leave his home to enter hospice care at Elite Senior Care, he also had to leave behind his beloved pets. While visiting Elite Senior Care to take care of her father, Kacy found out about the pet therapy program offered through HTA and signed up her father to be a part of the program. Two HTA teams, Roxy and her dog Trix, and Madison and her dog Bailey, were frequent visitors to Randy's room. According to Kacy, Randy looked forward to these visits. In fact, Randy made sure that he would not go out of his room when he was expecting a visit from Trix or Bailey. Randy loved to pet both dogs. Trix was a small dog so she was able to sit on Randy's bed. Trix would be dressed up in costumes for all of the different holidays, which Randy loved. "He would say, oh you're a bunny. (Trix) could come with bunny ears and when he would come into the room (Randy) started laughing because it's hilarious" (Kacy, personal communication, July 1, 2012). Bailey was a frisky dog and would amuse Randy and Kacy with her tricks. While Randy was interacting with Bailey, Kacy would talk with Madison, getting to know Madison well. Even after Randy's passing Kacy always made it a point to come and say hello to Madison, Bailey, Roxy and Trix when she saw them out in the hallways visiting other residents.

During the last month of Randy's life, he contracted an infection and was put in isolation. Prior to going into isolation, he enjoyed socializing through activities such as eating with his friends and playing BINGO. When he was in isolation, he could not go out of the room. However, Trix and Bailey were permitted to go in, and their visits

become even more meaningful for Randy. According to Kacy, (personal communication, July 1, 2012),

“He looked forward to seeing the two dogs because that was the only activity he had. You can imagine being cooped up in a room and having nothing to look forward to. Even TV after awhile, he wasn’t interested in. But when I said Madison is here with Bailey, and Roxy is here with Trix, he would open his eyes and be smiling. He would just hold and pet the dog. He just loved it.”

During the last weeks of his life, Randy had a stroke which left him unable to speak. He didn’t really say anything, but he could smile. When Kacy would say that she was there, Randy would close his eyes and would not look. Kacy recalled, (personal communication, July 1, 2012),

“If I said Madison and Bailey or Roxy and Trix are here, he’d open his eyes wide like a gold ball and he’d be smiling. The dogs brought lots of joy even when he was in good health. It was a real big bonus when he was in isolation and hospice.”

The connections made between HTA members and Kacy’s family extended beyond Randy’s passing and Kacy emphasized how appreciative she was to HTA. She was especially touched when Roxy and Trix came to Randy’s funeral. Kacy believes that Trix felt Randy’s presence because he sat down and started barking. Roxy confirmed that Trix, who is well behaved, had been unusually vocal at Randy’s funeral. Trix and Bailey provided comfort to Kacy after Randy’s passing.

“What really touched me and lifted my heart was the first time I saw Roxy and Trix. Trix came as Elvis Presley. He had sunglasses on and came up to me and he started licking my hand. I just started tearing because I swear he was giving a final kiss or goodbye to Daddy. Same thing when I came up to Madison and Bailey on Friday. Bailey was licking my hand just like she was giving a final kiss to Daddy. And Daddy was there too. You could feel his presence there. I think every time HTA or Trix or Roxy are here, I swear he’s there. He’s here at Elite Senior Care. Not physically, but in spirit. He really enjoyed it” (Kacy, personal communication, July 1, 2012).

Challenges of Pet Therapy

One of the challenges and concerns about pet therapy are allergies and the perception that animals, like dogs may be unclean. HTA has guidelines for disease control for their therapy dogs. An infection of high concern in facilities with therapy animals is Methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus Aureua (MRSA). MRSA is a type of bacteria that is resistant to many antibiotics and is a zoonotic disease meaning that it can be passed between humans and canines. HTA members are asked to be vigilant of any infections on either themselves or their animals. Prior to visiting a facility, therapy dogs should be bathed no less than 24 hours before the visit. Volunteers are encouraged to carry hand sanitizer and ask that all people petting their dog sanitize their hands first. When visiting the bed of a patient, a large sheet should be laid down on the bed for the animal to sit on; ideally a different sheet should be used for each bed. After each visit, therapy dogs should be bathed or wiped down with a hot washcloth and antibacterial soap. Items such as leashes, towels and backpacks, as well as clothing worn during the visits should be cleaned and disinfected as well.

According to Jalongo et al., (2004), the most common concerns of incorporating an animal into a facility are sanitation concerns, safety considerations, allergies, cultural differences and fear of dogs. Some of these concerns were observed throughout the duration of this study. HTA members voiced a fear of liability, especially in facilities such as public schools. When entering any facility with a therapy animal, allergies and phobias of those in the facility must be taken into consideration. Some facilities on Oahu have strict guidelines regarding handlers and their therapy animals which can discourage potential volunteers.

Lily and her dog, Isla, have been volunteering at Oahu Military Hospital (OMH) for several years and says that she has seen lots of problems with the pet therapy program. Previously, it was easy to become a volunteer at OMH. Now it is more difficult. All volunteers are required to take the same all day orientation attended by new staff members including doctors and nurses at the facility. Lily feels that this is irrelevant to pet therapy volunteers, since they cover chain of command and other topics not necessary for a pet therapy volunteer position. In addition to the all day orientation, a mandatory half-day Red Cross course and an updated TB test are required of a potential pet therapy volunteer.

The OMH director in charge of the pet therapy program also did not respond to volunteers or prospective volunteers in a timely manner which was discouraging according to Lily. After joining HTA, Lily sent out an email asking how many HTA members would be interested in volunteering at OMH. Fourteen HTA members responded back, but when Lily tried to contact the volunteer director at OMH, she did not get a response back. Lily felt frustrated when there was such a high amount of interest, but the lack of communication and strict requirements needed to get into the pet therapy program at facilities like OMH dissuaded potential volunteers.

People's perception of animals can vary by gender, education level, religion, cultural values, media perception and prior experiences (Kellert, 1980; Nakajima et al., 2002; Pifer et al., 1994; Serpell, 2004). Madison says that it is necessary to remember that not everyone loves dogs. It is important to ask people first, and let them take the initiative to approach or interact with your dog. Some care facilities on Oahu have a staff member escort HTA members and their dogs to patients, while other facilities will allow

HTA members to visit on their own after checking in. Jenny, a new volunteer also feels that when first starting out in the field of pet therapy, you have to be open to making mistakes and not be afraid to ask questions. Not everyone will agree with the benefits of pet therapy so it is best to be respectful and mindful of opposing perceptions of animals when trying to implement an animal therapy program into a facility.

Concern about the safety and comfort of a dog can also be an issue. Because his dog, Harper, is small, Jake becomes concerned if a patient is in a wheelchair and unable to support her properly. According to Jake (personal communication, August 1, 2012), some patients have a “death grip” due to physical ailments which prevent them from having full control over their body. Jake also has to be aware of Harper’s comfort level and take a proactive approach to ensure that she is not put in an uncomfortable or unsafe environment. Similarly, Jenny, whose therapy animal Bean, is a guinea pig, has to take special precautions when visiting with residents. Jenny brings a blanket so that Bean can sit comfortably on people’s laps. She sometimes has to show residents how to pet or hold Bean since many of them are unfamiliar with smaller animals. Despite all of these precautions, Bean has slipped off of people’s laps occasionally, causing some anxiety for Jenny.

