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Pet Partners’ mission is to improve human health and well-being through the human-animal bond.

In 2017, about 3 million visits will be made across all 50 states.

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“In an age of research when it is tempting to reduce emotions to biochemical reactions and to rely heavily on the technology of medicine, it is refreshing to find that a person’s health and well-being may be improved by prescribing contact with other living things. Members of the health and allied professions must continue to combine resources, work together in the spirit of cooperation, and never forget to ‘cure when possible, but comfort always.’”

Michael J. McCulloch, MD (1944-1985)

A Letter from the Founder

This is one person’s view of the journey and insights of my dealing with the human-animal bond for most of my nearly 85 years. Those of us who have been in veterinary practice have known for years that pets contribute to human health and well-being. We also know that the health meaning and significance of the human-animal bond is profoundly visible when it is “broken” by separation and loss; loss by death or separation because of the need for hospitalization or man-made “No Pet” rules and restrictions in housing, health-care facilities and prisons.

The journey of how Delta began for me was in 1959 when a client said she appreciated how sensitive I was to her and her handicapped husband’s feelings that their Beagle was a member of their family as they could not have children. This story and many others were shared with Dr. Aubrey Fine for his classic book, *Our Faithful Companions*. It would once again “ring my bell” in the mid-1960s by reading the late Dr. Boris Levinson’s publications on the need for more research on the human-animal bond and the mental health role of the veterinarian.

I shared this information with my brother, Michael McCulloch, a medical student at the University of Iowa, College of Medicine where I was an assistant professor. We needed a medical physician to promote the need to conduct research on the human-animal bond; we needed to plumb the depths of human-animal interactions (HAI) to understand the relationships between pets, people and the environment. I piqued his interest! The rest is history and the beginning of the Delta/Pet Partners journey.

In the early 1970s, we published and supported Levinson’s plea for more research and I was able to line Michael up for speaking engagements across the country and brought together my graduate school mentor and other pioneers, R. K. Anderson, DVM, and Dr. Stanley Diesch at the University of Minnesota. In the 1970s the press was not too kind when writing about Michael’s talks with such comments as “Psychiatrist goes to the dogs” and “This human-animal bond thing is just a passing fad for these animal lovers.”

It was during this period that the Delta concept evolved. We called it the Delta Triangle for the client, the animal and the veterinarian and recommended studying each of the sides. The Delta Foundation was founded in Portland, Oregon in 1977. Dr. Michael McCulloch became its first President with the primary purpose of promoting and conducting research on HAI. The Delta Foundation morphed into the Delta Society in 1981 with Dr. Leo Bustad as president.

Between 1977 and 1981 several university-based programs developed to study the Human-Animal Bond.

The early Board of Directors included not only veterinarians but an MD, a nurse, a social worker, researchers and a philanthropist who truly understood the importance of the vision.

Milestones Along the Way

- 1977 - Delta Foundation started with Michael McCulloch as its first President
- I initiated the American Veterinary Medical Association's Task Force to study the profession’s role in human-animal interactions
- Delta Society board members provided leadership in getting federal legislation passed that prevented owners from keeping the elderly and handicapped from keeping pets in federally-subsidized housing
- Established first peer-reviewed Delta Society research journal, *Anthrozoos*
- The International Society of Anthrozoology (ISAZ) spun off to become a stand-alone organization and the largest publisher of HAI research today
- The Pet Partners’ Therapy Animal Program was established in 1991. Ann Howie, ACSW with her dog, Falstaff, were the first registered Pet Partners in the nation
- Co-founded International Association of Human-Animal Interactions Organization (IAHAIO)
- Established the first Standards of Practice for AAT and AAA for health-care facilities
- Widely recognized as the Gold Standard, the Therapy Animal Program continues to grow, improve and evolve. In 2016, Read With Me™ was introduced to advance literacy
- A new strategic plan is released that capitalizes on Pet Partners strengths and takes advantages of the rapidly growing and evolving world of animal-assisted interventions

Pet Partners and the forerunners, Delta Foundation and Delta Society, have made an outstanding impact because of the three Ps: Persistence in our efforts, Professionalism in our study of the human-animal bond and Passion to improve human health with our companion animals that give us so much pleasure and ask so little in return. I look forward to meeting you at the Pet Partners Conference: Professionalizing the Passion in Bellevue in September!

- Bill McCulloch, DVM, MPH

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Although names often are arbitrarily given, some fortuitously have significance. This story will focus on the soul of one name. The un-named puppy acquired her name from a middle school boy, the winner of a contest submitting names for the newest member of my therapy dog team. The young boy had always connected with all of my therapy dogs who provided him with great comfort. There were times during our visits that I would use sleight of hand/magic to make our sessions more engaging and fun. The tricks would always make him smile; however, the young lad would often let me know that the warmth and gentleness radiating from my four paw friends were the most impactful and magical, more magical in fact than the accompanying legerdemain. He named the puppy Magic and couldn’t have selected a better name for her. Magic grew up to be an exceptionally sensitive and wonderful soul. She spent most of her life (almost 12 years) being a healer, working right beside me and making a difference. Her life ended on January 3, 2017, at 9:36 am. It was a moment that I will hold closely to my heart forever.

