

Assistant Dog and Resistant Epilepsy in Croatia

Our son Davor has epilepsy from his childhood. He had his first epi attack in 1991, in the age of 5,7.

Since then, some good things in our life with therapeutic dog start spontaneously, almost coincidentally. We saw a short information and video contribution on TV, we found some information on the internet and after that our wish to start a project „The Dog in Family“ was growing stronger and stronger.

At 2005 we've contacted „The Croatian Guide Dog and Mobility Association“. People in this Association have shared some new usefull ideas with us, advices about dog's special needs and knowledge about dog's training.

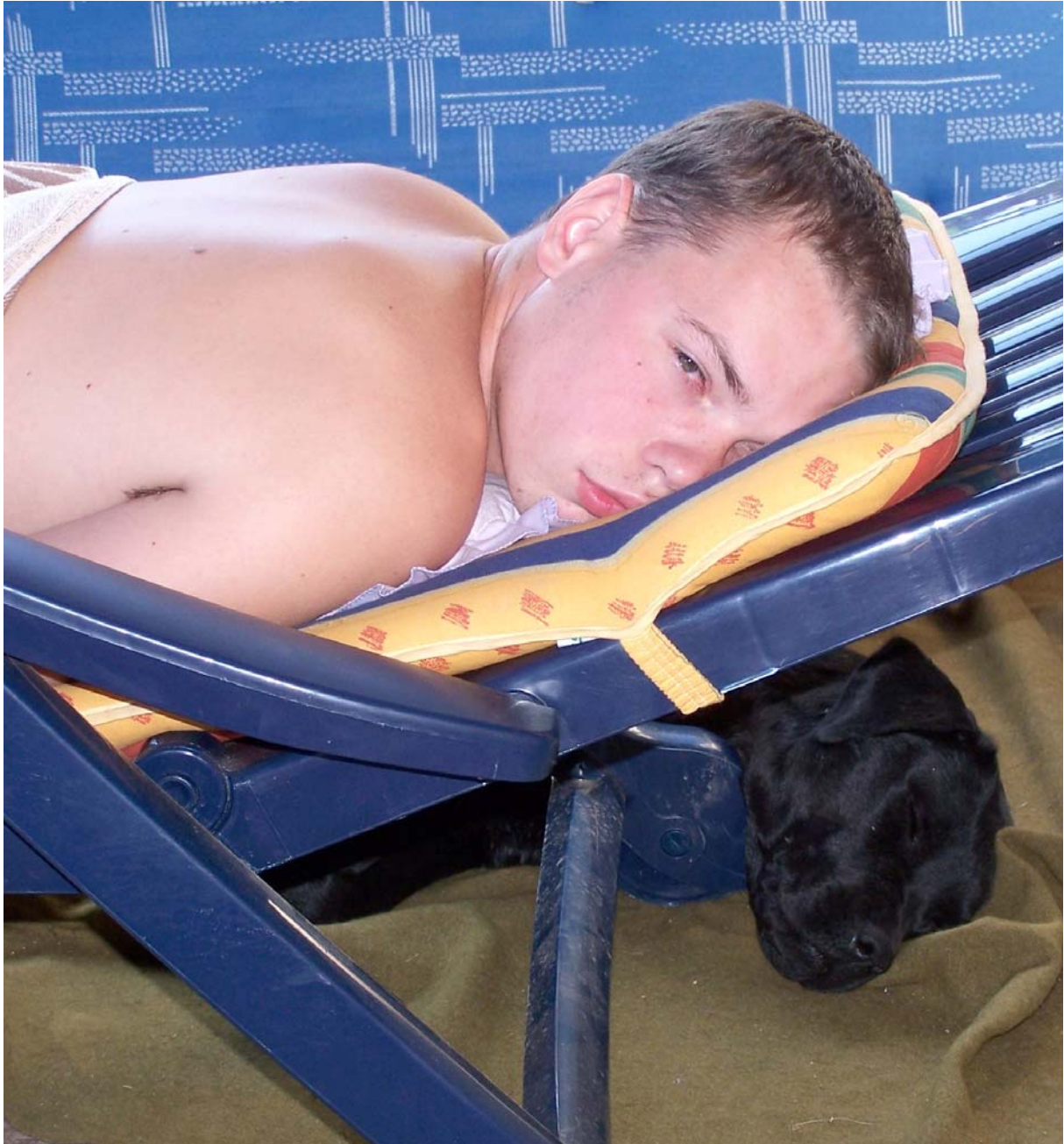


This was the beginning of a great friendship between Davor and Frida-the dog. Frida's training has started ever since – we've started with many exercises to improve her therapeutic skills. We were bound to learn a lot about these special dogs, their habits, needs and what can we expect from Frida in return.

Davor and Frida have spent most of Frida's childhood together, they've learned to share special rules and needs and Frida had to recognize every single sign which could be a possible entrance of epilepsy attack.



That was the time of pleasure but for Frida it was also a digging job. Frida's trainer was trying to show Frida what her tasks were. She was learning fast and doing everything very well. After two years of their friendship and after 14 years of his epilepsy, EEG entry was better than before. Their friendship is still strong and every day is getting better and etter.



This is an example how seemingly incompatible professional, scientific, non-government and non-profit associations (Croatian Guide Dog and Mobility Association, Croatian Association for Epilepsy, KBC "Zagreb"-The Hospital) can unit, and their field of operation can have mutual interest-in this particular case the well being and improvement of life of a person with drug resistant epilepsy.

We hope that this will not be an isolated case in our country and that soon we'll have a new Center for therapeutic dogs' training. I'm sure that we will have more successful cases like Davor and Frida.

You must know some very important things: nobody ever said or promised to us that Frida will be able to do everything she was asked to do, to alert, prevent, or assist epi-attacks. Frida is not a medicament, she is a remarkable dog, who is doing all this important stuff. But to us, she is like a person, an irreplaceable person in our lives. She's simply the best and we adore her.