Pet therapy in Hawaii can provide numerous benefits similar to those identified in studies by Beck and Katcher (1996), Fawcett and Gullone (2001), Nagasawa et al. (2009), Wells (2009), and Wood et al. (2007) that were discussed in Chapter 2. Some of these benefits included bringing joy and laughter into the lives of senior citizens and facilitating interaction and learning in adults and children of all ages. Challenges regarding pet therapy in Hawaii are similar to concerns identified by Jalongo et al. (2004)

such as safety considerations, sanitation concerns, liability concerns, allergies and cultural differences.

CHAPTER 7

ANALYSIS OF HAWAII THERAPY ANIMAL ORGANIZATION

I analyze HTA using Bolman and Deal's (2003) structural, human resource, political and symbolic framework and Martin's (1992) integration and fragmentation perspective. The structural frame examines the social framework of the organization and the human resource frame looks at the connection between characteristics of the organization and its members. The political frame focuses on conflict, the allocation of resources and the variety of interest groups in an organization. The symbolic frame explores how individuals create meaning in the world around them. Martin's integration perspective focuses on unifying aspects within the organization while the fragmentation perspective explores the intricacy of personal relationships and differing viewpoints.

HTA's Structural Frame

According to Bolman and Deal (2003), the structural frame of an organization focuses on its social architecture. The first assumption is that the organization (HTA) is based on the need to attain the established goals and objectives that are clearly outlined in their mission statement. Although HTA is defined as an animal assisted therapy (AAT) organization, it seems that the activities in which members participate are more aligned with an animal assisted activities (AAA) organization. Although HTA is working to expand programs such as the wounded warrior program, the majority of volunteers visit residents and patients in care homes, hospitals and schools. To be considered an AAT program, the animal would need to have an integral part in the treatment process of an

individual. It seems that HTA considers their work of animal-assisted therapy in a more informal context. The animals are providing therapy in the form of increasing happiness, relaxation, laughter and facilitating social interaction. The therapy animals appear to be benefiting the people they visit even if they are not necessarily a part of a formal treatment program.

The second assumption of Bolman and Deal's (2003) structural frame states that efficiency within an organization can be increased and performance can be enhanced through division of labor and specialization. On paper, there appears to be three tiers at HTA with the founder and president, Gabby at the top. Since HTA is a non-profit organization, they are also required to have a board of directors, the second tier that oversees activities in HTA. Composing the largest group at HTA are in the third tier, its volunteer members. At the time of the study, there were 50-60 registered HTA members but only 20-25 active members.

The tier comprised of the board of directors is unstable. According to a long time member of HTA, factors contributing to the instability include original board members who are no longer part of the organization, and current appointed board members who do not show up to meetings. Due to the lack of a stable board of directors, it is challenging to make concrete decisions. Low attendance at board meetings can even lead to canceled meetings. In addition, there are some board members who are misinformed and do not take the time to understand the organization. Board members were initially selected because they were part of the founding group of individuals and were also friends with the founder rather than people with experience or expertise. This led to the formation of a

board that lacked diversity and the skills needed to responsibly and efficiently run the organization (Hollier, 2010).

Hollier (2010) states that board members may not be clearly told what is expected of them and need to be provided with more education regarding their specific roles and responsibilities. Over the course of the study, a few HTA meetings were held to discuss upcoming events. Not all board members were present during the meetings. Board members that were present, were not identified during these meetings. Several HTA board members who originally agreed to serve as a board member were not aware of what was expected nor did they have a thorough understanding of the organization. In one incident, a board member did not know that HTA was a non-profit organization and provided misinformation to the public during an event. According to Hollier (2010), this is not an uncommon phenomenon in nonprofit organizations. Hollier states that there is often a lack of understanding about the relationship between the board of directors, the director and what each of their responsibilities entails. Furthermore, Hollier points out that in the case of nonprofit organizations, individuals are volunteering their time and may become offended if they are told that they are not doing a good job.

Another problem that can occur is that board members and the founding director may evolve at different rates. This seems to be the case at HTA. There are some board members who push forward with the expansion of HTA's services, while others barely show up at events. The disconnection between board members and Gabby may in part be caused by the founder. According to Hollier (2010), an individual who founded the organization may try to hold onto his or her power by failing to disseminate all information to the board members.

In the case of HTA, it seems that Gabby is hesitant to delegate responsibilities to other HTA members. Jake expressed that he feels that Gabby has trouble entrusting others with tasks concerning HTA. Gabby fought for a number of years to get HTA established. According to Jake, HTA is Gabby's "baby" and she likes to do everything on her own. Throughout his time with HTA, Jake has tried to help in any way possible. When taking initiative to help, Jake felt that Gabby was unhappy with his efforts and was even trying to sabotage him. The two clashed over management styles and he believed that Gabby felt like he was trying to take over. Jake felt like her management style was top down and that she did not try to get input from members or listen to their interests. Events were organized without generating support from volunteers, and as a result, HTA member turnout tended to be low. Disagreements with Gabby caused Jake to withdraw from the organization at times. However, Jake continued to remain a part of HTA for several reasons. Jake enjoyed volunteering with his dog and believed that he was making a difference in his community through HTA. He also felt that despite their disagreements, Gabby's heart was always in the right place.

Delegation of tasks is a concern expressed by some HTA members. Gabby expressed a desire to delegate more responsibility to willing HTA members but it seems that her intentions have not yet been transformed into actions. Hollier (2010) points out that there can be a fear by executive directors to identify complaints or shortcomings because they may worry that such criticism will negatively impact their ability to raise funds for the organization. According to Hollier, fundraising should be the highest priority for the board of directors since money is essential for the organization to fulfill its mission. During a board meeting held over the course of this study, a fundraising

event was in the planning stages. Not all board members were there and a clear agenda was not established. A handout consisting of notes and email messages pertaining to the upcoming fundraiser was disseminated to all HTA members present. A copy of the email was forwarded to all HTA members to keep them informed of the event. Gabby appears to be in the early stages of delegating responsibilities. While the intent by the executive director is there, groups and committees have not yet been formally established.

The third assumption of Bolman and Deal's (2003) structural frame states that appropriate types of control and coordination are needed in order to ensure that efforts of members within a group come together. For the most part, Gabby's approach to running HTA is agreeable with the majority of its members. She is friendly and approachable, has an open door policy and encourages all members to come to her with their concerns. It is her preference that HTA members find their own place within the organization and therefore she does not push them into specific roles.

Members expressed a need for improved coordination and communication within the organization. The main source of communication for all HTA members is through email. Those interviewed spoke about the need to increase communication amongst all HTA members. A solution brought up would be to secure a central site where all members would have access to volunteer schedules and information. During the time of the study, the only way to find out who was volunteering at what facility was to directly communicate with the volunteer. If an organization was interested in having HTA visit their facility, inquiries were sent directly to Gabby who would then send out an email to all HTA members. Once the email was sent out, volunteers did not have any way to know which other members were interested.

