When and How Do I Renew?

- One renewal date per household – either January 1 (registered in April through September) or July 1 (registered in October through March).
- Electronic renewals will be sent out 60 days prior to renewal and will be on the member portal.
- Hard copy renewal notices should be received 30 days prior to your renewal date.
- Electronic second notices will be generated January 1 and July 1. Hard copies will be mailed out by January 15 and July 15.
- All renewals received after your renewal date will be assessed a $10 late fee.
- If your renewal is late, there is no insurance coverage between your renewal date and the date your renewal is finalized. Any member who does not renew, including the $10 late fee, by February 15 or August 15, will be required to retest and reapply for ATD membership.

Prepare to renew:

- Make sure your dog has had an annual wellness examination by a veterinarian within 12 months.
- Be sure the rabies vaccination is current.
- If using a titer instead of rabies vaccine, rabies titer levels must be 0.5 IU or greater and must be measured every two years.
- Your dog’s annual fecal exam must be done within 12 months. Make sure the fecal exam is done early enough to get results and, if positive, get treatment and retest.
- Your veterinarian will sign off on the Renewal Health Verification form attesting that all three items are up to date.

Time to renew:

- You can go to www.therapydogs.com to renew online. Sign into the member portal. Your username is your email address, and your initial password (if you have not changed it) is your member number with a “p” in front of it.
- Complete your review. T/Os take the T/O Review. Non-T/Os take the Member Review.
- You will print your Renewal Health Verification Form, have your veterinarian complete it, scan and upload it and save.
- Include the appropriate fees. Make your check payable to Alliance of Therapy Dogs or put your credit card information in the space provided. All credit card information is deleted once your renewal is processed. You can also pay online by going to the Member Portal. Electronic Funds Transfers (EFTs) are not accepted.
- Payment without the signed renewal health verification form will not be accepted. All required materials must be submitted together. Your renewal will not be processed until the office has received all required materials.

We appreciate all that you do to prepare for your renewal. Please remember that postage fees are a large expense for our organization. We strive to keep our membership fees as low as possible. Please help us by returning your complete membership renewal package with all required materials and signatures to arrive by your appropriate renewal date. This way, your membership and insurance will not lapse and you will avoid incurring late fees.

If you have any questions concerning the member renewal process, please contact the corporate office on the toll free number (877) 843-7364 or email us at office@therapydogs.com.

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Alliance of Therapy Dogs

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New City, NY
Carroll Colasardo (Vice President)
Mesa, AZ
Kimberly Williams (Treasurer)
Kearney, NE
Kelsey J. Gilmore-Futeral (Secretary)
Mount Pleasant, SC

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In Alphabetical Order
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Jane Hirsch
(Immediate Past President)
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Golden, CO
Billie Smith (Executive Director)
Cheyenne, WY

Mission Statement
It is the purpose of Alliance of Therapy Dogs to provide registration, support and insurance for members who volunteer with their dogs in animal assisted activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, visits to hospitals, special needs centers, schools, and nursing homes. Our objective is to form a network of caring individuals who are willing to share their special dogs in order to bring happiness and cheer to people, young and old alike.

Magical Miracle Moments
The Newsmagazine staff would like to announce a new section for the publication called “Magical Miracle Moments.”

We would like to hear about your story of a very special or “magical” moment you and your wonderful dog experienced in your volunteer work. Examples may be a patient who has been totally unresponsive until a dog visits and, the next thing you know, they are smiling, petting the dog, a tear running down their face. Or a child who simply cannot read, and one day reads an entire book to a therapy dog.

These articles should focus only on the special, unique moment, not the everyday miracles we experience with our dogs on regular visits.

Requirements:
• 1,000 words or less
• Author’s name, city and state
• Photos with photo releases attached
• In a format able to be edited, such as a word document

If your story is not published in this section, it may be published in another section, and/or on Facebook.

All communications regarding applications for membership, renewals, concerns, issues, general questions and requests for merchandise are processed by the corporate office and should be sent to:

Alliance of Therapy Dogs
Mailing address:
P. O. Box 20227
Cheyenne, WY 82003

Physical Address:
1919 Morrie Ave.
Cheyenne, WY 82001

877-843-7364 (Toll Free)
307-432-0272
307-638-2079 (Fax)
Email: office@therapydogs.com
Website: www.therapydogs.com
CONTENTS

Spring 2017 President’s Message ........................................ 1
A Special Thank You For Our Volunteers ............................ 2
2016/2017 Alliance of Therapy Dogs Committees .................... 3
Merchandise ................................................................ 4
TidBits .................................................................... 6
T/O’s Get on Board! ..................................................... 6
Looking for a Few Good Volunteers ................................. 7
Requirements for Newsmagazine Submissions ...................... 8
Alliance of Therapy Dogs Scholarship ............................... 9
Spotlight on Kim Williams, treasurer .................................. 10
Peaches .................................................................... 12
Baby ....................................................................... 13
Star, 6-Year-Old Rescued Greyhound ................................. 14
A Therapy Dog Tradition ............................................... 15
Miss Gabby .................................................................. 15
Lilah ........................................................................ 16
Polly ........................................................................ 17
Healthcare Heroes ....................................................... 17
The Power of a Hemi ................................................... 18
What It’s All About ................................................... 20
The Most Memorable Therapy Dog Visit ............................ 21
The Dog Is In: Using Therapy Dogs in Perioperative Rooms ...... 22
Elvie ........................................................................ 23
Midnight: This is my story ............................................. 24
Adelynn ..................................................................... 25
Victory ..................................................................... 26
Alliance of Therapy Dogs Outstanding Member .................. 27
Sunny ....................................................................... 28
ATD is going green! ..................................................... 28
Maya ........................................................................ 29
Why We Do This ....................................................... 30
Sophie ....................................................................... 31
Dogs in the News ......................................................... 32
  Community Builder Award goes to Therapy Dog Teams!  
  Terri Carruthers and Lillian Garcia of Phoenix, AZ
  Therapy dog gives back to lifetime of community service
Photograph Authorization Release Form ............................... 33
Retired ...................................................................... 34
Somewhere Over the Rainbow .......................................... 37
Photo Tags & IDs ........................................................ 43
I was just thinking about how much has changed over the past 10 years. We are now an organization of over 15,000 members. Think about how many people we touch and how much of an impact we have with our therapy dogs. Every day, I hear about little miracles and not so little miracles that are a result of visiting with our dogs.

I am proud to be part of this organization of caring, committed people and their wonderful dogs. We are all volunteers, yet combined, we have immeasurable impact on the lives of others.

When I got involved in therapy dog work, there were few institutions that understood the impact we can have. I remember being part of a small group of registered members struggling to find an institution that would accept visits from our teams. We would call them, and after lots of discussion, would be allowed to visit. The first inroads that we made were with nursing homes and assisted living centers. They seemed more open to visits and were less concerned about the liability.

Now, I am finding that institutions are clamoring for visits. Not only nursing homes and assisted living centers, but libraries, schools and colleges, scout troops, hospitals, airports and even courtrooms. I could never have imagined the demand.

Even with over 15,000 members, many of us are finding that there are not enough local teams to meet the demand for therapy dog visits. We can be busy every day of the week if we want to.

Alliance of Therapy Dogs is committed to increasing the number of registered teams as demand increases. We are revamping our website to provide clearer information and reach out to those who might be interested in joining us with their dogs. The new site will launch over the next few months. We are trying to streamline the registration and renewal process and hope to make life easier for our current members.

We need you to help us. Do you know of anyone who would like to join us with their well-behaved, social dogs and spread smiles and joy to others? If so, please send them to our website, therapydogs.com, or to one of our local Tester/Observers. You can also have them email or call the office, office@therapydogs.com or (877) 843-7364.

Thank you for all that you do to bring smiles and joy into the lives of others. Our dogs are truly remarkable, and our teams are the best!

Pat Coglianese
A SPECIAL THANK YOU FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS

We are proud of the many Alliance of Therapy Dogs visits you have made since becoming a member. Whether you go to hospitals, nursing homes or other medical facilities, participate in education or reading programs, or help de-stress passengers at airports or students during final exams, you are providing a valuable service to the people in your area.

We believe that faithful volunteers like you deserve to be recognized for all of the beneficial work you do. In honor of your dedication to Alliance of Therapy Dogs, we are pleased to acknowledge the contributions you make to your community with these tokens of our admiration and gratitude.

Alliance of Therapy Dogs Visit Pins

Do you ever think about how many times you and your dog(s) visit facilities on behalf of Alliance of Therapy Dogs? We invite you to keep track of your facility visits. Alliance of Therapy Dogs offers a lapel pin which displays the Alliance of Therapy Dogs logo. There are two rings on the bottom to attach the gold bars that display the number of facility visits.

Achievement levels begin with 50 visits to any given facility and then go on to 100, 250, 500 and 1000+. When you reach the next level, you may order the appropriate bar to signify the new number.

Alliance of Therapy Dogs Visit Certificates

Alliance of Therapy Dogs offers certificates for your visits. Provide your visit tracking information and Alliance of Therapy Dogs will send you a certificate showing your name and your dog’s name along with the appropriate number of visits. Achievement levels begin with a minimum of 50 visits. These certificates can also be copied and sent to the AKC to apply for the Therapy Dog (ThD) Title.

Years of Service Patches

In recognition of the amount of time you have participated in pet therapy with Alliance of Therapy Dogs, we are pleased to offer you a service patch which displays the Alliance of Therapy Dogs logo and the number of years you have been a member. The patch may be sewn onto a shirt, hat, fanny pack, vest or wherever you would like to display it. They come in two round sizes: 3 inches or 2 inches.

The patches are offered following one year of service and in five year increments thereafter. If you would like a service patch, fill in your information below and send it to: Alliance of Therapy Dogs, P.O. Box 20227, Cheyenne, WY 82003 or via email to office@therapydogs.com.

☐ Yes, I would like to receive the Years of Service Patch! I have been an Alliance of Therapy Dogs member for: (please circle one)

1 year 5 years 10 years 15 years 20 years 25 years

Name: ________________________________________________________

Address: _______________________________________________________

City, State, ZIP: _________________________________________________

Alliance of Therapy Dogs Member Number: _________________________
2016/2017 ALLIANCE OF THERAPY DOGS Committees

**Alternative Review (ARC):** Review and approve membership outside of the standard Alliance of Therapy Dogs registration process when there is no available T/O in the area of the prospective member. Approve or disapprove all issues that fall outside the Alliance of Therapy Dogs Rules and Regulations.

**Grievance and Ethics (G&E):** Review and respond to grievances, complaints, ethics issues and general concerns.

**Documents and Awards (D&A):** Set scholarship criteria and choose recipients; review and select the recipient of the annual Outstanding Member Award; develop/update policies as needed; and publish all handbooks.

**Nominating:** Conduct election of officers and board members with the assistance of the corporate office.

**Public Relations (PR):** Develop and increase public awareness of Alliance of Therapy Dogs’ mission and activities.

**Research and Investigation (R&I):** Research and investigate matters including, but not limited to: Alliance of Therapy Dogs’ name and logo misuse, website misuse and legal issues, including felony applicants.

