

Pet Partners

INTERACTIONS MAGAZINE

Buddy's gift is

CONNECTING
TO YOUNG
READERS.

- 10 EDUCATE
- 12 DEMONSTRATE
- 17 LETTERS

Stories of lives improved by positive human-animal interactions.

FALL 2016



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

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A Letter from the CEO

Growing up my mom had a favorite saying: "If you have your health, you have everything." As a teenager I can remember thinking: "Sure, mom. Whatever." When you're young and blessed with good health, your health is the last thing on your mind. It's only when faced with a chronic illness or as we age that it's easy to realize that my mom was right. Now I question what else I take for granted. The opportunities that learning to read with proficiency has afforded me? That I love to fly and feel energized and not stressed by a trip to the airport? That I have the good fortune to come to work every day in a dog friendly office? I'll spend the holiday season counting my blessings and maybe you will, too. What is even better than counting your blessings? Sharing those blessings. Some of you will spend your holidays sharing your wonderful companion animal with vulnerable people in lonely or difficult situations. Thank you.

Everywhere I go, I hear people refer to the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program as the Gold Standard and they're right. We've been remiss in not bragging about that ourselves but that's going to change! If you are a Community Partner or a local group that maintains a website or you create printed materials, we invite you to join us by proudly proclaiming "Pet Partners, the Gold Standard in Therapy Animal Programs."

So what has the "Gold Standard

Therapy Animal Program" been up to in 2016? In communities across America, the year-end numbers will show that more than 15,000 registered therapy teams will have interacted with patients, clients, young readers, college students and even people rushing through an airport about three million times! Thank you



President and CEO C. Annie Peters

to all of our teams who have made the time to let us know about your visits through Log A Visit in the Volunteer Center at www.petpartners.org. With your assistance in using the Log A Visit tool, we are better able to report out on the magnitude of the work we're doing together. Three million times someone had a more positive outlook, felt a reduction in pain or improved their reading skills. That's incredible!

We've been busy at Pet Partners HQ, too. Developed by our Human-Animal Bond Advisory Board, we released new policy

statements to keep the focus on animal welfare as interest in Animal-Assisted Interventions explodes. We dedicated a great deal of time to the development of a strategic plan. Almost finished, we'll be excited to share it with you in the next issue of Interactions. Keeping our commitment to ongoing education for therapy animal handlers, we released a new course, Infection Prevention and Control which earned an endorsement from the Society of Healthcare Epidemiologists of America. We also released Pet Partners Read With Me™ so that all Pet Partners have access to free support and ongoing education if their companion animal enjoys volunteering with children who make tremendous gains by reading aloud to a non-judgmental animal.

In this issue you'll read more about our passion for supporting your work in a literacy skills setting. Dr. Nancy Gee shares outcomes of her powerful research about what can be expected when children read to animals. Our Chief Medical Officer, Dr. David Williams, reminds us of the impact literacy has on good health and life skills. Now instead of saying "Sure mom. Whatever." I'd love to be able to say to her: "Mom, you were right. And good health can even start with a young child reading to a therapy animal." But then mom was always right, wasn't she? Happy holidays and good health to all of you.

Learn more at www.petpartners.org

Meet Buddy: He Loves Green Eggs and Ham



When you hear the name “Buddy,” you might picture man’s best friend: maybe an enthusiastic Golden Retriever, or a dependable Labrador. This Buddy is not quite what you would expect. He has a beak, gorgeous plumage of yellow, green, and blue, and an enduring love for the works of Dr. Seuss.

Buddy the macaw is one of twenty-one therapy birds currently registered with Pet Partners. Buddy and his handler, Dan Lee, joined the Therapy Animal Program in 2013. Buddy is twenty-three years old, and by Dan’s estimation, he has already had four or five different homes during the course of his lifetime. Dan tells us that this statistic isn’t uncommon in the world of birds. Macaws like Buddy are incredibly intelligent and very social, which means they require a certain type of home in order to thrive. To meet their unique needs, owners will often seek out enrichment



activities to keep their birds healthy and engaged. These activities may even come at a cost to the owner. Keeping Buddy occupied is not a big concern for Dan; through Buddy’s volunteer work, he has plenty of socialization built right into his schedule. Buddy and Dan are favorites at libraries and elementary schools in their community, where they participate in Buddy’s favorite pastime: reading with children.

“I’d like to tell you I worked at it,” Dan says. “But I didn’t have much to do with it at all. Buddy just ran with it.” From day one, it was clear that Buddy had just the right personality to excel in a reading program environment. His enthusiasm for the spoken word is contagious. Short books, long books, picture books, chapter books Buddy loves them all, because at the end of the day, his real love is not the book itself, but listening to a child read. Of course, if he *had* to pick his favorite book, Dan tells us Buddy would pick a Dr. Seuss classic; maybe *Green Eggs & Ham* because he loves the sounds of rhyming words. Still, regardless of what a child might pick to read that day, Buddy will be an attentive listener. He nods his head with the turn of each page, watching the reader’s face with fascination. Apparently that fascination is mutual: according to Dan, many of the same children come back to see Buddy week after week, ready to share a new story.

