

“Paws & Hearts”

Animal Assisted Therapy

Fed. Tax ID #91-20965

FALL 2015

NEWSLETTER

Board of Directors

President:

Virginia Tillmannshofer

Vice President:

Richard Waxman
Executive Director
“Paws & Hearts”

Founder:

“Lucky” Waxman

Secretary/Treasurer

Danielle Barton,
Branch Retail Executive
BBVA Compass Bank

Jack Poyfair, LVN
Executive Director
Vista Cove at Rancho
Mirage

Anita Jameson
Retired Educator

It's late August and I'm writing the Fall Newsletter! For the first time in 15 years this Newsletter has been very easy to put together. I was asked by our local Desert Pet Companion Magazine to write an article on the first 15 years of “Paws & Hearts” and was given unlimited pages. What a lovely few weeks of memories I had writing the article. As always, Karen proofed it and by the time we were finished, we submitted a pretty good account of the last 15 years of my life.

Karen and I thought it would be nice to share the article with all our readers (and save us a bit of work) so it pretty much takes up the bulk of the newsletter. It was fun cutting and pasting and getting it to fit. I even managed to get a few pictures of the volunteers mentioned included.

In just a few short months we will embark on year 16. But before that, we have the celebratory **Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser**. We are pulling out all the stops for this one. We have three of the local shelters bringing dogs for adoption, vendors, as always our amazing raffle, and this year we have even done some local advertising on KMIR and KRET.

Looking forward to a fun and festive day!

Richard Waxman

Upcoming Events to Put on Your Calendars!

**15th Annual Dog Walk/
Fundraiser
Saturday November 28th
Westin Mission Hills Golf Resort**

“Take Your Dog to the Movies”

**Cinemas Palme D'Or
Thursday December 3rd, 2015
Movie and time to follow**

“Paws & Hearts” 74-854 Velie Way, Ste. 7
Palm Desert, CA 92260

(760) 836-1406 fax (760) 836-1426

E-Mail: Pawsandhearts@aol.com

Website: www.pawsandhearts.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pawsandheartsorg

“Scruffy & Maddie’s” Views

Scruffy here.....seems that I have a lot of spare time on my paws these days with only ‘limited’ visits per week.....so I’ve knocked Maddie out of the way and have put paw to keyboard.

I’m not sure what Dad is thinking, but honestly he seems to be staying home most of the time when he isn’t at the office. Seems like he doesn’t let me out of his sight anymore, and when I’m snoozing in the den (our favorite room) he keeps stretching out beside me, putting his arm around me and staring at me until I open one eye as if to say, “I’m okay, I was napping until you once again woke me up!” “And what’s with all the hugging and kissing? You know we rarely do that!”

And pictures, oy! Dad actually got a very simple I-Phone so he can take endless pictures of me. And wouldn’t you know it, he figured out how to record, so I’ve been recorded sleeping, playing with my toys and eating. If he whips out that camera many more times, I’ll be biting him and burying that damn camera in the back yard!

All in all, I know he is very concerned about me, but I’m doing okay. Today I even got to train two new volunteers at Lucy Curci Cancer Center this morning. They are going to start bringing their dog next week, but I showed them how a true **Canine Ambassador** professional handles the patients, and chisels a cookie after each hello and hand kiss!

Don’t worry Dad, I’m not going anywhere just yet!

“Scruffy & Maddie” Waxman



Lucky, the dog who started it all!

"Paws & Hearts" Animal Assisted Therapy *Celebrates 15 years!*

By Richard Waxman, Executive Director
(and most importantly, Lucky, Scruffy and Maddie's Dad)

Reprinted with permission of the Desert Pet Companion



As I sit here at my desk, trying to put into words what our 15 ½ year journey has been like, I am barraged with images; finding a little white poodle-terrier who I named "Lucky;" the nursing director from the old Valencia Palms who met Lucky and suggested I bring him down to his facility to visit the patients; my first call to the Desert Sun, asking if they wanted to do a cute article on Pet Therapy; and the overwhelming response to the story that led to our first few volunteers.

There were the presentations to all the long-term care facilities with Lucky in my arms to find out if they would like a therapy dog to make weekly visits, and the interviews with 15 ½ years of potential 4-legged volunteers. Sadly, I also shared the loss of many of these amazing 4-legged Canine Ambassadors with their 2-legged counterparts. When my own Lucky got sick and passed away in 2011, I reassessed this whole idea, but thought to myself that Lucky didn't work that hard for me to throw in the towel, so I kept on going.

Another milestone in setting up "Paws & Hearts" was finding Tish Gobble, CPA who did all the filings with Sacramento to turn my idea into a real 501 C-3 Not-For-Profit, and then receiving our very first donation check from Phyllis Harkins. And dear Phillip Valdez, baking tray after tray of heart-shaped chocolate chip cookies that he took into LA to sell at his office building, all the proceeds going to "Paws & Hearts." And then came a lot of firsts: our very first dog walk-fundraiser; our first board of directors; and all those non-profit classes I attended at RAP given by Eldon Baber, who provided incredible training in all areas of non-profit management those first few incredible years.

