

“Paws & Hearts”

Animal Assisted Therapy

Fed. Tax ID #91-2096569



WINTER 2024 NEWSLETTER

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“Lucky” & “Scruffy” Waxman

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Members at Large

Karen Gebala

In Memorium

Valerie Zugates

Drew Marefos

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

It is early Fall as I take pen to paper and put this next Newsletter together. I can honestly tell you all that I have not been happier to see a year come to a close, and you all know the reasons why. Let's just say next year will be better around our office!

We are ending the year with some good news—our little Volunteer Book Club is growing in numbers month by month. Not only are we all learning about some amazing books, but the volunteers who attend are really getting to know each other and truly feel a part of our group.

Yours truly made the cover of the Rancho Mirage Insider magazine.....this was all set up a year ago to promote what would have been our 23rd Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser. You can read the article on our website <https://pawsandhearts.org/docs/RMInsider23.pdf>

Speaking of our website, Linda who has been working with us on our site has created a brand-new site and it is marvelous! We launched it on November 1st, and if you haven't checked it out, please do.

May 2024 be a very good year for all of us!

- Richard Waxman

UPCOMING EVENTS

Add to your calendar!

PET BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Monthly Meetings
Second Wednesday of the Month
@ 1:00pm

VOLUNTEER BOOK CLUB

Monthly get togethers
Last Wednesday of the Month
@1:00pm at the office

“TERRY’S” VIEWS

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



The Junior Executive reporting in!
Another Newsletter for Dad to work on. Funny thing, he talks out loud as he writes. Does he think I actually understand anything other than a few basic commands? Most of which I've come to ignore anyway!

A couple of months ago Dad was putting together our yearly Holiday Card, and after trying for two weeks to pose Toby and me together, he gave up and created a card featuring the two of us and those four dogs who came before me. Isn't it enough that I have to see their pictures on the office walls and be compared to them all the time?! Sheesh....so, I'm the office mascot and not an actual therapy dog—get over it slave driver!

We've had a few wonderful new volunteers start on visits these last few months, and Dad and I are hopeful that more potential volunteers will find their way to our door. What we do is just so beneficial to the senior community in our desert!

Until our Spring Newsletter.....

“Terry” Waxman

“Paws & Hearts”

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www.facebook.com/pawsandheartsorg

NEWS! NEWS! NEWS!

In early November we were the cover/feature story in the Rancho Mirage Insider. As soon as the magazine was delivered, we were invited to be the Guest Luncheon Speaker for a women's club at Mission Hills.

Desert Newcomers was very nice to "Terry" and me. Not only is one of our longest volunteers, Karen Dorn, part of the group, but everyone was so gracious and "Terry" was just on his absolute best behavior during lunch and our presentation!

Also in November we had an advertorial in Miriam's Winter *Desert Companion Magazine*. Both articles were to come out to coincide with this year's Dog Walk, so let's hope that both magazines are as kind to us next year when we promise to have our *Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser* to mark the start of our 25th Year!!!



[Cont'd]

Back at Visits after the Pandemic

By Richard Waxman, Executive Director, "Paws & Hearts" Animal Assisted Therapy

I have had a year now since I last began visiting our local long-term care facilities, and "Paws & Hearts" has been busy with a lot of volunteer work. Each morning, our staff and our canine team—made up of our handler and our canine—visit the Comprehensive Cancer Center at Desert Regional, which opens throughout the valley year such facilities as the Vista Care Healthcare and the Vista Care Center. Prior to the pandemic, we had 4-5 more visiting regular visits. We are currently scheduling our group and now have 2-3 teams making weekly visits.

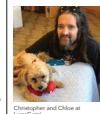
We are always looking for great pups who would like a fun job and feel great if you are a full-time resident and have the best job in town that is a minimum of one year old, appear to be healthy, and would be friendly with total strangers. This would be the perfect volunteer opportunity for the best of you. After a temporary visit and some training, you and your therapy dog team can finally be together each week.

The best way to describe the joy that can be found in these interactions is with a story I heard while training a new volunteer at the Cancer Center. We came across a woman at the waiting room, and she immediately recognized the volunteer story. She told me that a few years ago her husband had been a patient at the Vista Care Cancer Center, and he is a volunteer every day every day when he went to be for his volunteer treatment. She explained that the dog was important to him,



Richard Waxman, Executive Director, "Paws & Hearts" Animal Assisted Therapy

because when they found they couldn't have any pets. At this point, I asked her how she and her husband had been able to have the dog. She mentioned that the dog was brought to the end of the line, in a very good location and will be your dog for all the work, we'll love to hear from you!



