

“Paws & Hearts”

Animal Assisted Therapy

Fed. Tax ID #91-2096569

SUMMER/FALL 2011

NEWSLETTER

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“Paws & Hearts”

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Executive Director’s Message

Most of you who are familiar with “Paws & Hearts” are aware that “Lucky” passed away in June. Suffice to say that my life has been turned upside down by the loss of my little boy. I always figured “Lucky” and I would be doing this forever, wishful thinking on my part.

I had almost finished the Summer newsletter and in it I talked about “Lucky” having had walking-pneumonia, getting better, and only working Wednesday’s at Eisenhower. For weeks after he passed away I couldn’t bring myself to redo the newsletter and write about him, so I’ve made this the Summer/Fall issue and the article on The Comprehensive Cancer Center at Desert Regional, and our two Duroville Canine Ambassadors will appear in our next issue.

A lot of this newsletter will be a remembrance to “Lucky” who trained most of the volunteers over the years. We’ve all lost dogs over the past, but losing this one, my business partner, companion and king-pin has been devastating.

Richard Waxman

Upcoming Events to Put on Your Calendars!

**Annual Halloween Dog Costume Party at Vista Cove
Saturday, October 29th**

**Volunteer Fall Training
Jocelyn Senior Center
Saturday, October 15th
All volunteers required to attend!**

**11th Annual Dog Walk/
Fundraiser
Saturday December 3rd
Westin Mission Hills Resort**

“Scruffy’s Views

Hi Everyone: Watching Dad take Lucky’s name off this column was one of the hardest things I’ve had to do. He just doesn’t seem to understand that tears will clog up the keyboard! But more important, no one will ever forget “Lucky”, not me, the big brother, or Samantha the cat, or any of the thousands of patients Lucky visited over 9 years at Eisenhower Medical Center.

Dad took a few weeks off from visits and Uncle Drew took me around and we had a good time, but now Dad is back and he is having a really hard time whenever someone says, “Where is that little white dog?” I almost wish I could verbalize because I’d do the answering for Dad. Everyone means well, but this is a very hard transition.

Most of the staff have come over to express their condolences to us and share their memories of Lucky, but the most heart-felt story we heard was from a woman in the lobby a couple of weeks ago. This woman looked at me and asked, “Where’s your brother, the little white dog?” Dad explained that Lucky had passed away and the woman was devastated. She told us that a year ago when she was a patient Lucky and I were up on her bed and that Lucky layed across her chest and kissed her face over and over and made her feel so much better, and she was going in for surgery and was so hoping for another visit. I offered up my services for which she was grateful, but you could tell that she wanted Lucky as well. He is sure a tough act to follow, and Dad is lousy at tug-of-war. Lucky always gave me a good run for my money!

“Scruffy” Waxman

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“Lucky” Waxman—The End of an Era at “Paws & Hearts”

Richard Waxman, Executive Director “Paws & Hearts” and Dad

Twelve years ago, July 4th I was looking at a condo and this little white poodle mix jumped right up into my arms. No collar, full of fleas and ticks, it was apparent he’d been abandoned. He saw the word sucker engraved on my forehead and home we went.

Didn’t take long before I named him Lucky, because I thought I was very lucky that he found me. In Yiddish we have a word, ‘*buschert*’ and it means, *meant-to-be*, and if ever two lives were meant to collide it was Lucky’s and mine. For the next twelve years, Lucky was at my side, actually up in my right arm as we built “Paws & Hearts” Animal Assisted Therapy. Lucky was the founder, I was just the executive director.

Lucky was still a puppy when we were invited to Valencia Palms Nursing Home in Indio. Lucky turned out to be marvelous on the beds with the patients and the Desert Sun sent a writer and photographer on our next visit, and when the story and photograph ran in the paper, our journey together began!

Potential volunteers read about Lucky’s visits and they wanted to take their dogs on visits and what I thought would become a hobby, quickly became a full-time career. Lucky and I began making presentations to the Activities Directors at local nursing homes about a new program, temperament tests were conducted, and Lucky’s visits became *training visits* for the new volunteers.

Very quickly an office in Palm Desert opened, a board of directors was assembled, and Lucky and I began making presentations at local rotaries and service clubs. Gino Lamont from KMIR 6 had us on his morning show a dozen times that first year, and the response from potential volunteers, donors and facilities was overwhelming. We were on our way, and the next decade of my life flew by in a heart-beat!