The lack of scheduled physical meetings is also detrimental to creating a cohesive bond amongst members. Most of the active HTA members volunteered at Kokua Care Home during the first two weekends of each month. During these weekends, members would visit with residents and meet afterwards if necessary. However, meetings were typically casual and unscheduled. There were no set meeting dates for board members and not all HTA members come to Kokua Care Home. According to Gabby, there are also some members who were previously certified through HTA, but stopped coming to Kokua Care Home. All HTA members need to pay their yearly dues in order to be covered by the organization's insurance company during visits to facilities. Members who do not pay their yearly dues are no longer covered. Better communication with HTA members who are no longer active is also needed to inform them of their need to pay dues. Without communicating with these members there is no way of knowing if they are still volunteering, at which facilities they are volunteering at, and how they are representing HTA since they are no longer receiving updated information. As previously mentioned in Chapter 5, there are approximately 50-60 HTA members, but only 20-25 active members that consistently attend meetings and events.

Bolman and Deal's (2003) fourth structural frame assumption states that rationality and not outside pressures or personal preferences should always be at the forefront. Gabby has a clear vision of the kind of volunteers that she would like to join HTA and she is adamant that HTA members volunteer from the heart, not out of wanting recognition. She is quick to turn away people who would like to certify their pet simply to have the status of owning a therapy animal.

After interviewing some HTA members, it appears that at times Gabby does let her personal biases get in the way of listening to suggestions of other HTA members. Because of her passion regarding the mission and representation of HTA, Gabby sometimes finds it difficult to take other people's suggestions into consideration if she feels strongly about an idea. For example, Gabby selected a product for fundraising on her own rather than surveying HTA members. As a result the product did not sell well and only a few members actively participated in buying and selling the product to others. Despite their differences, all HTA members interviewed unanimously agree that Gabby is the driving force of HTA and ultimately she wants only the best for the organization.

The fifth assumption in Bolman and Deal's structural frame states that structures should fit the objectives, environment and workforce of an organization. The overall structure of HTA suits its members well. HTA members range in age from high school students to retirees, the majority of whom hold full time jobs while volunteering on the weekends. Members are asked to come to a few HTA visits at Kokua Care Home a year. The remainder of the time, HTA members are free to volunteer at facilities such as care homes, hospitals, or schools near their homes that best fits their interest or that of their dogs. Scheduling is worked out directly between the volunteer and the facility, rather than going through HTA first. Volunteers are also encouraged to attend fundraising events and seminars held by HTA as their schedule permits.

The final assumption in Bolman and Deal's structural frame states that structural deficiencies, which can lead to performance gaps and other problems, can be fixed by careful analysis and restructuring. Gabby has admitted that she hopes to develop a more efficient way to delegate responsibilities to other HTA members. Another goal is for

HTA to expand its services; in order to do that, other HTA members will need to step in and take more responsibility. Because they lack set committees or positions in charge of specific record keeping tasks, there are problems running HTA on a day-to-day basis. A great deal of the work falls on Gabby. She acknowledges that there are other areas that can be taken over by others such as record keeping of volunteer hours, facilities that HTA members visit and annual dues that need to be renewed for all members. She is currently taking steps to restructure HTA to run more efficiently and have HTA members take on more active roles and responsibilities.

HTA's Human Resource Frame

Bolman and Deal's (2003) human resource frame focuses on the relationship between characteristics of members of an organization. Personal stories from HTA members that were discussed in Chapter 6 will be further analyzed using the human resource frame in this section. The first assumption of this framework states that the existence of organizations is based on the need to meet human needs. The purpose of HTA is to promote the human-animal bond. Through stories shared by HTA members, patients, residents and their families, interactions with HTA therapy dogs meet several human needs that help to promote overall well-being. One of these needs is acceptance. According to Fawcett and Gullone (2001), companion animals can promote psychosocial development by providing unconditional love and acceptance. Love and acceptance can increase self-efficacy, encourage a sense of trust in others, and decrease feelings of inadequacy and rejection.

According to Wells (2009), animals can also provide a source of social support. Animals are seen as nonjudgmental, dependable, and faithful. No matter what physical or psychological condition an individual is in, dogs appear to have a way of seeing past these conditions and are able to touch people in a way that other humans sometimes cannot. Gabby shared an example involving a stroke patient who began to cry after spending time with her therapy dog. After feeling rejected for so long, the dog brought him a sense of acceptance. Stacy spoke about her special education students who were often classified as different by others, and often acted out as a way to communicate their feelings of inadequacy. However, when her students were with her therapy dog, they felt a sense of acceptance and, identifying with the dog, negative behaviors decreased.

HTA dogs also helped to facilitate conversations during visits. According to Wood et al. (2007), companion animals can serve as a “social lubricant”. They can be a neutral topic of interest that serve as an icebreaker and help facilitate conversations with others. Multiple HTA members noted this trend during their visits. Kacy (personal communication, July 1, 2012) noted that with a therapy dog present, “patients became more outgoing”. Kailey, who often works with special needs children said that “dogs encourage kids to talk, walk, or do other challenging activities they normally would not do” (personal communication, August 15, 2012). Kailey’s observations reflect a study by Melson (2003) which found that companion animals such as dogs, impacted children’s cognitive, perceptual, and language development by stimulating interest, providing motivation and promoting curiosity. Jase stated that with his therapy dog present, “patients open up more and ask a lot of questions. They want to talk story and they want to know everything about your dog” (personal communication, August, 11, 2012).

This phenomenon was also something that I frequently saw during my own observations. At a park during an HTA presentation to summer school students, children opened up more and conversed with handlers when dogs were present. I also observed several monthly visits at Elite Senior Care. Prior to the therapy dogs arriving, residents would be quietly sitting in their chairs in the recreation room, but upon the arrival of the therapy dogs, the residents engaged in conversation. They would talk and interact with not only the dogs and the handlers, but the other residents as well. Two interviews for this study were conducted at outdoor coffee shops with HTA members and their dogs. During these interviews, two different strangers approached us to inquire about their dog, and talk to us about their own pets.

In addition, HTA dogs brought joy and happiness to residents, patients, students, and to their handlers during visits that were unanimously described by all parties as positive experiences. According to Valeri (2006), the actual or perceived behavior of dogs can create an enjoyable atmosphere conducive to laughter. Valeri noted that laughter has important social implications. Laughter can indicate a mutually positive relationship and reinforce shared affective positive experiences. Kacy, whose father received frequent visits by HTA members said that the dogs helped to lift, not only her father's spirits, but hers as well. Jase recounted a woman who began to cry because she was so happy to see her mother smile when in the presence of his therapy dog. During an hour visit to Lokahi Care Home (a local state run care home), three separate patients sung to HTA therapy dog Harper. On another visit I observed medically fragile students at a public elementary school. Mia is a student who was bedridden and unable to speak, but when the teacher picked up Mia's hand to help her stroke the HTA therapy dog, she

started to smile, and continued to smile when the dog lay beside her on her bed. Nick, was also bedridden and nonverbal, but Nick's teacher said that he brightens up when therapy dog Amy, was next to him and began smiling when Amy lay on the bed beside him.

The second assumption in Bolman and Deal's (2003) human resource frame states that people and organizations have a mutualistic relationship. People bring their energy, ideas and talents to the organization and in return are provided with positive benefits. Since HTA is a volunteer-run organization, the membership is essential to its success. HTA membership is diverse, and each member brings experiences that benefit HTA. Gabby has over 30 years of experience in the health care industry. Jake has background knowledge and experience with various state run organizations, while Lily has experience with personnel relation work. An HTA member runs a successful dog training school and assists Gabby with the certification and training of potential therapy dogs while another HTA member is a dog walker in an affluent neighborhood. Other team members have experiences in education and working with children and students. These are just a few of the volunteers that bring their varied prior experiences, expertise, and connections to HTA.

