

**CESAR MILLAN SEMINAR
“THE DOG WHISPERER”
WHITE SHEPHERD GENETICS PROJECT FUND
RAISER
By Judy Huston**

THE FACTS

Cesar Millan Seminar – “The Dog Whisperer”

April 16, 2005 at Davisburg, Michigan

Participants: 307

Total amount raised after expenses: \$7,000

Seminar Coordinator: Judy Huston

Team Leader: Jackie Richardson

Team: Cathy Sadowski, Kathy Wood, Eva Wawrowski, Gina Driver, Julie and Alexandria Bennett, Pam and Michelle Koons (and thanks to Dick, Craig, Mike, Susan, Angie, Faye, Kate, and other team friends and family, and especially LC for help and support).

In late November 2004, I arranged for TIVO to be installed on our Direct TV system. My first attempt to locate interesting animal-related shows to record, especially dogs, revealed a National Geographic program called “The Dog Whisperer” with Cesar Millan. I was blown away by this man's ability with dogs.

After two weeks of watching and re-watching episodes that included aggressive Rotties, Pit Bulls, German Shepherds (including three white ones), small dogs, big dogs, mixed breeds, I needed to learn more. I began surfing the net and found that Cesar Millan ran the Dog Psychology Center in Los Angeles. I read from his site that he rehabilitates dogs and trains people. I learned that he is a dog behaviorist who promotes the idea of the dog as a pack animal who has one of two roles – to lead or to follow. And, the role is determined by one thing only – the energy of both the dog and the human. Cesar says, “They know who we are and what our role is 10 seconds after they meet us.” Fascinating. I needed to learn more.

I contacted Cesar's office and connected with his Executive Assistant, Gayle Thompson. I wanted to find out whether he did seminars and if so, where, besides L.A. Those who know my story know that over three years ago, my White Shepherd, Kyra, survived a late-diagnosis of Lumbosacral Stenosis and Inflammatory Bowel Disease that left her with side-effects that need to be managed on an on-going basis and that prohibit travel. Fate was in my corner and I discovered that Cesar's show was going on the road and they were in the process of booking the first out-of-state events. Michigan turned out to be one of the first and we just needed to settle on the date. It was April or August so I picked April and got to work. Gayle was wonderful about answering my questions

and helping us every step of the way.

I realized immediately that this could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to do a major fund-raiser for one of my passions, the White Shepherd Genetics Project. Gayle from Cesar's office told me they required 150 participants. I didn't know if I could get that many people, but knew I had to try. Volunteers began offering to help right from the beginning. My friend and training partner, Cathy Sadowski, was the first person I'd shared Cesar episodes with and she volunteered to help bring him here. The word was barely out when I had two more women vying for who would do the flyers and registration form. One woman did the flyers and database and the other donated beautiful tickets that some people had Cesar sign and kept for souvenirs. She later created a beautiful framed picture of Cesar with our white dogs that we presented to him on Sunday. Two other women explained that their background was in managing events and one became Team Leader and the other was our MC at the event.

Pam and Michelle Koons, my Kyra's breeders, volunteered to do a White Shepherd exhibit. Their work was outstanding and exceeded my expectations, just like everything else about this seminar. I intended that the exhibit would serve two purposes. The first and most important was to bring attention to what we are doing in the purebred world and how our breed is at the forefront of responsible and ethical breeding and disclosure of any health problems. Second, we placed a donation jar on the table to encourage donations to the project.

When it looked like we would reach the 150 people, I asked Gayle whether funds from participants over the required 150 could be donated back to our fund. They graciously agreed to donate back a full half of their fee. This made all the difference in the world. Now, I had the money to pay for the sound system, screen, and piping we needed to make this a professional presentation. Even with all the extras, we added \$7,000 to our WS Genetics Projects funds.

We are grateful to Cesar and Illusion Millan for their dedication and commitment to dogs and to the well being of their owners and for being so generous with our White Shepherd project.

When I counted the money in our donation jar, there was a \$100 bill in there. Pam Koons told me that Cesar dropped it in the jar. Giving is what this man does whether it is his love and support, his expertise, his time, or his own funds. The world of dogs is ready for Cesar. I hope we in the Midwest gave him an idea of what is ahead for him and his family. We look forward to inviting him back in 2006 for a second seminar.