There’s a few possible explanations for Buddy’s popularity. Certainly his appearance alone is attention-grabbing. Imagine walking into your public library and

seeing a colorful macaw reading along with a child! But not just any parrot could be the gifted therapy animal that Buddy is. Buddy is an uncommon soul, with both a gentle heart and a remarkable ability to relate to human emotions. You might wonder how a parrot can demonstrate their understanding of complex feelings. If Buddy witnesses two characters arguing on a TV show, he will interject: "Stop! Don't fight!" His intuitive abilities translate directly to his impact while volunteering, whether it's building a child's confidence as they read aloud, or making new friends in a local nursing home. Even those who are afraid of birds have a hard time resisting Buddy's winning personality and caring spirit. Dan is in awe of Buddy's gift connecting to young readers: "I get a little bit overpowered as I watch Buddy reading with a child and he's reacting to the story. Doesn't matter how many times I see it. Each week, it's a new experience."

Buddy is both compassionate and engaging, and these qualities make him a perfect fit for therapy animal volunteer work. Still, there are two ends of the leash in a therapy animal team. The human handler must bring their skills and intuition to each visit as well. Although Dan is very humble about his contributions, it's the special partnership between Dan and Buddy that makes their work truly exceptional. When asked for his words of wisdom on what makes a great therapy animal team, Dan advises handlers to know your animal. "If someone nurtures their relationship between them and their animal, then that goes a long way towards their animal feeling secure, knowing whatever happens that their person is going to take care of them. That allows them to be comfortable in a complex environment," says Dan. "Because Buddy as a bird is a prey animal, it's his instinct to be fearful. He looks to me for security." Buddy's confidence comes from Dan, which makes the children Buddy interacts with all the more at ease.

Short books, long books, picture books, chapter books Buddy loves them all, because at the end of the day, his real love is not the book itself, but listening to a child read.



in Buddy's hometown of Mesa, Arizona, reading to a macaw is both a welcome departure from the everyday routine of reading in class and an opportunity to experience a very special empathetic ear. The half hour they share with Buddy is a magical chance to



It's important for Buddy to impart a sense of calm during his visits, particularly in the context of a reading program, where some children may lack confidence in their ability to read aloud. Buddy's gifts can be shared widely because Dan puts Buddy's needs first. Dan practices one of Pet Partners' core values every day: YAYABA™ You Are Your Animal's Best Advocate. Dan's support of Buddy aligns with Pet Partners' philosophy that this important work never comes at the expense of the animal's welfare; one of a number of values that differentiates Pet Partners from other therapy animal programs.

It's the characters like Buddy and Dan that make the impact of our Therapy Animal Program so rich and enduring. Pet Partners is the only program to register nine species for therapy animal work. While dogs are the most widely employed, different people react differently to different animals. For the children

be heard and understood by another being of a completely different species. And, after all, isn't that spirit perfectly consistent with what motivates us to read in the first place? Books transport us into new worlds, full of possibilities. Buddy and Dan help young readers to find new possibilities in themselves, by demonstrating compassion, caring, and trust one page at a time.

Listening to Your Pet

By Steve Dale, CABC

Sponsored by Vita Bone®

I know firsthand how moving and emotional Pet Partners visits can be. Because of this, it's easy to become distracted and focus more on the people benefiting from your visit rather than your dog himself.

In these emotional situations it can be difficult to remain objective because of how we think our pet should feel; so at times we may misinterpret what our pet is trying to tell us.



There's no blame here. After all, people work hard to be able to register their animals to participate in the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program and volunteer with good intentions.

It's easy to get wrapped up in an engrossing conversation between a U.S. Veteran with PTSD as he's petting your dog; so much so that you may not notice your pup's tail has stopped wagging as it usually does. Your attention can be easily diverted if you're chatting with a parent of a child in a pediatric ward, and you might miss indications of stress your Pet Partners rabbit is showing.

It's important to remember that we are human. We also tend to have predetermined notions in our minds about our pets, and sometimes it's difficult to tell what's really happening with your pet during visits because it's "your kid."

Some phrases are thrown around, for example "my dog is bomb proof," meaning nothing can rattle my dog. I suppose it's possible, but few dogs are truly "bomb proof." Even if that's the case – as a responsible handler and your animal's advocate you should ensure that your pet won't be tested to his or her limit during a visit.

For example, let's say you're in a reading program and all is going well until a child begins to pull at your dog's ear hollering, "Can't you hear me read?" It's urgent that as a handler, you step in and stop that situation for your dog's welfare. The point is not to prove that your dog is truly "bomb proof."

Our pets may not be able to talk, but I can assure you, they are always communicating with us. It's imperative to understand body language, or signaling, appropriate for your dog.

Any change in your pet's usual demeanor should be a red flag. It might indicate anything from a medical issue to perhaps something going on at the particular visit; maybe your dog is becoming anxious or maybe there's an odor you don't even notice.

I can't stress enough how important it is to pay attention to your pet and learn signaling cues for the species to best understand what your pet is trying to communicate. If in doubt, err on the side of the pet – even if it means ending the visit early. This is the best way to prevent a problem and to support your pet.



Pet Partners on Capitol Hill

Several Pet Partners therapy animal teams recently traveled to Washington, DC to take part in Pet Night on Capitol Hill. Pet Night, a celebration of the importance of pets in our lives, was attended by hundreds of elected representatives, legislative officials, animal welfare advocates and leaders in the pet industry. Guests got to experience firsthand the joy and stress reduction that animals provide when they visited the Pet Partners Comfort Corner™ during the event. "I can't think of a better way to deliver the message to Capitol Hill that pets contribute to our health and well-being than our passionate handlers and amazing therapy animals," said Traci Pryor, Senior Director of National Strategic Partnerships. Pet Night was presented by Human Animal Bond Research Initiative (HABRI) Foundation and the Pet Industry Leadership Council (PILC).

