



## JUNIOR BEAGLER PROGRAM

*BLAINE GROVE, Delegate, New England Beagle Club, Inc.*

Blaine Grove, Delegate for New England Beagle Club, Inc. and Terry Gerhart, Director of the Junior Beagler Program, are proof positive of what can come out of a casual conversation between two friends with time on their hands while hunting! Seems Blaine had been imagining a Program for youngsters with Beagles for some time. The more Blaine and Terry spoke, the more obvious it became that they needed to start a Program. With the support of Terry's family (wise man who knew the rest of the family would be involved one way or another), Blaine, Terry, and other Beaglers joined forces to begin the Northeast Regional Junior Beagler Program.

### **1. What is the Junior Beagler Program?**

The Program is a joint effort supported by several clubs in the northeast including the Northeast Beagle Gundog Federation, Pennsylvania Beagle Gundog Federation, New England Hunting Beagle Association, and Iroquois Beagle Gundog Association. The Program introduces children to working with and training dogs, participating in Trials, becoming a responsible club member, taking part in club activities, and understanding good sportsmanship. Each Junior in the Program completes a registration form that includes basic contact information, their acceptance of the Program rules, and dedication to participate in the "future of the Sport and the betterment of the breed." Parental consent is required.

### **2. What is the purpose of the Program? Why was it started?**

The intent was to introduce Beagle handling to youngsters in the Northeast region, to reward and encourage them, to provide incentives, and to set goals for achievement. While other programs have



*The Gerhart girls, Bailey 4 years old (left) and Elizabeth 7(right) at Presque Isle Beagle Club LIC Trial*

been rewarding for young handlers, the idea was to begin a Program that could be both effective and consistent.

### **3. Who is eligible for the Program?**

The Program is intended to be inclusive, and to start kids at an early age. Thus, there are no minimum age restrictions. While the program is intended for youngsters between the ages of 7 and 17, one or two have started as young as 4 and 5 years of age.

### **4. How do the youngsters earn points in the Program?**

There are two ways for kids to earn points:

- Participation in Club Activities

The children earn points for their participation in club activities. These activities can be things such as helping in the kitchen during events, assisting at a work party, attending judging seminars, being a Marshall, handing out col-

lars, or serving as an apprentice judge. Any worthy act to help a club in any way is accepted and encouraged. Due to the age differences within the program, each club activity is counted as one point.

- **Participation in Trials**

All Junior Beaglers must register and run the same AKC registered Beagle for the Trial year; this dog is referred to as #1 Dog. The Junior Beagler does not have to own the Beagle. The Junior Beagler may handle one other AKC registered Beagle, #2 Dog, for additional award points. The Junior Beagler must be listed as the handler on the entry form for the day's Trial. Points are awarded based on the placement of the Junior Beagler's #1Dog and #2Dog in the Trial.

It is the Junior Beagler's responsibility to submit Trial forms with placements and/or club activity event participation to the Director who maintains a log of the Junior Beagler's points.

### **5. What is the Collar Program?**

The Collar Program is a progressive achievement program that begins at age seven. Any points earned prior to age seven are saved and awarded when the child turns seven. As a progressive achievement program, there are requirements that must be completed at each level before a youngster can progress to the next level. Generally, only one collar can be earned in a year. The exception is a child who starts the program at a later age, for example, 11 years of age. That child is permitted to accelerate through the program by completing requirements that would have been completed at ages 7 through 10. While the two Programs, Junior Beagler and the Junior Beagler Collar, are separate, youngsters usually participate in both as the two complement each other.

### **6. How do the kids find out about the Program?**

Information about the program is posted on every Federation website. Terry makes a conscious effort to go to every Club and asks for their support while giving an update and providing information about the program.

After all of this, you might be wondering if the Jun-



*Tyler Long, 2017 NE Regional Junior Beagler of The Year with #1 Baxter*

ior Beagler Program is working. It has taken time and effort to grow the program, but the results have been great. The Junior Beagler Program began in January 2016 with 17 kids. The following year, there were 32 kids involved. This year there are 50 and the youngest is 4 years old! The good news is kids and adults are enjoying the experience. Each Club has a



*Mitchell and Max Johnson getting ready to take their dogs in the field, Lycoming Beagle Club*

representative who introduces the program and mentors the kids at the Club level. The representative helps the kids in different ways including helping them get an AKC registered dog to run and mentoring them on the Trial experience and hunting with Beagles. The kids are learning valuable lessons. They understand that they receive points



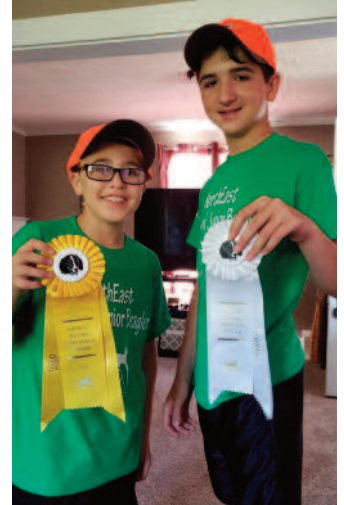
*Trevor Hammerle filling feeders,  
Paskamansett Beagle Club*



*Laylah Hall (right) and Trinity  
Grube (left), receiving  
awards for Junior Beagler  
Program 2017-2018*



*Cheyenne Colon with her  
green, orange and yellow  
collars*



*Austin and Atdyn Santos re-  
ceiving awards, hats and shirts  
for Junior Beagler Program*

based on their dog's performance. In Terry's words, "This isn't a gimme program!" The Juniors know they can't show up with an untrained dog and expect to do well. The majority of awards are donated by sponsors and the Clubs have funds to support the

program. The looks on the faces of young Beaglers who earn collars (red through silver) or a vest or chaps tell it all. The kids are proud and happy; they are becoming Beaglers and some even learn how to cook!



*Great Two Days, Great People, Breakneck Beagle Club*