We are often told that time heals the soul, and the pain from loss eventually subsides. Although that may be true, it still doesn’t make things any easier at that moment. As professionals and volunteers working alongside therapy animals, the realities of loss must be considered from a variety of perspectives. Working alongside these unique beings who have these tremendous affiliative personalities is an honor that we should cherish. We have to cope not only with our loss from our personal perspective but also with the point of view of the clients that we serve. All persons, volunteer handlers, professionals and our clients will need some mending and support, as our mutual interactions with therapy animals have become part of the fabric of our lives. Ultimately, we never get over death; we simply learn to accept its inevitability.

As can be appreciated, beginnings of relationships are typically happier than the feelings experienced when one ends. Life spans of our companion animals are shorter than those of humans. It is this briefness of lifespan, however, that is paradoxically joyful and painful. We must remember that all lives have beginnings and endings. It is the middle, what many refer to as a lifetime, which we must hold close to our hearts. It is that lifetime filled with wonderful memories that we will have to help our clients and for that matter ourselves to celebrate, cherish and remember.

It is important to appreciate that people have to take care of themselves before they can really be effective in taking care of others. In essence, we have to give ourselves time to heal, and that may mean that we need to take a break for a while (if we have other therapy animals). Realization of this point is critical. I’ve included some healthy options anyone grieving the loss of a pet could consider.

Helping our clients with grief is something that is unavoidable. We must not forget that all clients will respond differently to the passing of a therapy animal. Some may have a harder

Take time to care of yourself - The journey begins with you. Do whatever you need to help yourself on your journey of healing.

Reflect - Take time to reflect upon loss and the significance of your therapy animal. Some write their feelings out, complete a memory scrapbook, draw or use other creative arts to express their sentiments.

Exercise - Walk, bike, hike - revitalize your body and soul.

Accept - We may find ourselves going through many emotional stages of loss. It is an emotional journey whose end-point is acceptance of the final outcome.

Support - Find a source of support. We may find comfort in talking with other therapy dog handlers and friends who have experienced loss. Additionally, finding a support group on pet loss could be a healthy option.

Uplift - Find ways that help uplift and “feed your soul”. The process may begin with opening up your feelings of loss.

Reminisce - Reminiscing with others about loss can be very comforting. Healing includes remembering good times and putting into perspective the importance of that life.

Express - The key ingredient to healing is to be able to properly express ourselves. We need to give ourselves permission to share our emotions.

Time and mourning than others and we owe it to our clients to gracefully and respectfully explain loss to them and allow them a forum to express their feelings. Allowing each client to have an opportunity to say goodbye is important. For some, writing can be a strong therapeutic alternative to express their feelings. Making cards and/or drawing sketches are avenues that preserve positive memories of interactions. The volume will become a tapestry of memories that will celebrate a life well lived. For others, having a forum to express themselves verbally will be a healthy alternative. They may find it reassuring to talk about memorable moments, to acknowledge and to re-live how the therapy animal personally contributed. Talking can therapeutically lead some people to closure.

In the event that a therapy animal is beginning to decline in health and will discontinue working, one can give clients an opportunity to be able to say their last goodbye while the animal’s schedule is being curtailed. I recall a couple of weeks before Magic actually passed away, a little boy noticed one of her tumors. He asked me about the tumor, and we discussed Magic’s cancer. I knew that what he had just witnessed was concerning to him and assured him that Magic was not in any pain. After a few moments, he eventually looked towards her and dropped to his knees to embrace her. He then looked deeply into her eyes and told her “I love you Magic” and then just held her for a while. That moment meant a great deal to that young man at that time. When he came back a couple weeks later and found out that Magic had passed away, he shared with me how important it was for him to tell Magic how much he cared about her. “I got a chance to say goodbye.”

Time and again I am reminded of a quotation from Winnie the Pooh that clearly expresses my sentiment. It highlights a tender moment when Christopher Robin is talking to his good friend Winnie the Pooh. Christopher Robin is beginning to realize he’s growing up and one day soon he may need to say goodbye to all of his animal friends. He looks deeply at Winnie and tells him “if there ever is a tomorrow when we’re not together... there’s something that you must always remember, even if we are apart I’ll always be with you.”

Having an opportunity to say “goodbye” is both endearing and ultimately comforting; it is humanity’s best display of compassion, empathy and hope—qualities often hidden. Ironically, in my case (and I’m sure for many of you who have previously experienced loss) Christopher Robin will always be my Magic. Even though she is now a departed spirit, I feel her presence whispering to me in silence to remember the times we shared. Her life is now fully immersed in me. These tender thoughts help me through this journey and preserve the wonderful memories of times gone by.