Paz, My Best Friend, My Four Legged Hero

By Charley Bednarsh

Paz was my 70 pound, goofy labradoodle whose ability to comfort the youngest crime victims truly exemplified the healing power of the human-animal bond. From March 2011 through November 2015 I witnessed Paz's gentle presence soothe so many young crime victims who were being questioned or prepared for trial. He was an expert at his job, comforting those that needed him the most.

On November 26, 2015, when Paz was almost 6, he was diagnosed with T Cell Lymphoma. I remember hugging my sweet Paz, as I vowed to do everything to make him better; I can vividly recall his huge, trusting eyes when he returned my affection with a sloppy kiss. On November 28, 2015, Paz commenced chemotherapy for his T Cell Lymphoma. The vet said there is no cure for lymphoma, so the treatment goal was to prolong Paz's life for as long as the quality of his life was not compromised. Cancer treatment for dogs is extremely costly; fortunately, Paz had health insurance which would cover a percentage of the treatment costs, however the several thousand dollars in copays would be my responsibility. I paid the copays as the treatment progressed, however, by February 2016, the ongoing copays were financially daunting. In February 2016, I read about the Petco/Blue Buffalo Cancer Care Grant to Pet Partners, and felt incredible relief when Pet



Partners staff immediately approved my application for assistance. The grant funds allowed me to focus on my beloved Paz and to appreciate whatever time we had left together. Paz's lymphoma returned at the end of May 2016, and on May 31, 2016, I said goodbye to my beloved Paz, as he crossed the rainbow bridge.

I am so appreciative of the Petco Foundation and Blue Buffalo Foundation, whose generosity helped fund Paz's continued access to the best cancer treatment available, and I am deeply grateful to Dr. Timothy Rocha and the entire Blue Pearl Veterinary Partners' staff, whose skill, knowledge and compassion made it possible for Paz's 6 month remission following his cancer diagnosis. During Paz's six short years of life, he gave so much to so many, asking nothing in return; his gentle presence and unconditional love helped numerous young crime victims to heal. Paz's 6 month remission gave me and so many the opportunity to love and hug him countless times, before we said our final goodbyes.



Can dogs help children learn to read?

By Nancy Gee, PhD



A recently published systematic review performed by researchers at the University of Lincoln and the WALTHAM Centre for Pet Nutrition examined the evidence base supporting the educational value of children reading to dogs (Hall, Gee, & Mills, 2016). Published in the peer reviewed journal PLOS ONE, study findings suggest dogs may improve children's reading abilities through beneficially altering behavioral and emotional processes that improve the learning environment.

So why is this area so important? The World Wide Literacy Foundation estimates that approximately 15% percent of the world's population (more than 796 million people) cannot read, resulting in a global annual cost of \$1.2 trillion. The effects of illiteracy are similar in developing and developed countries, limiting employment opportunities and income generation and trapping people in a cycle of

poverty. Illiteracy is linked to increased risk of poor health, as well criminal activity and dependence on social welfare or charity.

In children, we know that reading enjoyment

Reading to a dog may be effective because doing so creates a warm and non-judgmental reading environment that children enjoy. Making reading fun will undoubtedly help children develop into life-long readers.

declines sharply after the age of 8¹ and governments have recognized the need to improve students' motivation to read for pleasure². As children grow up it becomes challenging to get them to engage in reading. Technology related activities including the use of a cell phone to talk, text, go online or play games³ competes with reading activities.

One approach to motivating children to read for fun is to incorporate a reading to dogs program in a library, classroom, school or community setting. These programs have

become wildly popular; a recent Google search (September 6, 2016) using the term “reading to dogs” returned 97,500,000 results. There is seldom a specific reading curricula involved and most frequently the children get to select the book they wish to read to the dog. A volunteer therapy-dog handler is present to monitor the interaction and to see to the needs and welfare of the dog. The programs have very low running costs, requiring a quiet space, comfortable seating, a book, and a volunteer with a well-trained dog who is comfortable and relaxed around children. Reading to dogs programs

systematic review (Hall, et al., 2016), revealed that reading to a dog appears to have a beneficial impact on reading performance. That said, it is important not to over interpret this conclusion and the authors caution that much of the evidence base is of low quality. Reading to dogs programs cannot replace the fundamental reading instruction that is integral to a solid education. However, these programs can provide a wonderful way to engage children in reading for fun, for practice, and to appeal to their imagination. Reading to a dog may be effective because doing so creates a warm and non-judgmental reading environment that children



Pet Partners
Read With Me™

We're thrilled to offer Read With Me™ participants the opportunity to hear directly from Dr. Gee at an upcoming continuing education webinar in January 2017. If you're a Pet Partners volunteer, but not a member of Read With Me yet, contact us to be added to the roster.

have received high praise from children, parents, library staff and teachers, but until recently the scientific evidence supporting these programs was completely missing.

The University of Lincoln and WALTHAM

enjoy. Making reading fun will undoubtedly help children develop into life-long readers. With improved literacy skills they can embark on a journey of personal growth and contribute to society in informed and thoughtful ways.

1 (<http://www.scholastic.com/readingreport/the-state-of-kids-and-reading.htm#top-nav-scroll>)

2 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-evidence-on-reading-for-pleasure>)

3 (<http://www.scholastic.com/readingreport/the-state-of-kids-and-reading.htm#top-nav-scroll>)

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Welcome to Pet Partners' New Read With Me™ Program

By David E. Williams, M.D.
Chief Medical Officer, Pet Partners



As an African American emergency physician, I have spent the last twenty years practicing on the south and west sides of Chicago, in some of the poorest and most violent areas of that city.

