

“Paws & Hearts”

Animal Assisted Therapy

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FALL 2013

NEWSLETTER

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Executive Director’s Message

Is summer ever going to loosen its grip on us poor desert rats this season? What started out as a lovely, cool August has sure given way to hot, humid weather; rains, fires and mud-slides. Sheesh, time for fall to arrive!

As always “Scruffy” and “Maddie” and I have kept busy with our weekly visits to Eisenhower Medical Center. Uncle Drew has been a big help taking one of the visits each week and sending in very spirited volunteer reports. The *guys* and I have filled in a few times at the Lucy Curci Cancer Center and hear nothing but words of praise and thank-you’s for providing our *Canine Ambassadors* in the radiation waiting room. All the dogs make such a difference to those folks coming in for treatment!

The rest of my summer was spent temperament testing potential dogs, and most of them passed the test with flying colors. Always wonderful when a new dog immediately understands what to do during the test and gets himself a ‘job’ once a week visiting a facility!

I’m very busy planning the upcoming Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser, and I can’t believe this will be the 13th one, and the start of our 14th year of service. Where does the time fly?

Richard Waxman

Upcoming Events to Put on Your Calendars!

**13th Annual Dog Walk/
Fundraiser
Saturday November 30th
Westin Mission Hills Resort**

**“Take Your Dog to the Movies”
Cinemas Palme D’Or
Early 2013
(Check our website for date!)**

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“Scruffy’s Views

What a busy summer my younger sister “Maddie” and I have put in this year. Okay, Dad and Uncle Drew managed to reduce our three days of visits at Eisenhower to only two, but that extra walking is tough on a little dog like me. And how come “Maddie” gets carried or pushed in the cart?

We’ve met some really wonderful patients and family members these past few months on our rounds, and I think we’ve had our pictures taken more than ever before. If I hear one more, “Oh you two adorable dogs are going on my Facebook page,” I’m going to ask for royalties!

A couple of the nicest visits we’ve had were the most quiet and subdued ones. We visited with a gentleman yesterday who was in a great deal of pain and he whispered to me that he had cancer and it didn’t look too good for him. He referred to me by name, and told us that we had visited him back in June. He kept stroking my head and thanking Dad for offering this program to the hospital because it meant so much for him to have me up on the bed beside him, making him feel better.

The other memorable visit we had was with another gentleman. Both my sister and I were up on the bed, and the patient looked at us and asked, “Where is the little white dog that visits here?” I explained about Lucky’s passing, and the patient told us in great detail that when his wife was in the hospital 3 years ago, Lucky curled up around her neck and made her cry, she was so happy with the visit. Just so nice that Lucky is never forgotten!

“Scruffy” Waxman

In this issue we are going to highlight another incredible *Canine Volunteer* who passed away earlier this year. "Mulligan" and Sue visited the old Valencia Palms, which is now Desert Springs Healthcare & Wellness Center for many years every Friday. "Mulligan" was a treasure of love and companionship to the residents at the very facility that gave us our start thirteen years ago. Sue has written up a remembrance for "Mulligan" which is now on our Memorial Wall, and we share it with our readers.

Mulligan's story begins one day in June 2004 when a friend called and said I found a dog, tired hungry & matted. Someone had dumped him out in Desert Hot Springs. My son went and rescued him, and after futile attempts to find an owner, I decided he would be my "Mulligan". For those of you golfers, you know a Mulligan is a do-over, and he got to do it over with me.

A trip to the vet revealed Mully to be a purebred Border Collie between 5-7 years old. A wonderful, unique animal, he loved everyone! He adapted quite readily to the good life, enjoying laying on the bed with the fan on him when it was hot.

Mulligan loved many things; his food, the ball, the park, and especially my son and I! He went everywhere with us, the beach, the mountains. You name it.

Something was missing though. I read that border collies need a job so I called *"Paws & Hearts"* and after passing the temperament test, (I forgot to mention he was very well behaved and unfazed by anything), he became a *Canine Ambassador* visiting Valencia Palms nursing home each and every Friday for 6 years.

Mully so looked forward to our weekly visits, he was always ready and dancing at the door when I put on my volunteer shirt, and his volunteer bandanna. He made many friends through the years. He was patient and kind with all of them and he loved them all. There was Dolly who marked her calendar on Friday's (our visiting day) and she cried when we left. There was a gentleman who seldom spoke but told me Mully reminded him of his child-hood dog. There were Joyce and Armando, both of whom had lost limbs to diabetes, but Mulligan didn't care, he loved them unconditionally.

The patients would always say *"thank you"* and I would tell them *"it is I who thank you for having us visit."*

After 9 years together, (he could have been as much as 16 years old) he developed spondylitis and hip dysplasia, but even with medication had trouble rising. We helped him up for a while and he walked spunky okay once up. Then the day came when the guy who lived for the ball couldn't walk, and looked at me as if to say, *"Mom please help me."* So we sent him to heaven on April 19th of this year.

They say after you're gone, it's important how you are remembered. Mulligan will always be remembered by many - he lives on in their hearts and mine. That makes his whole life worthwhile . I'm glad I could share part of it.

Mulligan's Mom, Sue Cotton

Mulligan
visiting a
resident at
Valencia
Palms.



