



MARCOS TOWNSEND THE GAZETTE

Lori Sholzberg, seen here with her dog Maggie, helped come up with the cherry-red Unconditional love bracelet as a fundraiser for the SPCA, which she has supported since first volunteering there at age 11.

Dangle a bangle for SPCA

Cherry red bracelets support pet shelter

Local animal lover launched Unconditional love, latest in Livestrong fundraising fashion

MONIQUE POLAK
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

Fashionable folks are wearing their hearts on their sleeves — or their wrists. Last summer, a yellow synthetic silicon bracelet stamped with Livestrong became the must-have arm accessory. Designed to raise money for cancer research through the Lance Armstrong Foundation, that bracelet has led to a series of silicon spin-offs.

Part philanthropy, part style, these bracelets are everywhere. The pink ones support breast cancer research; blue is for ovarian cancer research; white means you support the Live 8 battle against poverty.

Now, thanks to the efforts of animal lover Lori Sholzberg, Montrealeers have yet another

bracelet to dangle from their wrists. This latest one is cherry red and reads "Unconditional love," with a pawprint replacing the "O" in "love." Profits from its sale go to the Montreal SPCA.

More than 1,500 of the bracelets have been sold, and another 1,500 recently hit town. Sholzberg, who works as office manager at the Animal Health Clinic, an N.D.G. veterinary clinic, began distributing the bracelets at the end of May.

She came up with the idea when she heard of a similar project in Los Angeles. Sholzberg's friend Ruth Asch, who used to work at the clinic, devised the slogan; Sholzberg chose the colour, added the pawprint and is handling distribution.

Sholzberg believes the words "Unconditional love" resonate

with pet owners. "I look at my dog Maggie, and that's what she and the animals I work with give me every day," she said.

Sholzberg is a longtime supporter of the SPCA. She began doing volunteer work there at the age of 11. "I cleaned cages, walked dogs and fed cats," she said.

Sholzberg has already raised more than \$4,000 with the bracelets, which sell for \$6 each and are available at the veterinary clinic where she works, as well as at several local pet stores and boutiques.

When Pierre Barnoti, executive director of the SPCA, was contacted for this story, he was not wearing his bracelet. "My daughter Yasmine, who's 18, borrowed it — permanently," he said.

Barnoti thinks the bracelets are a great idea. "The cost is low, there's a high return for the SPCA and the message is clear," he said.

So far, Alicen Willis, a writer and therapist, is Sholzberg's best customer. Willis bought 40

bracelets, which she is planning to give to guests at her wedding in September. Animals are an important part of Willis's life. "Both our dogs, Kebec and Lucy, are rescue dogs," she said.

We all want unconditional love. "It's harder to find it in the human world. Animals never lie," Sholzberg said.

Unconditional love bracelets are available at the Animal Health Clinic, 5601 Sherbrooke St. W., (514) 369-9119; Animalerie Little Bear, 4205 Ste. Catherine St. W., (514) 935-3425; Bark & Fitz, 5674 Monkland St., (514) 483-3555; Ben & Tournesol, 4915 Sherbrooke St. W., (514) 481-5050; Club K9, 6004 Sherbrooke St. W., (514) 489-4004; Hugo Boss, 1407 Crescent St., (514) 843-5476; LMNOP, 4919a Sherbrooke St. W., (514) 486-4572; Pet Spa, 6131 Sherbrooke St. W., (514) 482-3718; and Wilfrid & Adrienne, 4919b Sherbrooke St. W., (514) 481-5850.