I have seen firsthand how functional illiteracy leads to subpar education and limited opportunities. When youth cannot read, they don't graduate high school, they don't get jobs, and they are more attracted to antisocial and criminal behavior, with devastating impact on their communities.

In 2014 the Annie C. Casey Foundation sponsored a study that found that 80% of lower income fourth graders and 66% of all US children were not reading at a proficient level. One major cause was socio-economic disparities.

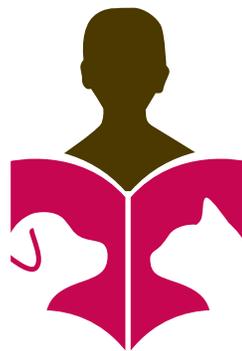
The Casey Foundation voiced great concern that as the gap between the rich and the poor was widening in America, so was the educational achievement gap among our children, especially in minority communities.

Another major cause of low reading proficiency are learning disabilities. The National Center for Learning Disabilities estimated that 15 million children, adolescents and adults in the United States have

learning disabilities, defined by the federal government as children with average intelligence whose academic difficulties are not caused by emotional, social, cultural or primary motor visual or hearing disability.¹

Both organizations concluded that no skill set is more crucial for the success of our children than their ability to read, and additional educational programs that aim to achieve early proficiency in reading are essential to closing these educational achievement gaps. If these trends continue unabated, the United States will not have enough skilled workers for an increasingly competitive global economy by the end of this decade, and our economic competitiveness as a nation and our stability as a society will be threatened.

That is why we at Pet Partners are proud to announce our new Read With Me special initiative. Read With Me was created to provide additional support and education free of charge to registered Pet Partners who want to participate in animal-assisted activity and animal-assisted education reading programs throughout the country.



Pet Partners®
Read With Me™

What are Animal-Assisted Reading Programs?

Therapy dogs have been assisting children in reading for over 30 years in libraries and after-school centers, helping struggling readers and students with learning disabilities achieve greater levels of reading success.² In most programs the therapy animal sits or lies quietly near the child while the child, under the supervision of a teacher or an adult, reads to the animal. While many of the therapy animals that are active in a reading program are dogs, other animals make great reading partners as well. It was important to Pet Partners to support all our diverse species that excel in a literacy setting and that enjoy working with children.

Studies have gone on to measure the reading skills of students assigned to therapy dogs compared to a control group of students who read to a teacher. Other studies look at measuring literacy gains, focus and motivation. I'm certain you are going to enjoy Dr. Nancy Gee's article in this issue. One of the world's leading researchers in animal-assisted therapy on reading and childhood cognitive development, Pet Partners is proud to have Dr. Gee serve on our Human-Animal Bond Advisory Board.

Why have all these studies found therapy dogs to be so effective at helping children read?

One reason is the influence of animals on humans. Research has shown the presence of a relaxed canine companion can reduce stress, lower heart rate, and reduce other observable signs of anxiety.³ In the past few decades research has shown that dogs can ease loneliness, foster trust, improve communication, improve cognitive functioning, reduce the need for medication by providing distraction from pain, and provide motivation for a patient's quick recovery.⁴

Another reason therapy dogs help children read is by decreasing their self-consciousness and increasing their confidence. Children are often hesitant, embarrassed, or shy about their reading abilities. Jalongo and Rench showed in 2004 that the presence of a calm, well-trained dog offers a unique form of social support, stress reduction and enhanced self-

esteem to the adolescent reader. Children felt at ease around the dog who was there just to listen to the story and not to judge how well he or she was reading. More confidence in reading often leads to improved grades, and improved grades mean happy children and parents and ultimately hopefully even adults who will be able to care for themselves and positively contribute to society.

What Does All of This Mean for Pet Partners Teams?

Pet Partners is widely recognized as the Gold Standard in therapy animal visitation programs, with more than 14,000 registered teams making about 3 million visits each year to a range of facilities in all 50 states. To become registered, each handler is evaluated with their companion animal to assess suitability for therapy work, and each animal undergoes a health assessment from their veterinarian. The vast majority of teams involve dogs but 8 additional species of animals are also registered. All registered teams are covered by a comprehensive insurance program to allay any liability fears that an institution may have.

To be able to offer the most comprehensive insurance available, Pet Partners recently made some changes to our policies. In order to be fully covered by Pet Partners GCLI policy, volunteers must represent Pet Partners and may not affiliate with another organization that registers therapy animal teams or charges a fee to participate in their program when Pet Partners has a similar offering.

In my own city, I am excited that Pet Partners is providing additional free support to its registered teams interested in helping to address the problem of childhood and adult illiteracy. These efforts have the potential to not only spread the joy of the human-animal bond, but also play a significant role in providing a more optimistic future for individuals and their communities.

¹ Dunlap, Vickie, Canine Assisted Therapy and Remediating Reading: A Review of the Literature, May 28, 2010

² Friesen 2012 Shannon 2007

³ Jalongo, MR, 2004: Canine Visitors: The Influence of therapy dogs on young children's learning and well-being in classrooms and hospitals. *Early Childhood Education Journal* 32(1), 9-16

⁴ Dunlap, V A review of the Literature, 2010



AROUND THE COUNTRY

PET PARTNERS TEAMS AT WORK

NEW FOR 2016

From your feedback we know how popular our team stories are to our readers - so we are going to do more of them! Interactions will now be published more frequently, and we are starting a page on the website to feature more of your work. If you have a very special story to tell please make sure that you share details when you log a visit in the Volunteer Center and we will contact you for more information.