13th Annual Dog Walk-Fundraiser

Saturday, November 30th, 2013

Corporate Sponsors to Date:

BBVA Compass Bank
Bones-n-Scones
Rancho Mirage Health & Rehabilitation Center
California Nursing & Rehabilitation
Eisenhower Medical Center
The Comprehensive Cancer Clinic at
Desert Regional Medical Center
Palm Springs Volvo
Sunrise Senior Living
(Fountains at the Carlotta)
Burgess North America
Windsor Court
Vista Cove at Rancho Mirage
Bill Knapp-Coldwell Banker



*Could we add your name to our growing list of corporate sponsors?
Please give us a call at (760) 836-1406 to discuss our various sponsorship levels?*

Our 13th Annual Dog Walk

We are about to kick off year number 14! Who could believe that this would be the **13th Annual Dog Walk** and that the little organization that "Lucky" and I founded 14 years ago would boast almost 45 volunteer teams and have such an incredible presence in the Coachella Valley? Our **Canine Ambassadors** visit facilities from The Comprehensive Cancer Center at Desert Regional Medical Center in north Palm Springs, all the way down valley to Indio Nursing and Rehabilitation.

For those of you who attended our walks in past years, you know that we always have Santa on hand so that your dog can have their picture taken with the guy in the red suit. This year we are going to feature Santa in a bit of a Santa's workshop-setting, in the hopes that you will be able to use your photo's as your holiday cards!

Again, please bring along those Zip-lock bags of loose change you have been saving all year and come out to our **13th Annual Dog Walk** and lend your support! Those bags of change mean a lot to us, and will get you an extra raffle ticket!

Current Events

Earlier this summer our office received a remarkable letter of praise from Congressman Dr. Raul Ruiz thanking us for developing this program and offering it to facilities in the valley.

Back in May, "Scruffy" was honored for his years of service at an awards luncheon hosted by the Angel Light Academy. There were seven other agencies who were recognized for their dedication in giving back to the community.

It truly was an inspiring afternoon and wonderful luncheon hosted by Fleming's Steak House at the River. "Scruffy" even got most of my steak, which he enjoyed just as much as the award!



"Lucky" Waxman Memorial Fund

I think this was Lucky's last visit day at Eisenhower Medical Center.



Thank you all for your very generous donations in "Lucky's" memory. This list keeps growing and every note received and the sentiments expressed are sincerely appreciated.

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.

Desert Springs Healthcare & Wellness Center, Kevin & "Bear": Had another good visit. Each week we are able to put a few more names and faces together. Our visit with Janice stood out this week. She is always so happy and excited to see "Bear." Her enthusiasm makes us feel honored we are able to visit each week and reminds us how even the smallest of gestures/good deeds are so important.

The Comprehensive Cancer Center at Desert Regional Medical Center, Joe, "Bob" & "Zoso": I received a special request for me and the boys to visit a cancer patient on the cancer floor of the Sinatra tower.....an area where I am not permitted because of the chemo treatments. However, this patient has been there for a long time and a social worker asked me to visit this woman because she is having a very difficult time. The social worker received permission from the doctor and hospital administrator. We did our best to cheer her up!

Eisenhower Medical Center, Richard, "Scruffy" & "Maddie": What a busy, delightful morning! This was truly the best visit I've had in years! We were in many rooms where the doctors came in during the visit and insisted that we stay and finish our visit. I of course declined and quickly wrapped it up. We met a couple in Michael's rehab. unit who have been married for 67 years. They told us all about their courtship, wedding and even the first movie they saw on their first date! What a treat they were! The whole morning was just incredible. Oh did I mention that the patients loved the visits from "Scruffy" and "Maddie?"

Indio Nursing & Rehabilitation, Marliene & "Charlie": What a morning! It seems like every Monday "Charlie" can't wait to rush through the door and practically drag me to the entrance of the facility. Today, Miss Carol got to spend extra time with "Charlie" who was all happy to pull himself on her lap for a big kiss! When we visit the dining room, "Charlie" is the center of attention. It's times like these in the dining room when everyone wants a chance to pet him at once that I wish I could have two "Charlie's." What a great day!

Palm Springs Healthcare & Rehabilitation, Mike & "Gus": "Gus" is showing real signs of improvement. He is still working me for a treat with each patient. However, he made a lot of effort to willingly approach patients, and shook hands (paws) with several. He actually sat and watched cartoons on TV with one patient. "Gus" will move up, with a nudge from behind, and give kisses!

Mission Hills at Rancho Mirage, Marie & "Buster": "Buster" just loves his job! He can't wait to get out of the car! The residents on the residential floors remember his very well from week to week. He has his favorite rooms to visit and the folks just love his weekly visits with them!

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 13th Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser

Saturday, November 30th, is coming up sooner and sooner. Who can believe it is the **13th** walk already?

As always the Westin Mission Hills in Rancho Mirage is hosting our event. Same wonderful event as always—spectacular raffle, beautiful walk, lovely continental breakfast, and holiday photos with Santa!

Don't forget to save up your loose change and turn it in at registration time. For every loose bag of change donated, you will be given an extra raffle ticket!

This is our big yearly fund raiser and we ask all our volunteers, donors and walkers to really work hard at filling up their pledge forms. This money has to last for many months in order to help us keep doing what we love to do!

