



# Alliance of **THERAPY DOGS**

NEWSMAGAZINE

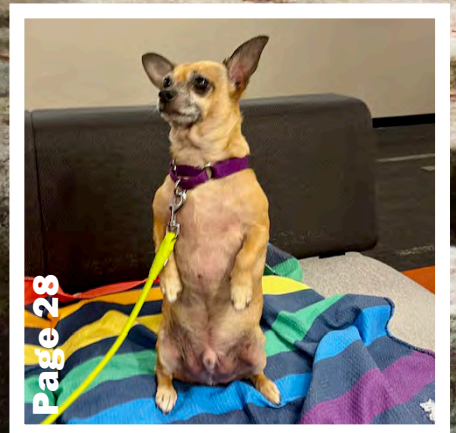
Fall/Winter 2024



Page 21



Page 34



Page 28

# When and How Do I Renew?

- One renewal date per household – October through March registrations will renew on January 1 of each year. April through September registrations will renew on July 1 of each year.
- Electronic renewals will be sent out 60 days prior to renewal and will be on the member portal.
- Hard copy renewal notices should be received 30 days prior to your renewal date.
- Electronic second notices will be generated January 1 and July 1. Hard copies will be mailed out by January 15 and July 15.
- All renewals received after your renewal date will be assessed a \$15 late fee.
- If your renewal is late, there is no insurance coverage between your renewal date and the date your renewal is finalized. Any member who does not renew, including the \$15 late fee, by February 15 or August 15, will be required to retest and reapply for ATD membership.

## Prepare to renew:

- Make sure your dog has had an annual wellness examination by a veterinarian within 12 months.
- Be sure the rabies vaccination is current.
- If using a titer instead of rabies vaccine, rabies titer levels must be 0.5 IU or greater and must be measured every two years.
- Your dog's annual fecal exam must be done within 12 months. Make sure the fecal exam is done early enough to get results and, if positive, get treatment and retest.
- Your veterinarian will sign off on the Renewal Health Verification form attesting that all three items are up to date.

## Time to renew:

- You can go to [www.therapydogs.com](http://www.therapydogs.com) to renew online. Sign into the member portal. Your username is your email address, and your initial password (if you have not changed it) is your member number.
- Complete your review. T/Os take the T/O Review. All other members take the Member Review.
- You will print your Renewal Health Verification Form, have your veterinarian complete it, scan and upload it, and save.
- Include the appropriate fees. Make your check or money order payable to Alliance of Therapy Dogs. You can also pay online by going to the Member Portal. Electronic Funds Transfers (EFTs) are not accepted.
- Payment without the signed renewal health verification form will not be accepted. All required materials must be submitted together. Your renewal will not be processed until the office has received all required materials.
- We appreciate all that you do to prepare for your renewal. Please remember that postage fees are a large expense for our organization. We strive to keep our membership fees as low as possible. Please help us by returning your complete membership renewal package with all required materials and signatures to arrive by your appropriate renewal date. This way, your membership and insurance will not lapse and you will avoid incurring late fees.
- If you have any questions concerning the member renewal process, please contact the corporate office on the toll free number 307-432-0272 or email us at [office@therapydogs.com](mailto:office@therapydogs.com).

## Magazine Editors:

Don Vaughan  
Jared Wadley

## Graphic Designer:

Courtney Roberts

## Disclaimer

We edit your stories the best we can, but do trust our members to provide correct or verified information. We are not professional journalists or copy editors. We are volunteers. We try our best to catch errors, misspellings and incorrect information. But sometimes we err!

## Advertising Requirments

Single issue, full page \$100, half page \$75, and quarter page \$50. Ad must be camera ready and submitted to ATD office no later than February 15 for the Spring/Summer issue and August 31 for the Fall/Winter issue.

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# Alliance of Therapy Dogs

## Officers

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skyhiteri@gmail.com



## Alliance of Therapy Dogs

# Mission Statement

Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) is an international registry of certified therapy dog teams. We provide testing, certification, registration, support, and insurance for members who volunteer with their dogs in animal assisted activities. Our objective is to form and support our network of caring individuals and special dogs who share smiles and joy with people, young and old alike.

## Magical Miracle Moments

We would like to hear about the very special or “magical” moment you and your wonderful dog experienced during your volunteer work. Examples may be a patient who has been totally unresponsive until a dog visits and, the next thing you know, they are smiling, petting the dog, a tear running down their face. Or a child who simply cannot read, and one day reads an entire book to a therapy dog. These articles should focus only on the special, unique moment, not the everyday miracles we experience with our dogs on regular visits.

### REQUIREMENTS:

- 1,000 words or less
- Author’s name, city and state
- Photos with photo releases attached
- In a format able to be edited, such as a word document

If your story is not published in this section it may be published in another section.

All communications regarding applications for membership, renewals, concerns, issues, general questions and requests for merchandise are processed by the corporate office and should be sent to:

### Alliance of Therapy Dogs

Mailing address:  
P. O. Box 20227  
Cheyenne, WY 82003  
Physical Address:  
1919 Morrie Ave.  
Cheyenne, WY 82001  
307-432-0272  
877-843-7364 (Toll Free)  
307-638-2079 (Fax)  
Email: office@therapydogs.com  
Website: www.therapydogs.com

# Contents

When and How Do I Renew? . . . . .	ii
Alliance of Therapy Dogs:	
Officers . . . . .	iii
Directors . . . . .	iii
Executive Director . . . . .	iii
Advisors . . . . .	iii
Magical Miracle Moments . . . . .	iii
Mission Statement . . . . .	iii
Outstanding Member Award . . . . .	1
Alliance of Therapy Dogs Scholarship . . . . .	2
2024/25 Alliance of Therapy Dogs Board Committees . . . . .	3
President's Message . . . . .	4
Board Meeting . . . . .	6
Merchandise . . . . .	8
Tidbits . . . . .	11
Ways to Donate . . . . .	12
Requirements for Newsmagazine Submissions . . . . .	13
Looking for a Few Good Volunteers . . . . .	14
Spotlight on . . . Maurice Kuypers, Director . . . . .	16
A Special Thank You For Our Volunteers . . . . .	18
2024 ATD Scholarship Recipients . . . . .	19
Unsung Heroes . . . . .	20
Witnessing Miracles . . . . .	21
What's Wrong? . . . . .	22
Rolling Out The Red Carpet . . . . .	23
A Career Change Labrador and his ATD Junior Handler	
Make Air Travel 'Less Ruff' . . . . .	24
Tale of the 'DALE-One' Terrific Terrier . . . . .	26
Peyton's Miracle Moments . . . . .	27
Library Champion . . . . .	28
What's wrong with his eyes? . . . . .	29
Tessa Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow - Life of a Therapy Dog . . . . .	30
Partner in Crime . . . . .	32
Meet Lola . . . . .	33
Homeless Hound to Hero . . . . .	34
Love Never Fails . . . . .	36
Double Back . . . . .	37
Our Village of Volunteers: Therapy Dogs of SLO . . . . .	38
Yoda Makes a Discovery . . . . .	39
Wings for All . . . . .	40
Dogs in the News . . . . .	41
Retired . . . . .	43
What's Wrong? Answers . . . . .	44
Become a supporting member! . . . . .	45
Somewhere Over the Rainbow . . . . .	46
Alliance of Therapy Dogs Photograph Authorization Release Form . . . . .	50
ATD Photo Tags & IDs . . . . .	51

