



# Green Dog<sup>®</sup> Walkers

## TIPS ON PROMOTION OF YOUR GREEN DOG WALKERS PROJECT

1. The main number one rule is “Keep it friendly!” Remember the pledge, to never be confrontational when wearing a GDW accessory. The best way to approach a fellow dog walker is to begin by saying “We are talking to dog owners who are good about picking up after their dogs, so they can help get the message out to those who are not.” Assume the person you are talking to is a responsible dog owner and the conversation will go well. If you approach them in a reprimanding tone, it does no good for the conversation nor the overall message of the project.
2. In the first six months of projects in the Falkirk area, they only had one person respond with a negative attitude. Their experience has been that most people are interested and eager to sign up. However, if you do find that the person you are approaching has an attitude, is confrontational, grumpy or begins offering reasons why they won’t or can’t pick up after their dog, best not to engage or let it escalate - they will always have another excuse. Stay friendly and move on!
3. Most of your pledgers will be people who are already doing the right thing - that’s fine! They are your ambassadors, to help change attitudes by the nonverbal sign of a GDW accessory. Don’t worry about trying to convince dog foulers to come over to your side. Start with the ones willing to wear an accessory to help with a bit of peer pressure.
4. Arrange to leave cardboard dispensers of the pledge forms at public places in your community such as the local library, one stop shop, vets surgery, pet stores, groomers, kennel, trainer classes, and any business which will agree to keep them on the counter.
5. Vets may be happy to include a brochure in any “puppy packs” they give out to clients the first time they bring in a new puppy for its vaccinations. Or they may be willing to mention the project and hand a pledge forms to all of their clients. GDW Groups in Falkirk have found vets are very willing to be involved in the project this way. If you have a newsletter in which you will be publishing Green Dog Walker information, you could ask your vet to write an article about the health hazards of dog fouling.
6. The best way to distribute pledge forms is in person, face to face, one on one. This is because it offers a chance to have a dialogue, to find out about trouble spots in your community, and a way to bring in more volunteers to help your group. Network, network, network!
7. Have business cards made up with the Green Dog Walkers logo on it (or just a green paw print) and your group’s contact information. That helps you promote the scheme where ever you happen to be and makes it easy for people to contact you for a pledge form. They are also very handy to have in your pocket when walking your dog, if someone asks about your GDW accessory. Alternatively, make sure you always have a pledge form or two in your pocket or handbag.
8. Set up a Green Dog Walkers booth whenever and wherever you can. Saturday morning next to your most popular dog path or in the park, local fairs, including school fairs are a great way to talk to people who are already relaxed and receptive and often have their dog with them. Think of creative ways your booth might fit into theme fairs. For example, a combined Green Dog Walkers with anti-litter booths at a “health and mental health” fair, with the idea that litter is depressing and clean-ups are good exercise, including dealing with dog fouling; at a heritage fair under the concept that our

green spaces are part of our heritage and we need to take care of them, including cleaning up dog fouling. Other obvious venues for a booth are dog shows, bark in the parks, etc.

9. You can “launch” your Green Dog Walker project by calling a local paper or arrange to have a photographer there, to publicise that your community group has taken on the project. It is good for the “photo opportunity” to include a couple dogs on leads. However, Falkirk’s experience has shown two things to keep in mind: if you bring in dog volunteers, warn their owners that the hoped for photo may or may not end up in the paper. (You have no control over what editorial decisions are made) and don’t bring a dog to a photo shoot (or booth) who is unfriendly to or threatened by other dogs. A battle of dog wits does not make for a good publicity event!

10. Include a regular Green Dog Walkers column or page in your community group’s newsletter. Remember; keep it friendly and non-confrontational!

11. Involve the children. We find that children really get enthusiastic about the Green Dog Walkers project. Often children are about to get their first puppy and are easily convinced to “start out right” and get their GDW accessory right away. Brownies can earn badges by helping with the project; school eco groups can get a notch in their Green Flag status, etc.

12. Make sure that any communication that goes out under the logo is always in the friendly, non-confrontational manner of the project. For example, it would not be used to post notices that were entirely about enforcement or a reprimand from a neighbourhood group to any individual about their dog fouling habits, etc.

These are just some of the ways Falkirk has promoted projects from the start. New ones are always coming up and you will think of more on your own. We would appreciate it if you would let us know of promotional ideas you use that really work, so we can continue to advise all Green Dog Walker project leaders of creative new ideas.

Leave only paw prints!

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