**Member Review and Education (MRE):** Develop ideas for re-evaluating teams, create the annual member review, create the rules review, develop educational materials for present/prospective membership.

**Social Media:** Interface with social networking members, be in control of the social networking content, and make recommendations to the board as needed.

**Tester/Observer (T/O):** Review and approve prospective Tester/Observer applications. Serve as the first line to resolve T/O issues, including disciplinary actions. Develop T/O annual review and monitor the T/O E-group.

**Newsmagazine Staff:** Choose and edit submissions and design the semi-annual newsmagazine.
Merchandise

The following items are available for purchase from Alliance of Therapy Dogs

See the ATD website for merchandise updates.

Clothing with the Alliance of Therapy Dogs logo can be ordered from:

Wrinkles and the Therapy Puppies.
The suggested donation is $10, but any amount lesser or greater would be very much appreciated.

Land’s End
www.therapydogs.com
click on “Shop Merchandise”
### Merchandise Order Form

We now accept major credit cards

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<th>ITEM</th>
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<th>QUANTITY</th>
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Name__________________________________ ATD Member # ________________
Address_________________________________________________________________________________________
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Credit Card # ____________________________________________________________________________
Expiration Date __________________________ Security Code (last 3 or 4 digits by signature)__________


Equipment Check


No matter where you go or what you do, you must have the right gear. And before you leave, you should check and double-check to see what you might have forgotten. Everything can become complicated if you don’t have what you need when you need it.

So, what about your therapy dog visits? “Oh, that’s easy,” you say. Just hook the red heart tag on your dog’s collar, grab the leash and head out the door. After all, as soon as Max sees that tag, he’s excited and wants to leave, and you’re only going to be 20 minutes from home. That’s all you need, right? Or is it?

Let’s do an equipment check:

- Red heart tag.
- ATD membership card. (Is it still in your wallet?)
- Dog’s health records. (Maybe they are on file at the facility. Are they up to date?)
- Are you and your dog well groomed and in good health?
- Are you wearing safe, approved footwear? Beware of flipflops or sandals. Yes, some people wear them, but without a strap across the heel to prevent them from slipping off they are a hazard.
- Now, what about a clean-up kit? You never really need one – until you NEED one. (Trust me on this.)
- Four-foot leash and an approved collar. Even if your dog wears a harness he also needs an approved collar to control his head when visiting.
- Water for your dog. This is optional, but a good idea as some facilities can be warm. Maybe you want to leave the water in the car for a drink after your visit.
- Cell phone turned off or on silent. They can’t be used during a visit, not even to text. The phone should be turned off.

You would not take a business trip without having the right presentation on your laptop and appropriate attire. Before you leave with your canine best friend to go to work as a therapy team, check that you have all you need to make your visit the best possible.

TidBits

Members who take their dogs to work with them and/or use them in their jobs, including but not limited to teachers, therapists, doctors or psychologists, are not covered by ATD insurance when functioning as employees. Our insurance only provides coverage when the member is acting in a volunteer capacity.

T/O’s GET ON BOARD!

Would you like to help ATD continue to grow and develop? Do you have ideas for the future? Do you have time to help with organization and committee operations?

If your answer is YES, we need you! If you’re interested in applying for a director position, please contact the office. We have occasional openings and will call on you when the time comes. File your credentials now!
Looking for a Few Good Volunteers

Do you ever wonder how you can help others experience the satisfaction you feel when you take your dog on a pet therapy visit? If you do, you have an opportunity to take the concept of “Sharing Smiles and Joy” to new heights by becoming a Tester/Observer.

If you have practical experience working with dogs and are good at reading their body language, please consider becoming a T/O. Here are some of the dog-related attributes we look for in a T/O candidate:

- Experience in teaching or assisting in teaching dog training classes
- Training dogs for performance venues such as obedience, agility or herding
- Fostering and rehoming dogs
- Interaction on various levels with a wide variety of breeds—including both large and small dogs
- Assisting T/Os and learning to determine under what circumstances teams successfully complete the testing process
- Reading a variety of books by animal trainers and behaviorists and/or attending seminars on training and behaviors

T/Os are role models for Alliance of Therapy Dogs and as such must know and follow all rules and regulations and be able to convey them to new and prospective members. Good “people skills” are essential to communicating effectively and tactfully with people.

There are additional abilities which may qualify you as well, so please contact the office for your application packet. Join us in our mission to provide registration and support for prospective members in volunteer assisted activities.

We need your help!
Requirements for Alliance of Therapy Dogs Newsmagazine Submissions

We love your stories! Reading each and every one is a true pleasure, and we are happy to share them with the rest of our Alliance of Therapy Dogs family. Here are the things you need to know in order to get your stories printed.

1. Articles and Stories
   a. 1,000 words or less
   b. Submit to corporate office in an electronic format such as a Word document, Rich Text File, or other editable electronic/digital form; NOT a .pdf or adobe file.
   c. The story/article you submit MUST follow all Alliance of Therapy Dogs rules and guidelines. For instance, any stories or articles where your dog is off leash (unless preforming tricks) or you have taken your dog to work will not be published. To be certain, please refer to your member handbook or look up the guidelines on-line.
   d. All stories and articles must relate directly to your therapy work as members of Alliance of Therapy Dogs. We do not accept stories from members of other therapy dog registries.

2. Photos
   a. Photos of non-members MUST be accompanied by a signed photo release or we cannot publish them. (www.therapydogs.com/MemberDocuments.html or in your handbook)
   b. You may submit more than one photo, but usually only one will be selected for printing.
   c. We prefer that all photos submitted be high-resolution digital photos. Hard copy photographs are also acceptable.
   d. Please, no newspaper clippings or copies of such.

3. In The News!
   a. Summarize any news articles in your own words in 125 words or less.
   b. Must include your name, city and state of residence.
   c. You may include one photo that was not taken by the media outlet.
   d. Please do not send articles or links for us to summarize as the Newsmagazine committee will no longer summarize third-party articles.

4. Retirees
   a. All dog retirement announcements should be limited to a photo, date of birth, years of service, and no more than 50 words describing the dog’s special qualities. Editors may shorten descriptions that exceed the word count.

5. Rainbow Bridge
   a. Photos must follow the above guidelines.
   b. Include the following: owner’s/handler’s name, dog’s name, breed, date of birth, date of death and years of service.
   c. You may include to few lines (no more than 50 words) about the dog’s service or special qualities, but we may need to edit it accordingly.
   d. Due to limited space, human obituaries are not published.

Submission deadline dates are always February 15 and August 31

Please understand that not all articles that are submitted are published. News articles cannot be reproduced due to copyright issues. The Newsmagazine committee reserves the right to edit contributions for language and length and to make the final decision regarding which articles will be included in each issue. Links to stories will no longer be published, and the Newsmagazine staff will no longer summarize third-party stories. If we have any follow-up questions about your submission, we’ll send them to you as soon as possible.
ALLIANCE OF THERAPY DOGS

SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship is awarded annually. Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Must be an Alliance of Therapy Dogs member in good standing, or the spouse, child or stepchild of a member in good standing.
- If the applicant is a family member and not the Alliance of Therapy Dogs member, s/he must have been involved in some area of volunteer work in the past two years.
- Must be applying to an accredited program in a field of health, medicine or science related to animals.

The following documents must accompany your application:

1. Letter of introduction telling us about yourself.
2. Institution’s verification of acceptance.
3. Copy of your most current transcript, if within the past 10 years.
4. Two letters of recommendation from non-family members. One letter should be from a facility visited by you and your therapy dog or, if you are not an Alliance of Therapy Dogs member, from a facility where you volunteer or volunteered.
5. The completed Alliance of Therapy Dogs scholarship questionnaire (available on the website or by request from the office at office@therapydogs.com).

The deadline to apply was February 15. All documents listed above must be received or postmarked by this date.

Scholarship winners were notified in April.

If you have questions, please contact the Alliance of Therapy Dogs office.

P.O. Box 20227 | Cheyenne, WY  82003 | Fax: 1-307-638-2079
Email: office@therapydogs.com | www.therapydogs.com
Spotlight on . . .
Kim Williams, treasurer

After working as a behavioral psychologist for years and having three children, Kim Williams wanted to stay home and be a mom. However, she did have some extra time on her hands. What to do? She had what she described as a “beautiful idea” – pet therapy. It would be a nice transition from her professional career and education.

In 1995, her family brought home a Pembroke Welsh Corgi. Unfortunately, he developed doggie Alzheimer’s at a fairly young age and was not the right candidate for therapy work. However, in 2002, Penny, another Pembroke Welsh Corgi, joined the family. Penny had the right personality for pet therapy, and the two became a registered team in 2004 with Alliance of Therapy Dogs (Therapy Dogs Incorporated at the time).

The two began visiting CHI Health Good Samaritan Hospital in Kearney, Nebraska, as well as a local library and Camp Bear, a grief camp for children who have lost a family member. In 2015, Penny won the Nebraska Hero Dog award. Penny is now retired, but Kim continues visiting CHI Health Good Samaritan Hospital, the library, local schools and a nursing home with her current registered therapy Bernese Mountain Dog, Rowan. A special part of Kim and Rowan’s visits takes place each Christmas Day at the hospital when Rowan pulls a cart full of toys for the children. For the past six years, Kim has also been the coordinator for the pet therapy program at the hospital.

Kim and her family – which also includes her husband, Todd, and Finnegan, a mixed-breed dog – live in Kearney, Nebraska. A town of 35,000, Kearney has an active pet therapy scene with about 30 teams visiting in the area. When this active pet therapy area lost a tester/observer, Kim jumped at the opportunity to become a tester/observer in 2009.

Being a tester/observer is “a great opportunity to educate more people,” Kim says. From her perspective as a T/O, Kim realized that her professional career and education matched well with pet therapy. She was elected to the Alliance of Therapy Dogs Board of Directors in May 2012. This new opportunity gave Kim the chance to learn about pet therapy on a national level and to help educate people about their pets. Just this past year, Kim was elected treasurer for the board.

“Once on the board, I learned it was so much more,” Kim said when describing the new perspective on pet therapy that being a board member has given her. For example, Kim had no idea about a number of board committees and what they did. One thing that Kim has taken away from her time on the board is clear: “We trust our members,” she says.
When Kim is not actively visiting with Rowan, you might find her knitting caps for children at the local hospital or volunteering for No One Dies Alone. As her three children say, “Mom is a professional volunteer.” When Kim is not volunteering, she is likely spending time with her family.

Every opportunity Kim has taken in pet therapy and with Alliance of Therapy Dogs brings her a sense of meaning and purpose that keeps her going each day.

“My hope as a team, as a T/O, and as a board member is always to educate — educate about dogs, the relationship between dogs and humans and the value of pet therapy in many different programs,” Kim says. “There are many ways to touch another’s life, be it momentary distraction or comfort during dark times.”

Kim has many fond memories from her time has an ATD member. As a tester/observer, she enjoys the journey with the teams she has tested. “You’ve brought them along. You watch them become active in the community and make a difference. It brings a sense of pride,” she says. Kim’s therapy visits fill her with a sense of pride, as well. For example, when she visits a local Alzheimer’s care center, “You feel like you are really making a difference.”