Over the course of our 15 ½ years, there have been wonderful donors who kept sending in donations with each quarterly newsletter. There is also a small, but growing group of donors, who have included us in their long-term-planning, and most importantly, hundreds of thank-you letters and calls over the years from patients whose lives the volunteers have touched with their heart-warming visits.

Our very first website was conceived by another long-term volunteer Karen Pelletier, and most recently updated. And with much kicking and screaming by our board, I finally acquiesced to adding a Facebook page which every week is updated and highlights our incredible *Canine Ambassador* teams at work!

Cont'd pg. 3

..... Celebrates 15 years cont'd

I get asked all the time how "Paws & Hearts" began, and it is just a very simple story of my being in the right place at the right time. I had relocated to Palm Springs in 1998, and was without a dog. After a few months I purchased my first home and before the paint was even dry on the walls I found Lucky. I was actually showing a friend a condo complex that I thought was very nice on a very hot July 4th afternoon. We were walking around and this little white and apricot poodle something or other came running over and literally jumped up in my arms. I asked people sitting by the pool if they knew who the dog belonged to and someone said they thought he'd been abandoned because there was a dish of dried food and water left for him. I looked at this dog and said, "Would you like to come home with me?" and he saw the words sucker written across my forehead, gave me a big kiss and as we say in Yiddish, it was *bashert* which means, meant to be. I named him Lucky because I thought I was very lucky that he found me.

And a few years later at our third dog walk, "Scruffy" was one of the dogs up for adoption that wound up with a new home. And then three years ago, "Maddie" came along. "Scruffy" visited Eisenhower Medical Center for 13 years, 3 days per week, and is now semi-retired. "Maddie" the youngster is doing most of the visits solo these days!

Most of you know the rest of the story.....that Nursing Director from Valencia Palms came to look at a rental I was showing, (Lucky always went to work with me, even back then) and told me I should bring Lucky to visit his residents some time. Little did he know that Pet Therapy was a great passion of mine! Lucky and I actually went the very next day to visit. I remember that day as if it were yesterday.....Lucky was amazing on the beds with the residents, he was so gentle and cuddly with everyone.

The marketer in me quickly called the Desert Sun and asked if they would be interested in writing an article, and to my surprise they said YES, and asked if they could come and watch a visit the next day. A second visit, a glowing article with a picture that to this day people remember, the phone started to ring with potential volunteers wanting to take their dogs to visit facilities.

A boyfriend by the name of Phillip came along and he helped form our first board of directors. It was his suggestion that each board member contribute a monthly donation to cover the rent and utilities, and that is still in place, fifteen years later.

"Paws & Hearts" is now 15 ½ years old and continues adding new volunteer teams and new facilities. But there have been some amazing volunteers along the way, and some have been with us for many years. Here is a list of some of our esteemed veterans;

Ann 11 years, 2 dogs—Gus, and now Andy who visits Eisenhower and does all the fill-in visits for us.

Cathy 11 years, 3 different dogs at various facilities. Currently she and "Zoey" visit The Fountains at the Carlotta.

Rose Ann and "Sammi" 10 years visiting The Lucy Curci Cancer Center

Karen, "Waldo" & "Emerson" 9 years visiting Rancho Mirage Healthcare

Joe, "Bob" & "Zoso" 8 years visiting Desert Regional Medical Center

Ann & "Samie" 8 years at various facilities, most recently The Lucy Curci Cancer Center

Kay & "Bennie" 6 years at Martha's Village & Kitchen

..... Celebrates 15 years cont'd

And my right-hand man, Drew Marefos, who for the last 7 years has become indispensable. Drew has become an amazing volunteer, going on visits, making presentations, and training. Drew is a board-member-at-large and a major donor, donating the Three T's that all non-profits look for; Time, Talent & Treasure!

And it wouldn't be proper to leave out some of the names of those who have been instrumental in helping us grow. The very first person who took an interest was Gino Lamont at KMIR when he did the morning news. He had us on once 15 fifteen years ago, and then asked us back many times that first year. We will always be grateful to Gino for that. And for all these years, KMIR has been the corporate sponsor for our Annual Dog Walk-fundraiser providing us with our great Grand Marshals!