Gabby encourages team members to use these strengths to help the organization grow and expand, and consequently HTA members feel that they benefit from their volunteer work through HTA. Jase and Jake have said that they tended to be more introverted prior to volunteering with HTA, but once they began visits with their therapy dogs, they began to feel more confident communicating with others. Like Jake and Jase, Kailey also found that working with HTA helped her talk to people since her dogs served

as a good starting point for conversations. All interviewees, regardless of their background, described the work they engage in through HTA as having a positive influence for both themselves and the people that they visit.

The third assumption in the human resource frame states that a poor fit between an individual and the organization can have a detrimental impact on both parties involved. Most people come to HTA because of their love for animals and their desire to help others in the community. Desired character traits are compassion, humility, and altruism, rather than those who are more self-serving and want the status of being able to say that they have a therapy dog. This belief goes against what HTA stands for, and Gabby reserves the right to turn away people who volunteer for these motives.

According to a long time HTA member, there has been a high turnover rate among the volunteers since its establishment. According to Lettieri (2004), a high turnover rate is common in many non-profit organizations. Whenever a volunteer leaves HTA, Gabby speaks with him/her individually in an attempt to determine his or her reasons for leaving. For many people it is simply the challenge of committing the time necessary because of other personal obligations. If it is because of a conflict or a disagreement with the organization or another member, Gabby will bring the concerns back to the group so that together they can reflect and improve on their practice.

HTA's Political Frame

The political frame explores conflict, allocation of resources and the variety of interest groups within organizations (Bolman & Deal, 2003). One assumption of the

political frame is that organizations are composed of a variety of individuals and interest groups. The members of HTA include high school and college students, retirees, individuals who work full-time jobs in various fields, single men and women, married couples, and families with children. HTA members have a range of personalities and ethnicities, come from different backgrounds, and come with varying levels of life experience. The main interest of the majority of members is to give back to those in their community through pet therapy and facilitation of the human-animal bond. There are some individuals at HTA who have had ulterior motives. For example, some individuals have tried to sell their pet products or promote their businesses through HTA. Other individuals have also come to HTA with the intent to become certified as a therapy dog team for the label and status rather than with the intention to volunteer in the community. Gabby has been diligent about directly addressing individuals whose interests are not in line with her philosophy of volunteering from the heart and promoting HTA rather than their own special interests.

The second assumption of the political frame states that interests, values, beliefs, perceptions of reality and information among members within an organization can vary. Differences in perceptions of reality and information among members is evident within HTA. As previously mentioned although there are officially between 50-60 HTA members, only 20-25 of the members actively participate in visitations and events hosted by HTA. There is a core group of about five HTA members who consistently take the lead on organizing projects and events and believe that being a part of HTA means that each member should actively participate in events other than pet visitation at facilities. Involvement outside facilitation visits include fundraising activities and events, attending

seminars to further their knowledge on pet therapy, and attending other public events which raise awareness of HTA in the community. Members who consistently take an active role in all aspects of HTA perceive the need that all HTA members should be more involved. Other HTA members view their involvement as sufficient as long as they continue to participate in pet visitation at a facility.

Other assumptions of Bolman and Deal's (2003) political frame assert that many crucial decisions in organizations center on the allocation of scarce resources and that scarce resources and differences among group members can lead to conflict. Conflict is a key component that influences dynamics in an organization. HTA is a non-profit, all-volunteer organization. The resource that is most valued is time. The time given by each member of HTA can be seen as the basis of much conflict observed in the organization. Gabby, the founder, has put a tremendous amount of time and energy into establishing and maintaining HTA. She has a full-time job outside of HTA, therefore any time invested in HTA is her personal time. After investing so much of her time into HTA she wants the organization to thrive. According to some HTA members it seems like it is difficult for Gabby to entrust others with responsibilities pertaining to HTA and its success. HTA members have voiced the need for other members to become more involved within the organization which would require devoting more of their time. Different views as to what an adequate amount of time that each member contributes to HTA has been a source of conflict. Furthermore because time is such a valuable asset and Gabby knows that each member who volunteers is sacrificing their own personal time, she is hesitant to push members into designating a certain amount of hours dedicated to

the organization. Instead Gabby chooses to be grateful for their involvement and allows them to find their own place within the organization.

HTA's Symbolic Frame

Bolman and Deal's (2003) symbolic frame looks at how humans make sense of the world that they live in. This frame focuses on beliefs, meaning and faith. One assumption of this frame is that value is placed on meaning and less on what actually happened. Another assumption states that processes and events are often valued not for what is produced, but instead for what is expressed. HTA participates in animal related events and activities. However, the value of the organization lies not only in events and visits that can be observed, but also in the intangible feelings that are expressed through the human-animal bond. A large part of HTA's mission includes visiting residents and patients in hospitals and care homes and students in various public and private schools throughout the island. According to Thach and Thompson (2006), non-profit organizations tend to place a higher value on achieving a specific social purpose rather than measuring success in financial terms.

If an outsider with no background knowledge of pet therapy were to observe some visitations, they may not observe anything significant and wonder about the benefits that animals provide residents, patients and children. Particularly for those individuals who cannot communicate with others, it is difficult to determine if pet therapy has any impact, or if they are even aware of the presence of the dog. Some residents and medically fragile students, appear to be unengaged during the visit, lying on the bed with their eyes closed. Family members of these individuals often have requested visits because their loved one

at one time used to love animals or they have seen small indications that animals bring them happiness. Regardless of the extent of a patient or student's response, family members have expressed appreciation for the efforts of the handlers and their dogs.

During my site visits to various care homes and schools, I watched as HTA members conversed with all individuals, regardless of whether or not it was a one-sided interaction. According to Beck and Katcher (1996), the sight of an animal can have a calming effect by decreasing tension and promoting relaxation. HTA members asked the resident how they were doing and would say that they had come to visit with their dog. They would keep up a running commentary as to what the dog was doing while they were in the room and upon leaving, would say goodbye to the patient. Visits by HTA members and their dogs may provide a positive impact on residents, patients and children in ways that may never fully be recognized.

The small indications of success and accomplishment in the people that they visit are what many volunteers consider their most gratifying experiences. Many HTA members visit the same residents, patients or students and are able to witness the progress being made from week to week. Even during short visits, small accomplishments are often achieved. Over the course of an hour visit at a summer school program, I watched a 7-year-old child gain confidence in the presence of a HTA therapy dog. The child did not interact with other students and preferred to remain outside of the room with her leader. When she first entered the room clutching the hand of her leader, she seemed extremely frightened as the dogs mingled and greeted the other children. She was hesitant to even touch a strand of the dog's fur. As the visit progressed, the children were given a chance to pet and socialize with the dogs. With the help of her leader and HTA member Kailey,

the girl slowly opened up and became more comfortable with the dog. By the end of the session she was confidently holding the dog's leash independently and was walking the dog around the room with the other children.

