

Parent Clubs: Stewards of Breed Health

Why active Parent Clubs are Critical for Improving the Health of Dogs

Duane Butherus, PhD and Director AKC CHF

The interrelated roles of the Parent Clubs (PCs), the Researchers (Pis) and the Canine Health Foundation need to be understood, so that each can play the optimum role in improving the health of a specific breed as well as the health of all dogs. We'll examine what each group can do to get better and more useful results from the research that we jointly support. Some of the major issues are:

CHF role

- Support the PCs in specifying the problems in their individual breeds
- Provide well-defined opportunities for PCs to support the research that best addresses the problems in their breeds.
- Select the optimum PIs and research institutions to do the work needed by the PCs
- Provide sufficient oversight of research work underway that the PCs are assured that their funds are spent wisely
- Provide regular updates to the PCs on research they are supporting

Parent Club Role

- Conduct accurate, periodic surveys of their breed to identify what problems that breed is subject to, and the relative importance of the identified problems
- Provide funding for research projects that address problems in their breed, as well as more general canine health issues.
- Organize and carry out sample acquisition, along with supporting, pedigree information. Provide convincing assurance to membership of the security of the information.
- Update their membership on supported work, progress and outcomes.

PI Role

- Be responsive to both the science as well as the needs of the individual dog owners, PC organizers and health representatives.
- Work jointly with PC groups in sample and pedigree collection
- Be willing to report back in educated lay terms to the supporting PCs
- Be aware of the human cost of the funding provided by the PCs.