

“Paws & Hearts”

Animal Assisted Therapy

Fed. Tax ID #91-2096569

WINTER/SPRING 2015-16

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

Here we are in a new year, our 16th actually, and this is our first Newsletter of 2016. I am combining both the Winter & Spring issues again this year because a very busy first quarter is ahead.

Let me first give a very sincere thank you to everyone who turned out in November for our Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser. Great morning, perfect weather, lots of fun, and some serious dollars raised! Let’s do it again this year!

As I look ahead to 2016 I have many things to be thankful for. “Scruffy” is still going strong and able to make a weekly visit. “Maddie” and I are part of the Pet Therapy program at Desert Regional Medical Center and really enjoying it. (More on this below, and pictures on the back.)

We have once again been awarded a grant from Bighorn Charities and are just awaiting the donation from Barry Manilow’s 2015 Holiday Concerts at the McCallum Theater.

As always, new volunteers continue to find their way to our door, and it is the weekly volunteer reports that I read on Monday mornings which are the basis for the weekly Facebook updates, which I love the most! Here’s to a great 2016!

Richard Waxman

Upcoming Events to Put on Your Calendars!

“Take Your Dog to the Movies”

Spring/Summer 2016

Date to be determined

**16th Annual Dog Walk/
Fundraiser
Saturday November 26th
Westin Mission Hills Golf Resort**

**“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

Hi Everyone! Did you all see those Holiday Cards that Dad sent out in December? He actually posed Maddie, Samantha and me for those pictures-- no photo-shop here. Again, if he doesn’t stop with the pictures, that iPhone will find itself as the newest chew toy in our basket!

I am still visiting every Wednesday morning at the Lucy Curci Cancer Center, but it is my sister “Maddie” who is the big shot these days, visiting Desert Regional Medical Center on Monday afternoons. I’ll let her take over.....

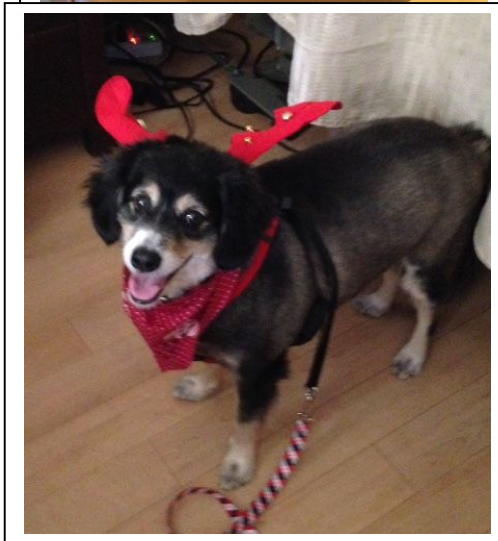
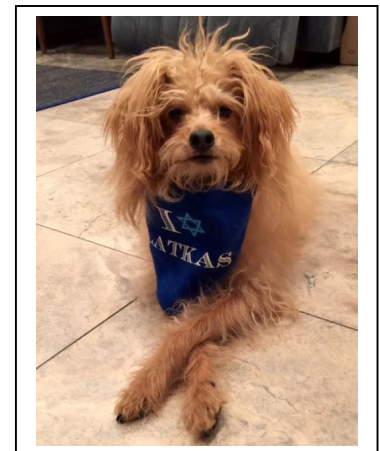
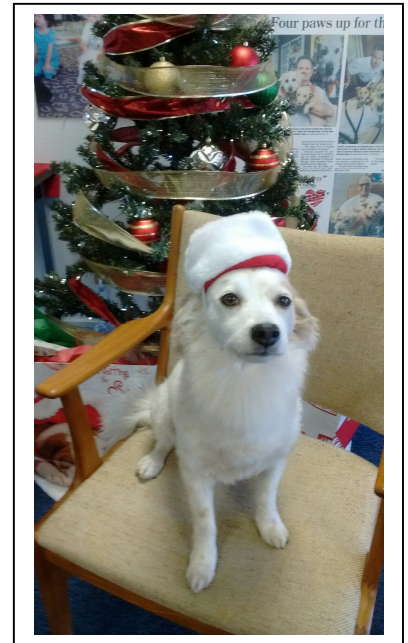
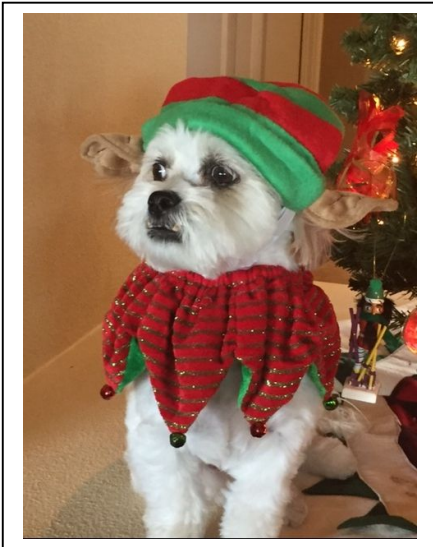
My first time at the keyboard, not bad! Yes, every Monday afternoon Dad takes me up to Desert Regional. We start off in the Comprehensive Cancer Center, visiting with the clients in the waiting rooms. I get to jump up on the chairs and visit with some very nice folks.