We were asked to visit the Oncology floor on Wednesday afternoons at Eisenhower Medical Center and a couple of years into it, we began visiting 3 times per week so that all the floors were covered. My second dog, “Scruffy” came along, and after some intense training by his older brother, he began going on visits with us, and the two of them worked like a well-oiled machine, Lucky always the star, and Scruffy a very happy Ethel Mertz, the second banana.

The past Spring Lucky developed a cough that just would not go away. Many trips to the vet, many medications later, Lucky passed away very suddenly June 28th from a tumor on his liver that ruptured.

I can’t remember a time when Lucky wasn’t under my arm at Eisenhower. We’d enter a patient’s room and I’d say, “Lucky and Scruffy are here to visit. Would you like them on your bed?” And Lucky would lay across the patients chest and Scruffy would snuggle in along-side their leg. I never thought this would ever change, but sadly it has. Scruffy has become Numero Uno now at Eisenhower and he does his older brother proud visiting with the patients and making them feel better. Not a visit goes by that someone doesn’t ask, “Where is the little white dog?” and as much as that hurts, just knowing that Lucky is missed is thanks enough for the memories he made over 9 years, and an estimated 32,000 individual room visits.

To watch a video of Lucky and Scruffy at work, and to see what your dog could do as a Canine Ambassador please visit our website at: www.pawsandhearts.org click on Lucky at the top, go to his Memorial Page, and click on his video.

Rest in peace Luck, your work and your legacy will never be forgotten!

Plans for our 11th Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser

A tribute to our founder, "Lucky" Waxman



This year's walk will be very bitter-sweet as it will be the first one without "Lucky" the founder of the organization. We are going to make this walk a celebration of his life and the legacy he left behind by creating such an amazing organization.

Year after year our annual dog walk/fundraiser attracts more and more participants and we are hoping that this year many of the patients that Lucky and Scruffy visited over the years at Eisenhower Medical Center will come out in remembrance of Lucky.

The walk will once again be hosted by the Westin Mission Hills in Rancho Mirage and their spectacular setting will make for another wonderful event. As usual we will have our amazing raffle, complimentary continental breakfast, a performance by the famous *Muttley Crew*, and numerous vendors.

Please start collecting pledges in your dog's name and don't forget to turn in your coins.....we are asking that all walkers bring in their loose change and drop it in our coin jars. Every walker with change will receive an extra raffle ticket for free for their spare change!

Save the date: Saturday, December 3rd Registration begins at 9am, the walk at 10am!

Upcoming Events and Fundraisers

Upcoming events and fundraisers that the board has put together for our volunteers and folks in the community will be listed by date and function. It will be noted whether the event is open only to volunteers or the entire community. All upcoming events will be board approved and hosted through the office of "Paws & Hearts."

Annual Halloween Dog Costume Party

Vista Cove at Rancho Mirage
Saturday, October 29th, 10 am
Open for everyone to attend!

Save the Date of our 2011 Annual DogWalk/Fundriaser

In Memory of "Lucky"

Saturday, December 3rd

*Westin Mission Hills Resort, Rancho Mirage, CA
Registration begins at 9am, Dog Walk at 10am*

"As Good As New" Official Thrift Stores for "Paws & Hearts"

Please be sure to visit our thrift shop, *As Good As New* located at 44 855 San Pablo Ave. #3, Palm Desert, behind the Angel View Thrift Shop, (760) 341-4660. The store is full of great items and the merchandise changes daily.

As Good As New is a terrific way to generate donations for our organization. A whopping 50% of all sales are a donation to us, so your purchases are very important, and your donations of household goods keeps a customer coming back.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO SEE GARAGE SALES IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, PLEASE CONSIDER ASKING THE SELLER IF THEY WOULD DONATE THEIR UNSOLD GOODS TO US. WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO ARRANGE PICK UP.

Keep in mind that we are able to *pick up* all of your large donations, so items such as furniture, televisions, even computers can benefit us, but please keep in mind that all items must be in *working* and *saleable condition*. So next time you are cleaning out the house, please give us a call and we will be only too happy to schedule a pick up!

Hours of Operation: Monday – Saturday 10 – 5, Sunday 11 – 4, (760) 341-4660

Volunteer Stories

A few 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.

