#### Alliance of Therapy Alliance of THERAPY DOGS NEWSMAGAZINE Spring/Summer 2025

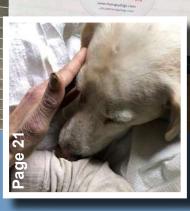
## OUT WITH THE OLD, in with the new!

Alliance of Therapy Dogs

Suite 201







#### **Magazine Editors:** Don Vaughan Jared Wadley

Graphic Designer: Courtney Roberts

#### Disclaimer

We edit your stories the best we can, but do trust our members to provide correct or verified information. We are not professional journalists or copy editors. We are volunteers. We try our best to catch errors, misspellings and incorrect information. But sometimes we err!

#### **Advertising Requirments**

Single issue, full page \$100, half page \$75, and quarter page \$50. Ad must be camera ready and submitted to ATD office no later than February 15 for the Spring/Summer issue and August 31 for the Fall/ Winter issue.

Alliance of Therapy Dogs

Newsmagazine is published two times a year. Any articles published in Alliance of Therapy Dogs newsmagazines may be reprinted with credit given to the author of the article and the statement: Reprinted with permission from Alliance of Therapy Dogs Newsmagazine (ex.: Vol. 1, Issue 2, p. 60) or whatever issue it is taken from.

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: 401 West 19th St. Suite 201 Cheyenne, WY 82001 307-432-0272 877-843-7364 (Toll Free) 307-638-2079 (Fax) Email: office@therapydogs.com Website: www.therapydogs.com

### When and How Do I Renew?

- One renewal date per household October through March registrations will renew on January 1 of each year. April through September registrations will renew on July 1 of each year.
- 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 \$15 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 \$15 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.
- Complete your review. T/Os take the T/O Review. All other members 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 or money order payable to Alliance of Therapy Dogs. 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 307-432-0272 or email us at office@therapydogs.com.

#### 2024/2025 Board of Directors

#### Officers

Don Vaughan (President) Kasson, MN 55944 donv@therapydogs.com

Cris Lewis (Vice President) Neenah, WI 54956 crisl@therapydogs.com

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Maurice Kuypers Sante Fe, NM 87505 mauricek@therapydogs.com

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Kimberly Williams (Immediate Past President) Kearney, NE 68845 kimw@therapydogs.com Alliance of Therapy Dogs

### Mission Statement

Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) is an international registry of certified therapy dog teams. We provide testing, certification, registration, support, and insurance for members who volunteer with their dogs in animal assisted activities. Our objective is to form and support our network of caring individuals and special dogs who share smiles and joy with people, young and old alike.

## **Magical Miracle Moments**

We would like to hear about the very special or "magical" moment you and your wonderful dog experienced during 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.

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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.

## OUTSTANDING MEMBER AWARD

This honor is awarded annually. Nominees must meet the following criteria:

- Must be an Alliance of Therapy Dogs member or Tester/Observer in good standing.
- Must be actively conducting pet therapy visits.
- Must never have had a verified incident/accident or complaint filed against them which resulted in action taken by ATD.
- Must have made a minimum of 25 visits during the calendar year of the nomination. Nominations must be submitted and postmarked by November 1 of the year for consideration and must be 300 to 700 words in length.
  - Nominations should include:
    - Details about the number or frequency of therapy dog visits the nominee makes.
    - Details about the nominee's impact on the community.
    - Details on whether the nominee recruits other therapy dog teams or facilities.
    - How many years the nominee has been volunteering with pet therapy and/or with Alliance of Therapy Dogs.
    - Any particular attributes that make the nominee outstanding.

The Nominating and Awards Committee will evaluate all nominations and submit the top several candidates for the Members, T/Os, and Supporting Members to vote upon to determine the winner.

Nominations must be postmarked by November 1. The Outstanding Member Award winner will be announced on December 19. If you have questions, please contact the Alliance of Therapy Dogs Office.

## Alliance of Therapy Dog

#### Are You:

An Alliance of Therapy Dogs member in good standing?
Applying to an accredited college program?

#### Yes? Apply for our scholarship today!

- Send us your application, plus
- A letter of introduction telling us about yourself
- Institution's verification of acceptance
- Copy of your current transcript (within the past 10 years)
- Two letters of recommendation from non-family members. One from a facility visited by you and your therapy dog
- 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 is February 15.

Scholarship winners will be notified by April 1. Questions? office@therapydogs.com | therapydogs.com This scholarship is awarded annually. Applicants must meet the above criteria. A portion of the scholarship is dedicated to gualified Junior Handlers.

og Smile

## Understanding Your ATD Liability Insurance Policy Webinar Recap

#### What is ATD Liability Insurance?

- General liability: \$5,000,000 per occurrence
   \$5,000,000 aggregate
- This insurance helps cover legal costs and damages, safeguarding volunteers and nonprofits from the financial strain of lawsuits.
- As our ATD Membership grows, the risk to our insurance policy grows.



#### You Are Insured When:

- You are acting as a volunteer.
- Your dog is wearing the ATD red heart tag.
- You have your ATD membership card available.
- You are following all ATD Rules and Regulations.
- You have no other organization's insurance coverage in place.



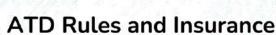
#### **Dual Membership**

- ATD allows dual membership with other organizations.
- ATD Members cannot represent ATD and another pet therapy organization that provides insurance at the same time on the same visit.
- Members are covered only when ATD is the primary insurance and no other insurance (whether from the facility or another organization) is in effect while they are visiting.



#### Understanding Your Membership Responsibility

- When you certify with ATD, you agree to abide by all ATD Rules and Regulations, including our Member Code of Ethics per your signature on the Application Form.
- Membership requires you to read and know the rules each year.
- If a claim is filed on your behalf by ATD and it is determined that you were not following the ATD rules at the time of the incident, you may be required to reimburse ATD for any monies paid out on the claim.



- Each year the Board of Directors reviews the ATD Rules and Regulations and tweaks them according to current best practices.
- Insurance reviews the changes and agrees to back the ATD Handbook.
- Exceptions and how to handle them are outlined in your ATD Member Handbook.
- Respect the partnership!



#### **Insurance at Work**

- ATD insurance only covers ATD Members when they are acting in a volunteer capacity.
- If you use your dog at work while being paid, you must purchase an additional insurance policy with another company.
- ATD insurance requires you to make and log one volunteer visit every three months to continue being an active ATD therapy dog team.





If you have any questions about your ATD liability insurance policy, please contact the ATD Office at office@therapydogs.com!

# Board Committees

**Certification (CERT):** Ensures the quality of Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) T/Os by reviewing T/O applications, developing the annual Tester/Observer Review, monitoring the T/O Egroup, advising the ATD Office on concerns regarding T/O that surface, and investigating and resolving T/O grievances. Review and approve membership applications outside the standard ATD Certification Test when there is no available T/O in the area of the prospective member. Reviews, approves and denies all concerns that fall outside the established ATD rules.

Documents (DOC): Update policies as needed. Publish all handbooks. Prepare Director biographies.

**Education (EDU):** Develop ideas for reevaluating teams, create the annual Member Review, create the Rules Review, and develop educational materials for present and prospective membership (both handlers and Tester/Observers). Assist in the development and distribution of both education and public relations information.

Develop and increase public awareness of the presence of ATD as a national registry for volunteer therapy dog teams.

**Executive:** Assist the Board of Directors of Alliance of Therapy Dogs in the orderly and fair governance of ATD by, among other things, acting on behalf of the Board within the scope of the Bylaws, conduct research to assist in strategic planning, assist in emergent and sensitive issues, and act as the Appeals Committee. Assist the ATD Office with research and investigation issues as needed.

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

**Newsmagazine:** Choose and edit submissions and design the semiannual newsmagazine.

**Nominating And Awards (N&A):** Conduct election of Officers and Board members with the assistance of the ATD Office. Set scholarship criteria and choose recipients; review and select the recipient of the annual Outstanding Member Award.



## Spring 2025 President's Message



Exciting news for the future of Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) - we moved!

ATD has experienced significant growth over the years despite minimal marketing efforts. With our membership now exceeding 19,000, the demand for a larger office space had become apparent. Our former office, a small house, lacked the capacity for our in-office personnel and supplies, making it difficult to work efficiently. Simply, we needed more space.