In another case, Jase described a family member who began to cry from happiness because her mother got out of bed to kiss the therapy dog. Although it was a small gesture, and her mother immediately went back to bed, it provided the family members a bit of peace to see their mother, who had been unhappy for so long, have a moment of happiness. To someone unfamiliar with these circumstances, the ability to pick up a dog's leash or the desire to kiss a dog may not seem like a large accomplishment. However when put into the larger context, these small victories may be extremely significant. As HTA member Jake remarked, his favorite and most rewarding memories of previous visits were seeing the twinkle in the eye of a resident, seeing a small smile, and seeing hands reaching out to pet his dog.

An assumption of Bolman and Deal's (2003) symbolic frame states that multiple meanings can be derived from an event because people will not interpret experiences in the same manner. While most people that I spoke to view services provided by HTA members as a positive experience, others such as a school administrator or the president of an organization, may be concerned about the presence of a dog in a facility. Literature on pet therapy has pointed to the physical, psychological and social benefits of interactions between human and animals (Fawcett & Gullone, 2001; Nagasawa et al., 2009; Wells, 2009). Despite all of these benefits, there are those who view animal therapy as a liability. HTA member Stacy was asked to stop bringing her dog into her classroom by the principal due to a concern about phobias, allergies, and the hygiene of

the dog. Gabby also commented that she faced a lot of resistance when first starting HTA, which took her 4-5 years to get approval to become a nonprofit organization. She noted that on the mainland, the benefits of therapeutic animals may be more accepted when compared with Hawaii. She also said the acceptance of therapy animals may be generational in the medical field; the younger generation of medical professionals has started to see that animals can be used to benefit their patients, and has seen more physicians moving towards this change.

On an organizational level, HTA members also interpret events in different ways. The core group of individuals seem to have a different outlook when compared with those who are inconsistently involved in HTA events and activities. Jake and Lily are two core HTA members who were actively involved in setting up a variety of events. Both voiced their frustration at the lack of involvement and commitment of other HTA members. Some volunteers seem to think that it was enough to just do visits, while Jake and Lily both feel that being a part of HTA means that members needed to promote the organization at community events outside of facility visitations. Throughout the duration of the study, there were several community and fundraising events that occurred. Some members interviewed viewed these events as successful in generating funds and publicity for HTA and their mission. However, Lily, who played a large role in organizing these events expressed her disappointment in the lack of support and commitment from other HTA members, which ultimately caused her to distance herself from HTA.

The last assumption of Bolman and Deal's (2003) symbolic frame states that symbols are created by people to help provide predictability, clarity, direction and increased faith in times of ambiguity or uncertainty. Symbols can include visual images

that represent beliefs and meanings. During the course of this study, HTA members started to visit a variety of new facilities. Volunteering at a new facility brings a level of ambiguity and uncertainty as each facility has their own unique protocols, staff and residents. During the course of this study, Jake, an interviewee, who I frequently observed began volunteering Lokahi Care Home, a state run facility for senior citizens. Stacy and Kailey were asked to give a presentation to children at a summer school program, something which neither had ever done before. HTA members also visited a non-profit preschool which specialized in speech and language therapy services. Even facilities that HTA members routinely visit vary from week to week as new patients and staff members come into the facility.

Because of these uncertainties, many members, like Jake, Jase, Jenny and Kailey expressed their anxiety when first volunteering with HTA and with each new facility that they visit. Symbols, such as visual images, that convey beliefs and meanings can help to provide predictability and also put members at ease when faced with a new situation or meeting new people. Indications or gestures that indicate a love for animals help many HTA members to form connections. As Jase expressed, “There is one thing that is very special for people who have dogs or have animals. They are a certain type of people that have more compassion for others” (personal communication, August 11, 2012).

It is evident that all HTA members who participated in this study love their pets. As previously noted when discussing the atmosphere of HTA in Chapter 5, HTA members speak fondly of their pets and many treat them like children; dogs can often be seen sitting in their owners’ lap. Some of the smaller dogs arrive in strollers or wear dog clothing and owners refer to themselves as “Mom” or “Dad”. Both female and male HTA

members were observed being openly affectionate with the dogs and showered them with hugs and kisses. Because of their attachments to their animals, there is a great deal of trust involved with each visit. Handlers allow strangers to interact with the pets they love so dearly. All HTA members interviewed on this topic expressed that they felt more comfortable and confident with each visitation session, as they saw the joy and positive reactions from those they visited.

With each visit, members also learned how to be more attuned to signals from their pets that were indicative of any discomfort, and learned to be proactive in these situations. For example, Jake could sense when his dog, Harper was uncomfortable or anxious when sitting in someone's lap. Harper is a small dog and is sometimes unable to get a comfortable footing. Jake learned to quickly remedy the problem by placing a blanket under Harper or asking residents to shift their position. The experiences of their dogs interacting with residents, patients and children give HTA members the knowledge, confidence and faith in knowing how their dogs will react when faced with new situations.

Cultural Perspectives of HTA

Martin's (1992) integration and fragmentation of social scientific perspectives were used when analyzing the cultural perspectives of HTA. The integration perspective focuses on unity and is defined by the following characteristics: "organization-wide consensus, consistency and clarity" (Martin, 1992, p. 45). Using this perspective I will explore themes, basic assumptions and values shared by all HTA members. The

fragmentation perspective looks at the complexity of cultural relationships and is defined by the following characteristics: “ambiguity, complexity of relationships among manifestations, and a multiplicity of interpretations that do not coalesce into a stable consensus” (Martin, 1992, p. 130).

There are several main issues upon which HTA members unanimously agree. According to Hudson (1999), non-profit organizations are most effective when members have shared common values and assumptions regarding the purpose of the organization and the way that it is operated. HTA members love their pets and believe in the benefits of pet therapy and share the belief that they are contributing to their community in a positive way. Although all members may not agree with Gabby’s leadership style, HTA members have expressed that her heart is always in the right place and that she is the driving force of the organization. They acknowledge that Gabby takes on a tremendous amount of responsibility and is involved in every aspect of the organization. There is also an agreement among HTA members that the organization would benefit from expanded services and more recognition within the community.

As the founder places a strong emphasis on creating a positive, collaborative and welcoming environment at HTA, all volunteers receive the HTA culture agreement packet which clearly outlines expectations for respecting other people’s differences, practicing direct communication, and dealing with conflict in a responsible, proactive, and constructive manner. HTA members interviewed agreed that Gabby is approachable and easy to talk to. Several individuals, including Madison, Lily and Jase all stated that one of the reasons they joined HTA instead of another pet therapy organization was Gabby’s welcoming and easygoing personality. According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2006),

alternative sources of power can include expertise, knowledge, information and skills, a strong work ethic and charismatic personality. These are all qualities that Gabby possesses that she has used to establish and run HTA since its establishment in 1994.

There are other issues that HTA members do not agree on. According to Walton and Dutton (1969), conflict in organizations may arise when members have individual differences pertaining to gender, ethnicity, beliefs, socioeconomic status, age, or differences in personality. The demographics of HTA membership are diverse, ranging from high school students to retirees and come from a multitude of different ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds. One issue that HTA members do not agree on is how HTA should be run. There is also conflict regarding the varying amount of time and activities that volunteers contribute to HTA and the lack in communication among HTA members, that leads to a distinct disconnection amongst volunteers. Some processes such as the certification of therapy dogs has also been questioned by HTA members. Members who devote the most time to HTA are the ones aware of problems within the organization, while those who do not invest a lot of time in HTA seem to have a superficial understanding of the organization and have expressed satisfaction with how the organization is run.