At her local hospital, Kim participates in a program that allows a pet therapy team to visit with a child in pre-op, known as Procedural Surgical Care Center (PSCC). Kim and Rowan meet a child coming in for surgery as soon as they enter the facility. Kim attaches a second leash to Rowan and, with Kim’s assistance on the shorter leash, the child and Rowan enter pre-op together. They then stay with the child until it’s time for the child’s procedure. Last year, the teams involved with the PSCC program received the 2016 International Planetree Excellence and Innovation Award.

During one of these visits, a little boy and his mother were nervous and concerned about his procedure. The boy wanted Rowan to come with him when it was time for the procedure, but unfortunately, that was not possible. However, Kim did have a stuffed animal that resembles Rowan. Kim said, “Take Rowan’s friend, he can go with you.” The boy’s mom grabbed Kim by the hand and said, “Thank you!” Kim’s action not only helped distract the child from the situation, it helped the mom as well. It was at this time, Kim realized, “Yep, this is where I need to be. The hospital is where my heart is!”
Peaches and the Girl with Pink Crutches

Peaches and I were working our way towards the top of the stairs to exit Shriners Hospital when I noticed a little girl with shiny pink crutches heading our way. She was excited to see the dog.

Peaches, my 4-year-old wonder that I rescued from the road, has been visiting Shriners Hospital for Children in Greenville, SC since 2013. Many children there are in beds, on crutches, in wheelchairs or using high-tech walkers. Others are being pulled in large red wagons stuffed with pillows and toys for comfort. Peaches saunters into the equipment-filled therapy room where the kids are learning to use their limbs again or the casting room where a child is having one cast cut off, soon to be replaced with another. None of the noises or smells phase her. She is happy to give and to receive the love.

We approached the girl with the shiny pink crutches, but for some reason Peaches cowered and pulled away in the opposite direction. I was caught off guard. After all, Peaches is the dog that walks into the room and instantly starts to entertain the kids with her bag of many tricks, the finale being balancing a biscuit on her nose, tossing it into the air like a seal with a fish, and catching it. She is so obedient that I can call her off a squirrel chase. But she would have nothing to do with those crutches.

I was saddened to see the expression of disappointment on the girl’s face.

“She is afraid of my crutches,” she said sadly.

“Then please help me train her,” I replied. Her face, framed in blonde pigtails, lit up behind her oversized glasses as she said, “What can I do?”

We sat together on the lobby rug with Peaches on a “down-stay” command.

“Take your crutch and place it in front of her feet and then slowly place it on her front feet,” I urged the girl. She was mesmerized by the idea and carefully took one crutch and began the exercise. I stroked Peaches and asked her to “Stay and Wait.” I gave the girl a small biscuit, which she happily gave to Peaches. Next, I directed her to take her crutch and gently run it along Peaches’ side and over her back, down to her tail, which she did with patience and care. Peaches’ fear was dissolving before our eyes. She didn’t move and received another biscuit from the determined little lady. All three of us stood, and the girl with her crutches went to hug Peaches, who immediately took the opportunity to slurp her in gratitude.

I turned to my beaming new friend. “Did you ever think you would be giving rather than receiving therapy today?” I asked. I also received a great big hug and thanked her wholeheartedly for opening that space in Peaches’ heart. This was one of many days where I left Shriners wondering, “Who rescued whom?” ever grateful for the lessons these brave and spirited children teach me each time I go.

—Laura Taylor, Campobello, SC
Baby, the German Shepherd mix, deserves to be recognized for his 12 years of support and unconditional love and respect not only towards me but also towards everyone he met. He not only got me out of severe depression, he made me believe in myself and love the world around me again. He has made me so proud repeatedly by sweetening the lives of so many stressed and lonely homebound seniors and children, even as a senior himself.

As time went by we retired in coastal NC. My multiple arthritis condition and bulged disc pain were making my entire body ache so painfully that I could no longer take Baby on walks. I could no longer stand long enough to give hour-long group dog training classes in obedience, agility or rally or run those delightful puppy classes. When I taught all those classes, Baby would accompany me, sit at a distance, and just watch the classes peacefully.

I had started visiting an 87-year-old neighbor who had just gone into a nursing home. Around that same time, previous clients contacted me to ask if I taught therapy dog training classes. I did not at the time. That made me think ... maybe that would help me continue to enjoy that passion I have for dogs and to help needy people in so doing! The use of a walker would not be a problem as I would be able to associate with the people there even better.

We never missed a visit to my friend. All my dogs loved their neighbor and she loved them back! Soon, people on other wards would ask us for a visit. After my mother’s death, I began looking to visit someone in a nursing home who was completely deaf and who needed a friend. I knew how lonely that can be and how much I would have loved to have spent more time with my own mom in France when she needed me. I met a woman who was completely alone – no children, husband nor relatives close by. She couldn’t hear at all and she liked dogs, so we became friends. She is 98 years old now. Talk about smiles! That lady so looks forward to our visits! Finally, she can be herself, open up and have discussions. Her petting is sometimes awkward and I know when to “take back” my dog when the handling gets somewhat rough. He is always understanding and adapts to any environment we are in together.

Sharing love, compassion and friendship gives me a deeper feeling of accomplishment and love than I would have ever anticipated. To my forever friends out there with dogs of their own: Thank you for just being YOU. Thank you for your everlasting and unselfish expressions of love, patience and even courage. You are God’s little angels and one in each team is a “GUARDIAN”!

—Dominique McPhail, Havelock, NC
It was an amazingly smooth transition for Star – he went from racing at a Florida dog track to racing into nursing homes, schools and libraries. He and Brandy, our other retired Greyhound, started with Alliance of Therapy Dogs about three years ago. When Brandy passed away, the question was ‘how will Star do without his sidekick?’ Not surprisingly, he relishes the full attention he now gets from being #1 Top Dog with students, wheelchair buddies and bedside admirers.

Star makes trips to nursing homes, rehab centers and schools (elementary, middle schools and community colleges) three to four times a month. In the summers when school is not in session, he picks up six weeks at our local library for their Read-To-A-Dog program. In the three years he has been hosting this event, the enthusiasm of the children grew quickly enough to expand the program from 4 to 6 weeks and from K-3 to K-5. Children and dogs are a wonderfully natural “fit” and he literally races to his spot in the library to greet his fans, which average 55 children each summer (plus parents and siblings). College students gather around him to give huge, stress-relieving hugs, especially during exam weeks. “I really needed this” is commonly heard; the moniker “Comfort Dog” has caught on. Hug Therapy! Through our church and local Farmers Market, Star is often sought out for home visits – another favorite venue of his.

Staffers at nursing homes and rehab centers are just as pleased as the residents with Star’s visits. He gets an enthusiastic greeting starting at the front desk, and his name listed on the Activities Calendar proves him to be a faithful visitor. He has slowly learned to brave slippery floors and has become well-adjusted to elevators. He brings his calling card everywhere he goes: made from cardstock, his picture appears on one side while Greyhound information appears on the back. Since so many family and friends at the nursing homes are interested in therapy dogs, ATD website information also appears at the bottom of the card.

Just to watch his enthusiasm, right from the initial car ride and through the open doors of the next event, is a true delight as his warm presence brings much joy and diversion to an otherwise ordinary day. Such a gentle, patient, sensitive Greyhound, Star has raced into many hearts of old and young alike.

—Janet Medrow, King of Prussia, PA
A Therapy Dog Tradition

Many years ago, Jack and Ann Butrick, founders of Alliance of Therapy Dogs, made Christmas Eve or Christmas Day visits with their dogs to the “shut-ins” of all three nursing homes in Cheyenne, WY. After having brought some Christmas Joy to the residents, all of us handlers went home to festivities with our own families.

Seeing the immense joy it brought the residents and staff, this tradition has left a warm spot in my heart to this day. Following the tradition Jack and Ann started, this year on Christmas Day, Steve Everett and Angel (Doxie), Frances Hale and Darla Sue (Terrier), Maureen Selvig and Indi (Afghan Hound) with her husband, Bjorn, and their boys, Sonder (17), Odin (15) and Larson (13) joined Veletia Manning and Faith (Papillon) in visiting the “shut-in” residents at the Courtyard Assisted Care, Hillcrest and Sierra Vista Nursing Home in Loveland, CO. Maureen said, “That was no doubt my favorite part of the day!”

—Veletia Manning, Loveland, CO

Miss Gabby

Miss Gabby is my little 2-year-old Chihuahua. She weighs 5 pounds and is so full of love. She passed the Canine Good Citizen testing at a year old.

We have met so many people at the nursing homes. They love her, and she loves them. One resident at a nursing home we visit had been there for four months. She was sitting in a wheelchair when she saw Miss Gabby. She put her hands out to reach for Gabby. I asked her if she wanted to pet Gabby, and she nodded yes. I kneeled, and she patted Gabby and tried to talk to her.

The attendant had tears in her eyes. She told me this lady had not said a word the whole time she had been there. It made me so proud of my little girl. Thank you for having us as part of your team.

—Betty Van Vliet, Windham, ME

Picture from left to right. Back row: Frances and Darla Sue, Steve and Angel, Maureen and Indi, Sonder, and Bjorn. Front row: Veletia and Faith, Odin, and Larson.
Lilah and I were recently in the cardiac ICU when a heart surgeon came up to me smiling. He said, “You know, you have the best job in the world.” I replied, “You know, you’re so right; I really do have the best job in the world.” Mine is a very special vantage point into the lives of people who are hurting and in stressful times of their lives. I’m not a doctor or a nurse or any type of medical person. I’m just here with a dog that brings smiles and comfort – that is it. We pet therapy folks cherish our special viewpoint and it drives us every day to do as much good as we can.

As we walk through the doors at Methodist University Hospital, we are greeted with big smiles and sweet greetings. It’s the same throughout the hospital, everywhere we go. “Hi, Lilah. Hey there, Lilah. Oh look, it’s Lilah.” People drop to the floor to pet her. It’s the same over and over. One day, a woman behind us asked, “Just how long does it take for you to get where you are going?” “Quite a while,” I said, “quite a while.”

We always check in at the nurse’s station to inquire which patients might feel like a pet visit. We tapped on this man’s door and asked if he liked puppy dogs. I heard a weak yes, so we entered. The patient was receiving a new liver the next morning, so he was very sick and weak. I lifted Lilah up to the side of his bed, and he looked at her very intently. Lilah looked back at him. Suddenly, he started singing, “You Are So Beautiful.” I was so surprised. He continued to sing the whole song to her. *What was that visit worth to him, I wonder? Everything, I think.*

I was walking down the hall when a lady stopped me and asked if we visited rooms. She said her son loved dogs and would we have time to visit him. She met us in the hallway outside his room and told me her son was in final stage MS. I did not know what that meant. Her son, Tommy, was completely paralyzed, lying on special bedding with air being pumped under the sheets.

The mother said it was fine to put Lilah on the bed. Lilah instinctively knows when things are bad. She cuddled up next to Tommy as closely as she could, and Tommy tried to speak to her. We saw Tommy and his parents another time. Lilah immediately remembered him. She very softly made her way up his body and placed the top of her head under his chin with her body snuggled by his shoulder. She stayed there quietly and didn’t move. It was the sweetest sight I had ever seen. What a special mission little Lilah has accepted for herself.

