

# **“Paws & Hearts”**

**Animal Assisted Therapy**

Fed. Tax ID #91-2096569

**WINTER 2017**

**NEWSLETTER**

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“Lucky” & “Scruffy”

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Another dog walk has passed, we have flipped the calendar to 2017, proudly starting our 17<sup>th</sup> year of service to the valley. I say it every year, but I can't believe the years keep passing so quickly.

Just a couple of things to share with our readers. First and foremost, the outpouring of love and kindness on the passing of “Scruffy” was incredibly thoughtful. I received close to a hundred cards and emails, many with donations in his memory, and I just want to thank each and every one of you *again* for taking the time to write something very special. It certainly meant a lot!

Secondly, our 2016 dog walk-- while it wasn't as well attended as walks in the past, probably due to the very cold morning—was a great community event. I'd like to thank Valerie, Drew and Ginny for working so hard to make this walk amazing. And a special thanks to Mayra from the Westin!

As we work our way into our 17<sup>th</sup> year, we have plans for a new program which I'll keep under wraps until it has been finalized and I can make a formal announcement. Suffice it to say, it is something I've wanted to do for a very long time.

*Richard Waxman*

## **Upcoming Events to Put on Your Calendars!**

**17<sup>th</sup> Annual Dog Walk/**

**Fundraiser**

**Saturday November 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Westin Mission Hills Golf Resort**

## **“Maddie’s” Views ( “Lucky” & “Scruffy” in thought)**

### **“Maddie’s” Views**

Another few months have gone by since our last Newsletter, and I'm still doing four solo visits per week. Count 'em, four visits. I think I need to go on strike here. Where is that assistant I requested as my Chanukah/Christmas present?

Speaking of the holidays, Dad and I visited Desert Regional Medical Center on Christmas afternoon. This is always our favorite visit of the year, (except for that hot Santa vest I have to wear!) because so many of the patients and staff members are doubly grateful for our visit.

My best room was a visit I had with a young man who was physically and mentally challenged, but he acknowledged that he wanted a visit when Dad asked him. It took us awhile to get comfortable so that Adam could finally pet me, but with Dad's help, Adam spent quite a few minutes running his hand under that hot Santa vest!

When our visit was coming to an end, Dad asked Adam if he would like a kiss from yours truly. Adam said yes, and I stood up on Adam's chest and proceeded to give him the best puppy kisses I had. We sure did get the biggest smile from Adam, which turned out to be the best kind of Christmas gift Dad or I could have asked for!

**“Maddie” Waxman**

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**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pawsandheartsorg](http://www.facebook.com/pawsandheartsorg)**

## Therapy Dog vs. Service Dog vs. Fake Certifications

For anyone who reads our Newsletters or Miriam's quarterly *Desert Pet Companion Magazine* to which I occasionally contribute, you all know how ticked off I get when I see people passing off their family pet as a fake service dog, just so they can take them wherever they go. I think the worst offense is someone with a dog in a shopping cart at a grocery store where food is sold. Trust me, THERE ARE NO SERVICE DOGS TRAINED TO RIDE IN GROCERY CARTS!!!

People who try to pass off their 'fake' service dogs for real service dogs are truly diminishing the vital role that service dogs play to people who really need them. Think of our service men with PTSD, who have trouble coping with everyday challenges. When they are paired up with a trained service dog, their daily struggles and their very lives become infinitely easier to cope with.

I am writing about this once again because over the last few months we have received quite a few calls from people who want to make their dog into a 'service dog.' When I question their motives, some of them are foolish enough to admit that if they have a certificate proving their dog is a 'service dog' they don't have to pay the fee to take their dog on an airplane. Give me a break! You people, and you know who you are, who buy fake service vests and a tag on the Internet are totally abusing a privilege that has been set up for people with serious medical needs that have been lucky enough to have been partnered up with a trained service dog.

I especially love the calls I receive when folks say to me, "I don't really care if my dog is classified as a therapy dog or a service dog, just as long as I get some sort of certificate, so I can take little him or her wherever I go."

While the law prohibits restaurant owners and businesses from asking someone with a service dog, what is the nature of the disability, the question that can certainly be asked is, "Where was the dog trained to be a service dog, and what training with the dog have you undergone?" When you get the deer-caught-in-the-headlights-look, you know you've just encountered a fake service dog, and a pretty unsavory dog owner.

Just to clarify what our **Canine Ambassadors** are.....our dogs are therapy dogs through and through! I explain to each and every volunteer when the dog passes the temperament test that little "Max" or "Shaina" is *not* a therapy dog *yet*. The temperament test determines whether a canine has the personality to become a therapy dog. If all the marks are hit on the test, then it's the week-after-week of on-the-job-training that transforms our canines into the amazing creatures they are with incredible powers of healing.

It is then that our canines become therapy dogs, improving the lives of the patients they visit each week, and then a certificate is issued from our office. (The dogs proudly wear their 'at-work' red bandana, and the volunteer wears a uniform.)

The volunteer reports are testimonials how amazing our **Canine Ambassadors** are at bringing comfort and a smile to those folks residing in long-term care facilities or undergoing radiation treatments at a cancer center.

With great pride, we can all say, "My dog is a therapy dog with  
**"Paws & Hearts"** Animal Assisted Therapy!