Last fall, we began the search for a larger office space to accommodate our growing nonprofit. At the start of February, we relocated to a new office for our expansion. The ATD Office is still located in Cheyenne, Wyoming. This move reflects our commitment to evolving and meeting the needs of our growing organization. (See page ? for photos of the move to the new location.)

#### The new physical location is:

#### Alliance of Therapy Dogs 401 West 19th St. Suite 201 Cheyenne, WY 82001

Please note: The ATD contact information (phone, fax, and P.O. Box) remains the same. Our physical Office address is the only change.

As noted in my previous President's Message, the Board voted to raise dues for 2025. This increase helps cover the increase of everyday costs, preparing for a potential move that has now taken place, and planning for the future. This decision was made to help keep ATD a premiere and financially stable therapy dog organization for years to come.

Thankfully, we are financially stable. This is huge for any organization, especially a nonprofit. The Board is evaluating the potential of purchasing a new location in 3 to 5 years. If deemed appropriate and with proper investment of the sale of the current property that housed the ATD Office and some fundraising efforts, the purchase of a new location could be done with little to no burden on our membership.

At the start of 2025, Monica Callahan stepped into a full-time position as ATD's Education and Marketing Manager. The ATD Office also added a part-time IT position in February. The Board didn't want to feel left out of the growth. Late in 2024, multiple new Directors joined the Board.

#### Please welcome:

- Keri Brammer of Lawton, Oklahoma.
- Jessica Davis of Schertz, Texas.
- Andy Germann of Haslet, Texas.
- Betsy Richardson of Stuart, Florida.
- Jamie Smith of Phoenix, Arizona.

Jim Hepner of Sanbury, Pennsylvania, was also elected to the Board. Due to personal reasons, Jim has since stepped down from the Board. We thank him for his time and service while on the Board.

The new Directors are a welcome addition to the Board of Directors, and all have been hard at work for ATD. It's an honor to have them join the Board.

New this year, the ATD Office published an Annual Impact Report. The report can be viewed and downloaded on ATD's website at https://www. therapydogs.com/members-therapy-dogs/. It's a nice snapshot of the past year of where we have been, where we are and where we are going. I recommend giving it a look. It's well done.

Thank you for choosing ATD as your certifying therapy dog organization. We are extremely grateful for our Members, Tester/Observers, and those who have supported us over the years and will continue to do so.

Continue sharing smiles and joy!

## ATTENTION TESTER/OBSERVERS

Have you ever considered joining the Board of Directors?

The ATD Board is an active working board, not simply an advisory board, and is responsible for implementing the strategy and policies of our organization. The anticipated volunteer commitment by each successful applicant includes:

- 10-15 hours per week.
- In-person attendance at the multi-day Annual Board Meeting in July each year.
- Virtual attendance at a one-day Mid-year Board Meeting.
- Review and respond to emails within three business days.

#### Would you like to help Alliance of Therapy Dogs continue to grow and develop?

- Do you have ideas for the future?
- Do you have time to help with organizational and committee operations?
- Do you have professional skills that could assist ATD?

#### Did you answer yes?

If you are a Tester/Observer, we would love you have you apply to be elected to the Board of Directors.

If you are interested in applying, please contact the ATD Office. When there is an opening, an announcement will be made via the T/O Egroup and an email blast.

307-432-0272 or 877-843-7364 • office@therapydogs.com www.therapydogs.com

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## ATD Merchandise

Members may purchase the following items from Alliance of Therapy Dogs. If you would like to place an order, you can scan the QR Code or go to: www.atdmerch.myshopify.com/ If you have not yet set up your Shopify account, please email office@therapydogs.com to request an invite.







of There





ATD tags, vests, collars, ties, leashes, bandanas, and more!



Members may purchase the following items from ATD. We also provide giveaway items for booths or events! Email office@therapydogs.com to request free items for your next event.











Bookmarks, magnets, notecards, stickers, pins, patches, and more!

## ATD Clothing from Custom Ink

Please note: There are print minimums on orders. Merchandise will print and ship approximately every 2 weeks. Custom Ink will let you know printing estimates as you complete your order.

ven's Quarter Zip Sweatshirt

\$60.00



ATD updates the offerings in the Custom Ink store to include new and seasonal items.

Visit https://stores.customink.com/atd

## Spotlight

Margaret May, Director Thornton, CO

#### What led you to choose your dogs' breed?

My involvement with therapy dogs began in 2001 with Beau, a rescued Lab mix. After his passing, I adopted another rescue, Lulu, but she wasn't suited for therapy work. This experience, coupled with an encounter with a sweet Golden Retriever in Georgia, reignited my interest. Following my move to Colorado in 2018, I obtained a male Golden Retriever from a breeder. My daughter Katya named him Beau, after our first beloved dog. His exceptional temperament inspired me to get another Golden from the same breeder in 2021, whom I named Rudy. I dedicated myself to training both dogs from puppyhood until they successfully achieved their therapy dog certifications.

#### Where do you visit?

In Georgia, my first Beau and I volunteered at a nursing home and my daughter's school. Currently, I bring Beau (#2) and Rudy (individually, of course) to two local hospitals and a nursing home. In the past, we volunteered at the airport and in hospice. Recently, I signed up to bring one of my boys to a local school.

#### What prompted you to volunteer for therapy dog work? What challenges, if any, happened as you embarked on this effort?

Relocating from New Jersey to Georgia in the early 2000s, I sought volunteer opportunities. Inspired by my parents, Ed and Maggie, I pursued therapy dog work. My father, afflicted with Alzheimer's, and my mother, a stroke survivor, resided together in a Pennsylvania nursing home. Limited by distance, I wanted to volunteer at a local Georgia nursing home in their honor.

My first Beau, a 90-pound dog, required a year of training before we were able to be certified with a local group. We joined a second local group which eventually disbanded, leading us to join a national organization. We volunteered until Beau's passing. Upon relocating to Colorado, I renewed my commitment to therapy dog volunteering.

#### What motivates you to do what you do?

The most rewarding aspect of this work is witnessing the smiles it brings to others. Whether it's the staff greeting us warmly in the hallway or the patients and their visitors beaming from their rooms, the positive impact is undeniable.

## Is there a special therapy moment that resonates with you?

A particularly poignant memory involves a resident at the nursing home who requested our presence during his insulin injection before lunch. Tears welled in his eyes as he gently stroked Beau while the nurse administered the shot. Afterward, he expressed gratitude to both of us. I can still visualize that visit.

## What's one tip that you frequently share with new teams?

Remember: your dog's well-being is extremely important. Pay close attention to any signs of stress. If your dog appears uncomfortable, prioritize their safety and end the visit.

## As a new Board Member, is there something you want to tackle during your tenure?

Among the various therapy dog organizations I've volunteered with over the years, ATD is the best. Driven by a desire to contribute to my experience as a Handler and Tester/Observer, I joined the Board. My background in IT also allows me to assist with modernizing our forms, processes, and so forth. I'm eager to lend my expertise wherever it's needed to support ATD's mission.

## If you weren't volunteering for ATD, what would you be doing?

I'd likely explore other volunteer opportunities within the community or simply enjoy more leisurely pursuits, such as reading or listening to podcasts, always with my dogs by my side.

#### Do you have a personal motto?

Inspired by Charles Schulz's timeless quote, 'Happiness is a warm puppy,' I believe therapy dogs bring an unparalleled sense of joy. Let's share this gift with others by volunteering with our canine companions.

## Tidbits

#### A Successful Therapy Dog Visit Starts with You!

Therapy dog visits can be a great way to brighten someone's day. The magical effect dogs have on humans is undeniable, but we cannot forget about the other end of the leash. The handler is a big part of a successful therapy dog visit. In order for therapy dogs to do their job well, it is important that handlers are prepared and proactive. Here are 5 steps to having a successful visit:

#### 1. Establish a Routine

Both dogs and humans do well with routine. This also applies to therapy dog visits. Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) requires teams to make and log at least 1 volunteer visit every 3 months in their ATD Portal. By making and logging frequent visits, your dog stays active and knows what to expect. When your dog knows what to expect on visits, they will be more comfortable and engaged with those they are visiting.

#### 2. Bring Your Required Gear

Make sure you are prepared for your visit by bringing the required gear. ATD requires Members to have the following gear while on a visit: a 4-foot (or shorter) leash, a red heart tag, and your dog's current vet records. The red heart tag can be attached to a collar, a harness, or the leash. By making sure your gear is ATD approved, you will not have to worry whether your visit is covered under ATD insurance or not.