Nyla Fine with Magic, photo credit: David Sax
A Researcher Remembers

We had the opportunity to catch up with Dr. Sandra Barker, a pioneer in the field of animal-assisted interventions. Dr. Barker and H.I. were a registered Pet Partners team from 2000 to 2008.

Q **How did you get interested?**

Randy and I have always had pets, both growing up with cats, and then getting our first dog, a Lhasa Apso, when we were in graduate school. It was our first credit card purchase as a married couple! We fell in love with the breed and shared our lives with many Lhasas over the years. Probably before therapy dog evaluation and registration were established (at least to my recollection of programs in the mid-1980s), I began providing AAI with one of my Lhasa Apsos at an area nursing home and neurology clinic and started including her in my own university counseling practice. She was a sweet, well-mannered dog and while not obedience trained, she was a champion show dog so was used to following my direction and being around lots of people, other dogs, and noisy environments. So being trained as a researcher, I became interested in studying the therapeutic impact of dogs on vulnerable populations.

Q **What did the Delta Society mean to you as a researcher back then?**

As I began my entry into the human-animal interaction arena, I was eager to find like-minded individuals and discovered Delta Society. It provided me with colleagues also interested in providing AAI and in conducting research on the benefits of HAI. Delta was professionalizing the field and I was thrilled to have found a professional “home.” Delta’s early conferences included both research and practice tracks and I learned so much from others in the field. The networking opportunities were so valuable since many of us were working in isolation in different parts of the country. Delta also provided me with a way to formally credential my dogs as therapy dogs, and I welcomed their excellent educational materials and conference offerings.

Q **When did you get started with AAI research?**

My first AAI research began in 1987 with my husband Randy (Dr. Randolph Barker) and was published in 1988. We read an article in a magazine about a survey in which pet owners ranked to whom they turn to confide. They rated family members first, close friends second, and then pets. We were intrigued by those findings and decided to investigate how close dog owners were to their family members compared to their dogs. Using a sociogram, we found dog owners were as emotionally close to their dogs as to their closest human family members. We subsequently validated that sociogram, The Family Life-Space Diagram, for use in human-animal interaction research and have included it in a number of subsequent studies.

Q **What have you seen change in the research field?**

More human-animal interaction research is being conducted! The research field has been advancing with larger and more rigorous studies being published and this has led to more credibility for the field. More researchers from varied disciplines are becoming interested in HAI research and working together, perhaps in part as a
What do you hope to see with AAI research in the future?

I hope to see more funding opportunities become available to support good quality research. I hope to see more interdisciplinary research, studies using more rigorous designs, more longitudinal studies, and more replication of studies. I also hope to see more studies building on prior studies instead of so much fragmentation in the field. It’s also important to see negative findings published as I strongly believe we learn just as much when effects of AAI are not supported by research results as when they are.

How can PP teams help move the field forward?

Having been a PP team in the past, I know how thorough the PP instruction, training, and evaluation are in preparing teams to visit in varied settings. Researchers need AAI interventions that are reliable and replicable and I believe PP teams can bring these important qualities to studies. I encourage PP teams to volunteer to participate in studies in their area and encourage researchers to reach out to PP when considering AAI interventions.

While on a vacation, the young tour director approached me and pointing to the Pet Partners patch on my jacket said, “I know what you do.” She went on to explain that her young son was very ill and while physically improving, she feared that they were losing him to depression. Nothing helped until a therapy dog team appeared at the door one morning and asked to visit. Within 10 minutes the dog was in the bed and the child was laughing and giggling. Then she so sweetly said to me, “so I know what you do - you saved my son’s life.”

-shared by evaluator Carolyn Marr

Celebrate Treats & Sweets Day this April

Join Pet Partners and bring pets and people together in the sweetest way!

Treats & Sweets Day is the yummiest way to celebrate and support therapy animals.

Sign up today (it’s free!) at www.treatsandsweetsday.org. It is a piece of cake to participate! Simply bake up some tasty treats (pet and human treats are encouraged!) and then invite your family, friends and colleagues to enjoy your homemade goodies in exchange for a donation to Pet Partners. You could hold a Treats & Sweets Day party at your home, workplace or even a facility you might visit. Select anytime in April that works for you! We make it simple by providing tons of ideas and tools, as well as support as you set up your personal fundraising page (online bakery) at www.treatsandsweetsday.org.

Are you ready to flex your flour power in support of Pet Partners? Join us for Treats & Sweets Day today!
Interest in animal-assisted interventions (AAI) indirectly occurred over 200 years ago when Florence Nightingale used small pets to help reduce anxiety in children and adults living in psychiatric institutions. Although Freud wasn’t ascribed to truly be an advocate for AAI, he periodically used his dog, Jofi, during his psychotherapy sessions, a practice that was emulated and made more popular by the renowned child psychotherapist Boris Levinson in the 1960s.