A main point of contention with HTA members is how the organization should be run. Gabby burdens herself with the responsibility of every aspect, on every level of the organization. However, she has expressed a desire to delegate some of these roles to other long time, committed members of HTA. Some members echo her sentiments and feel as though there has not been enough delegation and have felt resistance from Gabby. As previously discussed in the structural framework analysis section, one team member felt

sabotaged because there was a lot of resistance when he tried to go forward with his ideas when organizing a HTA event.

Some members have expressed that the management style at HTA is top down. Robert Dahl (1957) described this type of management style as authority, a source of power that exists within organizations. According to Dahl, the main distinction between authority and alternative sources of power is that within an organization, authority is directed downward while alternative sources of power can be directed downward, upward and laterally. Some members feel that their interest and input is not valued and they have expressed that events are sometimes organized without reaching a group consensus from HTA members. As a result, there tends to be the occasional low turn out at these events. Others view Gabby's management not as authoritative, but rather as a reflection of how passionate she is about HTA. One commented that Gabby may have trouble entrusting others with tasks concerning HTA because she so passionately wants to see HTA succeed and grow.

There is also a disagreement within HTA regarding the amount of time that members invest in the organization. As previously discussed in Chapter 5, frustration has been expressed by more than one person at the lack of participation by other members. Those who have invested a lot of time with HTA and help to organize events feel that members who belong to HTA need to honor their commitments and make a greater effort to support HTA outside of just doing visits. Community events help bring awareness about their organization to the public and fundraising events help to bring in much needed funds that the organization depends on. According to Walton and Dutton (1969), conflict can arise when members of an organization need to rely on each other to

complete a task. This interdependence on one another and the lack of contribution from members of a group can cause feelings of resentment within the organization.

As previously noted in Chapter 5, some participants interviewed expressed concern over the lack in communication among HTA members. Even though HTA is based in Honolulu, members live in all parts of Oahu and visit facilities throughout the island. According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2006), organizations with larger geographic extents require a greater amount of time to coordinate activities and communicate with members than organizations with smaller geographic extents. Many HTA members are not aware of what other HTA members are doing or what facilities they are visiting unless they directly communicate with them. This makes it difficult when new members join the organization and would like to know where HTA members are currently volunteering. Furthermore after the three initial visitations at Kokua Care Home prior to getting certified, handlers are free to volunteer at other facilities.

Members are supposed to renew their membership with Gabby every year so that they are covered by the organization's insurance in the event that something occurs during a visit. However, Gabby said that there are members who have not renewed their membership but may still operate as a handler under the HTA name and without the security of insurance provided by the organization. In addition, should they continue to volunteer, they are not aware of any changes in policy that may have occurred within the organization. Gabby also tries to keep track of volunteer hours, but not all HTA members report them back to her. The lack of a clear communication system does not lend itself to a cohesive group partnership among members.

The status of HTA board members has also been a topic of conflicting opinions. A detailed analysis of the organization of HTA board members was previously discussed using Bolman and Deal's structural frame analysis. There is uncertainty even among long-term HTA members as to who exactly is on the board. Some members, especially those who participate only superficially with HTA, seem unaware that a board even exists. Other HTA members who are less vested have not voiced any concern with the board. A few HTA members who are heavily involved in the organization have expressed concern about the instability and ambiguous nature of HTA board members.

The process of animal certification also has HTA members divided. HTA is one of the few organizations on Oahu that can certify a therapy dog. While other organizations typically charge a fee to certify a therapy animal, HTA does not charge a fee. Certification criteria is based upon the American Kennel Club (AKC) Canine Good Citizen Test. Most animals certified through HTA are dogs, although there are other animals such as cats, miniature horses and guinea pigs that have been certified. Once certified as a therapy animal, animals and their handlers are able to visit facilities. Most facilities require certification of a dog as a therapy animal before they will allow it into their building.

The only HTA member that has the ability to certify animals is Gabby, who has gone through several training courses. Members have praised Gabby's innate ability to detect a problem with a dog and to prevent problematic situations before they arise. They are also grateful that their dogs are certified free of charge. If a person would like to certify their dog they are asked to come to Kokua Care Home where the dog performs a

series of basic commands and demonstrates behaviors appropriately when its owner is not in the room.

As part of the process, Gabby also requires the dog and owner to attend at least three sessions at Kokua Care Home. During these sessions the dog and owner interact with elderly residents and other HTA handlers and their therapy dogs, while Gabby observes these interactions as part of her assessment of the potential therapy dog. One problem is that Gabby is not always in the room watching the dogs. Because she is the only person who can do certification, and since there are often multiple dogs waiting to be certified, she is often out in the hallway certifying new dogs instead of watching interactions that are occurring between dogs and residents. As a result, dogs can become certified before Gabby spends adequate time with them.

Aware of this problem, Gabby has recruited two members to help with the screening process. One felt comfortable assisting with screening the dogs, but felt that Gabby should be able to have enough time to go back and ensure that the dogs were suitable due to liability concerns. Unlike Gabby, he is not officially trained in the certification process and does not want to pass a dog who might turn out to be aggressive. If that scenario were to happen, it would fall back on Gabby and could have negative repercussions for the entire organization. He suggested putting together a standardized procedure in order to help with the screening process and enable other trusted HTA members to help with the initial assessment, relieving Gabby of some of the responsibility. Gabby forwarded him a stack of information to look through, but according to the volunteer, he felt so overwhelmed at the task of putting everything together himself, that he did not do it.

Organizational Culture of HTA and Pet Therapy in Hawaii

One of the objectives of this study was to examine the organizational culture of a non-profit animal assisted therapy organization on Oahu. I identified some of the views shared among members of HTA. These views included a deep love of animals, the belief that animals can have a positive and therapeutic impact on humans, and the desire to give back to their community. The views of HTA helped to dictate the activities in which the organization engaged in. HTA's goal was to facilitate the human-animal bond through animal assisted activities at schools, care and nursing homes, hospices and hospitals. Members of HTA and the interactions between them influenced the culture of the organization. Although there were challenges and conflict within the organization and how it was run, most members viewed HTA as a friendly and welcoming organization with an enjoyable atmosphere. Most members believed it was worthwhile to work through these challenges due to their belief in the benefits of pet therapy, their respect for HTA's founder Gabby and her well meaning intentions.

The second objective of my study was to explore the impact that the organization has had on participants and the community that is serviced. HTA is well-known by animal organizations in Hawaii, but not necessarily well-known by the general public. The people in facilities appear to have been impacted positively by HTA. From stories told by HTA members, staff of various facilities and family members of residents, HTA has brought happiness into the lives of many residents and patients at care homes and hospitals throughout Oahu as well as their families. Children of all ages, socioeconomic backgrounds and abilities also appeared to benefit from interactions with HTA therapy animals. Many physiological, psychological and social benefits of pet therapy described

by Fawcett and Gullone (2001), Nagasawa et al. (2009), Wells (2009), and Wood et al. (2007) were reported and/or observed throughout the duration of this study.

CHAPTER 8

IMPLICATIONS OF STUDY

The findings of this study on organizational culture in a non-profit animal assisted therapy organization suggest that continued knowledge sharing in a more organized manner may help to facilitate long-term effectiveness within HTA, as well as expand awareness of the human-animal bond to the general public. Community awareness may help to increase the acceptance of pet therapy programs into various facilities, encourage individuals to certify their own pets as therapy animals, and increase donations directed at pet therapy organizations.