**Members who take their dogs to work with them and/or use them in their jobs, including but not limited to teachers, therapists, doctors or psychologists, are not covered by ATD insurance when functioning as employees. Our insurance only provides coverage when the member is acting in a volunteer capacity.**

# OUTSTANDING MEMBER AWARD

This honor is awarded annually. Nominees must meet the following criteria:

- Must be an Alliance of Therapy Dogs member or Tester/Observer in good standing.
- Must be actively conducting pet therapy visits.
- Must never have had a verified incident/accident or complaint filed against them which resulted in action taken by ATD.
- Must have made a minimum of 25 visits during the calendar year of the nomination. Nominations must be submitted and postmarked by November 1 of the year for consideration and must be 300 to 700 words in length.

Nominations should include:

- Details about the number or frequency of therapy dog visits the nominee makes.
- Details about the nominee's impact on the community.
- Details on whether the nominee recruits other therapy dog teams or facilities.
- How many years the nominee has been volunteering with pet therapy and/or with Alliance of Therapy Dogs.
- Any particular attributes that make the nominee outstanding.

The Nominating and Awards Committee will evaluate all nominations and submit the top several candidates for the Members, T/Os, and Supporting Members to vote upon to determine the winner.

Nominations must be postmarked by November 1. The Outstanding Member Award winner will be announced on December 19. If you have questions, please contact the Alliance of Therapy Dogs Office.





# Alliance of Therapy Dog *Scholarship*

## Are You:

- An Alliance of Therapy Dogs member in good standing?
- Applying to an accredited college program?

## Yes? Apply for our scholarship today!

Send us your application, plus

- A letter of introduction telling us about yourself
- Institution's verification of acceptance
- Copy of your current transcript (within the past 10 years)
- Two letters of recommendation from non-family members. One from a facility visited by you and your therapy dog
- The completed Alliance of Therapy Dogs scholarship questionnaire (available on the website or by request from the office at [office@therapydogs.com](mailto:office@therapydogs.com)).

## The deadline to apply is February 15.

Scholarship winners will be notified by April 1.

Questions?

[office@therapydogs.com](mailto:office@therapydogs.com) |  
[therapydogs.com](http://therapydogs.com)

This scholarship is awarded annually. Applicants must meet the above criteria. A portion of the scholarship is dedicated to qualified Junior Handlers.

# Board Committees

**Certification (CERT):** Ensures the quality of Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) T/Os by reviewing T/O applications, developing the annual Tester/Observer Review, monitoring the T/O Egroup, advising the ATD Office on concerns regarding T/O that surface, and investigating and resolving T/O grievances. Review and approve membership applications outside the standard ATD Certification Test when there is no available T/O in the area of the prospective member. Reviews, approves and denies all concerns that fall outside the established ATD rules.

**Documents (DOC):** Update policies as needed. Publish all handbooks. Prepare Director biographies.

**Education (EDU):** Develop ideas for reevaluating teams, create the annual Member Review, create the Rules Review, and develop educational materials for present and prospective membership (both handlers and Tester/Observers). Assist in the development and distribution of both education and public relations information. Develop and increase public awareness of the presence of ATD as a national registry for volunteer therapy dog teams.

**Executive:** Assist the Board of Directors of Alliance of Therapy Dogs in the orderly and fair governance of ATD by, among other things, acting on behalf of the Board within the scope of the Bylaws, conduct research to assist in strategic planning, assist in emergent and sensitive issues, and act as the Appeals Committee. Assist the ATD Office with research and investigation issues as needed.

**Grievance and Ethics (G&E):** Review and respond to grievances, complaints, ethics issues and general concerns.

**Newsmagazine:** Choose and edit submissions and design the semiannual newsmagazine.

**Nominating And Awards (N&A):** Conduct election of Officers and Board members with the assistance of the ATD Office. Set scholarship criteria and choose recipients; review and select the recipient of the annual Outstanding Member Award.



# Fall 2024 President's Message



*ATD President Don Vaughan with Henry, the Olde English Bulldogge, and Ila, the Newfoundland*

Change is unavoidable. Sometimes it's easy. For many, it's hard. In most situations, it usually falls somewhere in the middle. If you haven't already, you should notice that there have been many changes this past year.

One big change is that ATD's President for the past three years, Kim Williams, stepped down from her position. As of July 1, I was elected to the role. Before going any further, I would like to personally thank Kim for all her time and dedication to ATD. It's greatly appreciated by many, me included. Even though Kim is no longer ATD President, she decided to stay on the Board of Directors and was elected to serve as a Director for another year.

Over the past handful of years, we've also seen a lot of other changes. For example, after 30 years working for ATD, former Executive Director Billie Smith retired. In addition, several Directors, many with more than 10 years of experience or more on the Board, decided to retire or move on to new adventures. We experienced the COVID-19

pandemic. And in these retirements alone, ATD has lost approximately 80 years of experience. Any one of these changes could be rough for an organization. But all of these, basically at once? Wow.

Have there been some bumps in the road? Absolutely. It's to be expected. However, thanks to a great team that includes you, our Members, as well as our Tester/Observers, our Board of Directors, our Office Staff, and all our supporters, ATD is standing strong.

