

# **“Paws & Hearts”**

**Animal Assisted Therapy**

*Fed. Tax ID #91-20965*

**SUMMER 2015**

**NEWSLETTER**

## Board of Directors

### *President:*

Virginia Tillmannshofer

### *Vice President:*

Richard Waxman  
Executive Director  
“Paws & Hearts”

### *Founder:*

“Lucky” Waxman

### *Secretary/Treasurer*

Danielle Barton,  
Branch Retail Executive  
BBVA Compass Bank

Jack Poyfair, LVN  
Executive Director  
Vista Cove at Rancho  
Mirage

Anita Jameson  
Retired Educator

Early Spring 2015 at the time of this writing and it is already 101 degrees out. Ouch! I think we are in for a very long, hot summer here in the desert.

So many things to share with our volunteers, donors and followers this year as we spend some time looking back at how “Paws & Hearts” began. Our first volunteer and board member shared with us his thoughts in a lovely letter which we’ve included here, and in our Summer mailing.

For those of you that Facebook you know that our Facebook page is up and running and we do weekly updates highlighting a volunteer or special event each and every Monday. If you haven’t ‘liked us’ on Facebook, please do!

I’ve said it before and will say it again, I can’t believe that almost 15 years have flown by like a fast moving train—scenes of visits with patients, temperament tests, trainings, special events, health fairs, a dance competition, dog walks, etc. etc. Thank God there are pictures and in some cases videos to help with the memories.

Actually I don’t need any pictures, I have most of this logged in my head, even though it is passing by much too fast. Enjoy this Newsletter!

*Richard Waxman*

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

**Annual Volunteer Meeting**  
**Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup>, 9:00 am**  
**Joslyn Center**

**15<sup>th</sup> Annual Dog Walk/  
Fundraiser**  
**Saturday November 28th**  
**Westin Mission Hills Resort**

**“Take Your Dog to the Movies”**  
**Cinemas Palme D’Or**  
**Early December 2015**

**“Paws & Hearts” 74-854 Velie Way, Ste. 7**  
**Palm Desert, CA 92260**

**(760) 836-1406 fax (760) 836-1426**

**E-Mail: [Pawsandhearts@aol.com](mailto:Pawsandhearts@aol.com)**

**Website: [www.pawsandhearts.org](http://www.pawsandhearts.org)**

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

## **“Scruffy & Maddie’s” Views**

This is a very personal note that I find myself having to write. Seems that I’m almost 14 years old and walking the halls at Eisenhower two or three mornings a week is now too much for me. Sheesh, no one ever told me that I was going to become an old dog.....hating this!

So, Dad decided that I really couldn’t retire yet, and there was a day that Lucy Curci Cancer Center needed a therapy dog, and I’m it! Dad and I agreed that I could just as easily sleep on the ottoman in the Radiation Waiting room as sleep at home. This way I get to wear my working bandana, and I get to visit with patients and tell them about my 13 years of room-to-room visits at the hospital. My young sister “Maddie” can do the heavy work at the hospital.

It isn’t so bad actually. A few weeks ago Eisenhower Medical Center had their Annual Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon and I was invited. Not only did I get to chisel some of the grilled chicken off Dad’s plate, but I was formally introduced and thanked for my years of volunteering by the Director of Volunteer Services, Rhiannon Howell. It was great to get a big round of applause from all the other volunteers when Dad held me up in his arms. . . . a happy hound indeed!

Don’t worry Dad, we have many more visits left together!

**“Scruffy & Maddie” Waxman**

*As we work through our Celebratory 15<sup>th</sup> year of service we will share stories, photos and reminiscences of our journey.*

*Our very first volunteer and one of our original board members Dan Aubuchon, the long-time tennis pro at Bighorn, gave us his thoughts in the form of this letter.....*

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My journey with "Paws & Hearts" actually began in The Woodlands Texas a year before "Paws & Hearts" began. I had a new puppy in my life, a very calm and mellow Golden Retriever named Ace. On a visit to my vet's office, she commented on what a calm and gentle puppy Ace was, and how he would be a great therapy dog. My first reaction was, I am loving this puppy and I don't want to give him up as a therapy dog. The vet then explained to me about Animal Assisted Therapy and gave me a brochure for Therapy Pet Pals of Texas. I attended a recruiting event and on Ace's first birthday he made his first visit to an assisted living facility in our town. He was a natural and soon the highlight of our week were the visits to our friends in this facility.