*The Therapy Dogs, Canine Ambassadors from our Volunteer Stories*



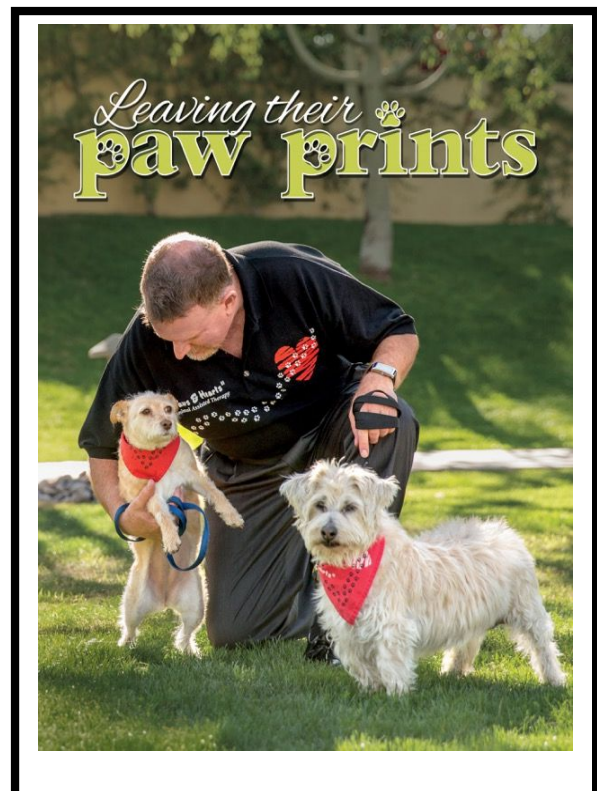
**Our Mission Statement**

*"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.

## Scruffy Waxman Memorial Fund

*I'd like to thank all of you who sent in a donation in memory of Scruffy.*

Rita Steffen	\$500.00
Dad	250.00
"Uncle" Drew	100.00
Valerie Zugates (in-kind)	250.00
Phyllis Harkins	100.00
Nick Papadakis	50.00
Mary Ann & Philip Sutherland	500.00
Jerry Abraham	100.00
Linda Jolly	50.00
Diana Finnegan	50.00
Anonymous	20.00
Anonymous	1,000.00
Karen & Joe Gebala	50.00
Sammy Rafael	1,000.00
Inge Fullerton	100.00





## 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.*

*(Pictures of all the featured dogs can be found on page 3)*

The Comprehensive Cancer Center at Desert Regional Medical Center--Mike & "Gus" Gus spent some quality time behind the reception desk on the 2nd floor. He has a large following with the staff. While we were signing in, he walked up to a couple seated with their backs to us. He stuck his nose between their shoulders, and the couple started giggling. The gentleman asked, "Well, hello, who are you?" Gus was able to visit several young kids that enjoyed shaking paws with him. There were also several regular patients, and quite a few new ones who quickly took to Gus.

Manor Care -- Gayle & "Toby" Everyone was happy to see Toby in his Santa hat, which kept falling down over his eyes. :- ) It's so uplifting to see the faces light up when patients see the dog. It is like night and day. They always look so somber, and then they see Toby and whether it's in the hallway, the PT room or their own room, their faces light up. The lady in the photo has severe CP, and her movements and speech are badly affected, but she always manages to say, "I love him" when Toby comes in. She hugs and kisses him and always has a HUGE smile on her face. This made for a great Christmas Visit!

Premier Health Care & Rehabilitation -- Suze & "Dunkin" We got all dressed up in antlers and Christmas hats and went to visit Dunkin's people on Christmas Eve day and on Christmas. We saw our favorite people, met some new friends who were visiting relatives that were thrilled to see an actual therapy dog come to visit. But the absolute best thing that happened on both visits was with a patient whose name is Connie. Connie loves Dunkin and always wants to see him, and she finally got her new legs, and we got to see her walk a little bit today. She was crying happy tears and we were crying happier tears. This is why we love volunteering with "**Paws & Hearts**".

Brookdale, Rancho Mirage -- Drew & "Maddie" Maddie was a happy camper this morning! The Rehab, Dept. construction is almost done! Our first stop was Memory Care, and the residents had finished their breakfast and were all smiles when Maddie appeared. One Lady said, "Maddie is better for me than breakfast." Everyone in long-term care had smiles and pets for Maddie. We finished up with Rehab that had only a few patients, but one Lady thought Maddie was the "Best Tonic" for her! A very good visit.

Stonewall Gardens Assisted Living -- Risa & "Shaina" We arrived at the perfect time when most of the residents had just finished dessert and were waiting for their visit. We entered the room with a round of cheers and Shaina was offered a seat at one of the tables. She found her way onto the lap of one of the residents who wasted no time in giving her kisses on her head. Shaina continued her way around the room and enjoyed going from table to table to greet each of the residents. She spent time being snuggled and caressed by the occupants of each table. She spent some extra time at the last table because one resident in particular wanted to talk about her medical issues. When it was time to leave the dining room the residents were all smiling and waving to her and made us promise to visit again next week. We then made our way down to the individual rooms. Shaina curled up at the feet of one gentleman who was very short of breath today. She has a routine with this gentleman where she sits herself down by his feet and then periodically gets up on her hind legs and places her head on his knee so that he can pet her. He gets a lot of comfort (and entertainment) out of her routine. When it was time for our visit to end the resident asked if "**Paws & Hearts**" made visits during the holiday season. I promised him that Shaina would see him next week. It is amazing the amount of love and comfort that a little dog can give!

## Our 2016 Annual Dog Walk!



Save the date for the 2017 Walk—Saturday, November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017