#### 3. Know Your Environment

Therapy dog visits are always changing and this is why it is important to stay alert and proactive. At the end of the day, our therapy dogs are still animals, and it only takes a

split second for something to happen. It can be easy to get caught up in routines and become complacent. Maintaining control of our dog's head is one of the most important parts of keeping everyone safe on a therapy dog visit. There is no such thing as a bombproof dog.

#### 4. Watch Your Dog's Body Language

One of the most important parts of a successful therapy dog visit is knowing your dog's body language. As your dog's advocate, they should always be your first priority on a therapy dog visit. If your dog looks uncomfortable, it is important that you remove them from the situation. Sometimes this may mean telling someone they cannot pet your dog at the moment.

Signs of stress may look a little different in every dog. It is important to learn how your dog communicates these feelings to you. Our goal, as successful therapy dog handlers, is to be proactive and catch stressful situations before they occur. This builds our dog's trust in us as handlers.

#### 5. Know Your ATD Member Handbook

Facilities require teams to be certified because of insurance coverage. ATD provides a \$5 million liability policy while on volunteer visits. However, teams are only covered by this policy if they are following the rules set forth by ATD and their insurance company. This is why it is important to stay up to date on ATD Rules and Regulations and make sure you are following them while on facility property. ATD provides a physical handbook every year to their teams around November and you can also find the ATD Handbook on the ATD website.

These 5 steps will help you and your dog continue bringing smiles and joy to those you visit. Establishing a routine, making sure you are bringing the required gear, and knowing your ATD Member Handbook Rules and Regulations are a big part of being a successful therapy dog team. When you stay proactive, control your dog's head, and follow your dog's body language, you will keep those you visit and your dog safe. If you ever have a question about a specific rule, the ATD Office is always willing to answer any questions you may have. The ATD Office can be reached at 307-432-0272 or **Office@** therapydogs.com.



Scan for the ATD Handbook or to learn more about the Alliance of Therapy Dogs



The easiest way to donate is to go to our website **therapydogs.com** and click on the gold "DONATE" button in the upper right-hand corner.

The Donate button will give you the option to:

🖀 Donate one-time

🕁 Donate monthly

Donate once a month by rounding up on purchases you make to a debit/ credit card you link to the donation page

#### A Donate "in memory" or "in honor" of someone

You can also support Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) by donating to ATD's Endowment. The ATD Board of Directors approved and established an endowment to ensure that ATD will have the foundation and funds to continue to support its volunteers for decades to come across our vast service area of the USA, Canada and Puerto Rico. This endowment is set up to accept donations from all over the world and in various forms, from cash and securities to real estate. Please contact the ATD Office if you have questions or if you would like to learn more about donating or about updating your estate plans to include Alliance of Therapy Dogs.

> You are also welcomed to donate by mailing a check or money order to: **Alliance of Therapy Dogs** P.O. Box 20227 Chevenne, WY 82003

Thank you for the ongoing support of our organization. \* ATD will place all donations received into the general fund unless otherwise specified by the donor.

Issue 1, Volume 20, 2025

## 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) will not be published. To be certain, please refer to your member handbook or look up the guidelines online.
- d. Besides being a member in good standing, the story should have taken place within the past year (except for certain instances, such as a pandemic) and not focus on a dog's retirement or death. Background information and stating that a dog has retired or has died is acceptable. Please see "Retires" and "Rainbow Bridge" for more details.

#### 2. Photos

- a. Photos of non-members MUST be accompanied by a signed photo release or we cannot publish them. (Click on the Digital Authorization Form link at https://www.therapydogs.com/ members-therapy-dogs/)
- 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. Dogs 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. Send electronic submissions to office@therapydogs.com. Hard copies mail to ATD, PO Box 20227, Cheyenne, WY 82003



## 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 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.

Following one year of service, patches are offered in five-year increments thereafter. If you would like a service patch, please order at https://atdmerch.myshopify.com/.

## **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 (T/O).

T/Os are role models for Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) 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.

The main purpose of the T/O role is to assess the skills of teams seeking certification and coach prospective and current members. The T/O provides constructive and encouraging feedback that helps teams (both the handler and the dog) improve their skills and confidence in providing animal-assisted activities or therapy. ATD has the following expectations of its T/Os:

- Abide by the ATD and T/O Code of Ethics.
- Be a role model and follow all current ATD rules and guidelines as an example to handlers and prospective members.
- Review the Member Handbook and Tester/Observer Handbook yearly and incorporate any changes into their practices.
- Follow current Certification Guidelines as outlined in the Tester/Observer Handbook.
- Coach prospective and existing members on following all current ATD rules. Do not criticize them but inform them so they understand ATD rules and guidelines and have the opportunity to make changes. If coaching is ignored, contact the ATD Office for guidance.

In addition, 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:

- Interaction on various levels with a 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.
- Training dogs for performance venues such as obedience, agility or herding.
- Reading a variety of books by animal trainers and behaviorists and/or attending seminars on training and behaviors.
- Experience in teaching or assisting in teaching dog training classes.
- Fostering and rehoming dogs.

There are additional abilities that may qualify you as well, so please contact the ATD 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!



## HOT CHOCOLATE FOR EVERYONE

Having my dog by my side is like always having a cup of hot chocolate within reach. Warm and comforting. A path to well-being, clarity, relaxation and sanity. The healing and joy a dog can bring is nothing short of a miracle. Sometimes it's just a simple touch or stroke, and sometimes just being in a dog's presence does the trick.

We don't always understand it, but we know the doghuman connection is bona fide. We seem to crave it and sometimes we have the opportunity to bring this gift to others. It's a true privilege to do so. Handlers and therapy dogs have an incredible bond and trust in each other.

This morning started as a wet, rainy, mess of a day. Our event was to be outside, and I was hoping all our teams would show. They did. We were hoping to bring some smiles to children at a facility for at-risk youth. To break up a gloomy day for these children seemed extra special. Honestly, though, I wasn't sure what the young residents would think.

When the door opened, there were looks of anticipation followed by smiles then excitement seemed to flood through the gates. The first thing I heard were squeals of joy and the smiles on their faces were priceless as if it were Christmas morning. The kids and the dogs were immediately engaged. It was genuine and heartfelt by kids, dogs and handlers alike. They were so happy to have the opportunity to get to know the dogs, soon picking their favorites, and to learn about therapy work. They had many questions for us and wanted to know everything about the dogs, from breed to age, to what kind of work they do. The kids pleaded with us to come for another visit "real soon." "When can you come back?" was heard throughout the visit.

Today wasn't a "life changer" but a "day changer" for a group of kids who have seen some hard times. How amazing is it that a dog can change the course of a given moment, hour, day or life?

Bridget Wolf, Calabash, NC





Each year, Members nominate other Members for the Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) Outstanding Member Award. The ATD Nominating and Awards Committee narrowed it down to 3 finalists and ATD Members cast their votes to select the winner.

We are proud to announce the 2024 OMA winner is:

#### **Forrest and Pat Hamilton**

This enthusiastic husband and wife team from New Carlisle, Ohio, have been ATD Members since 2007, handling four ATD certified dogs with their fifth dog soon joining the action. Forrest became a Tester/Observer (T/O) in 2010 and has tested hundreds of pet therapy teams with Pat organizing the testing schedule and observations. They both make sure the paperwork gets done properly with new handlers - so it is truly a team effort! He strives to help others better themselves, and she makes everyone feel comfortable and at ease. They have mentored new T/Os all while being active in their local pet therapy group serving in several officer positions for Best Friends Assisted Pet Therapy. Their goal has been to make ATD and their local group accessible to many people.

Pat and Forrest visit local retirement homes, hospitals, cancer centers and schools with their dogs. Both also participate in reading and reward programs at libraries and take their dog to local universities to provide stress relief for students and staff. But it doesn't stop there. Forrest and Pat do presentations for elementary students about dog safety and pet therapy. Health fairs, information booths, street fairs and recreational events are also part of more community service they participate in with their therapy dogs.

The expertise and knowledge of both Forrest and Pat have been instrumental in developing responsible therapy dog teams. They simply love dog therapy and believe the world would be a better place if we all were better humans for each other and for our furry friends.