According to Yang (2007, p. 83), “knowledge sharing occurs when an individual is willing to assist as well as to learn from others in the development of new competencies.” Members of HTA come from diverse backgrounds and bring with them various life experiences as well as expertise from their full-time professions. Gabby has been trying to utilize strengths of members in dog training and their skills in advertising and coordinating events to help HTA. Members who may not have professional skills can help new and prospective HTA members by sharing knowledge about pet visitation.

HTA handlers have expressed that there are a range of emotions when volunteering, especially in the hospice setting or with medically fragile children. They experience profound grief, sadness and also joy at the same time when seeing the happiness that their visits bring to patients and children. Teaching others their strategies on coping with such a wide range of emotions over time can help new members become more confident during their visitation sessions. According to Tobin and Snyman (2008),

knowledge can be shared through the use of stories and storytelling. Using stories and storytelling can be beneficial because they can effectively convey tacit knowledge, reason, emotion and meaning (Kaye & Jacobson, 1999; Swap et al., 2001). Storytelling also conveys information in a natural, entertaining, memorable and interactive manner (Denning, 2000; Wilkins, 1984). Designating times when volunteers can interact with one another can encourage knowledge sharing among members.

Yang (2007) determined that there was a positive relationship among sharing of knowledge, organizational learning and effectiveness of an organization. Knowledge sharing can increase advanced learning and provide greater insight which can lead to a more innovative and effective organization (Lettieri et al., 2004). Both Lettieri et al. and Yang noted that it is important that there is a mechanism for storing knowledge and information that members of an organization have collectively learned. Many members have voiced a need for more organization within HTA. Some HTA members have communicated a desire to help and become more involved, but do not know how. There may also be people out there in the community who have a suitable therapy dog and want to get involved with pet therapy but are unsure of how to do that.

Knowledge sharing may also help to bring more awareness of the human-animal bond to the public. Public awareness can help to increase the acceptance of pet therapy into facilities, generate interest from prospective pet therapy teams, and help to increase funding and donations for organizations like HTA. As Gabby expressed during her attempts to establish HTA, she faced opposition from people who were not aware of the benefits of pet therapy. In the past, the human-animal bond was not widely recognized by many professionals (Hines, 2003). Having people share their first hand experiences with

therapy animals may help the public to see the worth of this practice and also increase acceptance and tolerance out in the community, even from those who do not like animals. An increased interest and understand of the benefits of pet therapy may encourage people to volunteer with their pets, or persuade others who do not have pets of their own to donate to pet therapy organizations to help continue their efforts.

Several recommendations are suggested in order to address the gaps in knowledge sharing within HTA. These include appointing appropriate board members, encouraging more involvement from all volunteers, partnering experienced HTA members with new or prospective members, maintaining an updated website to store and disseminate information and designating specific times each month for pet therapy certification sessions and board meetings.

Board members that were initially appointed were part of the founding group that started the organization rather than appointed for their expertise. Board members may be unaware of what is expected of them and some are no longer a part of the organization. Gabby has expressed a desire for more team members to take the lead in various aspects of the organization. Appropriate board members can be appointed and committees could be created and headed by willing and knowledgeable individuals who could share their expertise with other members. The committees could be responsible for different areas such as fundraising, membership, public relations, organizing visits to facilities, certification of therapy animals, etc.

The lack of involvement in activities outside of visitation was a main point of conflict for some HTA members who grew frustrated with always taking the lead when

organizing events. Clear expectations of providing support during HTA events in addition to participating in visitation sessions could be established among HTA members.

According to Hatch and Cunliffe (2006), members in an organization internalize social constructions of a group and will socialize new members to follow these social constructions of reality. If expectations of participation in community events is established among current HTA members, then new members in turn will continue this process by internalizing the group's social constructions and encourage future members to do the same.

Selecting experienced mentors who can help new HTA members during the initial months of pet visitation may help to solidify connections made with the organization and increase retention of new members. New members can be paired with mentors who volunteer at facilities that they are interested in. For example, a new member who is interested in visiting children could be paired with a mentor who visits children at schools and in hospitals. The mentor could share some of the experiences that she has had over the years and could address any questions or concerns that the new member might have. If new to the field of pet therapy, new members could also shadow their mentors so that they will know what to expect during visits.

As one HTA member suggested, having a central location for HTA where new members can get information, support, and advice may increase member retention, which can help the organization to move forward and expand. Since a physical location has been difficult to secure due to high rent cost, maintaining an up-to-date website that is easily accessible would help to connect HTA members who live throughout Oahu. HTA currently has a website but not all links are frequently updated. For example, the most

current newsletter is from 2012. A website would also serve as the place to store data and share knowledge that has been learned. Providing first hand testimonials from families who have been impacted by HTA and having HTA members share some of their experiences online can encourage new members, while at the same time provide a way for existing members to communicate with one another.

Finally, HTA may benefit by setting specific times each month or year for different activities. For example, board meetings could be held on the first weekend of each month. Having monthly meetings could provide members with an opportunity to converse with one another and discuss any problems that may have surfaced over the past month. Important decisions or input from members can also be taken at this time. HTA could establish specific times when potential therapy dogs can be observed and tested. Currently, interested members call Gabby and come in at any time when visitations are being held at Kokua Care Home. HTA could open up certification of dogs every three months and designate specific times for potential therapy teams to come in. Gabby could also train other members who could assist her with the certification process. All of this information could also be posted on HTA's website. Having a predictable schedule of meetings times, animal certification and other events can help to increase communication and interaction among members.

This study suggests several implications in regards to pet therapy. Pet therapy can be beneficial especially for people confined in facilities because the dog and their handler can bring a piece of the outside world into their lives. Love of animals and the benefits that therapy animals provide transcends socioeconomic status and age as similar feelings

and emotions were expressed by both residents in the most expensive and elite care facilities, residents in private and state run facilities and children of all ages.

I believe that one of the reasons why pet therapy and interactions with animals is uplifting for patients and residents is that it brings a part of life existing outside of the facility into their world, even if only for a few moments. For those living in a facility confined to a room that they do not often leave, the small sentiments and gestures can have the biggest impact. Until one sees long-term care facilities and the conditions that some patients are in, it is difficult to understand how everyday occurrences like verbal interactions and motor skills can be meaningful to patients. In some facilities, bedridden patients spend a great deal of time alone in their beds or room, as there are typically not enough nurses or staff members to have one on one interaction with all the patients.

During my visits to various facilities, I observed a wide range of patients, spanning from those who were still able to easily converse and interact, to many who were confined to their beds, used bedpans, were fed through tubes, and were unable to converse. At times it was difficult to determine if they were cognizant and able to understand what was being said to them. Some residents were unable to talk or show emotion, but were able to move their fingers to pet the dogs in response to their presence. Other residents remained completely unresponsive to any stimulation or interaction. For these residents, we would spend some time with them, have the dog lay next to them on the bed and would talk to them even though they couldn't respond back.