Other newly-elected Officers were Director Cris Lewis as Vice President; long-time Director Stefanie Giese-Bogdan was elected Secretary; and Director Sandy Schiller was elected Treasurer. We also welcomed three new Directors to the Board: Maurice Kuypers from Santa Fe, New Mexico; Margaret May from Thornton, Colorado; and Elizabeth Vardell from Charlottesville, VA. We said goodbye to some Directors this past year, including long-time Director and former Secretary Laurie Schlossnagle. However, one Director who



stepped down from the Board, Monica Callahan, didn't go far. Monica was hired as ATD's new Social Media/Digital Content/Merchandise Manager. Again, more change.

In addition, as featured in our last Newsmagazine, long-time ATD Graphic Designer Stacy Schultz-Bisset retired, and Courtney Roberts took over her role. This summer, Courtney tackled putting together the Member Handbook and Tester/Observer Handbook for the first time. She did a great job and gave both handbooks a fresh new look.

Speaking of new looks: You might notice that a lot of ATD's documents look a little different. This past year, we have been creating an ATD Style Guide. The idea of the Style Guide is help give a rhyme and reason to how all ATD documents look. In other words, give them a brand. We want to make sure that if someone picks up an ATD document, they know that it is an ATD document. Though several documents might look different, know that the same base information is still there. It will take some time to implement all these changes, but we are working on it.

During all this change, one positive thing we have seen since the COVID-19 pandemic is growth. ATD's current membership is approximately 18,000. We dropped to below 15,000 members at one point. However, with growth comes more expense. Yes, more Members means more income. But with more Members, ATD also incurs more cost for insurance and more costs to process and maintain our memberships.

With ATD's growth, we have added and will likely need to add more staff in the next few years. When you add staff, you sometimes need more space for them, too. We currently have four paid ATD Office Staff who work in the ATD Office and two ATD Office Staff who telecommute. The ATD Office building is a small house in Cheyenne, Wyoming. It's a cute house, but it's also now a full house. With all of this in mind, there has been and will continue to be discussion regarding how much longer it will be before we need to find a larger space to run ATD.

And as I'm sure everyone is aware, everything just costs more. To help with rising costs, at this year's Annual Board Meeting, the Directors voted to increase fees by \$5. A single annual membership from \$30 to \$35, a new member processing fee from \$15 to \$20, and an additional same household handler or dog from \$10 to \$15. This increase starts

with January 2025 renewals. The supporting membership will not change, staying at \$20. Know that these decisions weren't easy to make. ATD has not raised the annual membership fee since 2008.

In addition to addressing change during the Annual Board Meeting in July, the Board confirmed that education is a priority for everyone connected to ATD. Everyone learns in different ways. Thus, ATD will continue to educate in various way - email blasts, short tidbit topics, prerecorded videos, live webinars, and printed documents, to name a few.

We regularly hear Members ask why. Why did that rule change? Why didn't that rule change? As part of the education, we are going to explain why. Know that every ATD Rule and Regulation has a why. They are there and were put into place for a reason. At the base of them all, they're there to keep all our teams and the people we visit safe while sharing smiles and joy. I'm excited to see what the next couple of years bring to ATD. I know there will be change; there already has been. However, I believe we have the right team at the right time. The one thing I don't see changing is the wonderful people and dogs who make ATD the wonderful organization it has been, is and will continue to be.

# Board Meeting

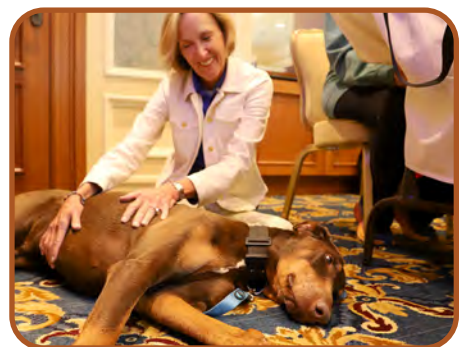
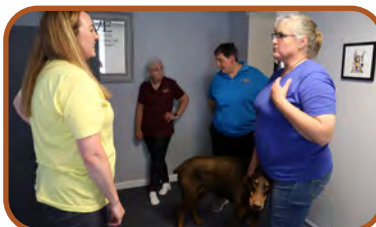
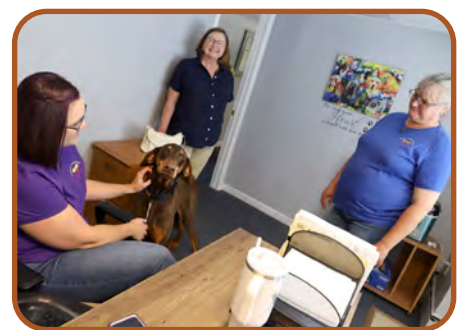


The Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) in-person Annual Board Meeting was held in Cheyenne, Wyoming, July 12-14. Given the number of changes the past few years, including a new set Officers and three new Directors this year, the Board came in a day early for a facilitated conversation with Tiffany Comer Cook with The Align Team on July 11. This was a good opportunity for training to make sure everyone was on the same page. Since the meeting was held in Cheyenne where the ATD Office is located, all of the Directors visited the Office and met with ATD staff.



2024-2025 Alliance of Therapy Dog Board of Directors (From left to right)  
Back row: Maurice Kuypers, Don Vaughan, Cris Lewis, Stefanie Giese-Bogdan, Sandy Schiller, Elizabeth Vardell, Margaret May  
Front row: Amy Brockel (Executive Director), Leroy (ATD Office dog), Kim Williams, Pat Coglianese





2024-25 Alliance of Therapy Dogs Officers  
(From left to right)  
President - Don Vaughan  
Vice President - Cris Lewis  
Secretary - Stefanie Giese-Bogdan  
Treasurer - Sandy Schiller

# ATD Merchandise

Members may purchase the following items from Alliance of Therapy Dogs.

If you would like to place your order, you can scan the QR Code or go to:

[www.atdmerch.myshopify.com/](http://www.atdmerch.myshopify.com/)

If you have not set up your Shopify account,

please email [office@therapydogs.com](mailto:office@therapydogs.com) to request an invite.



**ATD tags,  
vests, ties,  
collars,  
leashes, traffic  
lead,  
bandanas and  
more.**

# ATD Merchandise

Members may purchase the following items from Alliance of Therapy Dogs.  
 We also provide Give away items for Booths or events.  
 email [office@therapydogs.com](mailto:office@therapydogs.com) to request free items for your next event.

