

A family and financial magazine for Modern Woodmen members

# THE MODERN WOODMEN

Spring 2016

**3** fathers  
show their love p. 16

People (and pets) who make an  
**impact**  
p. 8 and 10

FIRST-  
TIMER'S  
GUIDE  
to buying  
a home  
(and more)  
p. 13

Advice for  
*small-business*  
owners p. 22

**2015**  
Annual report  
(Insert)

Financial  
terms  
**matching**  
game  
p. 12

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Member Richard Waxman,  
Rancho Mirage, Calif.





# Leaving their paw prints

PETS MAKE AN IMPACT THROUGH VOLUNTEER,  
SOCIAL AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES



How does Richard Waxman make an impact? With animals. The Modern Woodmen member from Rancho Mirage, Calif., visits area hospital patients with his trained therapy dogs.



# R

ichard Waxman isn't bashful talking about Paws and Hearts. But he shies away from taking credit. That spotlight belongs to Lucky, the dog who started it all.

"Our newsletter says, 'Lucky Waxman, founder. I'm just the executive,'" says Richard, a Modern Woodmen member from Rancho Mirage, California.

Paws and Hearts is a nonprofit organization Richard formed 16 years ago. The mission – visit area hospital patients with trained therapy dogs.

"There would be no Paws and Hearts if there wasn't Lucky," says Richard. "Lucky was a loud-mouthed, white poodle terrier who made an incredible visit. He was gifted. He just knew how to make people feel better."

Pets make an impact, just like our Modern Woodmen members. And just like members, pets improve lives through volunteer, social and learning activities.

### Volunteer: Do(g)-gooders

Richard's dogs (Scruffy and Maddie) and more than 40 other dogs large and small carry on what Lucky started. Wearing red Paws and Hearts bandanas, the therapy dogs (and their volunteer handlers) visit hospital patients and long-term care residents.

Even before Paws and Hearts, Richard was involved with pet therapy. He's witnessed the benefits, including reducing anxiety and feelings of isolation. He also points to studies showing pet therapy can lower blood pressure and diminish physical pain.

"It's a form of healing, and it's not to be taken lightly," Richard says.

Nor is the task taken lightly by the dogs.

"The dogs go into the facility with tails up. They're happy and they know they're going to work because they're wearing their red bandanas," Richard says. "The dogs know they made people feel good, but they are really tired by the time that shift is over. They're dragging their tails behind them."

### Socialize: Blues healers

Pets help their human companions feel happier and healthier, according to the Human Animal Bond Research Foundation (habri.org). We smile and laugh. We feel loved.

Member Michael Goodner, Ooltewah, Tennessee, described feeling sad and depressed. Then his little dog, Bo (right), jumped into his lap and turned his outlook around.

"This little guy gave me purpose. He gave me a

reason to live. He filled my home with so much love and laughter," Goodner says of Bo, who died in December.

Members Chet and Renee Goff, Pullman, Michigan, used to take their dog, Kaya (right), to nursing homes and schools.

"People loved her kind spirit and very playful heart," says Renee.

In addition to brightening lives, pets also can quite literally come to our rescue.

**"I firmly believe we would have gone to bed, went to sleep and not woken up if she had not been so persistent that night."**

– Member Wendy King, Piedmont, S.C.

Member Wendy King, Piedmont, South Carolina, at first believed her dog's whining one night four years ago was a cry for attention. But Wendy says Scout's (right) frenzy may have saved her family.

"She pounced on my chest, jumped out of bed and would not stop until I followed her," Wendy remembers.

Scout went to the kitchen door that leads to the garage. She cried and sniffed until Wendy opened it and realized she had left the car running with the garage door shut.

"I firmly believe we would have gone to bed, went to sleep and not woken up if she had not been so persistent that night," Wendy says.

### Learn: Teacher's pet

Making a difference isn't only for dogs. Cats, hamsters, guinea pigs, lizards – even goldfish – can get in on the act.

The nonprofit organization Pets in the Classroom (petsintheclassroom.org) has provided more than 70,000 grants to help prekindergarten through eighth-grade teachers buy and maintain a classroom pet. It cites studies and teacher feedback showing animals aid learning by increasing attendance, building confidence and sparking interest. Caring for a pet also encourages nurturing, promotes empathy and teaches responsibility.

If a goldfish can make an impact, so can you. Volunteer, socialize and learn with Modern Woodmen. Talk to your Modern Woodmen representative to learn more about chapters, Summit chapters and youth service clubs in your area. by Jennifer Meyer-Michels

## Furry friends

We asked our Facebook fans to share pictures of pets who make an impact. Let's give a shoutout to these amazing animals!



Bo | Shared by: Michael Goodner



Kaya | Shared by: Chet and Renee Goff



Scout | Shared by: Wendy King



Devon | Shared by: Sandra Moody



Precious | Shared by: Deane Lee



GoGo | Shared by: Tira Clement