Despite this auspicious beginning, AAI was mostly an isolated and unknown practice forty years ago in most American hospitals. The presence of a dog in a hospital was considered an anathema to the concepts of cleanliness and safety. It was not until the Delta Society, now Pet Partners, started a program to ensure that animals and handlers were educated, evaluated and registered, did perception and prevalence begin to change.

In the last twenty years, welcoming handlers and animals into hospitals to benefit patients has caught fire. In a recent survey by the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, 279 of 313 hospitals allowed visits from therapy dogs.

Why have hospitals become increasingly accepting of therapy animals? It is partly because of the proliferation of research that show the positive health benefits of AAI, and patient satisfaction surveys that confirm the positive impact patients perceive therapy animals have on their

Dr. David Williams follows the trajectory of animal-assisted interventions in healthcare and speaks with Robin Hart, the Director of Child Life Services for Rush University Medical Center in Chicago.
care, said Robin Hart. Ms. Hart oversees one of the oldest animal-assisted intervention programs at one of the biggest area hospitals in the Chicagoland region. “There are always people in the hospital concerned with the negative impact of pets on infection control and safety. For these people it’s important to have evidence based practices, and that’s why the research showing that AAI is effective and safe is so important,” Hart said.

To Hart’s point, researchers have been studying the impact of dogs on humans for over thirty years. Nagengast showed in 1997 the presence of a friendly dog was effective at reducing blood pressure. In 2009 Coakley and Mahoney found in a Massachusetts General Hospital Study - “Health Benefits after a Ten Minute Therapy Dog Visit ” that a ten minute therapy dog visit leads to a 3% slower breathing rate, a 22% drop in pain severity, a 19% boost in energy, a 48% decrease in depression, a 64% drop in feelings of anger and a 39% decrease in pain. A recent physician’s survey showed that 69% of doctors have worked with animals in a hospital, medical center or medical practice and that 88% of those doctors believe such interactions improve a patient’s physical condition.

“Rush [University Medical Center] has always been ahead of the curve in regards to animal-assisted interventions,” said Ms. Hart. “We started 30 years ago when we had puppies from the Anti-Cruelty Society come once a month to visit our patients.”

Ms. Hart went on to explain how in the last three decades the program has developed into an AAI program that now includes Pet Partners dogs that visit two times a week, and Pet Partners mini horses that come once per month. Rush even incorporates a therapy rabbit, whose diminutive size can be ideal for some pediatric patients.

“My role as a child life specialist is to promote coping in children and families being impacted by healthcare experiences,” Hart explained. “We educate children about what’s happening to them and why, and we hope to distinguish the healthcare experience from something that could be seen easily as child abuse through the eyes of a child.”

“Animals help us to normalize the hospital environment as much as possible. We have employed rabbits for about 20 years where the rabbit can sit on the children’s laps and calm them. Our rabbit Coco is often mentioned in patient satisfaction surveys. We find the animals very effective – they have a calming effect and don’t judge (the patient).”

Hart explains that while 15 or 20 years ago Rush was a pioneer, in the last 10 to 15 years animal assisted therapy has become very widespread. As a physician and Pet Partners’ Chief Medical Officer, I hope to see more of my colleagues becoming advocates for the benefits of AAI and will do what I can to make that a reality going forward as Pet Partners looks back on 40 years of advocacy and education.

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Help advance the field by using the correct terminology

Animal-assisted interventions (AAI) is an umbrella term for animal-assisted therapy (AAT), activity (AAA) and education (AAE). Use AAT when the intervention is goal oriented and often medically supervised or part of a prescribed treatment plan. AAE is literacy intervention when the literacy gains are measured and often under the direction of a reading specialist. AAA covers other activity like visits to nursing homes, library reading programs, and hospitals visits not medically supervised.

3 Nagengast SL. The Effects of the presence of a companion animal on psychological arousal and behavioral distress in children during a physical examination. Journal of Pediatric Nursing 1997
4 Coakley A, Mahoney E; Creating a therapeutic and healing environment with a pet therapy program Therapeutic Clinical Practice 2009 Aug 15910:141-145
5 habri.org/2014-physician survey
Looking Forward...

As we look back over forty years of accomplishments as the leader in our field, it is just as important, perhaps more so, to look forward. In 2016, the Pet Partners Board of Directors completed an aggressive three year Strategic Plan. Over six months, three board meetings and three face-to-face task force meetings, strengths and weaknesses were analyzed and compared to opportunities and threats.

Three top priorities emerged:

1) Continue to strengthen the support we provide to our outstanding handlers

2) Look at how we are currently organized at the community level with the goal of providing greater support for local presence

3) Meet the challenge of the growing demand for therapy animal teams by making sure we are offering top quality education, support and special initiatives for in-demand services like Read With Me™

Other ways that we will enhance our mission delivery and increase our impact are by focusing on natural alliances in the pet industry and new to Pet Partners, the healthcare industry. Partnerships with companies and organizations like American Pet Nutrition, PetSmart Charities and the PetCo Foundation bring resources and a shared passion for our animals’ health so they can do this important work. 2017 will see the announcement of significant partnerships within human health companies and associations.