**Bookmarks,  
 lanyards,  
 magnets,  
 stickers, pins  
 and patches**

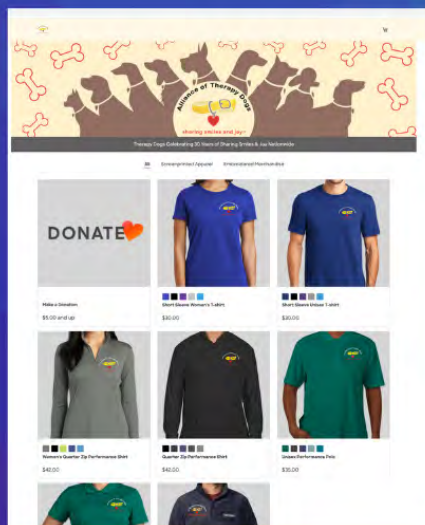


**Brochures,  
 Newsmagazines  
 and notecards**



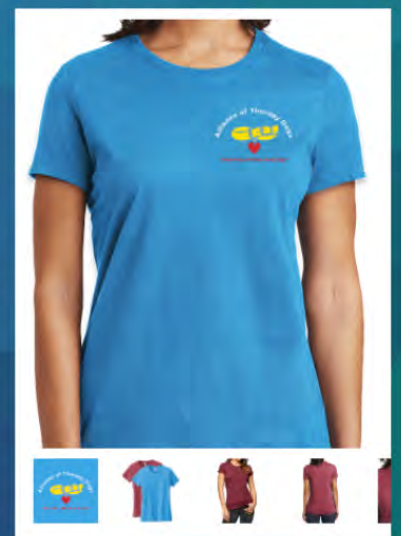
## ATD Clothing from Custom Ink

Visit <https://stores.customink.com/atd>



**ATD will update the offerings in the Custom Ink store to include new and seasonal items.**

**There are print minimums on orders so do know that they will print and ship approximately every two weeks. Custom Ink will let you know what to expect as you complete the order.**





# ATTENTION TESTER/OBSERVERS

Have you ever considered  
joining the Board of Directors?

The ATD Board is an active working board, not simply an advisory board, and is responsible for implementing the strategy and policies of our organization. The anticipated volunteer commitment by each successful applicant includes:

- **10-15 hours per week.**
- **In-person attendance at the multi-day Annual Board Meeting in July each year.**
- **Virtual attendance at a one-day Mid-year Board Meeting.**
- **Review and respond to emails within three business days.**

## Would you like to help **Alliance of Therapy Dogs** continue to grow and develop?

- Do you have ideas for the future?
- Do you have time to help with organizational and committee operations?
- Do you have professional skills that could assist ATD?

### Did you answer yes?

If you are a Tester/Observer, we would love you have you apply to be elected to the Board of Directors.

If you are interested in applying, please contact the ATD Office.  
When there is an opening, an announcement will be made via the  
T/O Egroup and an email blast.

307-432-0272 or 877-843-7364 • office@therapydogs.com  
www.therapydogs.com



## Taking Your Dog to Work



Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) knows there are many benefits to utilizing therapy dogs in the workplace, but there are things to consider before incorporating your dog in the day-to-day work environment.

ATD-certified and -insured dogs are only covered by ATD insurance while Members are volunteering. This volunteer insurance does not extend into a Member's workday in any way. If you want or need insurance for your dog that you take to work, an additional insurance policy must be acquired. While many policies may fit your needs, you can contact the ATD Office to get more information on a company that offers at work coverage to ATD Members. Also know if you take your dog to work to conduct a volunteer visit at any point in the day, you are only covered while volunteering and you are not covered before or after the volunteer visit.

Also be aware that many dogs do not have the stamina to go to work all day, every day. Dogs sleep, rest and relax a lot! Being expected to work for long periods of time and/or being expected to work "on demand," can be exhausting for dogs both mentally and physically. Consider setting up a different work schedule for your dog such as partial days, fewer days per week and scheduled "off" time. Your dog snoozing under your desk while waiting for the next interaction may not be enough down time for your dog. And when dogs that are tired or overworked are more likely to have an incident occur.

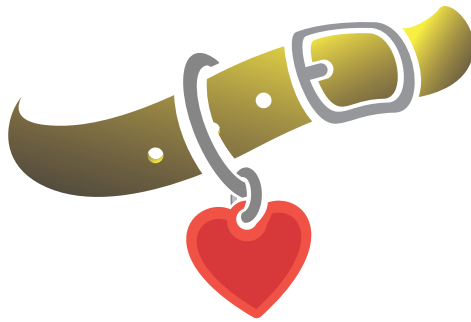
Just like humans, dogs' needs and perceptions change as they age. A dog that once loved to interact with every human they encountered, can get burnt out and

not want to interact in the same way any longer. Be vigilant about being your dog's advocate. Watch your dog carefully for signs of stress, avoidance and needing a break (this is true even if you don't take your dog to work!). While ATD rules don't extend to the workplace it is advised that the handler always be present when individuals engage with your dog at the place of employment as you can't advocate for a dog when you are not present during interactions with others.

While ATD rules only apply to volunteer visits, we do ask those that use their dog at their place of employment to be mindful of their affiliation with ATD. Be sure your dog is not wearing any ATD equipment, including their red heart tag, when you take your dog to work. Also be careful about posting photos and videos online and try not to confuse those you visit with the impression ATD is covering your visit while you are at your workplace.

The purpose of ATD visits is to provide a free service in a volunteer capacity. This is a cornerstone of who ATD is as an organization and our mission. If you choose to take your dog to work, please remember that you must still have at least one volunteer in-person visit every three months to maintain your ATD certification. If for any reason you are not able to maintain the volunteer visit requirement, please refer to your ATD Member Handbook or reach out to the ATD Office for guidance on how to proceed forward before resuming volunteer activities.

Before taking your dog to work, ATD recommends you consider all the different pieces and parts necessary to set both you and your dog up for success!



## Ways to Donate to **Alliance of Therapy Dogs**

The easiest way to donate is to go to our website  
**therapydogs.com** and click on the gold  
“DONATE” button in the upper right-hand corner.

### **The Donate button will give you the option to:**

**🐾 Donate one-time**

**🐾 Donate monthly**

**🐾 Donate once a month by rounding up on purchases you make to a debit/  
credit card you link to the donation page**

**🐾 Donate “in memory” or “in honor” of someone**

You can also support Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) by donating to ATD’s Endowment. The ATD Board of Directors approved and established an endowment to ensure that ATD will have the foundation and funds to continue to support its volunteers for decades to come across our vast service area of the USA, Canada and Puerto Rico. This endowment is set up to accept donations from all over the world and in various forms, from cash and securities to real estate. Please contact the ATD Office if you have questions or if you would like to learn more about donating or about updating your estate plans to include Alliance of Therapy Dogs.