Again, I was walking down the hall, when a nurse asked if we had time to see a patient. He said the patient was a low-functioning Down Syndrome man. The nurse said the patient loved his stuffed dog and thought he would love to pet a real one. I wasn’t prepared for the response. His reaction was pure joy and excitement. I can’t say how grateful the family was. He petted Lilah so gently that I think he really cherished her.

The experience of walking with Lilah on her leash throughout the hospital from floor to floor, one end of the hospital to the other, is the most rewarding experience. People speak to Lilah by name over and over. They speak to me, ask questions and tell me about their dogs. What might be a sad, cold place to some becomes a community when a dog is around. There is no doubt about that, not when you’re looking back at all those happy smiling faces. Does pet therapy work? Just take the leash for a few steps.

—Juana McCoy, Memphis, TN
Polly Beagle came into our lives as our adopted “daughter” on March 14, 2008. My wonderful birthday present! She was on the streets of Fresno, CA, almost dead, on a foggy December night. Her muscle tone was gone and she weighed only 11 pounds – half of what she should weigh. She was infected with worms and mites, and her thyroid was wacky. A notched ear indicated she probably came from a puppy mill.

But now, you would never know Polly had such a bad beginning in life. She is now a registered therapy dog! We visit Immanuel Lutheran almost daily, where Polly’s favorite friend is Emma. Most visits, Polly curls up beside Emma and sleeps on her bed.

Since losing her brother, Roger, in February, Polly has hardly spent five minutes alone. Her diabetes and near-death in 2014 have left her needing humans even more. She goes to church meetings and all sorts of gatherings seeking humans to love and to love her in return. I have never had a dog with such love for humans.

She also worked at the library having children read to her. Doctors and nurses get a “therapy” break with Polly when we visit our hospital in Carson City, NE where her career began.

We pray Polly stays with us for many years, as do her many human friends. Rescue, please!

—Connie Gomez, Kalispell, MT

It was a thrill to be one of three finalists out of 350 nominees for the Healthcare Hero Award awarded each year by the Phoenix Business Journal. As a volunteer at Banner Baywood Medical Center and Banner Heart Hospital, Christine and Charlie were nominated by the volunteer office. The award was presented in a breakfast meeting at the Fairmount Princess Hotel in Scottsdale, AZ last August with over four hundred people in attendance.

Christine Kulhawik-Marcus and her dog, Charlie, (a rescued 14-year-old mixed Yorkie) became the proud recipients of the Healthcare Volunteer Award, receiving an engraved trophy. Charlie was rescued at one year old. Because of Charlie’s sweet nature, he was a great candidate to become a therapy dog.

Charlie is unique in that he has one eye, which allows others to focus on him and take their attention away from their troubles. Charlie’s history of being bitten by a rattlesnake three years ago and surviving with much love and attention, make for a good story while visiting others at the hospitals. Charlie now helps to test other potential therapy dog teams at the Banner Baywood Campus in Mesa, AZ. Charlie and Christine continue to regularly visit and test new teams. They enjoy meeting new folks in difficult circumstances at the hospitals.

—Christine K. Marcus, Mesa, AZ
The Power of a Hemi

Jeff and I have owned Gordon setters for more years than I care to count. We enjoyed them as show dogs for many years, then left the show ring and just enjoyed them. Our house was never without at least one Gordon, usually two. A few years ago, after our eighth Gordon, Barney’s pal, Sox, moved to Tucson with our son, Barney moped around until it was clear to us that he was not cut out for the single life. So, we began the familiar hunt for yet another Gordon to fill an empty crate.

When we arrived in Scottsdale to meet new puppies, Jill, the breeder, introduced us to two of the most dignified, elegant and lordly young Gordons we had ever met. The choice between them, which could have been difficult, was made easy when the taller of the two boys examined Jeff with unblinking, intelligent eyes, and lowered his head to Jeff’s lap for a scratch. Hemi (named in honor of Jeff’s 30-year career with Chrysler and my beloved hot-rod, 350-horsepower Hemi engine Charger) was on his way home to Los Angeles the next day, happily curled up next to his new pal, Barney.

Hemi was an apt student at the local obedience class we attended, although he was known to our trainer as “Ferdinand” (as in “the Bull”), for his propensity to sleep through lessons. Life would have been just fine had our two Gordons simply been the loving companions we enjoyed. But fate, as we all know, often has ideas different from ours.

Jeff was in the hospital for a knee repair a few months after Hemi arrived. Visiting in his room, I looked up to see a woman walk by with a golden retriever by her side. Having never seen such a thing (A dog? In a hospital??), I listened for an hour and a half to stories of her therapy dog, Willie, and the work he did. A call to Therapy Dogs, Inc. (now known as Alliance of Therapy Dogs) gave me the opportunity, and I knew I had the dog.

Within a month or so, I met Ginny Mills, one of those ebullient people whose enthusiasm is irresistible. Ginny, a Tester/Observer for ATD, gave Hemi his evaluation (piece of cake) and, in a serious moment, suggested to me that he would make a perfect therapy dog for The Help Group in Sherman Oaks, CA. That opened two whole new worlds to me: the role of therapy dogs in our society today, and the challenge of educating children on the autism spectrum.

Founded in 1975, The Help Group is the largest nonprofit of its kind, with ten specialized schools in the Los Angeles area. Each campus or class is designed to reach a specific population of children, from Pre-K to High School, who have special needs related to Autism Spectrum Disorder, learning disabilities, ADHD, developmental delays, abuse and emotional challenges. Around 2012, The Help Group initiated its “Paws and Pals for
Kids with Autism” volunteer program to incorporate the benefits of animal assisted interventions with its educational services. At our “interview,” Lisa, the program’s founder, emphasized the need for a calm, relaxed dog. I listened while Hemi slept on my feet. She advised me that the teachers and staff were taught to expect the unexpected, and she wondered how to test for that. I suggested she knock over a nearby metal chair and see Hemi’s reaction. He twitched, picked up his head to locate the sound, looked at me to see my reaction, and went back to sleep. My feet were still warm, and we were hired.

Since then, every visit has been a miracle.

Most of the children we work with have limited, if any, vocal skills. They sometimes make noises, but cannot make any recognizable words. These children generally like to pet the dog; they brush him and sometimes walk him on a second leash. During our first year at The Help Group, we went to such a class. As we walked in the classroom, the teacher smiled a greeting and said, “Hey, everybody! Look who’s here!” Out of the back of the room, I heard a little boy slowly say, “He-mi!” I did not understand the teacher’s excitement and praise, until she told me Hemi’s name was the first word that little boy had ever spoken.

Over the last four years, so many things have been accomplished during visits from my beautiful Gordon setter. We teach children how dogs help people; we show them how to meet and greet a dog; we show them how to walk a dog; and, most importantly, we help children reach out to another living being. We don’t look for breakthroughs every visit, but we know they can happen, and when they do, we know there can be more. If a child can reach out his hand to a dog, he can reach out both hands for a hug from a person. If a little girl can overcome one fear, she can overcome others. If a little boy can say one word, he may magically say others. I know there will be other children who reach their goals, with the help of a big, powerful Hemi.

And someday they may get a visit from Hemi’s new pal, Scout.

—Susan Frankel, West Hills, CA
What It’s All About

At the beginning of 2016, Rhodesian Ridgeback Courage’s Gentleman Jack of Wildwest, THD, CGC, known mostly as Jack, and I were in the process of starting to work at the Northern Arizona Veterans Administration Health Care System. After several orientation meetings, Jack and I started in early March 2016 in the Community Living Center, the long-term care part of the facility.

There are three wings on each of the two floors. One wing is devoted to dementia care and another is a hospice wing. Each wing has 10 or 12 rooms, some singles, some doubles. Jack and I appear on the posted weekly schedule with Jack’s name first (as it should be). Among the initial discussions with the outstanding staff was the passing mention that they understood that it was stressful for Jack and the visits did not have to be of a specific length, nor would there have to be some arbitrary number of patients visited. If Jack began to exhibit stress, cut the visit short that week. Alternatively, if one of the patients really seemed to need the contact that week, stay with them, even if other patients and wings didn’t get covered that week. It was a great introduction to people who care about the patients and Jack too.

We visit every Wednesday afternoon after lunch, signing in to the visitor’s book as “Jack (and George too).” As it should be, I’m “that guy on the other end of the leash.” Everybody – staff and patients – know Jack by name (I think some of them even know my name.)

There are, according to the Census Bureau, just under 19,000,000 veterans in the US. About 92% of them are male and the veterans of “my war,” Vietnam, constitute the largest single group. The World War II and Korea groups are shrinking fast. The second largest group are from the Middle Eastern conflicts of the last couple of decades. In the long-term care facilities, however, most patients seem to come from World War II, Korea and Vietnam eras. The staff in Prescott, AZ is, as I said above, outstanding – caring, professional and enthusiastic. A substantial percentage of them are veterans and they are encouraged to “wear their branch of service” on their staff identification badge lanyards. The volunteers who are veterans are also encouraged to do the same. I served thirteen years in the US Army as a commissioned officer, so I wear an Army lanyard. That sense of identification evokes a response in almost every patient whom I have visited with – not the branch of service, but the fact of service.

Since November 2016, Jack has made 28 visits to the hospital. He has visited patients and their family members, as well as the staff. He is six or eight visits from his AKC Therapy Dog Advanced (THDA) title. Jack waits for me to put his vest on when we arrive to the facility, and then he heads straight for the door. His routine includes stops into rooms with long-term patients, and he knows which rooms to visit without any signal from me. They are his friends, so he sits and visits with them. In the Hospice Wing, he connects with the patients’ families. He works the Dementia Wing too, and that one’s tough. Some of the patients aren’t fully in control anymore and they can be rough in their handling, but Jack takes it all in stride. It’s like a long-serving military guy accepting the uncertainty and hardship that sometimes accompanies service.

Something happened on Nov. 11 that led to this writing. The hospital had an entry in the local Veterans’ Day parade. Several of Jack’s favorites told me on Wednesday that they were going to be in Friday’s parade. Bright
and early on the day, Jack, Katie (Wild West African Queen, THD, an older retired therapy Ridgeback on my wife Melanie’s leash) and I went into town and found the parade staging area where the hospital entry was in line.

As we walked up to the group, Jack recognized several of his “special buddies” and headed for the first one in line (they were all in their wheelchairs with volunteers to help them). One of the others asked my wife, “Is that dog related to Jack?” so she headed for him. It took over 30 minutes to get away and find a place to watch the parade. In the process, I exchanged cards with three more people who were interested in how to get started with their dogs in the therapy dog world.

The parade began with a five-branch color guard. The 83 entries in the parade included two high school bands, veteran’s organizations, some car clubs, veterans with their service dogs and civic organizations. Spectators, who clapped and cheered, could talk with people on the floats and in the parade. Jack and Katie sat on the curb with us and received a lot of pets. It was the neatest celebration of Americana that I have seen in many years.

Maybe next year Jack and I will just join the parade in the VA entry.

—George D. Clark, Jr., Prescott, AZ

One Sunday when Buster and I arrived at Phelps County Regional Medical Center for our usual visit, one of our friends from the Acute Rehab Unit met us in the main lobby. She said, “Lee, we have a patient who really needs to see Buster today!”