#### **Other finalists:**

#### **Robert Judice**

An ATD Member since 2022, Robert hails from Canton, Georgia, where he has also been a T/O since 2023, mentoring many new therapy dog teams with his knowledge and compassion. Robert is described as a "giver," enriching his community with his selfless time devoted to doing therapy dog visits multiple times a week. He visits with his dogs Baron and Greyson at fairs, farmers markets, parades, hospitals, nursing homes, fire stations, libraries, colleges and airports.

Robert was asked to bring his therapy dog to Apalachee High School for opening day after a mass shooting occurred. He made arrangements for several therapy dog teams and himself to provide the desperately needed support for students that day as well as at the counseling center before opening day.

He has also developed several programs for local therapy dog teams to get involved with such as leash-making (the leashes are then given to animal control agencies), an instructional program for children called "May I Pet Your Dog," and a red carpet event at a local nursing home where residents vote for best costumes on the therapy dogs. A therapy dog program at the Forsyth School District was implemented with staff as a result of Robert's efforts to establish the policies they needed to function effectively, while he also guided the testing of the dogs and their owners.

Robert has also encouraged, assisted and mentored new therapy dog handlers when they have difficulties finding a place to visit. He is quick to take them under his wing and introduce them to local hospitals, libraries and schools for visits. There isn't a day that goes by that Robert isn't thinking of others and coming up with ideas to help and promote ATD.

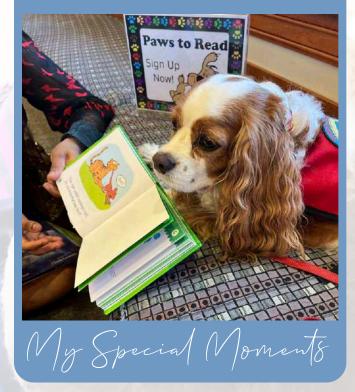
#### **Ellen and Howard Porter**

The dynamic duo of Ellen and Howard Porter of Linwood, New Jersey, have been ATD Members for more than 25 years. Ellen has been a T/O for ATD since 2013, sending out a monthly visitation list for those working towards their ATD certification and others already certified. Howard trained hunting dogs and K9s for the local police force.

Howard and Ellen are involved with community outreach with their ATD dogs at the local zoo for Dream Night, a special needs event, as well as visiting with the National Guard for service members in need of some relaxation and extra TLC from their therapy dogs. The couple also sponsors an annual Christmas Parade and were involved in developing Laddie's Legacy, a project which is now an entire dog day event that raises funds for people unable to afford veterinary treatment for their pets.

They both meet and greet people who need a little extra TLC several times a month with their therapy dogs. During the visits, they will often give a mini demonstration of dog obedience to folks, bringing smiles to all who are watching. They strive to help others develop a positive relationship with their canine family members.





Hello, my name is Britan, but my AKC name is Dakota's Discover the Magic. I am not sure why my mom decided on the name Britan. Maybe it is because most Cavaliers came from Great Britain.

I just had my birthday, November 6, and I am now nine years old. I thought this would be a good time to talk about some of the special moments that I have had being a therapy dog for over seven years.

First, I want to tell you how I got chosen to be a therapy dog.

My mom wanted a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel and found a breeder in Lula, Georgia. Mom told the breeder that she wanted a dog to become a therapy dog. The breeder said she had two little boys whose father was a therapy dog, and that mom should look at them. So, Mom picked me and went on to train me for therapy work. We now work as a team.

Second, let me tell you about the many wonderful experiences I've had as a therapy dog. I have been to Charlotte Airport, Winthrop University, Mint Hill Middle School, Walton Woods Assisted Living Facility, Matthews Public Library, and the New Hope Residential Center for teens. Each week my mom and I make our visits a priority.

One of my special residents at the assisted living home was a 100-year-old woman who smiled when we entered her room. She would always ask my mom what treats I liked. We told her sweet potato treats. Then she wanted to know how she could make them. Most of the time she would be relaxing in a recliner when we entered her room, and I would want to jump right up and gently lie down next to her. My mom would help me get onto her recliner and carefully hold my leash and make sure I was properly positioned, keeping the lady's safety a priority. Oh, how she loved our visits. At the lady's 100th birthday party at the facility, we gave her pictures of her and me as a gift. My mom put them in her room. But one day, during COVID-19 pandemic, she passed. We miss her. I didn't get to say goodbye.

Another important event that I took part in was the airport's Canine Crew. I helped people feel calmer about flying. Wow, that was a big job for little me. My mom had to stand with me for two hours while many people stopped to pet me. I wore a vest that said, "pet me," and that was what they did. There were grownups, flight attendants, and families who stopped by during the time we were there. I loved the children most of all. I was a hit. But I must say that my mom and I were tired at the end of that day.

Then, I enjoyed going to a middle school where the class was happy to meet me. These children had special needs, and I was the highlight of their day. I was very understanding of their needs and stayed calm for them to pet me. There usually was a group of children gathered around me, asking questions about me and my mom answered them.

I also went to a big college campus and met the students at a time when they were stressed for their finals. I think I would have been stressed then, too, if I were a student and had to take exams. I remember when I had to pass the Canine Good Citizen test prior to beginning the therapy assessment and supervised visits. I know a little about stress too. Other therapy dogs were at the university too, and the students went around to each of us. So much fun!

Some of my visits were more challenging because I brought a last smile to someone transitioning to their resting place. The families were grateful for my presence. I helped, in a small way, for them to say goodbye to their loved one. It was sad and I was sad too.

Everywhere I go with my mom people want to pet me; and of course, when she says yes, I am ready.

My mom and I have had many valuable experiences. I am still bringing smiles and joy to many and will continue to do so.

Being a therapy dog is both fun and fulfilling.

Barbara Peters, Alpharetta, GA



Photo: Briggs, while at Brown Plus Accounting for Bring Your Child to Work Day, visiting with Megan Grim with her children Carter and Regan Grim.

### DETECTIVE K9 BRIGGS ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY AND INTERVENTION

As her handler, I am blessed as she shares with me the connection perfection she has with people of all ages. As my Search and Rescue and Criminal Investigation partner, it became known that her ability extended beyond her nose. She knew if a missing person needed her at the end of a search, she was aware of a runaways' stress and in tune with the first responder who needed comforted when the task was tough.

In 2017, we had her certified as a therapy dog through ATD. Currently, she visits an Elementary School weekly, connecting with staff and students throughout the building but focusing on young students with autism. On the opposite end of life's stages, she spends time at a nursing home each week visiting the bedridden, assisting with hospice care and loving time with many of the residents. Teens are a big part of her week, as well, as she is at a youth development

lock-down residential center.

Many businesses have had her in for employee wellness days and Bring Your Child to Work Day. She has been with the National Guard at Fort Indiantown Gap and attended city police neighborhood events. High school and college classes, along with civic organization meetings, have found her enjoying each and every person.

2024 was a wonderful year for her. She received the Meritorious Service Award from the American Bloodhound Club. This award is given every two years to a bloodhound. Criteria for this award shall be the performance of extraordinary service to the community by a purebred bloodhound. This service must be in the areas of volunteer search and rescue, law enforcement work, therapy work, or any other form of service achievement.

Through the American Kennel Club, she earned the title Distinguished Therapy Dog (THDD). What amazes me about Briggs is this is "her." I did not train her for this. With the bloodhound, when utilized for tracking the missing and the wanted, we encourage independence. They are good at what they do because they are bred to be independent. Too much obedience can be an issue affecting their scenting ability. She, when scenting, is far from calm. Place her with people, she becomes calm immediately and focused with caring connection. I only contribute in two ways: I drive her to her stops and hold the leash to obey the rules. The rest she does on her own. As the ATD Office stated, "born to be a therapy dog" when they viewed the picture with a mom and her precious children.





#### **Editor's Correction**

The two photos on page 27 of the print edition of the 2024 Fall/Winter Newsmagazine did not go with the story headlined "Peyton's Miracle Moment." This is the correct photo of Shaun Suller and his dog Peyton of Las Vegas, Nevada.