You are also welcomed to donate  
by mailing a check or money order to:

**Alliance of Therapy Dogs**

P.O. Box 20227

Cheyenne, WY 82003

*Thank you for the ongoing support of our organization.*

\* ATD will place all donations received into the general fund  
unless otherwise specified by the donor.





# Requirements for Alliance of Therapy Dogs Newsmagazine Submissions

We love your stories! Reading each and every one is a true pleasure, and we are happy to share them with the rest of our Alliance of Therapy Dogs family. Here are the things you need to know in order to get your stories printed.

## 1. Articles and Stories

- a. 1,000 words or less
- b. Submit to corporate office in an electronic format such as a Word document, Rich Text File, or other editable electronic/digital form; NOT a .pdf or adobe file.
- c. The story/article you submit MUST follow all Alliance of Therapy Dogs rules and guidelines. For instance, any stories or articles where your dog is off leash (unless performing tricks) will not be published. To be certain, please refer to your member handbook or look up the guidelines online.
- d. Besides being a member in good standing, the story should have taken place within the past year (except for certain instances, such as a pandemic) and not focus on a dog's retirement or death. Background information and stating that a dog has retired or has died is acceptable. Please see "Retires" and "Rainbow Bridge" for more details.

## 2. Photos

- a. Photos of non-members MUST be accompanied by a signed photo release or we cannot publish them. (Click on the Digital Authorization Form link at <https://www.therapydogs.com/members-therapy-dogs/>)
- b. You may submit more than one photo, but usually only one will be selected for printing.
- c. We prefer that all photos submitted be high-resolution digital photos. Hard copy photographs are also acceptable.
- d. Please, no newspaper clippings or copies of such.

## 3. Dogs In The News!

- a. Summarize any news articles in your own words in 125 words or less.
- b. Must include your name, city and state of residence.
- c. You may include one photo that was not taken by the media outlet.
- d. Please do not send articles or links for us to summarize as the Newsmagazine committee will no longer summarize third-party articles.

## 4. Retirees

- a. All dog retirement announcements should be limited to a photo, date of birth, years of service, and no more than 50 words describing the dog's special qualities. Editors may shorten descriptions that exceed the word count.

## 5. Rainbow Bridge

- a. Photos must follow the above guidelines.
- b. Include the following: owner's/handler's name, dog's name, breed, date of birth, date of death and years of service.
- c. You may include a few lines (no more than 50 words) about the dog's service or special qualities, but we may need to edit it accordingly.
- d. Due to limited space, human obituaries are not published.

## Submission deadline dates are always February 15 and August 31

Please understand that not all articles that are submitted are published. News articles cannot be reproduced due to copyright issues. The Newsmagazine committee reserves the right to edit contributions for language and length and to make the final decision regarding which articles will be included in each issue. Links to stories will no longer be published, and the Newsmagazine staff will no longer summarize third-party stories. If we have any follow-up questions about your submission, we'll send them to you as soon as possible.

Send electronic submissions to [office@therapydogs.com](mailto:office@therapydogs.com).

Hard copies mail to ATD, PO Box 20227, Cheyenne, WY 82003

# Looking for a Few Good Volunteers



Do you ever wonder how you can help others experience the satisfaction you feel when you take your dog on a pet therapy visit? If you do, you have an opportunity to take the concept of “Sharing Smiles and Joy” to new heights by becoming a Tester/Observer (T/O).

T/Os are role models for Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) and as such must know and follow all rules and regulations and be able to convey them to new and prospective members. Good people skills are essential to communicating effectively and tactfully with people.

The main purpose of the T/O role is to assess the skills of teams seeking certification and coach prospective and current members. The T/O provides constructive and encouraging feedback that helps teams (both the handler and the dog) improve their skills and confidence in providing animal-assisted activities or therapy. ATD has the following expectations of its T/Os:

- Abide by the ATD and T/O Code of Ethics.
- Be a role model and follow all current ATD rules and guidelines as an example to handlers and prospective members.
- Review the Member Handbook and Tester/Observer Handbook yearly and incorporate any changes into their practices.
- Follow current Certification Guidelines as outlined in the Tester/Observer Handbook.
- Coach prospective and existing members on following all current ATD rules. Do not criticize them but inform them so they understand ATD rules and guidelines and have the opportunity to make changes. If coaching is ignored, contact the ATD Office for guidance.

