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PET'S HEALTH CRISIS CREATES A VACCINE ACTIVIST

New Jersey doctor's wife spends a year organizing a fundraiser for the California based Rabies Challenge Fund. Event to be held at Rutgers New Brunswick Saturday March 14, 2009

Judy Schor of Toms River thought she was doing the right thing when she took her seven year old Rat Terrier Peaches for a rabies shot on April 9, 2007. Prior to her routine vet visit, Peaches was an extremely healthy, nationally ranked agility champion who had already won her ADCh (the highest title awarded by the United States Agility Dog Association)

She had been a 2007 USDAA Regional Grand Prix finalist and Clean Run Magazine's Ultimate 60 Weave Pole Breed Champion. Schor believes that vet visit led to the end of her dog's highly successful performance career and inspired her to organize a multi-state fund raiser in support of the Rabies Challenge Fund.

Shortly after Memorial day 2007, Peaches developed ear lesions and the hair around the injection site on her right rear leg changed color. Schor returned to her vet and was prescribed an antibacterial, antifungal ointment for the lesions.

"I was told they had no clue about the hair color change," she recounted in an email.

In October 2007 Peaches right rear leg developed a massive swelling. A visit to a specialist (and a \$600 vet bill) yielded no results. Blotchy patches began to appear on Peaches' belly. Schor consulted specialists as far away as Maryland. There were many vet visits and invasive tests. Eventually, Peaches was put on prednisone and Schor was told nothing further could be done. Schor was not willing to give up on her little dog and kept trying different vets.

One of the specialists she consulted asked when Peaches had last been vaccinated but was not willing to suggest a relation between the vaccine and Peaches' condition.

Schor resorted to what she calls "Google U." She entered Peaches symptoms and the term "vaccination" into the search engine and found a reference to Rabies Vaccine Induced Ischemic Vasculitis, an auto-immune disease whose symptoms matched Peaches. She also found Dr. Daniel Morris, DVM ACVD Chief Professor Of Dermatology at the University of Pennsylvania who had a special interest in this disease.

"It took us many tears, many DVM's unwilling to diagnose her, months of prednisone to control symptoms, many biopsies, MRI's etc, and finally approximately \$12,000 to get her properly diagnosed by a University of Pennsylvania's Chief Professor of Dermatology, Dr. Daniel Morris, in early March of 2008," Schor explained in an email. The diagnosis did not lead to a cure for Peaches but the experience inspired Schor to undertake a year-long project to raise awareness

and money for the Rabies Challenge Fund. **Although many pet owners believe vaccinations are entirely benign and beneficial to their pets, clinical studies show that the long term effect on the animal's immune system is unpredictable and can result in autoimmune diseases, site specific cancers and neuro-disorders.** Current state laws requiring one or three-year rabies vaccinations are not based on medical research, Schor explained. As a doctor's wife she had worked on fundraisers in the past for human diseases. She used her agility contacts and the internet to recruit a group of 84 volunteers and began to organize the 2009 North East Rabies Challenge Fund Fundraiser which will be held on March 14, 2009 from 9 am to 5 pm in Trays Hall on the Rutgers/Douglass Campus in New Brunswick, NJ.

The event has attracted vets and pet owners from 19 states including Texas, Georgia and California as well as Canada. Over 200 people have already registered for the event that will feature two internationally acknowledged experts in the field of vaccines, Dr. W. Jean Dodds, DVM and Dr. Ronald A. Schultz, Ph.D

The Rabies Challenge Fund is a not for profit organization co-founded by Dr. Dodds, veterinary research scientist, practicing veterinarian and founder of HEMOPET, (the non-profit animal blood bank), and Kris Christine, whose own dog suffered from vaccinosis, to support a Rabies vaccine challenge study currently taking place at the University of Wisconsin School of Veterinary medicine. The goal is to extend the required interval for rabies boosters to 5 and then to 7 years and help protect pets from the consequences of over-vaccination. **Because the rabies vaccine is the most potent of the veterinary vaccines and is associated with significant adverse reactions, it should be given no more often than necessary to maintain immunity.** Some studies strongly suggest that annual or triennial rabies boosters for dogs are redundant and, in some cases (like Peaches) very injurious to the dogs. Dr. Ronald D. Schultz, Chairman of Pathobiology at the University of Wisconsin has volunteered to direct the project. Currently in it's second year, the Rabies Challenge Study is supported almost entirely by grass roots fund raising. Approximately \$150,000 a year must be raised to complete the study. **Scientific data published in France in 1992 by Michel Aubert and his research team demonstrated that dogs were immune to a rabies challenge 5 years after vaccination, while Dr. Schultz's own serological studies documented antibody titer counts at levels known to confer immunity to rabies 7 years postvaccination.** Unfortunately serological studies are not sufficient to change state rabies laws in the United States. In order to convince legislators, challenge studies must be undertaken that prove that dogs not revaccinated for five and seven years after their first two vaccinations are as protected as they were after receiving their second shot. Dr Schultz will speak on what every dog owner should know about canine vaccines and vaccination programs. Dr. Dodds will present clinical approaches to managing and treating adverse vaccine reactions. A moderated question and answer period will follow. Additional information on the event can be found at <http://www.freewebs.com/rcfbenefit2009/index.htm>. The Rabies Vaccine is the only vaccine required by law and some states still require annual revaccination despite no scientific evidence for that frequency.

Today Peaches rear leg is swollen again and her feet are oozing. Schor continues to look for a cure and get out the word. "Peaches story inspired me to hold this Benefit to educate people on the lack of science behind the Rabies Vaccination laws," she said.