Northeast



Yvonne Eaton-Stull & Maggie
McKean, PA

Maggie's 13 years of life have been full of good deeds. Maggie is a therapy dog as well as a crisis response dog.

After being featured in

the news for their crisis response work, Yvonne was contacted by a local kindergarten teacher interested in having Maggie visit her classroom. One young boy in the class was mostly nonverbal and often became frustrated and hurt himself. The teacher knew he loved dogs, so she hoped Maggie might be able to pull him out of his shell.

"Upon arrival, she had the children one by one come up and visit Maggie. This little boy sat down and was very interested in Maggie. He would point to a part of Maggie, such as her vest or her ear. Wherever he pointed I told him, 'that's her vest', 'that's her ear'. Very quietly I heard him repeat the words. The teacher was shocked and amazed! We played this game for a

while as he would point to something and I would tell him what it was and he would repeat the word. The teacher was so excited, she asked us to please come back another time.

On our second visit, that little boy not only said single words, he said a complete sentence! He came running up to Maggie and said 'Read to Maggie?' I, of course, said 'Yes, you can read to Maggie!' He grabbed a picture book and opened it pointing to pictures and telling Maggie what they were! The teacher began to cry!

This was such a moving experience to see the benefits of animal-assisted therapy!"

Katharine & Elbert Patterson & Chumani
Madison, CT

Katharine became a Pet Partners evaluator to help other volunteer teams share the beneficial impact of the strong bond a handler and their companion animal have.

Katharine and Elbert Patterson have been volunteering with Chumani for 8 years, bringing joy to many people in hospice care, hospitals, elementary schools and even mental health clinics. At the age of 5, Chumani developed a tumor on one of her parathyroid glands. Fortunately, the Pattersons had saved enough money to afford her treatment and Chumani was able to get back to doing what she loved most, bringing joy to others. This past March, Chumani developed a second tumor. The Pattersons received support from the Pet Partners Cancer Care Fund to help pay for Chumani's surgical procedure, medication and required tests. Chumani has since made a full recovery.



“Chumani’s first official duty as she returned to therapy work was to greet her group at the Errera Center for Homeless Veterans at the VA Medical Center in West Haven, CT. She has also served as a neutral dog for our most recent evaluations.”



Tiffany Moeltner & Wookiee
Blacksburg, VA

Tiffany Moeltner developed a therapy animal visitation program at her local schools to help at-risk children and those with special needs. Tiffany and her furry partner,

Wookiee, currently work with a local elementary school that has the highest at-risk population in the district. Tiffany’s sessions are very similar to a typical Read With Me™ session, however handlers also take the opportunity to teach children the proper and safe way to interact with dogs during their sessions. Tiffany explains, *“At the beginning of each session the children are taught to respect the dog’s choice to interact by stopping several feet from the dog and inviting the dog to interact with them without use of a command.”* This approach demonstrates Tiffany’s commitment to the You Are Your Animal’s Best Advocate (YAYABA) pledge, teaching the importance of respecting an animal’s space and advocating for their best interest. We are proud of the commitment Tiffany and Wookiee demonstrate, and appreciative of the positive impact their efforts have on their local community.

Midwest 

Shannon Hartfiel & Bogey
Belgium, WI

Bogey had a rough start in life. When he was rescued by the Hartfiel family, he was broken and scared. Fortunately, Shannon and Troy Hartfiel sensed there was something special



about Bogey, and with their affection and support, he blossomed into a loveable, gentle dog that was a perfect fit for the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program. Bogey’s work as a therapy dog involved visits to camps, literacy programs, and universities. He was also among the first dogs to provide animal-assisted therapy as part of a multi-service social services program. Bogey’s work in social services showed his true gift. During each visit he would find a new person to sit with, and he always chose the person who needed his love the most.

Sadly, Bogey was diagnosed with cancer, but Pet Partners Cancer Care Fund helped pay for his treatment. Bogey’s family was able to focus on giving him love and care when he needed it most, allowing him to celebrate birthdays like the one photographed above - his 15th!

Christie Lindemann & Buddy
Fargo, ND

Buddy the therapy dog visits many different classrooms at his local elementary school, listening to the students read aloud. Some of these classes include

participants in the English Language Learning (ELL) program. Many of the ELL students are from countries where dogs are not domesticated, and the children are taught to fear animals. Buddy’s visits offer an opportunity to demonstrate that dogs are not a threat. The children learn how to safely approach and work with dogs. Once their fear is gone, the children are able to read to Buddy with ease and confidence.

Buddy loves having kids read to him. His handler Christie Lindemann believes he has listened to over 3,800 kids read over the past three years. Their combined passion for education goes beyond the 4 hours of weekly volunteer time Christie and Buddy give at South Elementary; they have also created Buddy’s Little Free Library. Lindemann’s son, a huge supporter of Buddy’s work, raised over \$200.00 to build and supply the Little Library with new books. A true family effort, their commitment is making a positive change in their community, giving children access to books they would not have otherwise.





DEMONSTRATE



Tami Passeno & Bailey Bryon Center, MI

Bailey and her handler Tami Passeno volunteered with Pet Partners for over ten years, bringing joy to many patients and hospital staff. One of their most memorable encounters

was a visit with a very sick young girl sitting alone in her room. She asked if Bailey could sit with her on her bed and Tami helped Bailey up. The girl held Bailey and fell asleep shortly thereafter. When she awoke, she was still holding onto Bailey. A large smile crossed her face as she said, "That was the best nap I have ever had!"