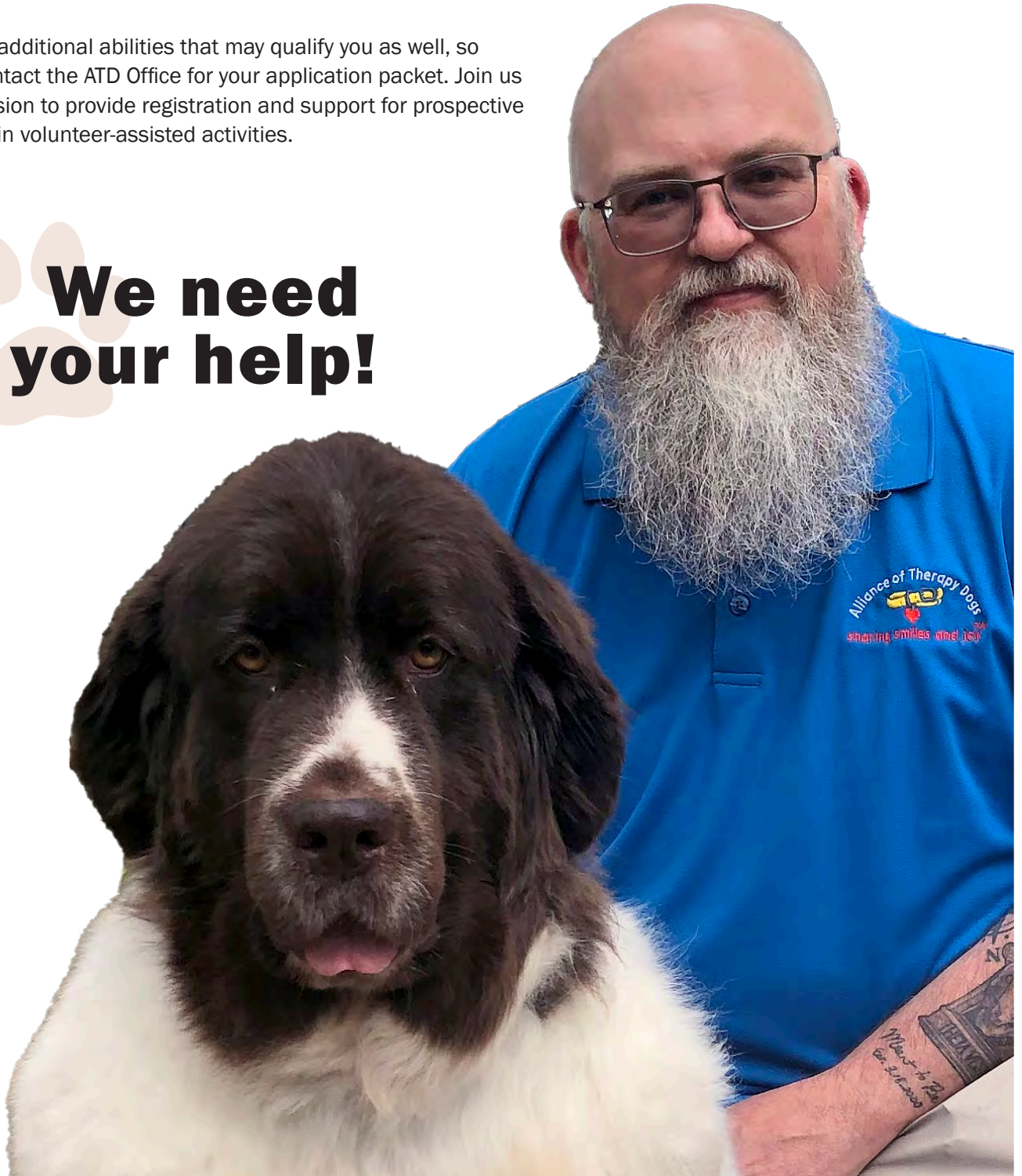
In addition, if you have practical experience working with dogs and are good at reading their body language, please consider becoming a T/O. Here are some of the dog-related attributes we look for in a T/O candidate:

- Interaction on various levels with a variety of breeds, including both large and small dogs.
- Assisting T/Os and learning to determine under what circumstances teams successfully complete the testing process.

- Training dogs for performance venues such as obedience, agility or herding.
- Reading a variety of books by animal trainers and behaviorists and/or attending seminars on training and behaviors.
- Experience in teaching or assisting in teaching dog training classes.
- Fostering and rehoming dogs.

There are additional abilities that may qualify you as well, so please contact the ATD Office for your application packet. Join us in our mission to provide registration and support for prospective members in volunteer-assisted activities.

 **We need  
your help!**



# Spotlight

**Maurice Kuypers, Director**  
Santa Fe, New Mexico



### **Tell us about your therapy dogs and the locations you visit.**

I have two therapy dogs, Skye and Leo. Both are Nova Scotia Duck Tolling Retrievers. Skye is 11 and she has been a therapy dog for six years. Leo is six and he has been a therapy dog for just over two years. I presently visit a hospital and its clinics, a center for grieving youth, and a senior community's memory care facility. In the past, I have visited hospice patients in long-term care and school reading programs.

### **When did you join ATD as a Member and become a Director?**

I joined ATD in the summer of 2018 and became a Director this May.

### **What prompted you to volunteer for therapy dog work? What challenges, if any, happened as you embarked on this effort?**

My association with ATD began after my wife visited with her work colleague, Stefanie Bogdan-Giese (fellow ATD Board Member). Stefanie related her experiences with ATD. My wife thought it would be a good way for our daughter to fulfill her high school service requirement, so I explored further how to become a Handler with my daughter as a Junior Handler. While my mother had been in assisted

living/memory care before her passing, I would see residents' family members bring their dogs for a visit and noticed the joy the dogs would bring. I wanted to share these same experiences through Skye.

### **What motivates you to do what you do?**

I continue to support the mission of ATD through my visits and now as a Board Member. It is truly amazing the joy our therapy dog visits bring. Those we visit are so grateful. I've heard many times how our visit has "made their day" of those we see.

### **What might someone (non-family members or close friends) be surprised to know about you?**

I have lived in several parts of the U.S. (mostly Midwest and East) as well as overseas assignments while working in Brussels, Shanghai, and Tokyo. I'm an avid devotee of exercise and several sports.

### **If you weren't volunteering for ATD, what would you be doing?**

I love to scuba dive, ski, and play golf. I enjoy hiking the Santa Fe area with our dogs: Lots of terrain to choose from!



# A Special Thank You For Our Volunteers

We are proud of the many Alliance of Therapy Dogs visits you have made since becoming a member. Whether you go to hospitals, nursing homes or other medical facilities, participate in education or reading programs, or help de-stress passengers at airports or students during final exams, you are providing a valuable service to the people in your area.

We believe that faithful volunteers like you deserve to be recognized for all the beneficial work you do. In honor of your dedication to Alliance of Therapy Dogs, we are pleased to acknowledge the contributions you make to your community with these tokens of our admiration and gratitude.

## Alliance of Therapy Dogs Visit Pins

Do you ever think about how many times you and your dog(s) visit facilities on behalf of Alliance of Therapy Dogs? We invite you to keep track of your facility visits. Alliance of Therapy Dogs offers a lapel pin which displays the Alliance of Therapy Dogs logo. There are two rings on the bottom to attach the gold bars that display the number of facility visits.

Achievement levels begin with 50 visits to any given facility and then go on to 100, 250, 500, and 1000+. When you reach the next level, you may order the appropriate bar to signify the new number.

## Alliance of Therapy Dogs Visit Certificates

Alliance of Therapy Dogs offers certificates for your visits. Provide your visit tracking information and Alliance of Therapy Dogs will send you a certificate showing your name and your dog's name along with the appropriate number of visits. Achievement levels begin with a minimum of 50 visits. These certificates can also be copied and sent to the AKC to apply for the Therapy Dog (ThD) Title.

## Years of Service Patches

In recognition of the amount of time you have participated in pet therapy with Alliance of Therapy Dogs, we are pleased to offer you a service patch which displays the Alliance of Therapy Dogs logo and the number of years you have been a member. The patch may be sewn onto a shirt, hat, fanny pack, vest, or wherever you would like to display it.