When we finish at the Cancer Center, we go into the hospital. Our first stop is the Rehab. Department where my old friend Dr. Michael Weinstein is working here now. I love getting a hug from him (picture later on in newsletter) and having him tell me what rooms to visit.

After this department, we visit 4E, 3E, 2E and Pediatrics. My favorite day so far was Christmas. I was all dressed up as one of Santa’s helpers, and I got to visit with more patients in one afternoon than ever before. What a way to spend the holiday!

“Scruffy & Maddie” Waxman

Many of our Canine Ambassadors shared with us their holiday photos last December. All the photos have been on our Facebook page, but we wanted to share some of them again.



What Makes for a Great Therapy Dog!

As we start another year, it is time to refresh and reprint an article we've run before.....What qualities a dog has to possess to become a therapy dog.

Running this article again was sparked by a call this January from a potential volunteer. The woman was telling me how she went to the breeder to purchase a Golden Doodle and that she told the breeder that she wanted to use the dog in pet therapy. The characteristics that a puppy displays are usually much different than the dog he or she eventually grows into. Purchasing or adopting a dog with the hopes of using it for pet therapy is noble, but until you have been with the dog for many months and watched it interact with other humans, children, and in many settings, it is hard to determine if dog X will be good for this type of work.

So, here is the article again.....

Over the fifteen years that "*Paws & Hearts*" has been in existence I have written a few articles for publication about what makes for good therapy dogs. For those of you just becoming familiar with our organization, I'll describe what it is I look for when considering a dog during a temperament test.

First and foremost, I understand that each and every one of us believes our dog is the cutest, the smartest, the most-friendly and the best behaved in the universe. However, not all of them have the personalities for this type of work. When a potential volunteer calls the office, I spend a lot of time asking all kinds of questions about the personality and characteristics of the canine in question. I never ever ask how cute the dog is. *Cute is not what makes for a good therapy dog.* It is the personality, the warmth, the compassion that your dog has, and his or her ability to share this with total strangers. . . . those folks we visit who are residing in long-term care facilities, are undergoing cancer treatments, are in the hospital, or having to deal with memory issues. Most often, it is a wet nose, a kiss, and a paw on the lap that makes a world of difference to these folks!

Here are a few questions to ask yourself to determine whether you have a *therapy dog* in the making. At the top of the list..... Is your dog outgoing with everyone? And by this I mean, total strangers. It isn't about being comfortable with the same friends who your dog already knows, or the neighbors in your community; it is about greeting total strangers as if they were old friends. A dog who hesitates or backs up is most definitely not a candidate for this type of volunteer work. Keep in mind, when you and your dog are visiting a patient in his or her room there is no 'warm-up' time. Your dog has to immediately make a friendly overture to the patient/resident to bring a smile to their face. If your dog should hesitate or back-up, the patient will say, "Your dog doesn't like me," and you never want to hear that.

Does your dog let you take away the chew toy he or she is playing with, without as much as a growl or a snarl? If your dog raises his upper lip and snarls as you attempt to take his toy away, he needs to be broken of this bad habit immediately, as this behavior is not acceptable at any time.

..... *Therapy Dog continued page 4*

..... Therapy Dog continued

Does your dog like to be the center of attention? A lot of our **Canine Ambassadors** work the Activity Rooms at the long-term care facilities and this is a little more challenging than a room visit. Usually the residents are sitting in their wheelchairs, and your dog--forever the perfect ambassador--goes from person to person to visit. There can be many distractions: people entering and exiting, wheelchairs and walkers moving about, a loud television, cell phones, items being dropped. Your dog needs to be 'startle-free!' "Buster" one of our longest-running volunteers, visits Mission Hills Senior Living every week and has become an incredible therapy dog. "Buster" knows just exactly who to give a kiss to, and whose lap to sit in.....he is a real pro!

The **Canine Ambassador** candidates must be a minimum of one-year old, current in their vaccinations and be spayed or neutered. The dogs do not require any prior formal obedience training, however, they must take simple commands and be incredibly well-mannered, and work well with their handler. During the temperament test, I'm always looking at the bond between human and canine. I observe the team as if I were a patient being greeted for the first time. Do you and your dog make a good first impression? Do you work well with each other? Take a few minutes and go to our website, www.pawsandhearts.org and check out our training videos. You will get to see Lucky and Scruffy visiting patients, and this is what you will be doing on your weekly visits. (If you have a large breed dog, it most likely won't be up on the bed, it will be standing by the side of the bed.)

The dogs must pass a temperament test prior to being assigned to a facility. At the test in our office, I want to see a dog that is very confident in his own coat. A dog that makes a bee-line for me, a total stranger, who wants to check me out, play tug of war, chisel cookies from me, has no hesitation when I squeeze his or her paws, gives a kiss on command, and just makes me feel that I am the best thing he or she has seen since a T-bone steak, is a potential **Canine Ambassador!**

And for the human, you need to have the ability to listen to the patients you will eventually visit. These visits are for the patients to talk and to have someone listen to them, while your dog does all the socializing!