When we arrived at the Acute Rehab Unit, I asked, “Where is our patient that needs to see Buster?” One of the nurses walked us across the hall to see what was going to happen.

As soon as Buster walked into the room, he knew he was needed. Our patient was up and dressed but not allowed to walk away from her bed. The patient was sitting on the bed and reached her arm around Buster’s neck, pulled his head down next to hers, and said in a loud, clear voice, “OH MY GOD!”

For the previous two days in the hospital, she was unable to talk and could only mumble. Once she spoke, she was so happy. She just kept going. We stopped by her room a couple of times before we went on to the Psychiatric Unit.

There have been so many memorable visits since my boys, Todd (2000-2008), Buster (2008-2016), Jack and I have been registered therapy dog teams.

—Leland (Lee) A. Perry, Rolla, MO
The Dog Is In: Using Therapy Dogs in Perioperative Rooms

No matter how colorful the walls or soft the hospital gown, the hospital environment is an alien environment for many children. Therapy teams in Kearney, Nebraska set out to remedy that by bringing a little of the outside world into the hospital – not just into the hospital but into the pre-operative prep rooms where patients are readied for surgeries and procedures. In a pilot program at CHI Health Good Samaritan, children undergoing in-hospital dental procedures are given the opportunity to have a therapy dog with them from admission to procedure.

The process begins with a routine pre-op call by nursing staff. The nurse tells parents or guardians about the availability of the dogs and asks about possible fears and allergies children may have. On the day of the procedure, the first thing a child sees upon entering the hospital is a happy dog! Children can have the therapy team remain with them from admission to beginning of the procedure. Time is spent in the waiting rooms doing what so many therapy teams do well: reading, playing, walking and visiting with the patient and family. It’s the time when the nurse comes to take the patient back to the perioperative area (pre-op) that makes the program unique.

When the time comes to go back to the prep rooms, the dog goes too! Two-handled leashes allow both the child and handler to walk back to the pre-op. It’s not uncommon to for the dog to hop on the scale right after the child! Once in the prep room, teams have a variety of experiences. Sometimes a fearful child will feel more at ease stroking the dog’s fur. Sometimes a dog might demonstrate that getting a blood pressure taken is not so scary. Sometimes it isn’t the child who is nervous but the parents. Having dogs present with the wires, beeps and tests helps to decrease the
child’s anxiety and, sometimes more importantly, the parent’s anxiety too. Each child is given a stuffed dog to keep. Frequently, the real dog and the stuffed one have conversations and adventures while nurses take care of what needs to be done.

The program is expanding from children’s dental procedures to orthopedics and ENT procedures. Staff in the pre-op area who normally do not see the therapy dogs during hospital rounds are delighted to get a little dog love too! Teams are available for post procedures if needed. If the procedure is 5 a.m. or 2 p.m., teams are there to do what our dogs in Alliance of Therapy Dogs do best: give unconditional love.

In fact, the program has been so popular that the therapy dog teams at CHI Health Good Samaritan won the 2016 International Planetree Patient-Centered Excellence and Innovation Award. Only 10 of these awards are given out each year, and Kearney teams were pleased to be one of the recipients. An international panel of patients and families chose the 2016 award winners. Kim Williams traveled to Chicago to accept the award on behalf of the teams. While attending the International Planetree Conference, Kim had the opportunity to speak with care centers and hospital representatives all over the world about ATD and therapy dog work. She presented the hospital program to more than 300 people and won first place in the conference poster contest. At the awards dinner consisting of 2,000-plus people, the roar and applause was deafening when pictures of therapy dogs from around the world were shown. It was truly an amazing experience. Congratulations to the teams in Kearney! They are dedicated, amazing women and dogs bringing a little of the outside world into a hospital environment.

—Kimberly Williams, Kearney, NE

I wanted to share the story of these visits I have enclosed for Hillcrest Nursing and Rehab Center that Elvie and I did between October and December 2016.

Our friend of over four years whom we have been visiting started getting very ill. Her only child lives in Pennsylvania, and I have gotten close to her as well through emails and phone calls. She was only able to make it home to see her mom once or twice each year. Her daughter called me to let me know that she didn’t know how long her mother had left and wanted me to be prepared as I had gotten so close to her mom. During the last couple of months, I have learned more about the hard part of being a therapy dog handler.

Our friend, whom I will call “Miss M,” was terrified of dogs because of a bad experience as a child. When we first met her, she would ask us to stop and she wanted to see my dog, Auggie, from the doorway of her room. Taking baby steps in always making sure she was comfortable, after all these years she started calling Auggie and Elvie “her” dogs! They sit right next to her and she pets them with no fear at all.

Sadly, we lost our friend on December 21. This has been a long and hard struggle for my dogs and me. We miss her so very much, but will continue to spread “the magic of fur!”

—Penny Sorenson, Muskegon, MI
Nine years ago, Fred adopted me from the Ft. Lauderdale Humane Society. My previous family turned me in because I got too big. Huh?

Two months later, we moved to Hendersonville, NC. Fred’s home was in the mountains, and I thought we were in dog heaven! In front of the house was an apple orchard and then wilderness. Almost every day, we would see deer or turkeys. I tried my best to catch one, but the deer were fast, and the turkeys flew away.

From then on, I would chase them off our property and bark. Fred was already close to being deaf in his right ear and was starting to lose hearing in his left ear. Fred praised me when I barked, so I became a sentry dog and would bark to let him know a human or animal was approaching our property. People ask if I’m a guard dog. No, I’m a hostess – which I show by bringing a toy to each of our guests.

When Fred had his knee replaced four years later, he had almost completely lost his hearing. A therapist told Fred that I could hear her before she had exited her car, and that I was providing a service as a hearing dog – which is a service dog. Later that day, Fred did research and found that she was right.

One day at the dog park, we met Shirley Parsley and Sally, a golden doodle. They had just become a therapy dog team. Shirley told Fred that I would make a great therapy dog, as I was so friendly and well-mannered. When we went home, Fred contacted a representative of Alliance of Therapy Dogs, and we were scheduled to be tested and passed all the tests. There was some concern about me being a service dog, but Fred explained that my duties were exclusive to our home. They were also concerned about Fred’s hearing difficulty, and he told them he would ask for an escort to let him know that it was alright for us to enter a client’s room and help with any questions the clients had. We were then registered!

Fred immediately contacted three assisted-living facilities in Hendersonville. We have been visiting all three weekly for two and half years. Two months after we started doing visits, we visited the veterans’ administration hospital in Ashville, and we now volunteer at their mental health center weekly, as well. Fred wanted to do this because he is a Marine Corps veteran and enjoys helping his brothers.

I have always been friendly, and wherever we go, people come and ask Fred what breed I am, and if they can pet me. He tells them I’m a full German Shepherd Dog, and yes, they can pet me. Most had never seen an all-black German Shepherd Dog before.

Fred learned that Les Maier, another therapy dog handler, had moved to the area and invited her to join him with one of her therapy dogs at one of the local homes. The good part of this is that she brings a small dog (either her Sheltie or Havanese), and the folks enjoy having both a small and large dog visit.

I do believe the fact that I love to be petted, and that I have been exposed to so many environments made becoming a therapy dog perfect for me. I do like the attention I receive, and Fred does, as well.

We want to thank Alliance of Therapy Dogs for the opportunity to serve. There is not a day that we don’t look forward to seeing our friends and meeting new people. Just to walk into a room and see the person sit up and smile is all the payment in the world.

—Frederic Blaess, Hendersonville, NC
My fur baby, Adelynn, and I became members of ATD this past November. Since then, we have made visits to several assisted living and memory care facilities. Prior to that, we visited my sister, who is a terminal cancer patient, during her stay at the hospital. My sister inspired me to diligently pursue this calling of serving others as we have seen the difference that animals make in her life and the difference Adelynn makes in the lives of others. I want Alliance of Therapy Dogs to be as proud of Adelynn as I am, and the following is one of the many reasons why:

Adelynn and I visited a medical rehabilitation facility in November. This was the first visit that we made after becoming new Alliance of Therapy Dogs members. While we were in the facility, we noticed a patient sitting alone in the common area of the facility. Adelynn and I went over to her to introduce ourselves and to get to know her. The woman looked as if she were a burn victim and had been seriously disfigured as a result. She told me that no one wanted to look at her. I reassured her that Adelynn and I wanted to spend time with her and get to know her, and that if anyone else did not want to do that, that the problem was with them, not her. Then, the woman tried to pull down the sleeve of her shirt to cover her arm, which had also been seriously burned. I told her that there was no need to do that and reassured her that Adelynn and I were there for her. When the woman tried to pull down her sleeve, Adelynn nudged the woman’s hand with her nose and licked the woman’s arm in such compassion. (I did not train Adelynn to do this; she has developed her gift of empathy on her own.) The woman then opened up more to us, began to smile, and even accepted a hug. She knew we sincerely cared about her. We saw the woman again about 20 minutes after we had left her. This time, she was sitting in her wheelchair in the facility hallway with her head up and a big automatic smile upon seeing us. This time, we saw confidence in someone who had none earlier.

There are many other stories of our visits that I could share that are also very touching. Adelynn has learned other amazing things on her own. She recognizes wheelchairs and walkers and pulls me toward them before I notice them so she can meet folks who need to see her. She also automatically goes to each door of a facility and sits still at attention, waiting for us to be told we can enter a room. She learned this on her own. She knows her job and does it well.

We will do our best to serve others and represent ATD well. I hope you are as proud of Adelynn as I am.

—Cynthia and Adelynn Hoehn, Clermont, FL
Early October 2016 was an eventful and challenging time for coastal central Florida residents as violent Hurricane Matthew passed offshore, leaving much damage and destruction in its wake.

Our beach home was in the mandatory coastal evacuation zone, so we, along with hundreds of our neighbors, boarded up and left our homes and the area not knowing whether they would still be there as the Category 4 storm spun dangerously closer to the Florida shore.

Our family departed the beach and traveled inland to escape the imminent hurricane. As we arrived at our temporary shelter on the Florida panhandle, we quickly saw the surrounding vacation homes becoming filled with other evacuees arriving in vehicles packed full with their children, elderly parents, important possessions and pets.

My dog, Victoria, now in her third year as a pet therapy dog, quickly seized the opportunity and became a local source of comfort and joy to evacuees who were quite stressed about leaving their homes in advance of Hurricane Matthew.

Each of the days we sheltered in Destin, FL, Victoria and I visited with our neighbors on the surrounding streets to help ease their (and their children’s) stress and anxiety. In turn, we were also comforted during the evacuation period, as we met and talked with people going through a similarly difficult time.

It’s truly amazing how a therapy dog like Victoria is such a wonderful source of joy, bringing smiles to those in distress and needing comfort, whenever and wherever that may be.

—Sharon Scheel, Celebration, FL

ALLIANCE OF THERAPY DOGS OUTSTANDING MEMBER AWARD

The annual Alliance of Therapy Dogs Outstanding Member Award will be selected by December 19, (Teri Meadow’s birthday), in honor of Alliance of Therapy Dogs’—now retired—20 year president. If you know a member or T/O who you feel has done an outstanding job of exemplifying Alliance of Therapy Dogs’ mission of sharing smiles and joy, please nominate them with a letter of 300 to 500 words explaining why this member is outstanding and should receive this award. Please submit the letter, typed, to the Alliance of Therapy Dogs office, by November 15, for consideration.

