

# Delaware State News



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## Kent County heart walk: Dog-gone effort



Delaware State News/Daniel Korup

Frederica resident Gene Thornton, vice president of the Kent County branch of the American Heart Association, and her dog Brandy have teamed up to raise \$1,000 for the upcoming heart walk in Dover.

## Canine top raiser for event

By Misty Autumn Seemans

Delaware State News

DOVER — The Kent County heart walk's top fundraiser likes to sniff trees, play fetch and drink water out of a bowl.

Brandy, a Hungarian sporting dog, has raised \$1,100 for the 16th annual Kent County American Heart Association heart walk Sept. 15 in Dover — the most money among those with two or four legs.

Frederica resident Gene Thornton, vice president of the Kent County heart association and Brandy's owner, said her American Kennel Club award-winning dog gets donations from two signature poses.

Brandy, short for Mattapex Brandywine, begs by sitting up on her hind legs or cocks her



From left, Marcus Proctor, 7 and Alexis Landry, 10, both of Dover hold their arms out to allow Brandy to jump over as Sabia Carbaugh, 4, of Dover looks on.

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**Harold Stafford of Dover, chairman of the Kent County American Heart Association Heart Walk Committee, receives a donation of \$100 from Brandy. The walk is set for Sept. 15 in Dover.**

## Walk

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head to the side.

"People don't want to turn down a face like that," Ms. Thornton said.

She said she takes Brandy door to door asking for donations to the walk.

The 5-kilometer walk will start at Mirror Lake on Park Drive in between Loockerman and Division streets in Dover.

Registration starts an hour before the walk at 9 a.m.

Corporate events director Tonda Parks said the heart association is encouraging walkers to each raise \$100, but it's not necessary.

"We're equally interested in getting people to get out and walk," she said.

Ms. Thornton started the heart association's K-9 brigade in 2004, to encourage people to bring their dogs with them on the walk.

Petting a dog can lower blood pressure, Ms. Thornton said.

"(The walk) goes with physical fitness and Brandy is also a therapy dog," she said.

Brandy, chairdog of the K-9 brigade, attends meetings but declined official comment Tuesday, only barking her excitement about the exercise she would get at the heart walk.

"I like to keep my heart nice and strong," said Brandy's friend Marcus Proctor, 7, of Dover, who will also walk Sept. 15.

Marcus' grandfather, Harold Stafford, chairman of the heart walk committee, has lost two of his friends to heart disease in two years.

"I have personally committed to doing three things — increas-

## If you go

Kent County American Heart Association heart walk

9 a.m., Sept. 15

Mirror Lake, Park Drive, Dover

Call 734-9321 or visit [www.americanheart.org/doverwalk](http://www.americanheart.org/doverwalk)

ing public awareness of the debilitating effects of heart disease, to promote healthy lifestyles so people will get involved in walking on a regular basis and participating in other physical fitness exercises, and last but not least, to raise money for the American Heart Association to provide better treatment and research," he said.

When a dog is able to raise more than \$1,000, it can fuel some healthy competition.

"When people see that a dog is No. 1, it gives them the motivation to go out and raise money," Ms. Thornton said.

She said one person gave \$250 in memory of her late dog.

"Some people love their pets and so they give donations in honor of them," Ms. Thornton said.

"It just gives a new way for people to donate to a good cause."

Brandy will try to raise more money at Uno Chicago Grill in Dover. Part of the restaurant's proceeds Aug. 31 will benefit the heart walk.

The heart association's goals are to get 1,000 human walkers and raise \$120,000.

For more information, call Ms. Parks at 734-9321 or visit [www.americanheart.org/doverwalk](http://www.americanheart.org/doverwalk).

*Post your opinions in the Public Issues Forum at [newszap.com](http://newszap.com)  
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