

“Paws & Hearts”

Animal Assisted Therapy

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SPRING 2013

NEWSLETTER

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Executive Director’s Message

It has been a crazy few months for me. For those of you who read our quarterly newsletters, you are aware there was no Winter issue. I had every intention of writing one, but I had minor foot surgery in January, and while the surgery was nothing, the healing process is still ongoing. Getting back into the office, going on visits, and temperament testing is finally falling back into place. So, here is the new issue!

The board and I have grappled with the ever-increasing costs of mailing out the newsletter. Years ago I received an average 25 newsletters per month in the mail from other organizations. The number of printed newsletters has decreased to just a trickle as most organizations are sending all of their print pieces electronically. I keep fighting this trend, but from a financial stand-point it makes sense to switch to on-line delivery.

Those of you on our mailing list will have already received a mailing asking you for your email address which we will add you to our electronic list. We will do two in-house mailings per year to stay in touch with everyone, but will electronically send newsletters to you. As always, the newsletters will be available on our website, in a much nicer/friendlier format.

I hope you will continue to support us through this change!

Richard Waxman

Upcoming Events to Put on Your Calendars!

“Take Your Dog to the Movies”

Cinemas Palme D’Or

August, 2013

(check our website for updates)

13th Annual Dog Walk/

Fundraiser

Saturday November 30th

Westin Mission Hills Resort

“Scruffy’s Views”

I think I need to go on strike! Dr. Hicks wanted me to lose 5 pounds, and thanks to Dad’s persistence I’ve done it. . . trim waist, smaller tooshy, and ribs that you can now feel! However, this diet has become really old. Can’t I go back to the treats in each and every room while on a visit? Where is the reward for doing all this work?

Okay, I know the reward is in how special “Maddie” and I make the patients at Eisenhower Medical Center feel during our three weekly visits. But sheesh, a few treats wouldn’t hurt that much!

These last few months with Dad being laid up from surgery “Maddie” and I have had to do only 2-weekly visits, because “Andy” our favorite Westie has been doing the Tuesday visits. Wednesdays Uncle Drew has been taking us, and Thursdays Uncle Ralph has been our escort. Dad needs to take a few lessons from Drew and Ralph.....they are so much easier and visit at a slower pace!

“Maddie” and I met a young man, Chris, last fall at Eisenhower. Chris is a cancer patient, and he and “Maddie” got along like they were long-lost friends. We’ve seen Chris off and on for months now, and while we are so very sorry he is not well, spending time with him and his Dad is just a lot of fun. On our Thursday visits Chris always saves a container of maple syrup from his breakfast tray, and he is pretty generous dipping his finger into it and letting me lick it off . . . a whole lot better than stale dog treats!

“Scruffy” Waxman

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Highlighting our Incredible Volunteer Teams

In this issue we are highlighting an incredible **Canine Volunteer** who passed away last year. "Annie" had been a volunteer for eight years visiting the residents at Atria at Palm Desert and being part of the Paws to Read Library reading program at The Thousand Palms Library. Her mother Ellen shared her story with us for our Memorial Wall and here it is.....

I am okay to write about my Annie because it really helps, but not sure where to start. So, here goes. My husband and I got her as an 8 week-old puppy in early 1997. We couldn't do enough to keep her entertained. She was a great bundle of puppy energy that wouldn't quit. She was of course very smart and learned her commands and good manners quickly. When we brought in another puppy, Annie was already two, and she would always let us know if Daisy was chewing or doing something she shouldn't be by licking me profusely.

When I heard about Animal Assisted Therapy and the "Paws & Hearts" organization, I jumped at the chance. We temperament tested with Richard and she of course passed immediately. We were assigned to The Atria Palm Desert Senior Living Community and continued visits there for about 8 years. Annie loved every minute of our weekly visits. She seemed to feel very at home there. She would greet, take a treat, do some tricks, but when I was talking one-on-one with a resident, Annie would quietly lay at their feet, (of course this was only after she explored and sniffed the entire room!) I called her Inspector Annie, always on the job! My other nick names for her were Annabelle, Annie Bananie, The Regal Beagle and Annie Get Your Gun—this one usually to make the residents understand me when I introduced her. A few of them always call her, "Annie Get Your Gun."



She loved, loved, loved kids. She did very well when we started doing the library visits (pictured above.) She was happiest when surrounded by a bunch of children, all petting her, cooing to her and making her the center of attention. Annie was very patient when the children read their books to her, all the while petting her, trying to keep her entertained.

Halloween was Annie's favorite holiday. She always answered the door with me, and stepped out to be with the kids with a big 'ol smile on her face! Sometimes she would try to leave with them, unnoticed by Mom!

I am so glad we both got to know you and be a part of your vision!

Ellen

The kind of canines we need!