The details for this service award are:
• The award is given annually
• Nominations made are for the immediate previous year
• The nominee must be a member in good standing
• The member must be actively doing visits
• The member must never have had a grievance / complaint filed against them or bite incident reported against the member’s dog
• The member must have made a minimum of 25 visits during calendar year of the nomination. The visits must be verifiable with facility contact information and signatures. This information may be tracked using the Personal Visitation Log available on the ATD website www.therapydogs.com.

The winner will be announced in the following spring/summer issue.
It is our privilege to nominate Bruce Barnhill for the Alliance of Therapy Dogs Volunteer of the Year. Bruce and his dogs provide a dedicated, reliable, and friendly team to represent the Alliance of Therapy Dogs. Bruce volunteers in the Middleton schools as part of a group of therapy dogs that assists in the Reading to Rover program. He also volunteers in nursing homes and assisted living facilities bringing smiles and warm, friendly doggie visits to residents across the Treasure Valley. Bruce just completed the test and observations with his third therapy dog, Daisy Mae. Bruce and his dogs Molly and Mickey serve as mentors for new therapy dog teams, and he actively recruits new pet therapy volunteers.

Last year, Bruce was selected as Caldwell Idaho’s Volunteer of the Year. Caldwell has a population of more than 50,000 people – many who volunteer. It is truly a huge honor to win this award. He was nominated by Heart and Home Hospice.

“Bruce Barnhill, Caldwell Heart and Home volunteer, possesses all the qualities of a remarkable volunteer in our community. That is why it was no surprise to us that he has received the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year award! As a Hospice Volunteer for the past three years, Bruce has donated over 700 hours of his time visiting with end-of-life patients in their homes and at our local assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, 226 of which were donated within the last year.” (nomination letter)

Bruce and Molly also do Eleventh Hour care which requires special training and a special team full of compassion and care.

“As an 11th Hour volunteer, Bruce provides respite for exhausted families and sits with actively dying patients at their bedside, holding their hands and offering a supportive presence while they pass on.” (narration letter).

“While there are many volunteers within our community, what really sets Bruce apart is his commitment to our mission of affirming life every day, every time. Bruce understands the worth of each person he comes in contact with regardless of background, abilities, or level of illness. Bruce affirms lives in our community through building meaningful relationships while always demonstrating compassion and integrity.”

Bruce is someone we can always count on. We never grow tired of hearing about his patient interactions and how they have “filled his bucket.” His heart is in the right place and he inspires our team to be better in our daily lives. We are lucky to have such an amazing community member on our team. (narration letter).

For these reasons, and on behalf of all the people who are blessed by his and his dog’s kindness and compassion, we are proud to nominate Bruce Barnhill as a volunteer whom all of us can emulate!

—Maggie Strowd, T/0 and Janet Palmeri, T/0
Sunny sizes up folks quickly and easily: if you might have a treat, a person of interest; if you offer a treat, a friend; if you are a consistent source of treats (or a sloppy eater), then a best friend forever or BFF! In every case, though, you are going to be a little happier, your day will be a little brighter, and you might be a little healthier because you crossed paths with this handsome Shetland Sheepdog and his minimalist entourage, Nancy Toney.

Sunny is part of a VITAS Healthcare program comprised of a dozen fellow Paw Pals visiting VITAS patients in local nursing homes, assisted living facilities, and private residences. He and Nancy provide a welcome hiatus amid schedules dominated by medical procedures, therapies, and the protracted tedium of convalescence. “Most of (the patients) have had dogs in the past, and it helps them to remember their own pets,” observed Nancy.

The 10-year-old Sheltie is a seasoned pro with six years of therapy work under his collar. Not just a registered therapy dog, Sunny is also a learn-ed “dog of letters” having obtained his CGC (Canine Good Citizen) designation upon completion of a comprehensive course designed by the American Kennel Club to instill model canine behavior. Ever the consummate professional, Sunny is well-aware of when to put on his game face, boost the charm factor, and go to work. Nancy said, “He saves himself for the outside world!” The duo was recognized with a Space Coast Magazine 2016 Humanitarian Award for their tireless volunteerism.

The team’s curriculum vitae also includes therapy visits to Holmes Regional Medical Center, where Nancy volunteered for over 50 years, and local nursing home patients as part of the Sunshine Ministry of First United Methodist Church of Melbourne, Florida, as well as the current work with VITAS. Nancy is a Space Coast area resident of more than 60 years and worked as a teaching assistant in public schools for 23 years before retiring. She can fully empathize with families and patients receiving hospice care from VITAS; the organization helped comfort and ease her partner Fred’s final weeks.

Fred was Sunny’s BFF!

—Nancy Toney, Melbourne, FL

ATD is going GREEN!

Our Newsmagazine is now available on our website to help us save paper and keep postage costs down. To opt out of receiving a printed copy in the mail, check the box on your next membership renewal form.
Maya evolves into an experienced therapy dog who travels around the San Francisco Bay area and beyond visiting retirement homes, schools, rehab centers and many other places. Maya is joined by her brother, Aiden, on the therapy visits where they spread their love and caring to everyone. Together, Maya and Aiden have over five hundred visits and have seen thousands of people.

The book, written for a second grade reading level, is available now! Go to www.MayaAndAidenJourney.com for more information.
Why do we do this? Why do we make therapy visits with our dogs – our best friends? Why do we spend time and energy in training and traveling to hospitals, assisted living facilities, schools, airports? I am often asked questions like – what is a therapy dog, why are here at the airport or hospital or assisted living facility with Tessa? Is she a service dog, a drug dog – just what are you up to? Here are two therapy visits that provide the answers to all the questions.

Caitlin and Emma

Tessa met Caitlin in April 2016 and Emma in October 2016 at Erlanger Pediatric Hospital in Chattanooga, TN.

Caitlin was 18 and in treatment when Tessa walked into her hospital room. Caitlin immediately brightened up, smiled and invited Tessa onto a blanket she had put on her bed. Caitlin cuddled with Tessa for a long time – talking to her about her work at an animal shelter, her love for dogs, and hopes for the future. It was a most special visit with a delightful young lady (and Puber the elephant on the bed).

When Tessa walked into Emma’s hospital room there was a party and Tessa instantly became part of it. It was Emma’s last chemo treatment at Erlanger – she was going home. Emma was so excited to see Tessa- she threw her arms around her and just bubbled with joy. The nurses, Emma’s mother and I all took pictures of the two. Such a great timely visit with a very wonderful joyful young lady who was happy to be going home.

This is what therapy visits are about – the joy we (really our dogs) bring to patients, nurses, travelers, residents, students, kids and anyone we meet. We bring puppy love and a moment away from the problems, the pain, the anxieties, and concerns. Those we visit with smile and love on our dogs. We get many positive comments about how lovely our dogs are, how well mannered (not like their dog – LOL); questions of “can I take your dog home with me” and always a thank you for bringing her or him.

There is another side – the person who holds the leash. It is not always fun and games. As I write this tears are in my eyes and on my cheeks. Tears of joy at what Tessa did with Caitlin and of sorrow – Caitlin passed away in July undergoing another treatment. Yet, Tessa and I will continue to do therapy visits – not for how it makes us feel but to give of ourselves so that others may know joy even if only for a brief time.

—Paul Friedman, Collierville, TX
Sophie... best friends are forever

Written by: Ted Slupik

Sophie was an AOTD registered therapy dog for thirteen years. All proceeds benefit Lizzy’s Fund, a 501(c)(3) charity.

★★★★★ By Betsy

I absolutely loved this book. It is very well written and honors the life of a very special therapy dog and the role she played in the lives she touched as well as her family who loved her so well. What a wonderful tribute to Sophie!

★★★★★ By Amazon Customer

"Sophie" is a true story about the bond between a beautiful collie, Sophie, and Ted, her owner. I thoroughly enjoyed this book detailing an exceptionally intelligent therapy dog with a wonderful personality that all the patients and friends she encountered grew to love. Wonderfully written, this book contains many stories and anecdotes about Sophie and her life. It is a heartfelt 13 year odyssey with numerous color pictures of not only Sophie, but also her many friends, human and canine. I could not put this book down and I recommend it highly, but have your Kleenex handy as you may need one. I did.

★★★★★ By Ann Adams

This story about Sophie, the therapy collie, is so touching. She was such an amazing dog. It's written with heartfelt love. After reading the story, I was in love with Sophie. She performed small, and not so small miracles as she worked in hospitals. I was looking for a book to give as a gift to my friends who love dogs. This is it! I know they will enjoy it. The best part of giving this book? It gives back! All profits help homeless senior dogs find homes. Another reason to love this book.

“Sophie loved to play and have fun, but she also loved to work. The rough-coated Collie spent more than a dozen years of her life smiling, listening, and strengthening patients at hospitals and nursing homes. ... Sophie helped blaze that trail at an unusually young age for a therapy dog, and her legacy and undeniable impact are captured perfectly in Sophie ... best friends are forever.”

The foreword of Sophie... best friends are forever was written by Laura T. Coffey. Laura is the author of the bestselling book My Old Dog: Rescued Pets with Remarkable Second Acts. She’s also a longtime writer, editor, and producer for TODAY.com, the website of NBC’s TODAY show. Above is an excerpt.

Available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble and at www.lizzysfund.org

www.sophiebestfriendsforever.com

www.lizzysfund.org
COMMUNITY BUILDER AWARD GOES TO THERAPY DOG TEAMS!
A retired South Carolina midlands couple and their therapy dogs were recently featured on WIS News as the recipients of Mungo Homes Community Builder Award.

Anna Marie and Kenneth Christley, along with their registered therapy Doodles, Tilly and Teddy Bear, were honored for their volunteer work at local nursing homes, hospice, and schools. Mary King, WIS news anchor/reporter, surprised and thanked the couple for their positive impact on the community while they were participating in Carolina Springs Elementary’s reading program. The award included a $1,000 donation to the charity of their choice, the Alzheimer’s Association, which both teams support in the annual Walk To End Alzheimer’s. The couple is grateful for the opportunity to give back with the help of their four-legged friends!

—Anna Marie Christley & Tilly
Kenneth Christley & Teddy Bear
West Columbia, SC.

Therapy dog gives back to lifetime of community service
Anne Sandula paid it forward in a lifetime of community service as a volunteer at hospitals, women’s groups and church organizations. Now ATD therapy dog Chico Luigi and his mom, Rita Sapienza of Melbourne Florida, are giving back to this wonderful lady for all she has done by visiting and helping her celebrate birthday 105. Thank you Ms. Sandula for all you have done. You are truly and inspiration to us all!

—Terri Carruthers and Lillian Garcia of Phoenix, AZ
Congratulations on making the news!
To share your news in our next edition, be sure to follow these guidelines:

1. Summarize any news articles in your own words in 125 words or less.

2. Do not send in newspaper or magazine clippings. We cannot reprint articles (or transcripts) that have been previously published elsewhere, nor will we do the summary. We want to share your words, not ours.