A therapy dog at Cheshire Medical Center, the Cheshire County Department of Corrections, local colleges, and assisted living facilities, Snow White has come a long way from Arkansas where the Lucky Pup Rescue almost missed out on this special girl. There was no more room at the inn - in this case the van. That is until they noticed that this white Yellow Lab mix was running after the van. The problem of too many animals was debated while Snow continued to chase the van. Looking out the window was this dog who wouldn't stop the running. Taking her in and calling her Snow White, little did they know that making room for one more dog really meant 12 when she delivered 11 puppies. Imagine bottle feeding 11 newborns because Snow was in no shape for nursing. Running for these pups was about all she could do. All 11 puppies were given Disney names to go with the Snow White theme. They grew up and were adopted out much quicker than mom, who needed several years of rehab and exposure to indoor living. We were lucky to be able to adopt this sensitive, gentle and intuitive canine, especially since the foster family who was in love with Snow. They would have kept her to themselves if our family hadn't passed their standards of how much love was waiting for her at our home. And we are grateful for her!

#### Rosemary Weidner, Dublin, NH

## **Midyear Board Meeting**



On February 26, 2025, the Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) Board of Directors, along with Executive Director Amy Brockel, met all day via Zoom for the Midyear Board Meeting. Besides focusing on strategic planning, it was the first opportunity for all the Board to gather and meet each other since adding multiple new Directors.

## **Read All About It**

A laid-back gentleman with a muscular build and a magnetic personality could easily apply to a number of celebrities. Sylvester Stallone and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson come to mind. But in the dog show world, it describes Rufus, a happy, well-behaved male Bullmastiff who was invited to The National Dog Show's annual photoshoot in Manhattan this past September. A cascade of great experiences followed.

In the show ring, Rufus is Grand Champion Gold T-Boldt's Read All About It. Outside of his work in the show ring, he's also a therapy dog with a heart of gold. So, the intersection between The National Dog Show and the opportunity to become a member of The National Dog Show Therapy Dog Ambassador Team was perfect for him. David Frei, the co-host of NBC's annual Thanksgiving Day broadcast, is a strong advocate of therapy dog service, and the exposure to David enhanced my experience and my perspective on our efforts. David took a personal interest in Rufus and his move from the show ring towards his new career. We were part of a successful Therapy Dog Ambassador event in Conshohocken, Pennsylvania, and participated in The National Dog Show Therapy Dog Symposium at Rowan University in December. The scientific proof for dog-assisted therapy was on full display at the Symposium, and I knew that I'd chosen the right path for Rufus.

The photo shoot in Manhattan launched our journey with The National Dog Show and was much grander than we anticipated. Rufus' handler, Dennis Collins, brought him to the shoot. What we thought would result in a "team photo" included photos and videos with Frei and John O'Hurley (Frei's co-host of The National Dog Show) as well as a "Rocky" impersonator representing the Sylvester Stallone character. Those special photos are now being used to promote the newly minted Philadelphia tourism program based on the movie and include the Bullmastiff "Butkus" character. Through it all, Rufus was perfectly behaved, meeting new people and letting his personality shine through.

Dennis Collins showed Rufus at The National Dog Show, but they did not advance to the Group Ring. However, the big wins for us were the experiences leading up to the show and interacting with the hundreds of people who wanted to learn about dogs like Rufus. We enjoyed some great moments at the RockyFest booth, telling the "Butkus" story and getting loads of attention from people that Rufus had never met before. The Therapy Dog Ambassador Team booth was also special as we had a chance to watch several other team members work with the people who dropped by.

Rufus has a magnetic personality. People wanted to touch him, ask questions, and take pictures. One of the benefits of a benched show like the National Dog Show is all the people you meet.

The momentum that began with the photoshoot will continue with Rufus' therapy dog visits. So far, we have learned how extremely popular The National Dog Show program is in retirement communities, schools and with the public. Wherever we go, Rufus makes quite an enthusiastic entrance. Rufus is a champion, great companion, and an ambassador for Bullmastiffs. Recent experiences have brought us together closer than ever.

As a Bullmastiff, Rufus already has a big head, but it doesn't seem that the extra attention has spoiled him in any way.

#### Mike Devine, Malvern, PA



### We mov

There was no more space for storage at the old office.

A lot of unpacking was needed.

In January 2025, Alliance of Therapy Dogs signed a lease to move into a new, larger office in downtown Cheyenne, Wyoming. Packing and preparation for the move was immediate, as the new lease started Feb. 1. Staff was able to move a few items right away, while the big

move happened on Feb. 3 with movers. Since the new office already had a number of desks, chairs and storage cabinets, the majority of the items needing to be moved were boxes and shelving.



from a temporary cubicle during the move. This space is now ATD's new conference room.

New conference room.



Round Image: Executive Director Amy Brockel and Board President Don Vaughan in the lobby of the new office.







Member Service Representative Sara Harris settling into her new cubicle space before the movers started unloading at the new office.



Issue 1, Volume 20, 2025



## **Ripples of Compassion: Moosh's Healing Presence**

Moosh became a certified therapy dog in 2017, but his work started long before that. From puppyhood, he's had an uncanny ability to sense who needed him most. Whether it's a child hesitant to reach out or an elderly person sitting quietly in the corner, Moosh always finds his way to them, offering his steady presence without expectation. When we officially joined Alliance of Therapy Dogs, it simply put a name to what he had already been doing all along connecting, comforting, and quietly making the world a softer place.

His certification opened doors for us, allowing us to visit hospice clients, schools, and assisted living facilities. But it's been never about the places - it's about the people. And more often than not, Moosh has a way of deciding exactly where we need to be.

Moosh walks into the common area of an assisted living facility, his black tri-colored coat gleaming under the soft lighting. He moves through the group of residents gathered for a therapy dog visit, pausing to greet outstretched hands and leaning into familiar faces. But then, he stops - his deep brown eyes locking onto a woman seated slightly apart from the others. She is frail. Her hands resting lightly on the arms of her wheelchair. Her face calm but watchful. Without hesitation, Moosh steps toward her, bypassing the others, and settles by her side as if he has always belonged there. She reaches for him, fingers threading gently through his fur, and smiles. "He came straight to me," she says, her voice touched with wonder. "Would you visit me again sometime?"

The following week, we return, just the three of us. She is waiting, her eyes brighter than before. Her hands steady as they stroke Moosh's thick coat. What begins as a simple visit soon becomes a ritual, a bond that stretches far beyond what either of us could have imagined. Week after week, Moosh and I come to see her, through changing seasons and shifting regulations, even as the world outside turns uncertain. As the pandemic locks doors and isolates so many, Moosh remains a constant presence in her life, his quiet companionship bridging the distance when so much else is forced apart.

In the quiet of those visits, as Moosh lay at her feet or rested his head on her lap, I began to see how far his presence could reach. He wasn't just bringing comfort to one person - he was shifting the space around him, opening doors I hadn't even realized were there.

One afternoon, in the halls of that assisted living facility, we met April, the coordinator of another senior community in a nearby town. She watched Moosh and asked if we would consider visiting her residents, too. And so, just like that, a new therapy dog program was born - one that would outlast our original friendship and extend Moosh's gentle impact far beyond what I had imagined. More ripples in our sea of community.

Even after our friend passed, Moosh continues to bring comfort in ways I could never have orchestrated on my own. During one of our visits, a woman stopped me in the hallway, her face lighting up with recognition. "This is Moosh, isn't it?" she said. "My mother has been telling me about him." As she knelt to greet him, she asked about getting her own dog certified, inspired by the connection her mother had formed with Moosh. A few months later, we stood together her final evaluation with me as her T/O, thrilled to welcome her as a newly certified Alliance of Therapy Dogs team. Since then, she and her dog have visited four more facilities, touching countless lives - and, in turn, inspiring two more teams to step forward and be tested. Moosh's presence had set something in motion, something that continued to ripple outward, long after that first moment when he quietly chose our friend on a group visit and changed both of our lives.

