

## Miniature donkey Tiny Tim has a big heart



Tiny Tim drinks from his bottle at Wollaston's library. / SUBMITTED

Greetings on Saturday from Jody Topping, wearing donkey earrings, and walking with the most adorable animal on earth. He is Tiny Tim the miniature donkey who captured the hearts of 75 adults and children who visited him at the Wollaston Public Library on July 22 to kick off the library's summer programs.

Tiny Tim had his six-week birthday that day. Like all youngsters, he is reaching some milestones. Besides drinking his formula from a bottle, he is also learning to drink from a dish and learning bathroom commands. Like many, he gets upset when his people or other companions leave him alone for short periods of time. He whinnies slightly, tries to find them, and dances until he calms down or they return.

The most impressive change from his appearance at the Bancroft Community Airport two weeks ago, besides his getting taller, is the new outfit he just received. Not only could he get through life bringing pleasure through his fantastic good looks alone, he has embarked on a worthwhile career serving others. His outfit proclaims that he is an "emotional support animal" in training.

Tiny Tim's birth parents are both miniature donkeys. Tiny Tim was extremely small when he was born, 10 pounds. His mother rejected him. He was not even tall enough to nurse. When Jody first saw him, she thought he was a bunny. She tried to help the mother accept him, but she tossed him away. Jody and her husband took him into their home and started their search on how to care for this newborn. Their vet was a great help as she too searched for information about miniature donkeys. They fed him often, every 20 minutes. They all have adjusted. He sleeps in a playpen with his toys in their room.

Jody and Tiny Tim have begun taking service training through St. John's Ambulance online. There will be modules along the way to certify them in stages. Usually dogs begin service training when they are maturing at about two years old. Jody wanted Tiny Tim to begin young, before he develops bad habits like kicking and biting. She was able to locate five service donkeys in the U.S. and no service donkeys in Canada. When he is a certified emotional support animal, he will visit nursing homes, residences for special needs, and hospitals. The Toppings are members of the Lions Club. Tiny Tim, the well-behaved and gentle donkey that he is, attends the meetings and other functions.

He is about 30 pounds now. With his tall ears, longish face, straight legs with black hooves, soft brown coat, expressive brown eyes, legendary "Donkey's Cross" on his back, grazing mouth, and Eeyore tail that is permanently attached, caused comments all day centered on his cuteness factor. Not one person was unaffected by the sight of this little knee-high miniature donkey.

Famous donkeys in literature include Eeyore of Winnie-the-Pooh fame, Brighty of the Grand Canyon, and the donkey who is friend and ride of Sancho Panza in the adventure-laden first novel, Don Quixote. Donkeys carry goods, like coffee, and people on their backs. In the 1967 Old Home Week Parade, Cisco the donkey drew a cart with passengers. Tiny Tim was in the Apsley Parade. The Toppings have other animals on their farm including a miniature mule and horses. Other animal lovers and owners exchanged stories with her about their animals, including pot bellied pigs and dogs.

From the example of this little donkey, we too can aim high. Mr. and Mrs. Topping and Tiny Tim can be reached at 705-313-5267.

Members and visitors, come to the Wollaston Public Library in Coe Hill, 'the wee library with heart' to discover what's next: 613-337-5183. Also, be sure to follow it on Facebook.

*Submitted by Pat Lavoy*