**Following one year of service, patches are offered in five-year increments thereafter. If you would like a service patch, please order at <https://atdmerch.myshopify.com/>.**



# 2024 ATD Scholarship Recipients

The Nominating and Awards Committee is proud to announce the 2024 Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) scholarship recipients. ATD awarded \$10,000 in scholarships. Brief summaries of their applications appear below.

Thank you to all who applied. We had a very strong collection of applicants and encourage those who were not selected this year to apply again.

**Evelyn Cunningham** has been an ATD member since May of 2023. She enjoys visiting with Walter, a Bedlington terrier, at a local university and airport. Evelyn is a psychiatric nurse practitioner who is looking to make an impact on supportive services for chronically homeless individuals entering permanent housing. Evelyn is currently in an MBA program at Touro University.

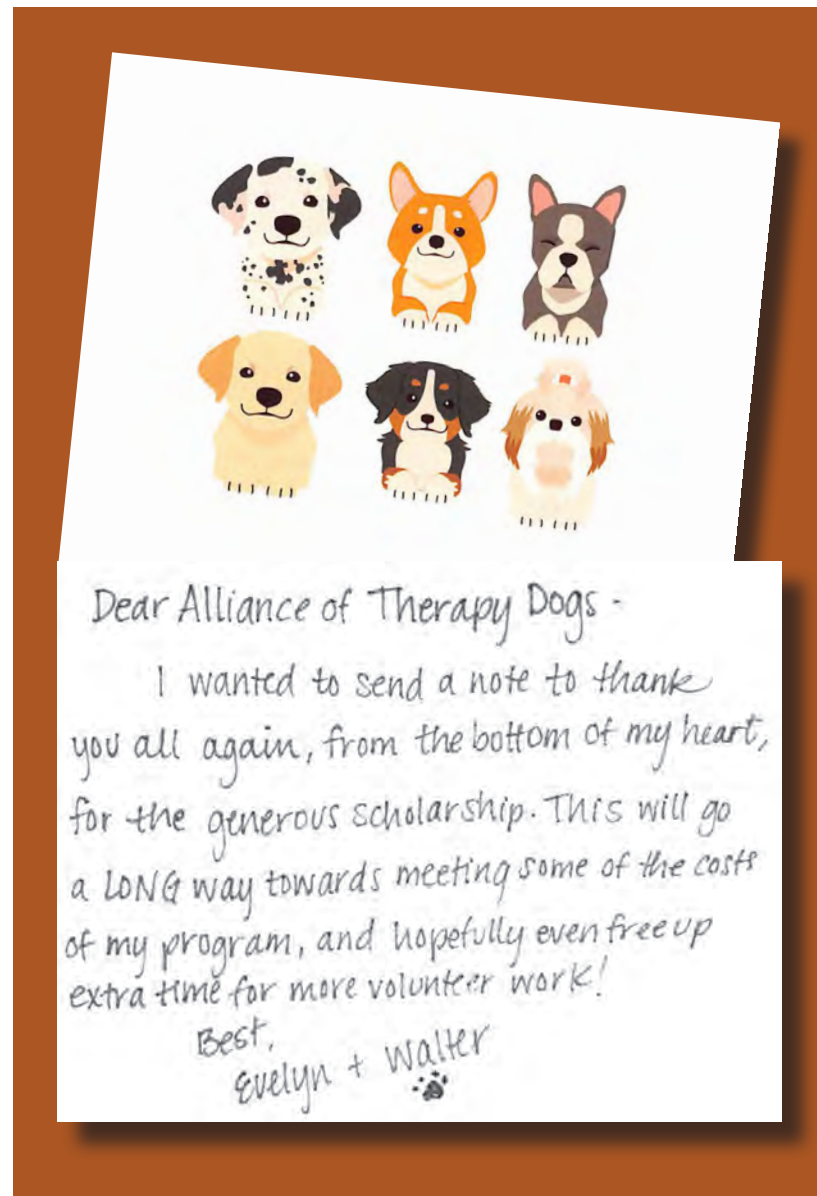
**Monica Buensuceso** joined ATD in April of 2021. She and her dog Dash, a Labradoodle, visit a number of different schools. Monica has been in the field of education for 23 years. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in General Psychology with an emphasis in Cognition and Instruction from Grand Canyon University.

**Charlotte McDonald** has been an ATD member since September of 2019. She and her dog Lulu, a Coton de Tulear, love visiting schools. Charlotte's aim is to pursue a degree in animal science at the University of Vermont starting in the fall of 2024 with the intention of establishing a career in research.

**Miranda Rivenbark** joined ATD in December of 2021. She and her dog Harley, a German Shepherd, have two favorite venues to visit. One is a rehabilitation center and the other is a family resource center. Miranda is currently enrolled at Penn Foster College studying to become a certified veterinary technician.

**Andrew Schanley** has been an ATD member since March of 2020. He and his dogs Ziggy and Zany, both Golden Retrievers, like visiting the public library to help kids with reading. Andrew plans to attend Charleston Southern University and major in Physical Therapy and Kinesiology, with a concentration in Athletic Training.

ATD has been awarding an annual scholarship since 2004. Scholarship application information can be found on the Member's page of the ATD website in the helpful documents section.





# Unsung Heroes

Sometimes the unsung heroes that are revealed in the aftermath of tragedy turn out to be man's best friend. Those four-legged fur balls that occupy so many of our homes as family members. The popularity of therapy dogs has grown exponentially over the past couple of decades as people have realized the value of a little canine companionship when bad things happen.