A year later my work brought me back to the desert and I was thrilled to be here again enjoying the beautiful weather. But something was missing in our lives. Ace and I really missed the Animal Assisted Therapy work that we had done in Texas. I was searching for something in the desert with no luck and even started to research what it would take to start an Animal Assisted Therapy program on my own. Then I had the good fortune to read an article in the Desert Sun about a gentleman who was starting an Animal Assisted Therapy program here in the Coachella Valley. I called and made an appointment to meet with Richard Waxman.

That interview and temperament test for Ace was VERY interesting. I knew Ace was a natural for this so I was not worried about meeting Richard. We met in the office on Date Palm and met Richard and Lucky. Ace and Lucky hit it off and began playing while Richard and I talked about his vision for "Paws & Hearts" and some of my experiences with Animal Assisted Therapy in Texas. Meanwhile Ace and Lucky were in the process of destroying a stuffed toy with a vigorous game of tug of war! I was not sure Richard was buying my description of Ace as a gentle mellow dog. Happily Richard accepted us as volunteers for "Paws & Hearts," and I later found out we were the first volunteers in this wonderful new organization.

In the early days of "Paws & Hearts" we often would visit a variety of facilities as Richard was growing the organization with new facilities all the time and sometimes we had more sites needing volunteers than we had available. Ace and I visited a day care for handicapped and able-bodied children, assisted-living facilities in Palm Springs, a facility for Alzheimer's in Rancho Mirage, and a variety of senior facilities in Palm Desert. My work took me away from the desert in the summer, but I can tell you that the highlight of each return to the desert was the call to Richard to ask the question "Where do you need Ace and I to visit?"

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Please don't forget to email us your email addresses so that we can include you in our data base. Thanks to everyone for your support of our on-line Newsletter.

..... Dan Aubuchon cont'd

A few years after our volunteer work began I had the opportunity to join the Board of Directors of "Paws & Hearts". This was a very special time for me. It allowed me to better understand the work and commitment of Richard and the other members of the board. It also gave me a better understanding of the amazing good that "Paws & Hearts" was doing throughout the valley. The stories of our volunteers, two-legged and four-legged, bringing joy to so many people made me proud to be part of such a great organization.

As I reflect on the last 15 years, there are three things that stand out to me about the story of "Paws & Hearts" Animal Assisted Therapy.

First is the amount of good will and good work that the volunteers do for people in unfortunate circumstances. Every volunteer has countless stories of the smiles and joy that our Canine Ambassadors bring to the people we visit.

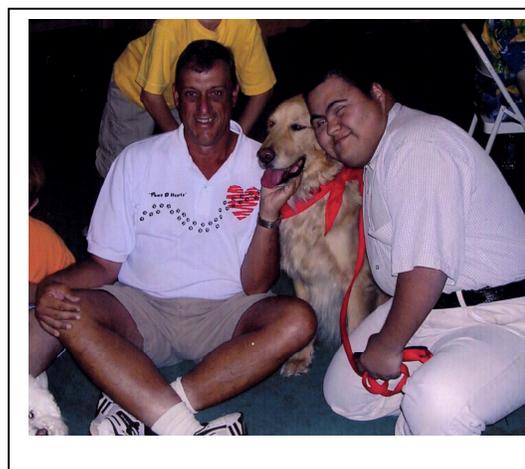
Second is the wonderful time with our pets. My dog Ace would absolutely go crazy when he saw the red bandana come out of the closet. There was nothing Ace enjoyed more than our time visiting our friends at so many places here in the valley. When Ace died 10 years into the program, I missed the time we spent with "Paws & Hearts" volunteering. Two years later I adopted Sherlock, and he and I again joined into the great world of "Paws & Hearts". Unfortunately personal and work issues have kept us from participating in the program the last two seasons, but I still think there is no better way you can spend time with your pet than in volunteering to bring the joy and love of a great dog to people who are in need of this love.

And finally, I must say an enormous thank you to Richard Waxman. I have seen Richard from the time that "Paws & Hearts" was just an idea in an empty office to the large and thriving organization that it is now. I am fortunate to have worked on the board with Richard and to have an insider's understanding of the commitment and passion and drive that allowed "Paws & Hearts" to come into being and to continue to grow and provide such a wonderful service to the valley. "Paws & Hearts" is about the volunteers and the people we visit, but there is an enormous amount of work that goes into keeping this organization operating. Without Richard Waxman there is no "Paws & Hearts" Animal Assisted Therapy.