3. You may include one photo that was not taken by the media outlet.
   Photos of non-members MUST be accompanied by a signed photo release or we cannot publish them.

(www.therapydogs.com/MemberDocuments.html or in your handbook)

ALLIANCE OF THERAPY DOGS
PHOTOGRAPH AUTHORIZATION RELEASE FORM

Instructions for Alliance of Therapy Dogs member: Please type or print legibly. Follow all facility rules regarding photographs, including filling out a facility photo release form if requested. Always get permission and use the photo release form even if the photo is for personal use and not for publication.

I, the undersigned, do hereby consent of my own free will, without coercion or inducement of any kind, to grant Alliance of Therapy Dogs, a registered non-profit 501(c)(3) Corporation headquartered in Wyoming, its successors and assigns, including those acting under its permission, to reproduce, copyright, publish, circulate or otherwise use photographic reproductions or likenesses or videotape segments of me and or my name.

This agreement fully represents all terms and considerations and no other inducements, statements or promises have been made to me. I fully understand that no monetary payment will be made to me for such uses as described above.

Please return this signed and dated form with any photos you submit for Alliance of Therapy Dogs publication use.

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Retired

**Gracie**  
Mary & Christy Bailey, Muskegon, MI  
Registered: 5/2015  
Retired: 5/2016

**Lil’ Bit**  
Terri J. Carruthers, Laveen, AZ  
Registered: 12/26/02  
Retired: 9/12/16

*Lil’ Bit’s paws have traveled and her heart has “Shared & Cared” with so many lives – Banner University Medical Center & Rehab., American Red Cross, Special Touch Camps and speaking engagements. It has been a wonderful journey to be a part of your work! Enjoy being “Queen” of the Bed.*

**Chrissey Snow**  
Shirley Giles, Anthem, AZ  
Registered: 6/2009  
Retired: 10/2016

*She enjoyed visiting both staff and patients at John C. Lincoln Hospital over the past years. She has also participated in reading programs and visited nursing home.*

**Carly**  
Terry Harris, Glenville, PA  
Registered: 1/2007  
Retired: 12/2016

**Gary**  
Carolyn Hoe, Sarasota, FL  
Registered: 5/7/07  
Retired: 12/1/16

*Gary helped children read at Ashton Elementary. He was one of two dogs to start the P.A.W.S. program (Pets Advocating in Sarasota) through the Child Protection Council comforting abused children in assessment and in court. He was loved by all for his big heart and loving spirit.*

**Morgan**  
Donna Lenczden, Reading, PA  
Registered: 1/2014  
Retired: 12/2016

*We started therapy work in Spring 2014 at local nursing and rehab facilities, later joining Reading Health System in Reading, PA. We met many wonderful patients and therapy teams. It’s hard to give up the work, but Morgan is enjoying his retirement.*
Scout
Carole Taylor, Shippensburg, PA
Registered: 2008
Retired: 11/7/2016

Sasha
Charlene Olsen, Hendersonville, NC
Registered: 10/2/09
Retired: 12/31/2016.
*She loved going to hospice and the schools. Time for a much-deserved rest.*

Phreyja
(Blueherons; Breeze Remembered)
Cliff Smith, Oregon, OH
Registered: 8/2012
Retired: 11/2016

Molly
Arlene Greiner, Morton, IL
Registered: 11/6/07
Retired: 10/2016
*Molly began visiting nursing homes, then the hospital oncology floor – putting smiles on faces all over. She delighted children at libraries when participating in Paws to Read. Retirement will be lying in the bay window soaking up the sun. Best dog ever!*
Ella
Marilyn Bott, Pittsburgh, PA
Registered: 12/28/09
Retired: 12/31/16
After three decades of doing therapy work, we all hang up our leash.

Frosty
John C. & Elizabeth Jones
Wickman, Las Vegas, NV
Registered: 11/2/2008
Retired: 1/1/2017
Frosty is a special pup. He went to nursing homes, doctor’s offices and hospitals and made special friends everywhere. He went to cardiac rehab to sit on a chair near people after their exercise. Everyone remembered Frosty’s name but not ours.

Bear
Betty Harrelson, Cary, NC
Registered: 10/6/08
Retired: 1/1/2017

Trixie
Diana Yackoski, Fort Myers, FL
Registered: 2/15/07
Retired: 12/9/16
Trixie was a therapy dog at Healthpark Hospital. We enjoyed visiting the patients and staff in her many outfits and all the attention she received. We will miss our hospital visits. Trixie is enjoying her well-deserved retirement.

Bella
Jared Wadley, Ypsilanti Township, MI
Registered: 3/24/10
Retired: 12/31/16
In Italian, Bella means “beautiful,” which describes the experiences that 200+ people had when they met her at hospitals, schools, and libraries. Her obedience and gentleness created heartwarming smiles and opportunities to teach others about responsible pet ownership. A former rescue, she’s been a good girl.

Misty
Joyce O’Connell, Fallbrook, CA
Registered: 3/12/07
Retired: 2/01/17
Somewhere Over the Rainbow

As puppies we must grow and learn
To walk and sit and stay.
We learn to listen to our mom
We get to play and play.

When we are grown at least a year
We get to take the test.
We have to mind our P’s and Q’s
We have to do our best.

So, now we all are therapy dogs
Is it work or play?
We visit friends both old and new
All takers; come what may.

We visit on throughout the years
We do our job so well.
But age is catching up to us
Look close and you can tell.

It’s time for us to take a break
We’ll shed a canine tear.
Time to rest our weary paws,
Retirement time is near.

A time will come when we will pass
Many hours we did log.
Time to cross the Rainbow Bridge
A retired Therapy Dog.

—Sandy Peterson, Boise, ID

Memorial Submissions
It’s never easy to close the “therapy dog” chapter in your dog’s life. The memorable connections and smiles created by your loving pet’s visits can stir many emotions as you decide to retire your loved one from Alliance of Therapy Dogs. The Newsmagazine wants to highlight these dedicated pets with a new section about retired dogs. Starting this issue, we will publish profiles recognizing their service to Alliance of Therapy Dogs. In addition to the photo, send the dog’s name, owner’s name, city and state, years of service and a brief summary (less than 50 words) about the pet’s special qualities. Keep in mind that only one submission to the Newsmagazine per issue will be accepted for your dog as it relates to tributes – either “Retired dogs” or “Over the Rainbow.”

Patty
Valerie Pfadenhauer, O’Fallon, MO
1/2/04-9/1/16
Years of Service: 9

Maggie
Karissa Barnes, Greeley, CO
8/28/01-9/12/16
Years of Service: 12
Maggie was the best dog and friend I’ve ever had. She was such a natural, always seeming to know who needed her the most. I’m so grateful that we found such a wonderful organization to be a part of and that helped us find Maggie’s true calling.

Harley Duke
Danielle Hughes, Nokomis, FL
10/21/03-8/21/16
Years of Service: 8
Harley was a playful yellow lab who worked with at-risk youth. He was one of the inspirations for the P.A.W.S. (Pet Advocate Working in Sarasota) Program. He loved to swim and to be with his Mommy. He is missed by all.

Ella
Ann Jenkins, Apex, NC
2004-2016
Years of Service: 9
Our gentle, loyal and loving Ella brought smiles and comfort to many folks. She is missed dearly. Godspeed, sweet Ella.

Ranger
Sandra Bourgeois, Chatsworth, CA
1/26/06-9/20/16
Years of Service: 9

Lucy
Sharon Pope, Conestoga, PA
6/22/03-2016
I lost my sweet therapy dog, Lucy, this summer. She is greatly missed by my family, all those great patients she visited and by me. Lucy was a wonderful and very special therapy dog. She put a smile on everyone’s face wherever she went.
Laila Rose
Susan Krancki, New Berlin, WI
4/6/12-7/31/16
Years of Service: 3
Laila Rose’s life was cut short by Lupus. She made the most of her short life here on Earth, bringing happiness and smiles to many patients and staff at our local hospital and at nursing homes. She was our “Rosebud” and is missed deeply.

Willie
Susan Sexton, Chester, VA
2004-8/2016

Cassie
Leslie Martin, Los Angeles, CA
10/1-02-2016
Years of Service: 12

Katie Bear
Ann & Pete Lyon, Houston, TX
12/12/04-8/10/16
Years of Service: 8
Katie was a loyal and affectionate Golden who brought smiles and joy to both adults and children in hospitals, nursing homes and the local autistic school. She willingly shared her unconditional love for people for many years. All who knew her miss her.

Lilie
Linda Balducci, La Jolla, CA
6/2000-9/19/16

Connor
Anne Campshure,
Broadview Heights, OH
9/29/04-10/24/16
Years of Service: 4
Connor was a sweet, special dobie boy who enjoyed his therapy visits. He made so many people happy in his years of service at various facilities in Venice, FL and Parma, OH.

Tasha
Deborah Daleiden, Oregon, IL
9/18/04-7/17/16
Years of Service: 7½
Tasha was a lover of all, and she was loved by everyone who ever met her. Her wagging tail and big Golden smile and gentle heart will be missed by all who knew and loved her.

Dax
Deborah Daleiden, Oregon, IL
2/23/06-9/21/2016
Years of Service: 7½
Dax was a big boy with a giant heart and gentle soul who loved sharing this with everyone he met. He was my “Heart Dog” and will be missed terribly.

K-9 Hawk (SAR-WTHDD)
Lois & Bill Hall, Clinton, IA
8/27/03-8/29/16
Years of Service: 12
Emergency K-9 Operations Search and Rescue, Clinton County Sheriff’s Office Reserve, Community Emergency Response Team Crisis Response, Youth & Pet Survivors, American Cancer Society Bark for Life Ambassador, Iowa Hawkeye Heroes . . . .

Cagney
Samantha Hillmer, Carrollton, TX
12/19/00-10/10/16
Years of Service: 8
Cagney was a wonderful therapy dog for over 8 years with ATD and retired when she was 14 years old. She visited seniors, special needs children, attended special corporate visits, did reading to rover programs, visited the VA hospital.

Hagrid
Rosemary Greny, Rockwall, TX
12/8/04-11/7/16
Years of Service: 3
Such a sweet, kind and friendly boy. He loved making others smile, playing Frisbee and swimming.
Haley
Cheryl Pesta, Clancy, MT
2009-2016
Years of Service: 2

Wally
Amy Beth Howard, Chester, VA
2006-2016
Years of Service: 7
Wally was a gentleman to the end. We rescued Wally, but that bumper sticker, “who rescued whom” is so true in his case. He gave me a sense of purpose. He gave so much joy to so many people during his visits. He was an amazing spirit.

Willow
Julie Palais, Louisa, VA
5/1/09-11/26/16
Years of Service: 1

Fiona
Joey Luck, Chesterfield, VA
Years of Service: 6
Fiona was a sweet heart who enjoyed hiking, playing hide and seek, and cuddling. She brought happiness to everyone she met.

Bailey
Deborah McCall, Dover, DE
3/15/06-11/27/16
Years of Service: 8
Bailey brought joy and happiness to our lives as well as the lives of those we visited at assisted living facilities, respite nights for the families of disabled children, and adults and children of all ages whom we’ve visited over the last 8 years.