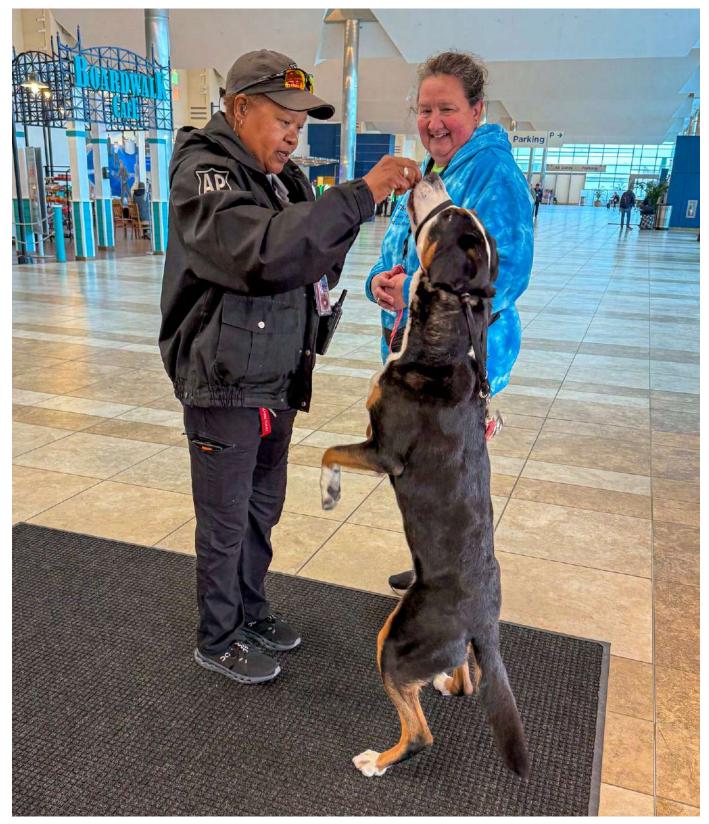
Over the years, Moosh and I have tested more than 50 therapy dog teams together as a Tester/Observer team for ATD, each one creating its own ripple effect in the community. Some handlers have dreamed of doing therapy work for years, while others were inspired by a single moment - like meeting Moosh on a visit or hearing about the comfort he had brought to someone they love. Every evaluation as a T/O has felt like an extension of his work, a way for him to quietly guide new teams into the world of therapy dog visits. One of the most rewarding connections we've made was with Hallie and her Labrador, Grove. From the moment we met them at their evaluations, it was clear that Grove had the same quiet intuition Moosh possessed - a gentle, knowing presence that put people at ease. Hallie and Grove have become a dedicated therapy dog team, visiting schools, libraries, government offices, and senior homes with the same warmth and kindness that Moosh had modeled. And in time, they took the next step, becoming testers themselves. Now, they are the ones evaluating and mentoring new teams, continuing the cycle that Moosh helped set in motion.

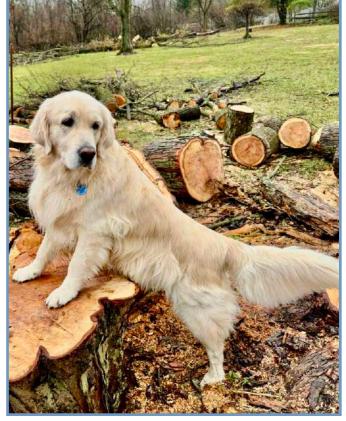
At 12 and a half years old, Moosh has slowed down, but his love for therapy work hasn't faded. He still gets excited when he sees his vest, still wags his tail at the mention of his favorite elder friends. The visits are shorter now - he tires more easily. I watch him carefully for signs that it's time to head home. Even in these briefer moments, his impact is undeniable. He settles beside an old friend, rests his head on a familiar lap, and sighs contentedly. His work isn't about how long he stays - it's about the connection he makes in the time he is there. The ripple effect he's had on our local therapy dog community and those we volunteer with has been undeniably vast and profound.

Elise Mebel, Atascadero, CA



This photo has been staged by ATD Members. Can you find what's wrong with this photo? See Page 32 for the answers.





## Following the Path of the Pawed

He came into the room loud, making a sound I had never heard before.

Angel and I were at a school, waiting in an open doorway to meet someone. Several kids had already walked by, gasping when they saw her - glossy white, with feathering that rivaled the gilded. Some dared to wiggle their fingers at her, even reaching out for a quick pet.

Then, a young boy, maybe 10, burst in, buzzing with energy, his voice still loud as a teacher followed closely behind. I always like to teach kids how to properly meet a new animal, but before I could speak, the teachers interjected with urgency.

"He is nonverbal. He is nonverbal!" Geez, I thought, I almost quieted a nonverbal child when it had taken all his courage to make that sound. I know nothing sometimes.

"God," I whispered, "You don't call the prepared; You prepare the called."

I paused trying to gauge my next steps. My priority in a therapy setting is always Angel, so I quickly assessed her response to the boy's sounds and movements. She was calm - tail up, swishing like a steady metronome. A polite smile stretched across her face, not the full open-mouthed kind that meant excitement, but the quiet, reassuring kind. Her soft eyes locked onto the boy; head slightly turned in curiosity. She was a statue, all four paws planted, her stillness a silent invitation.

The boy danced toward her, stretching out his hand to touch her nose - then flitted back, bouncing away with a giggle, as if he had scared himself half to death. The teachers encouraged him.

"Touch her. You can do it. She is so soft." He took a few wide, thoughtful steps around her, considering a safer approach, but quickly realized there wasn't one. Back at the front, he gathered himself and lunged forward again, this time managing half a finger on her nose before darting back. Angel stood patiently, unwavering, giving him every chance to build his courage.

"You can do it," I encouraged. "She is waiting to meet you."

Then, in a flash, he moved forward again - this time, three full fingers on her nose. The contact lasted barely a second before he pulled away. But his grin lasted much longer.

Success hung in the air, weightier than words. Angel is sometimes the first dog a child ever touches. She seems to know this and knows just what it takes. Because sometimes, the path forward isn't taught, it is followed.

The path of the pawed.

#### Terry Calico, Germantown, OH



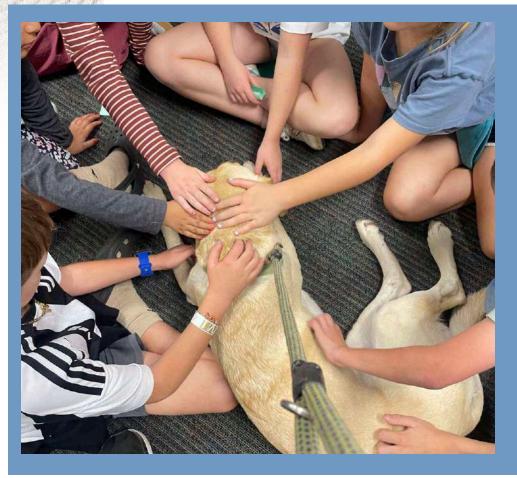
## Finding Our Calling: Grove's Journey from Service Dog to Therapy Dog

When I first welcomed Grove into my life as a puppy raiser, I thought she was on the path to becoming a service dog through Canine Companions for Independence (CCI). But life had other plans. Due to medical reasons, Grove was career-changed before completing her training. While I didn't know what the future held for us at the time, I quickly realized that this change was not an ending; it was the start of something incredible. Grove had been put on this earth to be a gift to one person, to change one person's life. And since that could no longer be the case, I felt compelled to make her a gift to many.

Just after Grove's first birthday, we took a big step together: testing to become a therapy dog team with Alliance of Therapy Dogs. After becoming certified and a year of visiting schools, libraries, and assisted living homes, I knew Grove was a natural. I then took things a step further. I became a Tester/ Observer for ATD to help other teams begin their own therapy dog journeys.

Since becoming an official therapy team, Grove and I have found so many ways to give back to our community. One of our favorite visits is to special needs classrooms, where the students light up when they see Grove walk through the door. Grove connects with kids and brings them fun and comfort. Each week, we also participate in the Read to Rover program at the San Luis Obispo Public Library, where kids practice reading aloud to Grove without any pressure or judgment. Grove is so popular with the kids at the library that her reading hour has become the most well attended in our county. At the local assisted living homes, we spend time with residents who look forward to Grove's visits as much as she does.

Another rewarding component of this journey has been organizing therapy dog visits to San Luis Obispo



County government offices. I know firsthand how stressful public service jobs can be, and it's amazing to see the impact Grove has on employees who just need a moment to unwind. Watching Grove work her magic in so many different settings has shown me how powerful the human-animal bond can be.

Looking back, I never could have predicted this path for us, but I wouldn't change a thing. Grove may not have become a service dog, but she has found her true calling—and so have I. Being a therapy dog team and helping others become one has been an incredibly rewarding experience. The ability to work and live with a dog as amazing as Grove is more than I could have ever dreamed of. I can't wait to see where this journey takes us next.