*Thank you Richard, from me, Ace and Sherlock!!!!!!*



"Lucky" & "Ace" the first day they met!



"Ace" & Dan at a very early visit.

### *A Good-bye to a very Special Canine Ambassador*

"Zoey" the *Bernese* Mountain dog moved to the valley last summer with her Mom Kim, and they came into the office for a temperament test. Having never worked with this breed, I had no idea what to expect.....I needn't have worried, Zoey was one of *the* most lovely dogs I had ever met.

Zoey quickly became an amazing *Canine Ambassador* not only Saturday mornings as part of our *Paws to Read* program at the Palm Springs Library, but also as a weekly fixture at Windsor Court, a long-term care facility.

Zoey visited every Wednesday morning, greeting residents in the lobby, the activities room, in private suites, and the Memory Care section. Zoey would take Kim into room after room to spend time with the residents who could no longer have pets of their own. *The residents always marveled at how Zoey would look directly into their eyes!* She had an amazing ability to make these folks smile and feel good when petting her.

There were hundreds of pictures of Zoey taken with the residents and they graced the walls, the elevator, and the rooms of these folks. Zoey will be very much missed by her friends at Windsor Court and will be a very tough act to follow. I'm sure Zoey is up in heaven right now, giving classes in Animal Assisted Therapy, teaching other pups how to make visits!



### 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.*

Lucy Curci Cancer Center, Richard & “Scruffy”: So this is semi-retirement? Lying on the ottoman and having patients come over and ooh and awe over how cute I am for 2 hours on Wednesday mornings? I can handle this! After 13 years of pounding the floors in the hospital, lying around on these visits is not so bad. I still get to wear my red bandana and have patients and staff chat with me and ask questions about my long career as a Therapy Dog. If only I could write a book and really retire with the proceeds! “Scruffy”

Vista Cove at Rancho Mirage, Nancy “Quincey” & “Higgins”: Today several residents spontaneously passed Quincey's leash from one to another so that they could take turns petting and talking to him. At least ten ladies were sitting in a semi-circle and participated in this group love-in. It has taken several months, but now most long-term residents realize that each will have the opportunity to commune with and touch Higgins or Quincey during our visits. I still have a catch in my throat whenever a resident who is 'snoozing' in his/her chair responds to my voice, opens their eyes, sees a fuzzy white dog being held right in front of them and emits an oh, or a hi there, or a similar sound of contentment. And, of course, there are the responses to Higgins who frequently jumps onto any open couch or armchair space next to any resident so that he can lean into the person's leg, arm or belly. Usually I hear, “Well, make yourself quite comfortable!”

Telecare, Karen & “Brownie”: Brownie knows this clinic very well now, and actually gets excited as we approach. This week, although we had some new patients, there were still some patients from last week. Everyone was excited to greet Brownie! Due to their excitement a couple of the patients continued to get overly excited in their play with Brownie, one patient tried to lay on top of Brownie, and became a little rough, but Brownie remained calm. Again, there was a lot of tugging and pulling on Brownie, but she remained very calm, and received hugs and kisses. I continued to encourage good behavior with her and animals in general, and the patients seemed to understand. A few added comments of how to take care of a dog. We went over the care and treatment, how to pet, and how to give a treat. At the end, the patients all lined up to give Brownie her last hug and kiss before we left!

Mission Hills at Rancho Mirage, Marie & “Buster”: We started our visit at our normal time and found most of the residents to be sitting around sleeping. Buster has a way of waking them up! Two of the ladies, Lucy and Mary, just think he is better than chocolate cake! He certainly has a way with women, that's for sure! Buster has been doing this now for such a long time that he guides me, and he knows EXACTLY what doors he should go to! This morning as I got dressed he waited patiently to see what top I was reaching for-- because if it's that white polo shirt it's all over—he knows he is going to visit his favorite ladies in their long-term care facility!

#### 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.

*We are in the process of planning for our*

**15<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL DOG WALK-FUNDRAISER**

**SATURDAY NOVEMBER 28, 2015**

**MARK THE DATE ON YOUR CALENDARS**

**IT TRULY WILL BE A**

**CELEBRATION OF 15 YEARS OF WORK!**