Plans are already underway to create a grassroots advocacy network to influence public policy. Pet Partners is tens of thousands of volunteers strong with countless other individuals who are passionate about our mission but don’t have an animal suitable for therapy work. Together we can advocate for more research funding for animal-assisted interventions and other federal and state level initiatives where the presence of the human-animal bond has a positive impact on human health and well-being.

We’ll accomplish our mission delivery goals by focusing on operating excellence to include leveraging technology; generating the resources needed i.e. fundraising; making certain that our organizational structure strengthens and doesn’t inhibit growth, quality and rigor; and building recognition of Pet Partners as the gold standard and the “go to” experts.

Board Chair, Diana Kiriakedes, who chaired the Strategic Plan Task Force as Chair-Elect noted: “Strategic Plans are important to gaining a shared understanding of not only what an organization will focus on but also what it won’t. We are excited that the field of animal-assisted interventions continues to grow and evolve and were very thoughtful about what it means for Pet Partners to continue to lead the field for the next forty years. A special thank you to Mo-Kan Pet Partners for inviting President and CEO, Annie Peters, to their annual meeting in June. It provided an excellent opportunity at just the right time for us to have the important perspective of our valued handlers represented in the process.”
Strategic Plan 2017-2019
Professionalizing the Passion

Key Focus & Investment Areas

Annually Monitor & Refine

Mission Delivery

Operating Excellence

Therapy Animal Volunteers
Public Policy
Healthcare Industry
Pet Industry

Organization Structure
Revenue Generation
Technology

Branding & Marketing
Finance

Pet Partners
Touching Lives, Improving Health
While our handlers are volunteering on the front lines with their companion animals, Pet Partners team evaluators are laboring behind the scenes, sometimes unbeknownst and often uncelebrated by clients and receiving facilities. Yet, without them, the Therapy Animal Program would not be able to recruit, assess, and support 15,000+ teams.

If a team evaluator conducts 6 evaluation events per year with 8 teams in attendance and those 8 teams visit an average of 15 clients per month, a single team evaluator is responsible for facilitating 8640 life affirming visits by a therapy animal team each and every year!

Thank you to all of the team evaluators, past and present, who have contributed to the growth of the Therapy Animal Program over the last 40 years. At this time, we want to express special gratitude to our longest-serving active evaluators. The following 15 individuals are celebrating their 20th anniversaries with Pet Partners in this role:

- Sharon Andrews
- Marilane Bergfelt
- Ron Berman
- Deborah Carr
- Mary Demastes
- Connie Gates
- Cindy Harvey
- Becky Jankowski
- Sherry Kirwin
- Lynn Malayter
- Carolyn Marr
- Kathy Montgomery
- Gary Ross
- Maureen Ross
- Gayle Sprinkle

Gary Ross
I became a Pet Partner Team Evaluator (and eventually an Instructor) in part because I had witnessed the profound effect that my relationships with animals had on me, and I wanted to capture and pay that experience forward to others. I joined Pet Partners primarily because I felt their programs were first rate. I continue to ‘pay it forward’ today largely because I get to see people and their animals striving to ‘pay it forward’ themselves. I see the work they put in and the pleasure the Teams get from giving to others as well as the joy they get from each other.

Deb Carr
I believe that I participate in a tiny bit of the grace of every team that has gone through me to the public. I have a tiny share in the joy that comes to every person visited by a team that I judged reliable, predictable, controllable and inspiring confidence. With that kind of karma, I expect that when I’m an old, old lady in a nursing home, someone will bring me a dog.

Becky Jankowski
As an evaluator, I have always enjoyed seeing the partnership journey that unfolds as teams gain experience. New teams are just learning to work together. They are often nervous and a little stiff. By their first renewal, they are working much more confidently together. After multiple renewals, these teams are often outstanding examples of trusting, seamless partnerships. I also enjoy evaluating “second generation” teams - experienced handlers committed to continuing on with therapy work after losing their beloved first therapy partners. These new dogs are the beneficiaries of their handlers’ years of experience.

Lynn Malayter
When I started AAI in 1996, it was really considered to be “out there” and very few hospitals were willing to implement it. Now it is considered to be standard protocol in many physical medicine departments as well as so many other venues that weren’t even on the horizon twenty years ago. There are not enough teams to meet the demand - teaching and evaluating are critical to meeting the demand.