A short time after their visit, Tami saw the girl's obituary. She said that moments like that help her put life into perspective, and she is incredibly thankful for being able to bring joy to people through her visits with Bailey. Bailey was diagnosed with cancer, and she is one of Pet Partners Cancer Care Fund recipients. The funds from this program help Bailey's family afford her care, and give Bailey more time to be surrounded by love and family.

randomly get up and go in her soft crate. I invited him to watch her and try and figure it out. The day he made the connection between the volume and tone of his voice and her distancing herself from him was very therapeutic. The veteran has since significantly reduced his instances of yelling, speaking aggressively to staff, and pointing his finger at them. Even though we met the AAT goals of treatment, the resident continues to check in with me and always asks 'How's my doggy?'"

Deb Newstrand & Tinkerbelle Union, KY

Tinkerbelle and Deb Newstrand have been visiting their local nursing home for three years on a regular basis. One of their favorite patients is Barbara, a resident with dementia. Barbara always remembers Tinkerbelle when she visits and often gives her pictures that she had colored over the week. As a birthday gift, Deb gave Barbara a stuffed Dalmatian dog which Barbara shows them every time they visit. Tinkerbelle has been able to give Barbara joy on even her hardest days.



"On one of our visits Barbara remembered her husband had died and she was sobbing when we arrived. Tink and I sat with her, and Barbara hugged Tink for at least half an hour. She told me Tink makes her happy and her husband would have liked Tink. That was the last time she spoke of her husband, but at least the timing was right and we were there for her that day. Now when we end each visit, she screams at the top of lungs as we walk down the hall, 'I love you Tinkerbelle!' I believe we make a difference in her life."

Southeast

Patricia Rivera & Outlaw Carollton, GA

Outlaw and Patricia Rivera provide animal-assisted therapy (AAT) to help socialize patients at their local nursing home for veterans. The opportunity to pet and play with Outlaw inspires even the most isolated patients to come out of their rooms.



"One resident in particular had a very difficult time adjusting to his admission; he was very angry and was very hostile, pointing his finger in a threatening manner when speaking to staff. He loved when 'the doggy' would sit on the sofa in my office with him. One day he asked why Outlaw would seemingly

Southwest



Janet Michelson & Penny

Parker, CO

Ever since Janet Michelson learned how therapy dogs were making positive impacts on people's lives, she knew she wanted to be involved

in a therapy dog program. Penny was rescued when she was 7 years old; she became a Pet Partners registered therapy dog in November 2011. From there, they spent the next four years volunteering at their local elementary school reading program and helped to bring joy to patients at their local hospital. Therapy work was intuitive to Penny; she always knew what each patient needed and gave them comfort when they needed it most. Penny retired in December 2015 due to tiring easily during visits. Unfortunately, Janet found a lump on Penny's side four months later; it turned out to be cancerous, and the tumultuous journey of fighting canine cancer began. Penny was one of the first canines to receive financial support from Pet Partners Cancer Care Fund, generously donated by the Petco Foundation and the Blue Buffalo Foundation. Because of support from the Cancer Care Fund, Janet was able to focus on caring for Penny instead of worrying about veterinary bills. Penny's surgery to remove the tumor was a success and she is recovering well, surrounded by loving family.

Linda Woods, Jim Woods, Melanie Long & Hope

Melissa, TX

Linda, Jim and Melanie have been volunteering with miniature therapy horse Hope at the Ronald McDonald House Dallas for the past year. Mini Hooves of Love teams have brought smiles to countless patients, as well as giving families relief from the stress of being in the hospital over numerous years. Towards the end of a visit, one patient's mother told Linda Woods that she and her toddler were originally planning to go straight to



their room after a long day of treatments and therapy. However, the lure of a miniature pony led them to take a peek in the play yard. As soon as their eyes met Hope's they decided to come out for a quick visit that turned into thirty minutes of playing and laughing together. The mother expressed how grateful she was that Hope and Linda were there that day. Seeing Hope elevated both their moods, and it was the first time her son had smiled all day.

Diane Reedy & Freeway

Melissa, TX

Freeway's introduction to the Reedy family began when she was thrown onto the freeway in front of Diane's husband's car. Mr. Reedy pulled over and brought her home to be nursed by Diane. Freeway was heartworm positive, suffered from broken bones, and was malnourished. Freeway had a knack for bringing comfort and joy to others, which inspired Diane to register with Freeway as a Pet Partners therapy team. They served their community for several years, touching the lives of many adults and children. They visited hospice patients, nursing home patients, schools, Shriners Hospital for Children, Paws for Reading in the Museum for Natural Sciences and many more. Wherever they went, smiles soon followed. The Houston Museum of Natural Science in Sugarland honored Freeway by showcasing her on their website, and there is a ceramic plaque that will remain there in Freeway's honor. Unfortunately, Freeway passed away recently due to health issues, but her memory will live on in the hearts of those whose lives she touched with joy and comfort.



West



Teresa Bingham & Lexi

Sierra Madre, CA

Lexi and her handler Teresa Bingham have been giving people a reason to smile for several years. Lexi makes friends wherever she goes, whether it is the House



of Hope in Pasadena, retirement homes, Huntington's Hospital, or the Boys' Home in Chatsworth. On one visit to the Boys' Home, Lexi noticed a nervous, shy boy that seemed curious about her. Lexi walked over to him and sat on his lap; this eased the tension, and the little boy opened right up. After that first visit, Lexi would seek out her new friend and cuddle up to him, bringing a smile to his face each and every time. Teresa and Lexi also volunteer at their local assistance living retirement home, visiting once a month. Each time they visit, they are greeted by a group of Lexi's regulars, eagerly awaiting their time with her. Her joy is contagious, and helps her to be a wonderful therapy dog.