#### Hallie Webster, San Luis Obispo, CA Elise Mebel, Atascadero, CA



**Dogs in the News**\_

## Have your furry friends been in the news? We'd love to hear about it.

To submit your news, check out the guidelines on page 11.



Joey, a 10-year-old goldendoodle, was featured in the Asheville, N.C., -based Stroll Magazine - December issue, entitled "Joey Offers Comfort to Kids." In September 2024, many areas of Asheville and western North Carolina were impacted by Hurricane Helene, resulting in landslides, heavy flooding and wind damage. Joey made many post-storm visits to the local YMCA and an after-school children's center. He provided comfort to children and families struggling with emotional recovery. His calming presence helped alleviate anxiety, foster a sense of security and rebuild trust in a disrupted environment. Joey helped restore a sense of normalcy and healing. Joey, an active ATD member for 6 years, loves spreading joy and happiness in the community.

David Raulerson, Asheville, NC



#### Model Therapy Dogs and Firefighters

Rebecca W. Bass, inspired by the rapport she witnessed between local firefighters and therapy dogs, conceived the idea of creating a 20-month calendar featuring them as models. Rebecca presented the idea to the local fire chief, who, recognizing the potential impact of the project, enthusiastically approved. Each month showcases a beautifully composed photograph of a firefighter, a therapy dog, and a fire truck, symbolizing the strength, courage, and compassion of our community's first responders. Rebecca, a published photographer, donated all her photos. The calendar is a tribute to these local human and canine heroes and raised over \$8,000 after printing costs which was distributed equally to three important charities: Beaufort County Animal Services, the Child Abuse Prevention Association (CAPA), and the SC Burned Children's Fund.

Rebecca W. Bass, Beaufort, SC

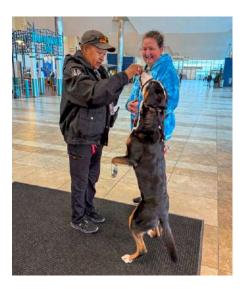
The CLT Canine Crew is comprised of volunteer dog teams that welcome travelers to Charlotte Douglas International Airport.

Join the CLT Canine Crew! Visit cltairport.com for more information.





# What's Wrong?



(from Page 28)

The rules being broken are:

1. Four not on the floor. (II. Visits, 13. Behavior of Dogs) 2. Non-handler giving the dog treats. (II. Visits, 16. Treats on Visits)

3. No collar. (VI. Attire and Equipment, 31. Dog Equipment, Head Halters and Harnesses)

4. Not maintaining control of the head. (VII. Safety Precautions, 40. Maintaining Control)

Reference the above ATD Rules and Regulations in your Member Handbook.





**Denali** Heidi Sargeant Huntington Beach, CA Years of Service: 8 Denali worked at local schools and libraries and helped a local Girl Scout troop earn a pet badge.



**Riley** Kathleen and Roy Shuman The Villages, FL Years of Service: 10 Riley became a therapy dog at age 3 and retired at age 13. Riley loved doing children's reading programs and excelled at connecting with those in memory care units. Now retired, Riley has become our therapy dog.



Lakota Billy Keresey, Hickory, NC Years of Service: 7 Lakota, a magnificent blue merle collie, completed 1,100 visits in his career. The AKC named him a "Good Citizen" at 14 months and declared him a "Distinguished Therapy Dog" on 12/5/17. He regularly visited 9 nursing homes in Hickory and participated in the public library's Paws to Read Program.



**Bella** Joanne Rogers, Westminster, MA Years of Service: 7

Bella was a rescue dog in February of 2016. She is a lover of people and children. She visited schools, nursing homes, a homeless shelter, the library, and our church shut-ins at Christmas time. After 7 years of service, she will retire.



**Junee** Dr. Kane and Mary Mach, Stillwater, OK Years of Service: 6

Junee loved her job as a therapy dog and took it very seriously. She read with children at schools, appeared at special events, provided emotional support to anyone in need, and responded to tragic events. Junee brought smiles and joy to everyone she met and will be deeply missed.



**The Dude** Barbara Doner, Albuquerque, NM Years of Service: 7

A dog trainer told me he wasn't trainable. After months of hard work and dedication, The Dude became an ATD therapy dog. Since 2017, he has been an icon as a K9 Ambassador at the Albuquerque International Sunport, along with visiting schools, hospitals, and Children, Youth & Families Department.

Os it time to hang up the red heart? Become a supporting member!

There comes a time when every team faces the difficult decision to hang up our partner's red heart tag. It might be because of illness, age or death. Sometimes the decision is made for us and other times, it is up to the human to make the decision to no longer be an active Alliance of Therapy Dogs team. It's not easy letting go of that special partnership. However, there is still a way for you to be involved in ATD even after the visits stop. You can become an ATD supporting member!

What does becoming a supporting member mean? It means that for \$20 per year you pay to support ATD, you continue to receive the member handbook, the newsmagazine and member communications. When the time is right and you want to become an ATD team again, you will not need to take the volunteer background check because you are still considered a member of ATD. When you notify the office that your dog has retired or has passed away, you can let the office know that you want to be transferred from active member to supporting member.

## *NEW BOOK RELEASE - HELP SCHOOLS – VOLUNTEER WITH YOUR THERAPY DOG!*

AN INTRODUCTION FOR VOLUNTEER DOG HANDLERS, TEACHERS, COUNSELORS, AND ADMINISTRATORS FOR SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION RESULTING IN RESEARCHED ENHANCED STUDENT WELLBEING

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"It's more than just theory – it's actionable advice backed by sound research and successful real-life case studies. Therapy dogs have proven beneficial in creatively improving students' mental health, academic performance, peer relationships, and social skills. The presence of therapy dogs in schools has been linked to enhanced mood, confidence, self-esteem, and overall life satisfaction among students. Additionally, they have been shown to improve children's self-regulation behavior, making the classroom environment more conducive to learning. This heightened interest in learning has also reduced absenteeism, improved academic performance, and a greater sense of belonging within the school community." For more information, email: gabriellematthew.mac@gmail.com

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 in our section about retired dogs. 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."



Rella "Thera-Poodle" Cindy Rosancrans, Lancaster, MA 1/20/11-5/31/24 Years of Service: 5 Rella loved life and people. She was always eager to meet and greet, whether visiting dozens of residential school young adults, or walking with her person in stores or at parks. Strikingly tall and elegant, Rella was also playful, funny, gentle, obsessed with plush stuffies, enthusiastic, brave, exuberant, and loving.



Dixie Dr. Kristi and Jim Kincheloe, San Angelo, TX 4/23/16-9/2/24 Years of Service: 7 Born to be a blessing to others, Dixie had a sweet spirit and was a special gift to not only our family but countless children and families. She loved visiting children in clinics and schools. The memory of the love and sweetness she shared will always warm our hearts.



**Gretchen** Kathleen Krishnan, Gold Canyon, AZ 5/27/12-10/29/24 I Years of Service: 10 Gretchen was a rescue serving both young and elderly. During hospice visits, she was quiet and gentle while being loved on by anyone in need. As a Gabriel's Angel volunteer, a reading program for at risk children, she listened to stories while children petted her and increased their self-confidence.



Augustina

Jody Bauerle, New Lenox, IL 8/6/12-8/9/24 I Years of Service: 7 Augustina was a retired racing greyhound, who truly loved being a therapy dog. We visited assisted living facilities, school and library reading programs, stress relief for college students and various other events. She instinctively knew who needed her most, and put smiles on many faces, adults and children alike.



Brodie

Jim and Kim Fortner, Livonia, MI 3/25/14-11/3/24 Years of Service: 8 Our labradoodle, Brodie, was born on March 25, 2014, and was THE BEST DOG! He had 8 years of service creating miracles while volunteering at hospitals and cancer centers. He went to the Rainbow Bridge on Nov. 3, 2024, while being held by his parents Jim and Kim Fortner.



**Toby** Stacey Murphy, Florence, KY 8/31/14-11/14/24 Years of Service: 4½ Toby was one of a kind and loved making everyone smile. He looked forward to his therapy visits, especially his kids. He will always be remembered as the special boy with the amazing smile and awesome squishmallow collection.