I've been writing this newsletter for thirteen years now, and it is one of the many responsibilities of being the Executive Director I enjoy the most. It allows me to reflect on the last quarter and share my thoughts with you, our readers and donors.

I don't know how many times I write about the kind of dogs that make good therapy dogs, but it seems as though I have to once again talk about the kind of dogs that are suited for this type of volunteer work.

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. Unfortunately, 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 is able to share with total strangers who are residing in long-term care facilities, are undergoing cancer treatments, or are in the hospital.

So, once again, let me give you a few tips about what makes for a really good therapy dog. 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 visit, and 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.

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.

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 we visit. "Kinsey" one of our longest-running volunteers visits Windsor Court every week and is an incredible dog with the patients/residents. "Kinsey" knows just exactly who to give a kiss to and whose lap to place his paw in. "Kinsey" is a real pro!

The dogs must pass a temperament test prior to being assigned to a facility, and many of the dogs that come in, just don't make the grade. If I had a dime for every potential human volunteer that looked lovingly at their pooch and commented, "Isn't my dog adorable?" I could have retired years ago! Rather, than cute (but cute is always a plus) bring me 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, give a kiss on command, and just let me think that I am the best thing he or she has seen since a T-bone steak, then we will have 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.

Our Volunteer Job Description is as follows:

Very simply put.....your job description is to provide the most sincere, heart-felt patient visits that you and your canine can provide. Remember to listen to the patients, and let them do the talking! Your Canine Ambassador will do the rest of the work!

"Lucky" Waxman Memorial Fund

This was Lucky's last visit day at Eisenhower Medical Center, (May 2011.)



Thank you all for your very generous donations in "Lucky's" memory, which currently totals \$4,200.00. This list keeps growing and every note received and the sentiments expressed are sincerely appreciated.

"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.

Eisenhower, Lucy Curci Cancer Center Bruce & “Kinsey”: One of the patients today was in a wheelchair and crying when she came into the reception room. Kinsey enthusiastically greeted her and licked the tears from her cheeks. Her face went from one of sadness to a big smile, at least for a few moments!

California Nursing & Rehabilitation Jonathan & “Zoe”: When we entered the facility, Daniel, the long-term resident that wants to baby-sit Zoe was sitting in the lobby all dressed up. Turns out it was his birthday and he was waiting for his sister to pick him up for lunch. He got dressed early because he didn’t want to miss Zoe and asked if it was okay to take her to lunch because she was his special buddy! He finally agreed that it was more important for Zoe to visit the other residents so he would have to go along without her.

The Fountains at the Carlotta Cathy & “Zoey”: One of Zoey’s favorite patients, Jody, had changed sections and rooms. I was told by the staff that Jody was waiting for Zoey. We started down the long hallway and Zoey went past every room unit she ran into a room with a purple comforter on the bed. She sniffed and looked all around the room, but no one was there. A few minutes later we found Jody down the hallway in her wheelchair, and she said that was her room with the purple comforter on the bed!

The Comprehensive Cancer Treatment Center at Desert Regional Joe, “Bob” & “Zoso”: My neighbor is selling their home and while walking the boys, the realtor recognized us. We had visited her brother at the hospital. She told me how wonderful it was when “Bob” put his front paws up on the bed so her brother could pet him. She said my boys rocked her world! She thanked me so much for being there with her brother, who passed away shortly after our visit.

Eisenhower Medical Center Richard, “Scruffy” & “Maddie”: Ralph came along and acted as escort, and as always we had a great time. Scruffy went solo to mental health, but breakfast had already been cleared away and he was majorly disappointed that there were no eggs on the floor!

We saw three lovely children on 4E, one 6-month old boy who became so animated when we put the dogs on the bed that he just went wild!

Saw other lovely patients, but the nicest was the nurse we saw yesterday in Renker. We went back to check on her again today and she couldn’t have been more appreciative. Ralph took a bunch of pictures of the guys on the bed with her and we are going to email them to her!

Lovely, lovely finish to a very busy 4-day visitation week for my two kids!

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.

Our 12th Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser Wrap-Up

Our Annual Walk last December was truly the best one to date! Not only did the weather co-operate like it never has before, but the walkers, donors, and our supporters turned out in record number for a wonderful event! Our gift baskets were over the top, and raffle ticket sales were the best they've ever been!

Everyone worked very hard to make this event outstanding from our Board of Directors, to the students from Palm Springs High School.

Of all the wonderful things that happened, a big thanks goes to Eisenhower Medical Center's 2 East. This floor took it upon themselves to sell paw-prints as a way of raising donations. The paw-prints wrapped around the nurse's station and had to end up at the fire hydrant! What an innovative way to raise donations for us.



Watch upcoming Newsletters for information on our 13th Annual Dog Walk-Fundraiser,
Saturday, November 30, 2013.