CeCe Card and Aragon Anaheim Hills, CA

Aragon is one busy cat: he is an actor, comedian, social activist and a Pet Partners therapy cat. You may have seen Aragon guest starring as Lord Tubbington on the Emmy award winning show "Glee" - which led to his status as an online sensation. Aragon comes from humble beginnings. His first year of life was spent at a rescue before he was adopted by his handler CeCe Card. CeCe and Aragon are inseparable; you can enjoy videos of their adventures on Aragon's Facebook page. His curious and confident demeanor helps him both in his acting career as well as his therapy work with Pet Partners. Aragon has traveled all over the country and has done therapy work with over 1,000 people. He loves to bring joy to everyone he encounters, and uses his celebrity status to make a difference in the world by increasing awareness of animal rights issues.



Your Prescription is Ready

Don't miss out! Brand new Pet Partners shirts and sweatshirts are available. Proceeds benefit Pet Partners. We are very excited that this new design also includes our Pet Partners mission statement on the back. Shirts start at \$19.99 and come in a variety of styles and sizes. Additional shirt designs are also available including cat and horse designs.



Visit www.petpartners.org while shirts are still available.



Letters to the Editor

Send your questions to
editor@petpartners.org

I know the Pet Partners website now has a place to Log A Visit. Why is it important to fill that out when I already track my visits?

Thank you for asking because your question gives us the opportunity to share some exciting news as part of the response. Historically Pet Partners struggled to collect data on how many facility visits a team was making, how many people they interacted with or what type of facility it was. Much of the information we had was anecdotal and made it very difficult sometimes to submit a grant request or report on how a major donor's gift was used. Gifts from foundations and major donors are critical to our ability to support the best educated therapy teams and to be advocates for animal welfare and client safety.

Conservatively we have been reporting for many years that our teams made approximately one million visits (or interactions) per year based on surveys. Because of the handlers who have taken the time to use Log A Visit, we are now proud to say that our teams are actually responsible for more than three million interactions a year! That's incredible. Being able to accurately report on the number and type of facilities visited and how many people benefitted will continue to allow us to lead the field of animal-assisted interventions.

Why does Pet Partners' Policies and Procedures limit a visit to no more than 2 hours?

Pet Partners continues to lead the way with our commitment to animal welfare. Volunteering as a therapy animal team, regardless of which end of the leash you're on, is hard work. While some interactions may be energizing, others may be draining. Limiting visiting to no more than two hours (and less if your animal is stressed or tired) supports our philosophy of YAYABA™ You Are Your Animal's Best Advocate. We invite you to check out our position statements developed and approved by our Human-Animal Bond Advisory Board at <https://petpartners.org/learn/position-statements/>.

For canine therapy handlers, the best way you can be your animal's advocate is to be able to read your dog's body language and to intervene before your companion gets stressed or tired. That's why

Pet Partners created the Canine Body Language continuing education online course. Learn more about it at <https://petpartners.org/learn/online-education/>. Registered handlers can sign up for the course through the Volunteer Center and purchase the course at a substantial discount.

What are the benefits of being a Read With Me™ participant?

Our registered teams have always been able to volunteer in reading visits as part of the Therapy Animal Program. First, including educational materials and additional support as part of your registration was a way to support safe and effective visits without adding cost for our volunteers. Second, the focus of these materials is designed to promote safety with emphasis on YAYABA, PETS™ and other best practices which we felt were areas where additional training would be beneficial. Finally, we wanted to be inclusive of all our registered species. The Read with Me manual includes species specific tips as well as examples for all nine Pet Partners species.

By letting Pet Partners officially know you are participating in Read with Me, you provide valuable information about the number of our therapy teams that are volunteering in literacy settings. You will also have the opportunity to attend continuing education webinars with leaders in the field.

If you missed the volunteer e-newsletter sent on September 6, 2016 or want to download the Read with Me manual or see additional information, log into the Volunteer Center and search on keywords Read with Me in the Resource Library.

Do you have a question on a topic that would be of interest to a broad audience? Please feel free to send it in for consideration to editor@petpartners.org. We will select questions that we commonly receive, but can't guarantee to answer every one. If you do need an immediate response, please contact Pet Partners through the Contact Us form on our website.

Katharine's Story

Katharine has been donating and volunteering with Pet Partners for the past twenty years. Her first introduction to animal-assisted therapy was when she ran into Dr. Bill McCulloch, one of Pet Partners' founders, in 1993. Bill showed Katharine research articles that espoused the benefits of the Human-Animal Bond after Katharine told him that her mother's favorite nurse was her little dog. From there Katharine was hooked and decided she wanted to help the cause in any way she could.

Katharine decided after meeting Bill that she wanted to get involved, and in 2007 she met the perfect candidate for her first therapy team member. Karisto stole Katharine's heart as well as the hearts of all of those whom she would visit. They have been visiting since 2008. The more Katharine visited the more she fell in love with the work, and decided it was time to adopt a second team member, Philia. Katharine and Philia have been volunteering since 2011.