Therapy dogs also brought joy to other more responsive patients and residents. As we live our lives we take for granted the daily pleasures of seeing plants and animals out in the environment, and interacting with our friends, family, and members in our

community. We are reminded of upcoming holidays when we see decorations around town and in store windows. However, when confined to a room some residents may realize how many “normalcies” they miss out on. For some of these residents, animals remind them of their childhood, previous pets, or the memories that they had. Some residents do not have family members or friends who come to visit them frequently so they appreciate the interaction with HTA members and their dogs, and are eager to converse with both the handlers and their dogs during visits. Without even realizing it, patients practice their motor skills when petting and interacting with the animals.

A love of animals and the benefits that they can provide reach people from all walks of life. Over the course of completing my observations and gathering data for this study, I went to a variety of facilities from state-run care homes housing residents of various socioeconomic status, to private care homes catering to the most affluent residents on Oahu. I visited both public schools and small private schools, as well as several hospitals in different areas. Despite the age and socioeconomic status of the residents, patients, students, and children that I visited, reactions to therapy dogs were similar.

Children of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds were intrigued by the therapy dogs. HTA dogs served as a “social lubricant” (Wood et al., 2007), who were neutral topics of interest to facilitate conversation and served as icebreakers. During observations of HTA visits, children converged around the dogs immediately and were eager to ask HTA handlers lots of questions. Some questions were about the therapy dogs, while other children were eager to share stories about their own dogs. The majority

of children observed liked to pet and hug the dogs and watch the dogs perform commands and tricks.

Older residents at care homes and hospitals also seemed to enjoy the presence of therapy dogs. Some residents were afraid of dogs and declined to personally interact with them, but still enjoyed watching the interactions between the dogs, interactions with handlers and their dogs, and interactions between other residents and the dogs. The dogs in this case, appeared to have a calming effect. According to Beck and Katcher (1996), animals can serve as neutral visual stimuli, interrupting thoughts and drawing attention outward. Many residents would also pet the dogs, place them on their laps, or talk to them. In several incidents, residents conversed more when the dogs were present, talking not only to the animal, but also asking handlers about their dogs, inquiring about their age, name and what kind of dog they were, and sharing stories about their own childhood days and pets they once had.

This study illustrated the organizational culture and dynamics within an animal centered organization. It highlighted both the benefits and challenges of allowing pets into facilities and organizations. Companion animals play an important role in the lives of humans, and future work should focus on bringing awareness to the human-animal bond. Animals can provide a sense of calm, relaxation, and joy in an otherwise stressful and busy life, and are viewed as dependable sources of support and can help children, adults and families through difficult transitions in their lives. Animals can enrich our lives by facilitating social interaction, learning and development and providing numerous physiological and psychological benefits which contributes to our overall well-being. Establishing organizations, such as HTA, that help to promote the human-animal bond

requires a tremendous amount of dedication, time and passion for animals from each volunteer involved. Knowledge sharing may hold the key to expand awareness of the human-animal bond to the public as well as facilitate long-term effectiveness within an organization. Results from this study may be useful for individuals interested in the human-animal bond who study animal centered organizations that service health care, retirement and educational facilities. Data from this study may also be used to help devise innovative ways that companion animals can be used to further promote the human-animal bond.

Appendix A

Interview Consent Form

University of Hawaii

Consent to Participate in Research Project

Pet Therapy Organizations on Oahu

My name is Kristen Ono. I am a PhD candidate at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (UH) in the Department of Educational Foundations. As one of the requirements for my PhD degree I will need to conduct research for a dissertation. The purpose of my research is to study pet therapy organizations on Oahu. I would like to study the organizations from multiple viewpoints and learn how each organization is run, the populations that they service, and the structures and strategies that are used to guide them. I am asking you to participate in this project due to your involvement in a pet therapy organization.

Project Description – Activities and Time Commitment: If you choose to participate in this project I will interview you in person and may do several brief follow up interviews with you via phone or email. The initial interview will last for about 30 minutes. I will record the interview using a speaker phone and a digital audio-recorder. I am recording the interview so that I can type an accurate transcript – a written record of what we talked about during the interview – and analyze the information from the interview at a later time. I will give you a copy of the transcript so that you will be able to make corrections if you wish. If you participate you will be one of nine people affiliated with pet therapy organizations whom I will interview individually. One example of the type of question I will ask is, “What do you find most rewarding and most challenging about your involvement with your pet therapy organization?” If you would like to preview a copy of all the questions that I will ask you, please let me know and I can send you a copy.

Benefits and Risks: Due to your interest in pet therapy organizations, there may be some benefit to you in participating in my research project. At the end of my research project you may request to have a copy of my data. I will create a detailed description of pet therapy organizations on Oahu and compare and contrast characteristics of each organization. I believe that there is little or no risk to you in participating in this project. If, however you are uncomfortable answering any of the interview questions, we will skip the question, take a break, stop the interview, or you can withdraw from the project altogether.

Confidentiality and Privacy: During this research project, I will keep all data from the interviews in a secure location. Only my advisor and I will have access to the data, although legally authorized agencies, including the University of Hawai'i Committee on Human Studies, have the right to review research records.

After I transcribe the interviews, I will erase the audio-recordings. When I report the results of my research project, and in my typed transcripts, I will not use your name or any other personally identifying information. Instead, I will use a pseudonym (fake name) for you name. If you would like a summary of the findings from my final report, please contact me at the number listed near the end of this consent form.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this research project is voluntary. You can choose freely to participate or not to participate. In addition, at any point during this project, you can withdraw your permission without any penalty of loss and benefits.

Questions: If you have any questions about this project, please contact me via phone at (808)590-6450 or email (kristen.ono@gmail.com). If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, in this project, you can contact the University of Hawai'i Committee on Human Studies (CHS) by phone at (808)956-5007 or by email at uhirb@hawaii.edu.

Please keep the prior portion of this consent form for your records.
If you agree to participate in this project, please sign the following signature portion of this consent form and return it to me.

Tear or cut here

Signature(s) for Consent:

I agree to participate in the research project entitled, *Pet Therapy Organizations on Oahu*. I understand that I can change my mind about participating in this project, at any time, by notifying the researcher.

Your Name (Print):

Your Signature:

Date:

Appendix B

Interview Questions for HTA Members

1. Background history of participant.
2. Why does this type of work interest you and how did you get involved in this organization? Did you grow up with pets or animals?
3. What is your job/position like? (A typical day, duties, responsibilities, problems dealt with, decisions to make, spend percent of time doing what?)
4. What particular skills or talents are most essential to be effective in your job? How did you learn these skills?
5. What part of this job do you personally find most satisfying? Most challenging?
6. Is there a basic philosophy of the organization and, if so, what is it?
7. How does your organization differ from other similar pet therapy organizations?
8. How would you describe the working atmosphere and the people with whom you work with?
9. What is the average length of time that volunteers have been involved with your organization?
10. From your perspective, what are some problems that you see working in the field of pet therapy?
11. What are the most important personal satisfactions and dissatisfactions about this job/organization?
12. Describe your management style.
13. What are your feelings about the future of this organization?
14. Describe your future involvement with this organization?

Appendix C

Interview Questions for Families of Patients/Residents

1. Background of participant.
2. What are your prior experiences with animals? Are you a current/former pet owner?
3. Do you enjoy the Animal Assisted Therapy program?
4. What do you enjoy the most?
5. What do you enjoy the least?
6. How long have you participated in this program?
7. Do you have any particular memories of Tails of Aloha that stands out?
8. Other comments pertaining to the AAT program.

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