We’re moving online
We love sharing our team stories as much as you do but with 15,565 registered teams in 2016 and only two issues of Interactions, we’ve been limited in the number of stories we can share. Look for more team stories in our just launched twice-monthly e-newsletter, on our Facebook page or online at https://petpartners.org/team-stories/. You’ll also find instructions there on how to share your favorite story with us!
Though only 21, Shana Horn and her mini-labradoodle, Rosie, are destined for big things. When home over the summer from Stern College for Women, Yeshiva University, Shana and Rosie stayed busy volunteering at The Jewish Home at Rockleigh, The New York State Psychiatric Institute (Columbia University), and Friendship Circle of Bergen County. Like many people who live in major metropolitan areas, Shana often relies on public transportation. This was creating a challenge for Shana and Rosie to be able to get to where they were expected and greatly anticipated.

Unlike assistance animals (guide dogs, hearing assistance or service animals), therapy animals enjoy no access rights. Therapy animals are only welcome in hospitals, schools or any venue where they’re invited in. For Rosie to ride the bus with Shana, the law was that Rosie had to be crated. Only that created stress for Rosie when the purpose of the bus ride was so that she could relieve stress in others. As a Pet Partners registered handler, Shana knew the human health benefits that come from a therapy animal visit should never be at the animal’s expense. Shana knew had to be an advocate for Rosie.

Shana reached out to State Sen. Loretta Weinberg. With Weinberg’s help, the New Jersey Transit agreed to let Rosie travel “to work” without being contained, because Shana and Rosie were a registered therapy animal team. Other interested handlers in New Jersey should present their information to a state representative for evaluation. If they are granted access, they’ll receive a letter from the New Jersey Transit. Pet Partners applauds Shana’s efforts to possibly begin to change public policy through her advocacy efforts while also advocating for Rosie’s well-being.

Interested in advocacy or getting in touch with Shana? Email us at advocacy@petpartners.org.

Handlers Make Great Advocates

Pictured left to right: State Senator Loretta Weinberg, Rosie the mini-labradoodle, and handler Shana Horn. Photo by Esti Kreinberg.

Pictured right: Shana and Rosie. Photo by Kayla Pridemore.
Pet Partners Conference 2017

Professionalizing The Passion

We hope you will join us September 8-9, 2017 in Bellevue, WA for the Pet Partners Conference: Professionalizing the Passion. With two full days of presentations on topics spanning current research and best practices, this conference is an opportunity for all those engaged in AAI, from volunteers to practitioners to facility staff, to expand their knowledge and network with others committed to the highest professional standards.

We are proud to announce our keynote speaker, Patricia McConnell. A Certified Applied Animal Behaviorist (CAAB), Dr. McConnell has made a lifelong commitment to improving the relationship between people and animals. An accomplished author of several books including The Other End of the Leash, she is known worldwide as an expert on canine and feline behavior and dog training.

You are also invited to help celebrate Pet Partners’ 40th Anniversary with a dinner banquet on Friday night with featured speaker, Dr. Aubrey Fine. The author of The Handbook on Animal-Assisted Therapy, Dr. Fine is a former member of the Board of Directors and the current chairperson of the Pet Partners Human-Animal Bond Advisory Board.

Don’t miss this opportunity to hear nationally recognized speakers on a variety of topics including therapy animal health and welfare, cat behavior, AAI competencies, current research and more!

Registration will open soon. Be sure to register by May 1st in order to receive early bird pricing. www.petpartners.org/conference

• $180 – Pet Partners Volunteers past and present (before May 1)
• $225 – Pet Partners Volunteers past and present (after May 1)
• $325 – Professionals and General Public

Thank you to our sponsors.
Why does Pet Partners register their teams through an online process?

Since the launch of the Volunteer Center in July of 2015, our Program Operations team has completed a record number of registrations—more than 7,000. Now more than ever, Pet Partners and our teams are called upon to lead the way in improving human health through the human-animal bond and the demand for therapy animal teams is growing. Our emphasis is on allowing more qualified teams to participate in this life-affirming volunteer work without sacrificing the quality or the rigor of our program. Client safety and animal welfare remain top priorities. Manually processing registrations was slow and cumbersome, consuming very limited resources.

The online registration process is a great tool. Your registration record is an online application with a handy checklist that will help you follow along. You can log in at any time to take a course, print your documents, find a team evaluation, or review your registration’s status. New and renewing registrations are processed in a much more timely manner – sometimes even in real time! Moving the process online also allows our Programs team to spend more time interacting with volunteers, answering questions and providing support. In the past, those staff resources had to be spent simply reviewing registration materials. Our Programs team is happy to assist with any questions or challenges you may be having.

I’d like to start volunteering at a new facility in my area. Do you have any suggestions about how I can approach them?

Absolutely! Particularly with a new facility, this is an outstanding opportunity to communicate the Pet Partners difference. By choosing to volunteer with Pet Partners, you have already demonstrated an unparalleled commitment to making the safest and most valuable impact on the clients you visit. Here’s what a new facility might want to know about Pet Partners, you, and your animal.
First of all, you can proudly say you’ve met our program’s rigorous requirements. Whether you live in Oregon or Ohio, you have been assessed using the same criteria: you have been educated and prepared through the handler’s course, your animal has met our health criteria to safely participate, and the two of you have demonstrated both the skills and aptitude necessary for therapy animal work in your team evaluation. Completing each of these steps demonstrates that you will be an asset to a facility!