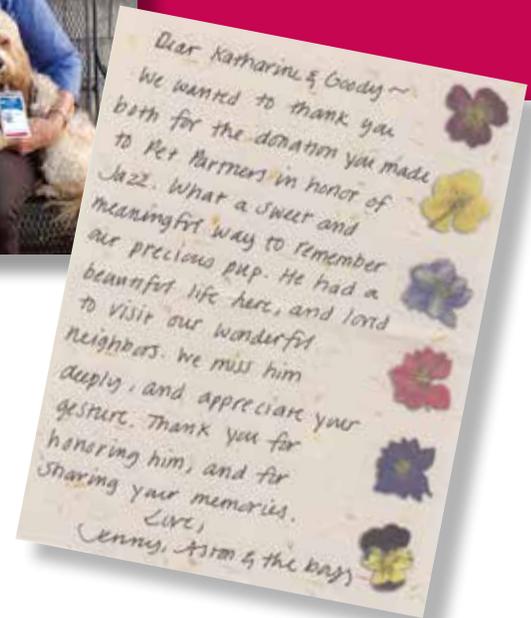
"One day this spring, a patient was admitted to the medical surgical unit after a traumatic fall. Suffering from her injuries and apprehensive about her new and strange surroundings, she had difficulty communicating with the hospital staff, and after several days, had not said a word. Her level of anxiety increased significantly as her stay in the hospital was prolonged.

As soon as the patient saw Philia, she sat up, smiled, and exclaimed: 'Oh, so beautiful! So beautiful!' and, with Philia on her lap, started talking to her and others in the room.

All were astounded by the patient's response, her expression of joy and the tranquility in her demeanor! We all had a feeling of relief and great appreciation for the gift that Katharine and her Pet Partner, Philia, are to our patients!"

(Quote from Celeste O'Brien Volunteer Services Coordinator from Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital)

As a life-long animal lover Katharine understands what it means to lose a pet. Long before becoming a



registered team, Katharine began making small gifts in memory of friends' and family members' pets, knowing that her donation would bring comfort to others and honor the joyous bond that those pets had with their handlers. The pets were not always Pet Partners, but that didn't mean their bond was any less important. Katharine's kind acts have brought solace to many grieving pet parents, memorializing the love that the pet received in its lifetime. Over the years she has collected many handwritten thank you notes from the families of the honored pets. The simple act of donating in honor of the families' pets gave acknowledgement to the bond that each had with their pets, and comfort to those who were grieving.

Katherine chose Pet Partners because of our high standards and the promise of growth and positive impact. Her donations are not just a tax write off for her. Over the years she has contributed \$4,692 in small gifts to honor friends' pets.

We are so proud of Katharine's dedicated work in the field of animal-assisted interventions and are grateful for her support.

Planning a future gift to Pet Partners

People like Katharine Harding (highlighted on the prior page) are appreciated by Pet Partners. Not only because of the outright donations she makes to Pet Partners, and the time she spends volunteering with her dogs as a therapy animal team, but also because Katharine has taken a visionary view of future support for the organization. She has included Pet Partners in her estate plan through her will.

Katharine shared that she decided to put Pet Partners in her will because *“ever since learning about Pet Partners (formerly Delta Society), I have made contributions in memory of family members’ and friends’ pets. Becoming a member of the Caring Community ensures that this tradition can be carried on, and that the organization’s mission will continue gaining momentum.”*

Are you interested in helping Pet Partners further its mission, but perhaps the thought of relinquishing assets you may need during your lifetime is not possible? A simple, flexible and versatile way to retain your assets during your lifetime while also ensuring that Pet Partners can continue its important work well into the future is by making a charitable bequest. It is as simple as including Pet Partners as a named beneficiary in your will.

Taking this step will give you a sense of accomplishment in helping Pet Partners continue to make an impact improving human health and well-being through the power of the human-animal bond for future generations.

Pet Partners is honored to welcome individuals who have included the organization in their estate plan into our Caring Community. If you would like information on how to include Pet Partners in your will, please contact us at legacy@petpartners.org.

Advantages of Creating a Bequest include

- **A bequest costs nothing now, yet it gives you satisfaction of knowing you have provided for a charity’s future**
- **You retain control and use of your assets during your lifetime**
- **You can modify your bequest if your circumstances change**
- **Gifts from your estate may be exempt from federal estate taxes**

If you include Pet Partners in your plans, please use our legal name, Pet Partners and our Federal Tax I.D. #91-1158281.

Attractive Options for Year-End Giving

IRA Charitable Rollover

In 2015, Congress enacted a permanent extension on the IRA charitable rollover. This allows individuals age 70 ½ or older to make a gift directly from their IRA to charity. The gift must be made from the IRA plan administrator directly to a non-profit organization, like Pet Partners. Although an IRA charitable rollover will not qualify for a charitable deduction, there are numerous advantages that are listed below.

Benefits of an IRA charitable rollover:

- **Avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to Pet Partners**
- **Satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year**
- **Reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions**
- **Allow you to support Pet Partners and its mission**

Transfer of Stock

Have you taken stock of your stocks this year? Have they performed well? Donating long-term appreciated securities directly to a charity by December 31 is one of the best and most tax efficient ways to support a non-profit organization like Pet Partners. If you sell the stock and donate the cash proceeds, your tax situation will not be as favorable as when you transfer stocks to a qualified charity. The advantages of making a stock transfer are below.

Benefits of donating long-term appreciated securities (owned for at least one year):

- **You can take a charitable deduction for the stock’s fair market value on the day you transfer it**
- **Avoid capital-gain taxes on the increase in value**
- **Allow you to make a generous donation to a charity you support, like Pet Partners**

Check with your legal and/or tax advisor for more information and to determine if a charitable bequest, using an IRA charitable rollover or transferring stock is right for you when making a charitable gift. For additional information, contact Pet Partners at legacy@petpartners.org.



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