Christopher and Chloé at Lucy's Café

All the information on becoming a volunteer can be found on our website, so we periodically visit. There are now new training videos we ask you to watch and then give a call prior to submitting a volunteer application for us. Interview: Because of the recent passage of Valerie Zugates and Drew Marlowe, there will be the Dog Walk Fundraiser this year. We are looking for our best team, so we need you to be prepared for the tremendous amount of work it would take to put this event together without their help. We will, however, be holding our Fall The Line Fundraiser once again and we ask our donors to go to our website, www.pawshands.org, click on Donations, and make donations via PayPal.

Please call us at (760) 336-1408 with any questions regarding becoming a volunteer. Our office is located at the Berger Foundation Building, 42400 Cook Street, Suite 104, Palm Desert, CA 92211.



HOMETOWN HERO AWARD

Our dear friend Randy Miller, the Modern Woodmen representative who for many years now has been a major donor and sponsor of our Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser, has presented me, Drew, and now Valerie (posthumously) with their Hometown Hero Award. Randy had planned to give this to Valerie over a year ago when we talked about having this year's walk. He gave it to me in memory of her at his office, and we remembered the moment with a photograph. The award comes with a donation for us. If anyone was deserving of this Hometown Hero Award, it was both Valerie and Drew. God bless you both for all that you did for "Paws & Hearts!"



~ Volunteer Stories ~

We are continually adding new Canine Ambassadors and their handlers--
Just a little different report this newsletter! Enjoy!!



KAREN & "TEDDY"

Many of you have heard me speak of Karen Gebala over the last 20 years. Karen is on our Board of Directors, and for all of these years she has been our proofreader. She makes what I write, sound so much better! Karen and her husband live in Scottsdale, but it is like they live around the corner the way we are always in touch.

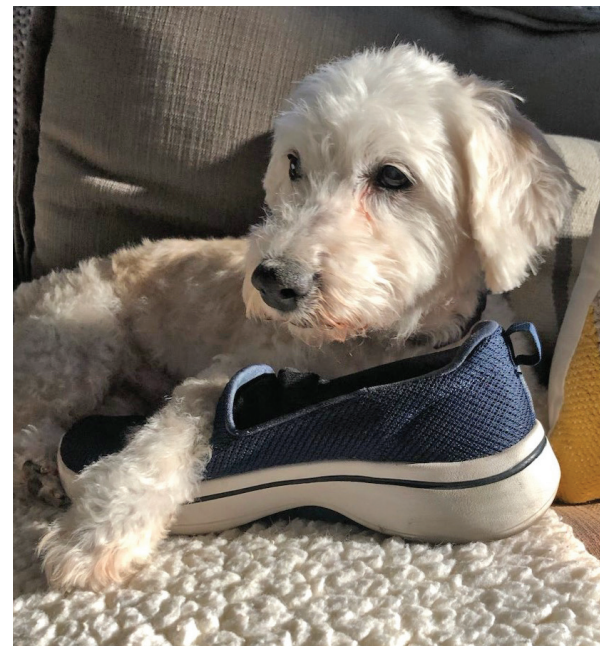
Karen started out 20 years ago when she and Joe had just moved here as a volunteer with their then dog, "Felicia." But life took them back to the Bay Area and various other addresses before their current one. Her commitment has never waived, and she is always there for us!

Karen has been a volunteer at her local animal shelter for two years now, and she actually works on mobile adoptions at a Petsmart. Week after week Karen would email pictures of dogs she would socialize and walk and assist in getting adopted. Every week I'd hear, "Look at who I fell in love with this week!" I figured it was only a matter of time until the inevitable happened, and she truly fell in love with a dog.

Enter this guy....."Teddy." This is the name Karen and Joe gave him. He had been found as an abandoned dog and rescued by the shelter. Turns out that Teddy is a senior dog. He is around 10 years old, with a few health issues, none of which were an obstacle for this adoption to take place. And these picture are the 'after' pics, after a couple of weeks in the Gebala household and a trip to the groomer.

I always knew that Karen was special, but to adopt a senior dog with special needs just moves her up the scale in my books! "Teddy" gets to live out the rest of his life in the lap of luxury with amazing pet parents who will love and treasure him 24/7! He was in the right place at the right time for Karen to come along. As we say in Yiddish, '*bashert*' meant to be.

Good luck "Teddy", you are some lucky pooch!



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.



"Paws & Hearts"

42-600 Cook Street, Ste. 138
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Palm Desert, CA 92211

PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Volunteer Book Club

This summer we started a Volunteer Book Club and we meet the last Wednesday of the month at the office at 1pm.

Our Book Club is different from traditional book clubs in that instead of being assigned a book that everyone has to read (and half the group doesn't care for), everyone brings in a book they have recently read and they make a presentation about it. This has been a lovely way for everyone to learn about new books they may never have come across and to share their own volunteer stories with other attendees!

The other difference with our group.....every month a different volunteer brings in his or her Canine Ambassador to introduce to the group and tell about the facility they visit and what makes their pup so special!

We hope that more of you will join because so far we are having a very good time of it!

If you want to attend please RSVP
pawsandhearts@aol.com