Harry Debby Catalano, Middletown, NY 4/12/15-12/9/24 Years of Service: 7 Harry was a little gentleman who put his heart and soul into everything he was asked to do. He brought smiles to the residents in nursing/rehab facilities and demonstrated his canine nose work skills, which brought on questions when he succeeded in finding the hidden scent. Forever in my heart.



**Bodie** Bob Hardie, Mount Pleasant, SC 2/25/14-11/1/24 | Years of Service: 7 Bodie, well known for his soft head and majestic fluffy tail at the Medical University of South Carolina, logged 1.063 hours at hospitals and clinics. He was also a regular at the College of Charleston Student Life events. He was awarded the 2021 Healthcare Hero Award for the Low Country.



Jenny Lynne Jill Zondervan, Buckeye, AZ 2/4/20-1/30/24 Years of Service: 1½ Gone too soon. A therapy dog for ATD for about 1.5 years, Jenny showed in conformation, rally, obedience and Fast CAT. She warmed the hearts of many in her short life. She was/is loved by her family Jill Zondervan, Mike Raaymakers and her fur brother Buck. We will miss her.



Henry Don and Stephanie Vaughan. Kasson, MN 9/21/17-12/17/24 Years of Service: 2½ Henry could light up a room. Something about him just brought a smile to people's faces. His stub of a tail and butt wag might have helped. Even though Henry made visits near and far, his focus was at a local mental health and addiction treatment facility. Rest in peace.



Abbie Laura Fulmer, West Columbia, SC 3/16/12-6/23/24 Years of Service: 9.5 Abbie was a rescue pup and began her therapy career at just 3 years old. She showed off her tricks that brought smiles to people in nursing homes, hospitals, community parades, airports, and many special events for disabled children. She was best known for her costumes and photographic smile.



Elke

Rebecca Bass and Frank Vandegrift, Beaufort, SC 8/3/15-12/13/24 Years of Service: 8 Elke completed over 200 therapy visits, bringing comfort to countless souls at military bases, senior citizen homes, prisons, and hospitals. Her empathy and unwavering spirit made her an exceptional ambassador for the Doberman breed. Elke's legacy of love will remain in our hearts forever.



**Shady Lady** Lee & Bob Saputo, Ocala, FL 6/22/12-10/08/24 Years of Service: 11 Eleven years in pet therapy in Colorado and Florida. She enjoyed visiting patients at Advent Health Hospital, Marion County Hospice and children at The Arnette House.



Marta Louella Stoever, Denver, CO 10/20/08-4/28/24 Years of Service: 13 Marta was a rescue from a hoarder's home. At first, she was extremely shy, but learned to love and care. When she laid down, she crossed her front paws and appeared to pray for all she saw. She was special to those her knew her and is missed by everyone.



Halle Stephen Trotta, Athens, OH 7/31/12-4/4/24 Years of Service: 5 Due to a cancer diagnosis, Halle retired March 27, 2024, spending time with family and friends. Halle brought joy and smiles. She decreased anxiety and blood pressure of patients, staff and students. Creating general feelings of wellbeing. She often was told that "she was an angel" and is greatly missed.



**Bella** Rhonda Schnacky, Eau Claire, WI 5/1/14-12/28/24 Years of Service: 3½ Bella loved people so much. She became certified at 1 year and 2 weeks of age. She made almost 800 visits and touched thousands of people's lives over the years. She had a gift for seeking out those who needed her the most. She is missed by many.



Cheyenne Jacqueline Heinze, Melbourne, FL 12/25/08-7/3/24 Years of Service: 13 Chevenne had the best disposition of any girl I've ever met. Putting smiles on hundreds of faces. Thank you, girl, for your years of service in children's schools, libraries, nursing homes, hospice, hospitals, and special events. You are so missed. You were such as gift.



Snow Joy Frasure, Longmont, CO 8/29/12-1/6/25 Years of Service: 10 Snow lit up the room wherever she visited. Her visits included two hospitals and the local library DEAR program. Her presence brought joy, peace, comfort and love to adults and children alike. The love she shared with our family and others was immeasurable. She will live in our hearts forever.



Root Beer Nancy and Jack Zollowski 5/31/11-11/5/24 Years of Service: 21 AKC CGC (2013), Novice Agility Jumper Preferred (2014), Rally Novice (2018), Rally Intermediate (2019), and Rally Advanced (2019). He earned his Therapy Advanced Title for 100 visits from AKC in 2019. We miss you little man.



**Ponyo** Eve Riley, St. Louis, MO 4/13/10-12/26/24 Years of Service: 7 Patient and kind, Ponyo brought comfort and joy to all she encountered. This multi-talented Standard Poodle particularly loved her therapy work visiting assisted living residents. My beautiful girl brought endless smiles and will be forever loved and missed.



Lucy May Candy Krueger, Boise, ID 4/25/07-12/14/23 Years of Service: 15 Lucy May was a smiler from puppyhood to old age. She was a special therapy dog because she would look at a person for as long as they needed and take in all that emotion. Her visits were mostly at St. Luke's Hospital Cancer Institute, in addition to other venues.



**Cramer** Joy Belsley, Metamora, IL 11/24/11-8/21/24 Years of Service: 11 Cramer was an amazing therapy dog partner achieving over 400 visits in his lifetime and earning the AKC title Distinguished Therapy Dog. He touched so many lives - none greater than mine. It was an honor to be Cramer's mom for almost 13 years.



**Mooshum** Elise Mebel, Atascadero, CA 5/24/12-1/2/25 Years of Service: 8 For 12.5 years, Moosh was the light and love of my life. Together, we profoundly impacted thousands of lives through visits and tested over 50 ATD teams as T/O partners. His legacy lives on in every person he touched and the therapy teams he inspired. My heart is forever his.



Vayl

Mary Minnich, Allentown, PA 5/5/17-12/28/24 Years of Service: 6 Vayl, as she was affectionately known, was a wonderful therapy dog. A kind German Shepherd who loved to visit children at our reading program, Books and Barks, and nursing homes and hospitals. She is deeply missed by her sister, Aslyn, and me. She was a special companion.



Hoku Shirley Kawakami, Pearl City, HI 4/6/15-11/3/24 Years of Service: 4 Hoku did 287 visits, which he loved, to schools, nursing homes and libraries where he did tricks to entertain and be a lovable boy. Hoku competed in AKC Obedience where he earned the Utility Dog and Obedience Master I titles. He is missed and will be forever in our hearts.



**Spartacus** Tamiko D. Brown, Clarksville, TN 12/25/16-10/1/24 Years of Service: 21/2 Spartacus brought so much joy and healing to others. Spartacus was a celebrity - everyone knew him. He loved his dog crocs. Spartacus served at Dayton Children's Hospital consistently. Spartacus served at many health events, colleges, walks, schools, libraries, and many more. Spartacus made such an impact on others and me.



Munchkin Marsha Usdane, Scottsdale, AZ 6/10/11-1/5/25 Years of Service: 9 Munchkin was an absolute joy to all. She loved people, especially those she visited over the years. She snuggled and brought them joy and comfort. The memory of our time together, and the happiness that she brought to those that she visited, will live on in my heart forever.



Abby Keith and Barbara Pettway, Cleveland, MS 8/9/09-2/13/25 Years of Service: 10 Abby was late becoming a therapy dog. Most of her therapy dog years were spent visiting a hospital extended care and assisted living facilities. Abby continued to bring love and joy to her family until her last day.



Camo Tom Martel, Payson, AZ 12/1/12-2/7/25 Years of Service: 9 Camo made more than 900 visits during his therapy dog career. He met and cared for over 23,000 people in Nevada and Arizona, bringing comfort, joy and unconditional love to those in hospitals, hospices, nursing homes and public schools.



"How lucky are we to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard

-Winnie the Pooh

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### Media Authorization Release Form

**Instructions for Alliance of Therapy Dogs Member**: Please type or print legibly. Follow all facility rules regarding photographs, videos, or other digital media including filling out a facility photo release form if requested. For the privacy of those whom we visit and to protect both Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) and our Members from liability, Members must have an ATD Media Authorization Release Form signed prior to taking any photo, video, or other digital media that identifies any individual (e.g., face, tattoo, birthmark, scar, etc.). The signed ATD Media Authorization Release Form must accompany any submission to an ATD-managed publication or social media platform. A facility or organization media release may not be used instead of the ATD Media Authorization Release. If you are not submitting the media to ATD for publication, simply retain this signed form for your records.

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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.

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