

“Paws & Hearts”

Animal Assisted Therapy

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FALL 2021

NEWSLETTER

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This will be a tough Newsletter to put together because “Maddie” went to the Rainbow Bridge in June, and while I’ve adopted another pup, not having my little secretary in the office with me or beside me in bed at night has been pretty awful.

We all have to say good-bye to a beloved 4-legged companion with whom we have shared a number of years with, and it never gets any easier. In Maddie’s case, it was her time to join Scruffy, Sam, and Bingo at the Rainbow Bridge. Maddie courageously battled Cushing’s Disease for two years, but sadly her time was up.

Part of this Newsletter will be devoted to her amazing 11 years as our star Canine Ambassador. Maddie visited everywhere—she started out with Scruffy at Eisenhower, moved onto Desert Regional, and wound up going every Wednesday morning to the Lucy Curci Cancer Center with Uncle Drew. She spent a few years accompanying Scruffy, and then she trained Bingo on visits. More on her life on the next page.

We have decided to postpone this year’s Dog Walk-Fundraiser until 2022, but we are going to have a Fall Fundraiser which we will talk about in the newsletter. We have two volunteers back on visits and have temperament tested new volunteer teams who are waiting to be trained and given assignments.

Let’s just hang in there a little longer!

Richard Waxman

Upcoming Events to Put on Your Calendars!

Pet Bereavement Support Group

Monthly Meetings

Second Wednesday of the month, 1 pm

22nd Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser

(We have to skip this year!)

Saturday, November 26th, 2022

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“Maddie’s” Views

(“Lucky”, “Scruffy” & “Bingo” in thought)

Dad is writing Maddie’s column this time and it is a tribute to her. It will be carried over onto the second page in pictures of her many visits over almost 11 years.

Maddie came along six months after Lucky passed away. She sure wasn’t my first choice at that November pet adopt-a-thon, I wasn’t even looking for a dog, but we all know how that goes.

And what a little pistol she was, that 8-month-old puppy. OMG, was she difficult to train or what? For exercise, she would nibble on Scruffy’s ear and run him through the house. Poor old guy! He never lost his patience with her. I was ready to return her numerous times—she chewed the corners of all the pillows on the living room sofa, and many other bad things!

However, after 6 or 7 months I took her on a visit to Eisenhower with Scruffy, where she just blossomed. It was like Lucky was inside her heart. With no training she instinctively did everything the way Lucky used to do it and from that first visit, all the puppy nonsense was gone.

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Maddie continued

Together, Maddie and Scruffy visited Eisenhower three mornings per week for a few years, and then they were asked to start visiting Desert Regional. At some point Scruffy passed away, and Maddie did visits solo for close to a year until Bad Boy Bingo came along. Maddie did her best to train Bingo, and what 'calm' Bingo didn't bring to a visit, he made up for in his enthusiastic greetings for all the patients he visited.

From Desert Regional, Maddie and Bingo spent almost 2 years visiting every Wednesday morning at the Lucy Curci Cancer Center with Uncle Drew. These three were a staple among staff and patients and always a big hit. Maddie would position herself on the ottoman, while Bingo would approach each and every patient that came into the room to say hello.

Maddie, Bingo, and I made presentations around the valley, and I remember filming the dog walk commercials at KMIR were such a treat. Maddie was the perfect dog in Thalia's arms, and Bingo was just such a ball of trouble in Bryan's arms. But amazing memories never-the-less!

Maddie went to the Rainbow Bridge in June, and it got pretty quiet around the house. All during the pandemic, Maddie came into the office and kept me company. I always referred to her as my secretary-- Lucy Carter. She was always right on her bed behind my office chair.

Maddie made countless visits in her time as the consummate *Canine Ambassador*, and she made so many people feel just a bit better from her gentle, loving visit. She is much missed by everyone, but no one more than her Dad.

Rest in peace Maddie, your memory will never be forgotten kiddo!