Butler
Shawn Luann and John Irons, Stillwater, OK
2007-9/23/16
Years of Service: 3
Butler was very gentle and could be trusted around any person, old or young, and any animals he encountered. He raised the bar on being the best dog EVER! He did his job well in being a therapy dog.

Charlie Brown
Patty Colhoun, Boothbay Harbor, ME
3/5/05-11/16/16
Years of Service: 7
A small lab with a big heart loved by young and old in Maine and The Villages, FL, where he served as a therapy and READing dog. He worked with first and second graders and in long-term care and Alzheimer’s units.

Sequin
Claudia Aschbrenner, Rockford, IL
6/2/02-9/1/16
Years of Service: 3½
Sequin served on The Caring Canines dog therapy team, SwedishAmerican Hospital. Her Corgi waddle, as she walked through the hospital, was her trademark. Sequin also served in her “senior” years assisted by a dog stroller to help her make her.

Sofia
Victoria Taylor, Reno, NV
6/9/07-9/6/16
Years of Service: 6
Sofia was a sweet girl with a fun, loving personality. She made people laugh everyday. Sofia loved life and every person and dog whom she met. When not visiting, she loved to play ball, chase critters and swim. Sofia worked until the day she died.

Zeus
Don & Donna McLean, Beaufort, SC
12/27/09-12/20/16
Years of Service: 2
Zeus was the perfect ambassador for the Doberman breed – intelligent, affectionate and sweet-tempered. Everyone who met him fell in love with him. He could not hold his “licker”! We all miss this lovely boy.

Yazz
Frances Law, Minden, NV
7/29/08-7/2016
Years of Service: 5
My heart breaks everyday for the companionship of this loving soul. He was truly one of the greats.

Holly
David & Nancy Skroko, Shorewood, IL
12/31/06-12/24/16
Years of Service: 4
Holly was a special angel. She loved going to the nursing home and always put a smile on people’s faces. Holly went everywhere with us. She will be forever missed by everyone . . . especially by us. Holly was a wonderful therapy dog and a great friend.
Maggie
June Hertzler, Madison, WI
DOB: ?-11/2016
Years of Service: 1
She was a wonderful therapy dog and is missed by many.

Karibou
Lori Johnson, Boulder, CO
5/26/01-3/4/16
Years of Service: 6
Karibou became a therapy dog after losing his two best doggy friends. He was a natural, bringing joy to hospital and hospice patients and students at a busy high school (his favorite!). Most of all, he loved his family; we will miss him always.

Alma
Susan Alderman, Silverthorne, CO
9/7/02-10/17/16
Years of Service: 9
She gave service in so many ways, both as a search and rescue avalanche dog and as a therapy dog. She was the first READ dog to serve in the schools in Summit County, Colorado. She was loved and will be missed by many.

Dorsey
Diane & Mike Roberts, Hendersonville, NC
4/7/05-10/19/16
Years of Service: 7
Erasing her racetrack trauma, our very pretty, fawn-like girl gave and received love as a "reading dog" and weekly comforter to three hospital psychiatric units.

Bear
Diane Carey, Anderson, IN
9/18/03-4/21/16
Years of Service: 11
Bear was a gift from God after the horrific loss of our German Shepherd in a fire. Bear’s gentle and sweet spirit brought joy and comfort to so many in their time of need. Losing him has left a big hole in many hearts. I miss him!

Crusher
Kathy Nilan, Palm Bay, FL
6/23/03-4/9/16
Years of Service: 11½
My dear, sweet Crusher. He was a mama’s boy, always the perfect dog; loved everyone and everything. How I miss him. Gone from this life, but forever in my heart.

Angel
Rosemary A. Condi, Jacksonville, FL
7/25/00-11/2/16
Years of Service: 9
She worked at hospice and nursing homes. She had an outgoing, loving personality, and loved visiting patients. More than 1,000 times I received sincere thank you’s for bringing her to visit. She was very much loved by all who met her.

Prince Harry
Cindy Sheffer, Spring Grove, PA
7/3/06-12/29/16
Years of Service: 8
Harry served at many nursing homes, schools, a library and a hospital. When he wasn’t giving to others, his passion was swimming. He made many hearts happy, especially mine. Thank you, Harry, for all the wonderful years you gave to all.

Charlie
Carol Luteyn, Leesburg, FL
6/21/07-11/2016
Years of Service: 6
He worked tirelessly, here and Blairsville, GA. He seemed to have empathy for his patients, giving them reason to be happy and go on living. Often called the "gentle giant," his size made it easier for those wheelchair-bound to love and hug him.

Lil’Bit
Terri J. Carruthers, Laveen, AZ
1/9/01-12/18/16

Mr. Piper
Sharyl Groscost, Lexington, SC
11/14/05-12/16/16
Years of Service: 8½
Mr. Piper embraced the virtues of the ideal therapy dog. Expressing compassion and love, he spread joy throughout his lifetime of service. Assisted living visits and weekly hospital rounds were highlights in his life — and mine, too.

Princess Chloe of Carolina
Rebecca Bass & Franklin Vandegrift, Beaufort, SC
10/15/05-12/31/16
Years of Service: 7
Chloe, was a cherished member of our family and helped train countless dogs, many of whom became therapy dogs and competition obedience dogs. She brought smiles to the elderly, Marines and wounded warriors.
Coconut
Ron, Ann, & Lexi Willis,
East Amherst, NY
4/7/06-4/11/16
Years of Service: 2

Energizer Bunny
Debbie Myers, Cochranton, PA
12/23/03-11/17/16
Years of Service: 10
Bunny was a tiny Japanese Chin. She weighed only 5 pounds and brought grace and calmness to every visit. She enjoyed visiting cancer patients and liked their gentle hugs and kisses. Her death was sudden and left a hole in our hearts.

Max
Debbie Harvey, Reno, NV
4/18/10-12/23/16
Years of Service: 3½
Max’s therapy dog work included Paws 4 Passengers, Justice Dogs, Paws 2 Read, University of Nevada-Reno, Kids Cottage and Northern Nevada Olympic Games for Special Students. Max was constantly by Debbie’s side. He will forever be in her heart.

Mac
Dale & Barbara White, Martinez, GA
Years of Service: 10
Mac brought smiles to those whom we visited at assisted living homes. She had a sweet disposition and the residents enjoyed petting her. It was wonderful seeing the connection between them.
We miss her.

Mac
Marian Kasker, Keeling, VA
Date of Death: 9/12/16
Years of Service: 3½
Mac was already an old man when I adopted him, but he had a wonderful, kind and gentle disposition. Although he visited the hospital and nursing homes, it was really the library’s reading programs he loved best, including the hugs from the kids.

Buddy
Karen Boone, Beaufort, SC
8/4/07-1/29/17
Years of Service: 2
Buddy loved everyone he met with his sweet, loving disposition. Whether visiting a nursing home or playing with children, he was always a gentleman. He loved going on adventures, especially riding in a boat and watching dolphins.

BJ
Pat Blankenship, Fredericksburg, VA
12/8/04-8/28/16
He was three pounds of joy. He loved being around people as he logged thousands of hours visiting nursing homes, the hospital or special events. Being so small, it was easy for everyone to hold and cuddle him. BJ was all about love and there’s nothing better than that.

Weirdo
Stephanie Kodis, Canton, MA
10/9/01-2/20/17
Years of Service: 3

Dexter
Samantha Glauser, Glendale, AZ
2/2/03-12/14/16
Years of Service: 5
Dexter loved his visits to two skilled nursing facilities and a crisis center to see kids at risk. He was so gentle and knew how to work those wrinkles. He was loved by all and will forever be the dog of my dreams.

Rudy
Jo Davis, Omaha, NE
5/7/06-2/11/17
Years of Service: 4
Rudy became a therapy dog after retiring from the racetrack. He was a quiet, gentlemanly soul who brought his calming and peaceful spirit to all he visited. He will always be in our hearts.

Teddy
Lynne & Lew Weiser, Langhorne, PA
2/2005-2/2017
Years of Service: 8
Our beautiful boy made everyone smile. We miss you.

Bailey
Maria Germana-Kucer, Stroudsburg, PA
3/29/05-6/6/16
Years of Service: 10
Bailey brought joy wherever she went. Patients at PMC lit up upon seeing her. During ESU finals, the students gave her hugs and belly rubs. She loved to get them. Not a day goes by that I don’t think of my baby girl – I love her forever.
Kami
Pamela & David Poisson, Farmington, ME
11/15/06-2/3/17
C.G.C. and therapy dog. He loved visiting everyone and all were his friends. Everyone loved and knew him. We will miss him forever until we all cross the Rainbow Bridge and he is waiting for us with my Dad, who passed 3 months earlier. Kami was his “best little buddy.”

Beanifred Wilhemina
Jennifer D. Lem, Cherry Hill, NJ
12/1/00-12/11/16
Years of Service: 14
Beans was innately gifted as a therapy dog and every day blessed all whom she encountered. With both keen sensitivity and confidence, this beautiful, sweet girl ministered to her family and to those she visited. Her love reached hurting hearts.

Liam
Susan Godlove, Lawton, OK
5/2006-2/27/17
Years of Service: 6
Liam was a wonderful therapy dog. I truly believe he was specifically born to be a therapy dog. His entire goal in life was to love and be loved by all. Humans were his magnet.

Strider
Mark Blair, Loveland, CO
12/2005-2/24/17
Years of Service: 6

Lucy
Tom Stewart, Broomfield, CO
2008-2/2017

Magic
Lee Cornwell, Fort Collins, CO
2/2015-12/13/16
Years of Service: 10
Magic enjoyed her therapy “job” visiting nursing homes Monday mornings. She was a therapy dog for 13 years until her arthritis prevented her from walking. She was sweet girl who loved everyone, especially her adopted sister who is also a therapy dog.

Chanel
Stewart Greenhouse, Glendale, AZ
1/2007-2/24/17
Years of Service: 9

Bo Jangles
Carol Holland, Cape Canaveral, FL
8/31/05-2/28/17
Years of Service: 2
Bo loved his job and worked at promo events, hospitals and nursing homes. His favorite was Solaris in Merritt Island, FL where he visited his friends every week. He was a lovable, polite, funny southern gentleman and will be missed by friends.

Belle
Helen Domer, Dalton, OH
1/06-3/22/17
Year of Service: 5
She was a rescue dog that my daughter got from the humane society to help with her Girl Scout Gold Award in having a therapy dog. It was love at first sight, and she was a wonderful dog for our family for the last 5 years.

Beau
Wanda & Bill Milne, Elgin, IL
3/12/03-12/8/16
Years of Service: 12¾
He was a gentle giant that always had a “barking” hello and sloppy kiss for patients and staff. He was a friend to all that knew him. He will be “Forever in Our Hearts.” We love and miss you Beau Bear!

Buster
Leland Perry, Rolla, MO
10/6/08-12/19/16

Tank
Karen Elizabeth Wotton, Orlando, FL
3/9/06-9/18/16
Years of Service: 6
Tank was a beloved therapy dog who brought hours of joy, love, humor and companionship to all those he visited. His greatest happiness in life was just “sitting a spell” with those who needed him. Our lives were better by just having you with us!
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