Moreover, as a Pet Partners volunteer, you have access to numerous special programs that a volunteer coordinator at a facility might be interested in. You can participate in

When looking at therapy animal work from a facility perspective, it’s also important to recall that animal-assisted interventions are not without risk. Your education in infection control guidelines and safe handling minimize that risk. When you commit to practicing YAYABA and PETS, you are ensuring your animal’s welfare—but also the safety of staff and clients that you visit. No other program offers this level of screening and education, while providing premium liability insurance coverage. It’s important to share this with a volunteer coordinator or representative of a facility.

Reading with Me™—if you’re approaching a school district or a library, this will add value to your registration. You can take special SHEA-endorsed coursework to hone your skills, in Infection Prevention & Control or Canine Body Language—if you’re approaching a healthcare facility or residential care facility, you will be two steps ahead of the rest of the crowd.

Remember, regardless of the type of facility, you are approaching them not just as a handler with an animal—but as a well-qualified therapy animal team with the credentials and support to make a meaningful impact. You represent the Pet Partners difference.

I have friends and family that are interested in therapy animal work, but they don’t have an animal that is suitable at the moment. How can they help support Pet Partners?

Great question. We know that becoming a therapy animal team is not for everyone (every person or every animal) and yet there are many people who care about the human-animal bond and want to get involved. Here are three ideas that may inspire them:

1. They can stay in touch by signing up for our eNews. Our bi-monthly newsletter will keep any supporter of the mission up-to-date on the latest happenings at Pet Partners. Touching stories, upcoming events, and ways to get involved will always be featured in each edition. For someone who is just beginning to learn about therapy animal work, this is a great first step.

2. They can become a monthly donor. Volunteer registration fees only cover about 30% of the organization’s costs. Your friends and family can become a part of an ever-growing community that supports Pet Partners’ teams.

3. They can bake some love for Treats & Sweets. In celebration of National Therapy Animal Day™on April 30, our teams and supporters participate in a nationwide bake sale. Profits benefit Pet Partners and the therapy animal program. To learn more about this fun and inclusive opportunity, check out treatsandsweetsday.org.

And coming soon... a chance for you AND your friends to register as advocates, using your voices to advance human health and well-being through the human-animal bond. Stay tuned!
Elanco Animal Health, a division of Eli Lilly and Company, recently announced support of Pet Partners’ efforts to build on our therapy animal program and help facilitate international expansion. The initiatives are being funded by a $100,000 grant through Elanco from the Lilly Foundation.

In the United States, we have experienced a surge of interest in people registering to be therapy animal team handlers as part of its core therapy animal program. To assist with the increased interest, a portion of the grant will fund the registration of up to more than 500 new therapy animal teams through 2017. This will help increase much-needed services while ensuring the high standards Pet Partners requires of our teams.

“Our therapy animal program integrates the healing power of pets into everyday health and educational practice by bringing animals to people who could benefit from their presence in hospitals, nursing homes, libraries, schools and more,” said Annie Peters, president and CEO of Pet Partners. “We are grateful to Elanco and the Lilly Foundation for their generous support and to be a global partner in a cause that we both share.”

The grant will also fund the expansion of Pet Partner services internationally by helping Pet Partners establish a pilot location, outside of the U.S. The pilot will help Pet Partners replicate a grassroots, community-based model of growth that has been so successful for those that benefit from Pet Partners’ services in the U.S.

“Elanco is purposeful in serving in the communities where our employees live and work. And we are all about celebrating the benefits that pets bring to our lives,” Jeff Simmons, senior vice president of Eli Lilly and Company and president of Elanco Animal Health. “We are excited to work with an organization that’s clearly aligned to our companionship cause and shares the vision of improving human health and well-being through therapy animal visits across the globe.”
Pet Partners is grateful for the support of the Pet Food Institute. In addition to financial sponsorship, the Pet Food Institute promotes the Pet Partners mission throughout the year.

“Numerous studies have documented profound mental and physical health benefits from the bond between people and companion animals,” says Cathy Enright, President & CEO of the Pet Food Institute. “That is just one reason why we are so thrilled to support Pet Partners and its mission of improving health and well-being through the human-animal bond.”

The Pet Food Institute and its members, who make 98% of all U.S. pet food and treat products, are committed to helping dogs and cats live long and healthy lives. As the voice of U.S. pet food makers for nearly 60 years, the Pet Food Institute provides factual information about pet food and treat safety, nutrition, and health to pet lovers.

Recognizing that shelter animals often make wonderful therapy animals, Pet Partners has received a $50,000 grant investment from the Petco Foundation for the purpose of increasing the number of shelter animals used in the program. This grant was made possible through the Petco Foundation’s annual Helping Heroes fundraising campaign, in partnership with Natural Balance Pet Food.