If your dog passes the temperament test, you, the human, will shadow me or Drew on a visit, without your dog. You will observe how we approach the patients and inquire if they would like a visit from the therapy dog. You will watch the various ways different patients with their own personalities visit with the dog. Each room and each patient is unique and very different. If you enjoy the interactions you witness and think this is something that you and your dog would be comfortable doing each and every week, you will be assigned a facility. Again, Drew or I will accompany you and *your* dog on your first visit. Remember, to make your dog into a therapy dog, it is repetition. Each and every week that your dog is on visits he or she will get better and better, so that one day 6-months down the road you can proudly say, "I have a great therapy dog!"

Ready to make a commitment and volunteer with us? Please give us a call at (760) 836-1406. The warmth and good feelings you get back from the folks you visit are absolutely indescribable! When a frail patient says, "You made my day," you know you and your dog have done something special!

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 Regional Medical Center, Richard & "Maddie": What an amazing Christmas afternoon visit Maddie and I had up at Desert. This was our first Christmas at the hospital and it was much better than Thanksgiving. I think it helped that Maddie was in holiday attire and I wore a Santa Hat. Everyone told Maddie how cute she looked and she certainly had her picture taken enough. There were so many appreciative patients and family members who enjoyed the visit and couldn't thank us enough for taking the time to visit. We got some great pics to use on Facebook, so it was a lovely Christmas afternoon!

The Fountains at the Carlotta, Lynne & "Ozzie": Ozzie and I had a great morning visiting residents at the Carlotta. There are definitely regulars who know him by name now and love to pet him. One resident beckoned him up on his bed (he was recovering from knee replacement) and snuggled right up to him. He actually fell asleep while petting Ozzie. So sweet!

Manor Care, Gayle & "Toby": It always feels so good to walk into the facility and hear people say, "Toby's here!!!" One lady who we just met, after petting Toby for a minute, said, "Oh, I love you already." Several said that they wished he could stay with them all day. Probably the most meaningful was a full-time resident named Coco, who told me last week that she was very depressed. When she saw us, she smiled and reached for Toby. I put him in her lap, and she was snuggling with him. He put his head up next to hers, and she said, "He loves me, and he makes me feel better".

Vista Cove at Rancho Mirage, Nancy & "Kewpie": New Year's Eve morning and it seemed that both Kewpie and I were being especially mindful of the resident's demeanor today. As we visited each I was struck by just how much they smile when greeted by Kewpie's exuberant hellos. Their faces just blossom like flowers greeting the morning sun. I am always amazed at our reception. It has been incredibly rewarding becoming a part of this organization (thank you Richard) this year and volunteering at Vista Cove (working with their incredibly kind and helpful staff) has been such an outstanding experience. Kewpie and I look forward to 2016!

Lucy Curci Cancer Center, Rose Ann & "Sammi": It was a festive morning at LC. Everyone was in a holiday mood – staff because a long weekend approaching, and some patients were really happy because their treatment was ending ...nice Xmas gift for them. Most memorable visit was an older lady who brought her father for treatment. They arrived close to end of our visit. She walked in and happily said, "Oh, a doggy is here today." Apparently they always arrive close to noon when the volunteers have left and they were both very thrilled to pet a dog. The father was rather frail and had a chill and Sammi sat at his side and got lots of attention while a nurse wrapped him in warm blankets. When he went for treatment, the daughter played with Sammi and was very appreciative!

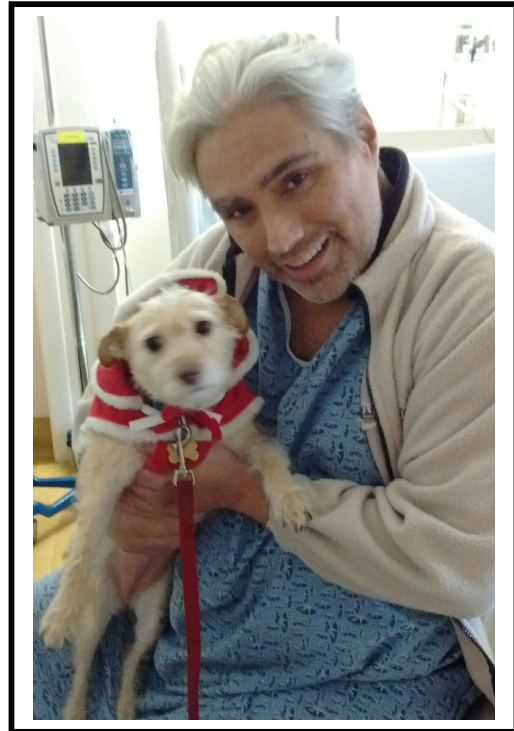
Our Mission Statement

"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.

"Maddie's" Newest Gig, her Monday afternoon visits at Desert Regional Medical Center



"Maddie" & Dr. Michael Weinstein



Santa's assistant on Christmas Day