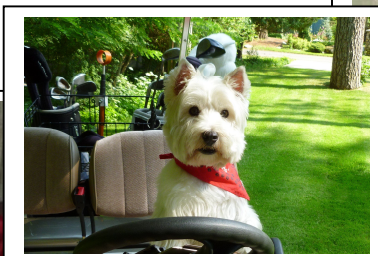
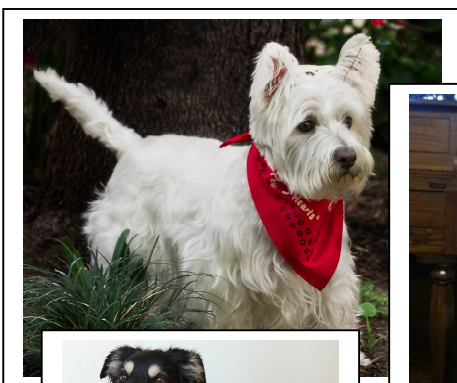
The Desert Sun for its very first article. That article and that picture made the phone ring! And over the years The Desert Sun has consistently done updates on our organization, included us in their Calendar listings, and even run a couple of Valley Voice articles that I've penned. You guys are great!

A radio interview on EZ 103.1 with John O. has led to a 15-year association. He had us on his Community Affairs program for many years, became our first MC at our very first dog walk, and continues to this day.

And big thanks goes to Valerie who for almost a decade now has donated her time to do our books every month. And I couldn't have written four newsletters per year for 15 years without a great proof-reader—Karen who no longer even lives in the valley, has continued to proof everything written that goes out of the office.

And what would a non-profit be without its board of directors? We are now on our second board, and we've become pretty professional along the way, but the one consistent person is our current Board President, Ginny Tillmannshofer. While the name may not be familiar to too many, those of you who attend our dog walks and love those amazing raffle baskets, they are the creative work of Ginny!

What respectable non-profit after 15 years wouldn't have its list of repeat donors and foundations to support it? We are very lucky that so many have benefitted from our visits and understand how truly important Animal Assisted Therapy is. Add to that list our handful of donors who have included us in their long-term planning and we are set for a lifetime of serving the Coachella Valley!



Volunteer Stories

Many of our readers have asked where our Volunteer Stories come from. Our volunteer teams visit their assigned facility each and every week and part of their commitment is to email into our office a weekly report, complete with their visitation story. Some day, these stories along with photographs will be turned into a book because the stories are heart-warming and the patients/clients we visit truly treasure their weekly visit.

Desert Springs (formerly Valencia Palms), Marie & "Zeus": This week Zeus and I had a great visit! We visited Betty who is not able to move so I had Zeus sitting up in the chair beside her bed. I positioned him as close to her bed as possible because Betty loves dogs, and all by himself Zeus reached to her and started licking her face, and then all of a sudden he lies next to her to cuddle. Betty was incredibly happy, and it was a very emotional moment! Zeus is really making progress with his ability to become a Therapy Dog. We can't wait for our visit next Saturday.

Martha's Village & Kitchen, Kay & "Bennie": Several new children were in the younger classes and were surprised that a dog would come to visit them, but they all made Bennie feel quite welcome. The children who were familiar with Bennie were quite happy to see him this week. It was very hot outside so there was very little running around and we got to visit with a class in-doors to escape the heat.

Eisenhower Medical Center, Richard & "Maddie": Excellent visit this morning! The first room we visited Maddie scoped out a few Cheerios on a man's chest and they were inhaled immediately. The patient really took a shine to Maddie, and likewise she took a shine to him. She was so content in his arms, it was quite a picture to see. In another room we visited with a blind woman who remembered Maddie and referred to her by name. Maddie and Uncle Drew had visited her a few weeks ago, and she remembered them. This was just one of those very special sessions!

Windsor Court Assisted Living, Chuck & "Lulu Cup": We had a really nice visit this morning. Lulu's fan club is certainly growing! We visited today for nearly 2 hours. Lulu has certain residents that she visits like Wilma, who love her to pieces. Looking forward to next week!

The Fountains at the Carlotta, Cathy & "Zoey": We spend a long time in the assisted living activity room. Zoey was very entertaining and the activity directors and patients were laughing at her. She put her front paws on the piano bench and everyone asked if she was going to play the piano! One of the patients was petting her and when he stopped, she put her paw on his leg as if to say, "Don't stop, keep going." Zoey woke up one of the ladies who had fallen asleep with her kisses, and then got lots of pets!

There was one patient and the activity director mentioned that she was in a really bad mood. Zoey went over and sat quietly next to her and the lady got a big smile on her face. Zoey kissed her hand and the lady said she loved Zoey's kisses.

All it took was a gentle, big white Standard Poodle to make this patient feel right with the world!

Our Mission Statement

"Paws & Hearts" is a leader in the field of "Animal Assisted Therapy" (AAT) and it is our mission to enrich the lives of the frail and special care cases that require the loving attention and affection that only a 'four-legged' healer can provide.

It is just around the corner

OUR BIG

**15th ANNUAL DOG WALK/
FUNDRAISER**

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 28

Mark the date on your calendar

It truly will be a

Celebration of 15 years of work!