Each October, during the campaign, customers are invited to donate online and in Petco stores across the country to support the life-changing work of service, therapy and working animals.

Pet Partners is appreciative of this investment which will help Pet Partners focus on marketing efforts to promote the important message that adopting animals from shelters is a wonderful way to find a companion animal that has the potential to become a therapy animal. Already advocates for giving shelter animals the opportunity to become therapy animals, Pet Partners has a Position Statement on Shelter Animals as Therapy Animals on our website.

An additional Position Statement authored by our Human-Animal Bond Advisory Board will be released this year that addresses individual characteristics of the animal, what characteristics make an appropriate therapy animal, not the breed or perceived breed. Pet Partners feels this is an important aspect of a campaign to promote shelter animals becoming therapy animals as so many shelter animals are identified as Pit Bulls or Pit Bull mixes.
April 30 is National Therapy Animal Day™

Mark your calendar for April 30th because it is National Therapy Animal Day! This very special annual day of celebration was created by Pet Partners in 2015 to recognize all of the exceptional therapy animals who partner with their human companions to bring comfort and healing to those in need.

Some goals of National Therapy Animal Day:

- Recognize and honor therapy animals
- Raise awareness and educate the public about the role therapy animals play in enhancing the health and well-being of humans
- Honor the thousands of dedicated handlers who volunteer their time and compassion during visits

Here are some fun ways you can join us as we celebrate National Therapy Animal Day:

- Participate in Treats & Sweets Day, our national signature fundraiser. Find out more about this sweet event at www.treatsandsweetsday.org

Why does Pet Partners need donations? Registration costs from animal-assisted therapy teams do not fully cover the costs of insurance, education, training and staff time to support our 15,500 teams. We make it easy to support these amazing teams! Consider one of these options; we’ll be ‘tail waggin’ happy if you do.

Show that you are Pet Partners Proud by wearing your favorite Pet Partners gear on National Therapy Animal Day! Our official 2017 National Therapy Animal Day t-shirt is available for purchase from March 20 through April 7. Visit www.petpartners.org to check it out!

Show your support on social media on April 30 by sharing our special Pet Partners posts, and by posting your own photos and stories of you with your favorite therapy animals. Make sure to use hashtag #nationaltherapyanimalday and #petpartners

Connect with your local media contacts to see if they will feature Pet Partners in a “good news” story about how therapy animals are making your community a healthier and happier place

Invite your mayor or other city or town officials to officially declare April 30 as Therapy Animal Day in your town. We have some sample mayoral proclamation language available on our website.

Visit petpartners.org/act/national-therapy-animal-day for additional ideas and resources!

A Primer of Donating to Pet Partners

Why does Pet Partners need donations? Registration costs from animal-assisted therapy teams do not fully cover the costs of insurance, education, training and staff time to support our 15,500 teams.

We make it easy to support these amazing teams! Consider one of these options; we’ll be ‘tail waggin’ happy if you do. Questions for us? Call 425-679-5503 or email us at legacy@petpartners.org

Monthly Donations

Monthly donations create a sustainable future for Pet Partners by allowing us to focus on registering, educating, and supporting handlers.

Monthly donations don’t have to be large – we encourage you to donate whatever amount is appropriate for you.

Sign up online or over the phone to have funds automatically charged to a credit card. You can forgo sending a check through the mail and trust that each month, your donation is going right to work.

Our ears perk up when we learn that a new person has decided to become one of these thoughtful donors.

Delta Society Members

The Delta Society is the former name of Pet Partners when it was launched in 1977. In a nod of respect for our founders, we’ve carried the name forward.

With an annual donation of $1,000 you will demonstrate your commitment to the growing field of animal-assisted therapy.

Each Delta Society member receives a pewter pin and certificate of membership.

These members are important to us. They enable Pet Partners to plan for growth while providing ongoing support, education, insurance and training for our current handlers.

Our Delta Society members are just “purr-fect!”

Caring Community

Leaving a gift through your estate to Pet Partners is simple. A charitable bequest is one or two sentences in your will or living trust that leaves to Pet Partners:

- A specific amount of money
- A percentage of your estate
- A gift contingent upon certain events

There are other easy ways to consider a future gift to Pet Partners which include designation from a life insurance policy or through retirement accounts.

Information you may need:

- Tax ID 91-1158281
- Legal name is Pet Partners
- Address is 875 124th Avenue NE, Ste.101, Bellevue WA 98005

These thoughtful people are part of Pet Partner’s Caring Community.
When you make a tax-deductible gift to Pet Partners, you become a hero by connecting special animals with people in need of comfort.

Research shows even a 10-minute visit from a therapy animal can reduce depression and pain and improve energy.

Pet Partners therapy Animal terms make 3 million visits a year.

Only 30% of our operating costs are covered by registration fees. We depend on the rest of our funding from generous people like you!