Volunteer Stories

As of this writing we have two volunteer teams making visits and while we've shared these stories on our Face-book page, they are very much worth reprinting in this newsletter!

After a year and a half with no pet therapy visits, last Friday we finally took a stab at life after the pandemic and a volunteer went on a visit.

Let me preface this story by saying that a lot of preparation went into this visit, and the facility worked with us to ensure the safety of their residents and our volunteer team. All the residents were masked as was the staff. The Activities Director told his group even before we arrived that they had to observe certain guidelines: face masks on at all times, no removing the mask to kiss the dog, and no giving the dogs treats.

The volunteer had her mask on the entire time and pretty much kept at the end of "Billy's" leash.

The visit went amazingly well, as you will see in the volunteer's report. Let's hope this is the start of our return to visits!

"What an amazing visit "Billy" and I just had Richard! The warmth and the love that the residents gave to Billy was just amazing! It was very clear that these dear souls had truly missed the interaction with a dog this last year and a half.

Billy worked the small group like a pro, visiting person to person, getting up close enough for many pets. He went around the circle numerous times so that everyone got a chance to visit with him as often as they wanted.

It was amazing going back on a visit after being away for so long. Even Billy acted differently—because once again he had a purpose, and as soon as his red bandanna went on, he knew he was going to make people happy! We'll be happy to visit this facility on a weekly basis Richard, once we are back in business and all the volunteers are back at it!"

And a talk with the Activities Director confirmed Kerry's report. Danny couldn't thank "Billy" and Kerry enough, and said that the whole mood of his facility was heightened this morning and that everyone, residents and staff included, were just thrilled with the visit! Keep em' coming!!!

Last week, our second volunteer team, Abril and her most adorable *Canine Ambassador* "Oliver" made a triumphant visit to Rancho Mirage Healthcare. Here is their amazing story—

I am so excited to share with you Oliver's and my experience at the new facility in Rancho Mirage. For starters Scott was very kind and happy to meet Oliver. He introduced us to Mary, the activity coordinator, also a really nice person, and she showed us around.

We visited about 10 patients today, Oliver made me so so proud of how well he behaved and how much love he gave to every single patient... oh, and to the nurses too, of course. He was very calm and gentle as usual, some people were so delighted to have him on their lap. He almost fell asleep on Jennie's lap! I kindly asked a few people to put their masks on for the pet therapy and they were happy to do so. Some of the patients were only Spanish speakers, so my Spanish came in handy.

As I was walking through the hallway with Oliver, I had the opportunity to talk to the families of two different patients, they were very thankful for Oliver's visit. They expressed how this makes such a difference in the lives of their loved ones. It definitely boosted my enthusiasm to continue doing these amazing visits, and "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," as stated in our mission.

To conclude, I am pleased to be a part of Paws & Hearts, an organization that allows me to spread love with the company of my beloved and faithful furry friend "Oliver."

Enjoy the cute pictures.

Take care, we'll be in touch. Sincerely, Abril and "Oliver"

Fall Fundraiser

Right after this newsletter is posted on our website and electronically sent to all of our volunteers and donors, we are going to follow up with a Donation Ask. In lieu of this year's Annual Dog Walk-Fundraiser and the fact that we have not asked for donations in almost 2-years, now is the time period. We really need everyone's support this fall.

We have a modest fund-raising goal of \$10,000.00 and based on the number of volunteers and donors we have, this should be very achievable.

We are gradually getting back to visits. We wish the pace were faster, but the pandemic predicts our ability to visit facilities in the valley. It is amazing to me that new volunteers have been coming into the office for temperament testing. Some of the dogs have passed, and we are just on hold to have these new volunteer teams trained.

Our Monthly Pet Loss Bereavement Group is still meeting monthly in the office and is of great help to those who attend.

So please, when you see the Donation Request, send in a check or go to our website and make a donation using Paypal. All donations will be acknowledged and greatly appreciated!