Comprehensive Cancer Center at Desert Regional Joe, "Bob" & "Zoso": "Bob" does not know he is a dog. On this day there were two patients waiting for treatment sitting on the chairs in the waiting room, with one vacant chair between them. "Bob" climbed into the empty chair, sat down, and laid his paw across the arm of the chair towards the lady next to him. She rubbed his ear and it was very clear that both created a bond. When it came time for her to go with the attendant to get treatment, she gave "Bob" a big hug. I think he wanted to stay!

The Lucy Curci Cancer Center at Eisenhower Ruth & "Jesse": Very busy day.....big backup. I think that a number of patients went away for the weekend and were being fitted in. "Jesse" was great for the first hour and a half.....after that he went into a corner and fell asleep!

Don & "Scrappy": Every Wednesday when I arrive at Lucy Curci I run into a patient that has finished his daily treatment and is on his way out. He always stops and pets "Scrappy" and thanks me and we chat for a few minutes. The difference about this particular patient is that we do all of this visiting in the parking garage. Pretty cool huh?!

Eisenhower Medical Center Drew, "Lucky" & "Scruffy": My first visit in sometime to Eisenhower, proved again the great value the "Paws & Hearts" service provides to the healthcare community. Every one of the patients visited were so appreciative of the visit by "Lucky" and "Scruffy", that for a few minutes their focus was directed away from their illnesses and towards a warm, furry, loving visitor with a cold nose and warm heart. One patient stood out from the others, a young man, foreign and unable to speak English, who at first did not interact with "Scruffy" until he felt a warm paw on his chest.....and then I saw a faint smile grow into a full-blown smile, and then the petting began, and continued until we had to say goodbye.....that's what Animal Assisted Therapy is all about! (This was one of Lucky's last visits at Eisenhower)

Eisenhower Five Star Club Nancy & "Katie": "Katie" had a great time with the patients. She loves to be there. There were some new faces that thoroughly enjoyed petting her and watching her tricks. It really feels good when I can get a laugh from people that don't have much to laugh about.

Monterey Palms Health Care & Rehabilitation Carol & "Sophie": "Sophie" and I spent an hour and a half so that we could spend more time with all the FRIENDS! They enjoy seeing "Sophie" and she shows her love by licking their legs and wagging her tail fearsly! She spends time on their beds if they want and she may take a short nap as we visit and talk. Most of them have had dogs, and they like to tell me about their pets. It is an HONOR to make them smile and to listen to their stories of families and pets!

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.



Lucky Waxman

July 4, 1998 – June 28, 2011

"Lucky" the true founder of "Paws & Hearts" passed away on Tuesday morning after a tumor was discovered on his liver.

For those valley residents who were patients at Eisenhower Medical Center over the last 9 years you probably received a visit from Lucky and his brother Scruffy. Lucky loved nothing better than to lay across the patients chest, settle in and make

them feel better. And when he heard those golden words, "you made my day!" he knew he'd done a good deed.

Over the years we have received hundreds of cards and notes at the office praising Lucky for his 3 weekly visits at Eisenhower. I think the sweetest words I heard were from a gentleman who shared his story, "My wife was in the hospital and you brought two small dogs into the room. The white one (Lucky) layed across her chest and never wanted to go. My wife really didn't like dogs, but for the last two weeks of her life all she talked about was how Lucky made her feel better."

Lucky trained all the incoming canine ambassadors and was known by patients and Eisenhower staff on a first name basis. Lucky never tired of wearing his red bandanna and going from room to room on visits. He made countless presentations to local service clubs, schools and groups throughout the valley. He was interviewed more on KMIR 6 more than any other dog and loved being on camera!

If Lucky could, he would like to thank everyone at Palm Desert Animal Hospital, especially Dr. Terry Hicks for working so hard these last few months to make him all better.

A special memorial fund has been set up in Lucky's memory and if you'd like to send a remembrance in his honor please send it to: Lucky c/o "Paws & Hearts" 74-854 Velie Way, Ste. 7, Palm Desert, CA 92260. A video of Lucky at work can be viewed at www.pawsandhearts.org

This Canine Ambassador will be missed and remembered for years to come by everyone whose life he touched and none more so than his heart-broken father.

Rest in peace Luck, you leave the world much loved, your work will never be forgotten.