Croatian Guide Dog and Mobility Association (CGDMA or Association)

founded on December 8, 1990, is the only non-governmental, not-for-profit organization that trains dogs for human purposes and implements an overall program of orientation and mobility for blind persons in Croatia (training to use the long (white) cane, providing trained guide dogs), thus creating the preconditions for integrating this group of people with disability into the Croatian society.

CGDMA also trains and provides service dogs for person in wheelchairs and those with severely impaired mobility. In addition, the organization is developing a program of **therapy dogs**, to entice communication and motoric functions in children with disabilities (cerebral paralysis, language and speech impairments, light mental disability, hyperactivity, epilepsy, etc..)

The experience and knowledge transferred from other European countries has shown exceptional results in terms of the quality of life of persons with mobility difficulties as well as children with developmental difficulties.



Croatian Association for Epilepsy (CAE) is founded in 1997 in Zagreb. The first president was dr Drago Škarpa. In the same year CAE became a full member of the International Bureau for

Epilepsy - www.ibe-epilepsy.org.

The main goals of CAE are promoting quality of life in people with epilepsy and members of their families, and facilitating understanding of facts about epilepsy and the needs of people with epilepsy.

Some of the activities of the Croatian Association for Epilepsy are as follows:

- Encouraging of communication and exchanging of knowledge and experiences between people suffering of epilepsy, including their relatives and friends.
- Stimulating education about epilepsy, as among people with epilepsy and their surroundings, as in wider social community.
- Publishing, collecting and disseminating books, brochures and audiovisual material on epilepsy
- Organising of conferences and seminars of medical and social aspects of epilepsy.
- Exchanging information with similar foreign association about welfare and health care of people with epilepsy
- Research of social aspects of epilepsy.
- Close collaboration with the Croatian League Against Epilepsy and with International Bureau for Epilepsy