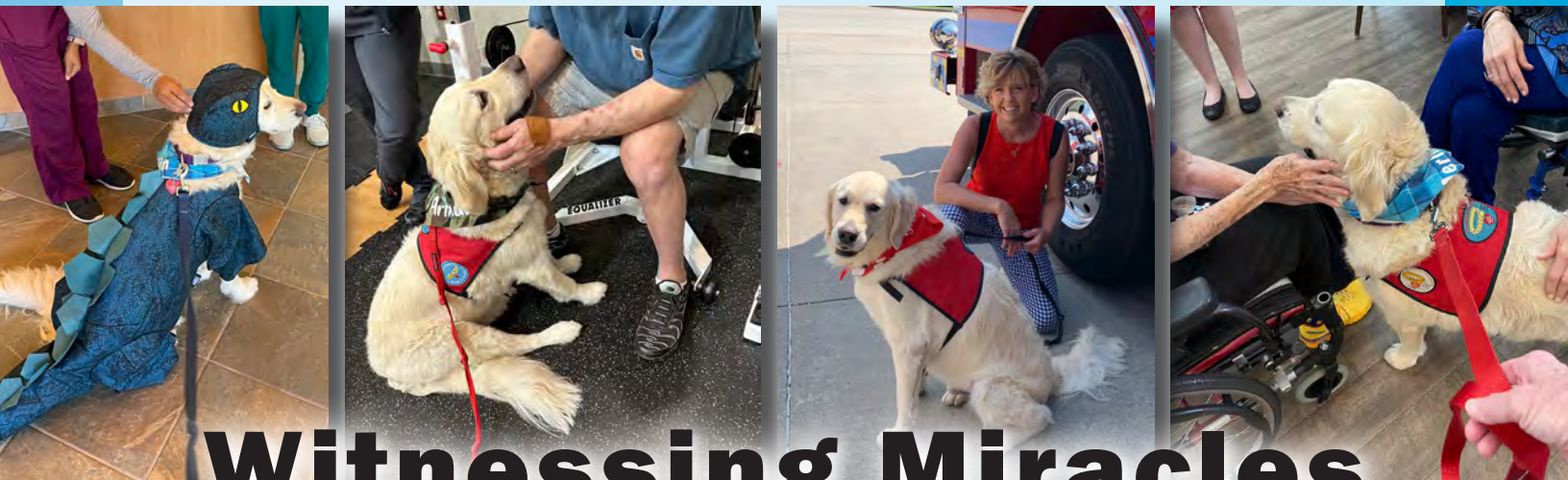
The recent range fires in the Texas panhandle opened many opportunities for the dogs and handlers of Panhandle Area Canine Therapies, better known as P.A.C.T., to work with and offer some much-needed comfort to victims dealing with devastating losses as a result of the fires. Founder Jo Humphrey and two other P.A.C.T. teams visited with individuals and families and those working with them from various organizations in Borger, Texas, where a local church was set up for assistance providers to get victims back on the road to recovery. This visit followed on the heels of another tragedy when a June 2023 tornado severely damaged Perryton, Texas, where P.A.C.T. is headquartered. Therapy dogs were busy there, as well. Several other panhandle communities were adversely affected by the fires which scorched over one million acres destroying historic ranches, numerous homes and outbuildings, and killed a tremendous number of livestock. Two persons lost their lives and many others, including firefighters, suffered serious injuries.

It always seems that an encouraging visit from a therapy dog can lift spirits and provide a respite from the overwhelming emotional impact of a tragedy. A gentle nudge, a warm hug or just a simple handshake from a furry paw can bring a much-needed smile to those in need.

*Jo Humphrey, Perryton, Texas*

Photo: The teams responding to the Borger incident were (left to right) Gail Nabors with Annie, Lori Wilson with Stewart Little, and Jo Humphrey with Carson.





# Witnessing Miracles

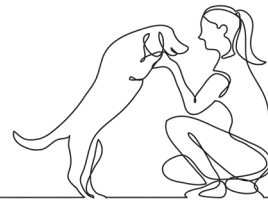
I am a full-time volunteer for the Alliance of Therapy Dogs. I have two ATD-certified Irish Crème Golden Retrievers. We are out three days a week with sometimes two pet therapy visits per day. We go to autism schools, rehab facilities, children’s neurological hospitals, hospice in-patient units, behavior centers, and specialty children’s hospitals. I take them to memory care units and they have also participated in grief counseling. I have witnessed miracles and watched as my dogs continuously spread joy among our community. I was inspired to write this today after a particularly long day of doing pet therapy. I had been gone for over three weeks and missed regular visits. I was amazed to see the number of people who were sincerely glad for our return. A few patients carry my dogs’ trading cards in their wallets or pockets all the time. Many rehab patients tell me they think about my dogs all the time. The children know exactly what day I come and exactly which dog I was supposed to bring, and they let me know if I brought the wrong dog! One particular group of kids I see suffer from Prader-Willi syndrome. Many will never go home. The opportunity for them to hug and pet my dogs gives them a chance to receive some unconditional love. I witness many things during our visits that I was inspired to write this Ode praising the wonders I see on any given day.

*Ode to the Alliance of Therapy Dogs whereby with one touch,*

the children will calm  
 the challenged will read  
 the veteran will remember  
 the orphan will feel a hug  
 the dying will see a furry angel  
 the disfigured are kissed  
 the lonely will find a friend  
 the mute will try to speak  
 the grieving will shed their tears  
 the elderly will find a companion  
 the nurses will smile  
 the chaplain will have an assistant  
 the first responder will feel appreciated  
 the weak will take a step  
 the afraid will dare to touch

*Carrie Canfield, Shenandoah, TX*

# What's Wrong? 🧐❤️



**This photo has been staged by ATD members. Can you find what's wrong with this photo?  
See Page 40 for the answers.**



# Rolling Out The Red Carpet

My 5-year-old mini Goldendoodle, Oliver, and I have been doing weekly visits at a local nursing home/hospice/memory care facility for the past year. We have always loved our visits there and have worked closely with the activities coordinator to schedule and visit residents in a variety of settings while we are there.

Recently, the coordinator asked if I could come at 2 p.m. on a day that we usually didn't visit, although it worked nicely into my retired schedule. When we arrived, the staff led us down a specially laid out 'red carpet' entrance to the group meeting area. Unbeknownst to me, the dear staff had organized a surprise party for Oliver and me celebrating National Therapy Dog Appreciation Day!

We were the guests of honor and were presented with a large bouquet of flowers, a certificate of achievement for Oliver, a wooden plaque, helium balloons, a bucket of new balls for Oliver and an engraved trophy! The 30-plus residents in attendance were all smiles, frequently clapping and thoroughly enjoying the surprise party.

Oliver was beside himself with so much attention focused on him, doing tricks, catching tossed balls midair and receiving non-stop petting, hugs and verbal praise from all in attendance.

In addition to bone-shaped cinnamon crackers for all, the staff held a Therapy Animal Trivia event where residents were encouraged to shout out answers about different kinds of therapy animals, animal visit benefits and general history.

We all had such a wonderful, memorable time and are very fortunate and grateful to be a part of their volunteer staff.

We can't wait until our next visit!

*Wendy Treleven, Eden, WA*



# A Career Change Labrador and his ATD Junior Handler Make Air Travel “Less Ruff”

“Does that really say, PET ME?”

Our 13-year-old Alliance of Therapy Dogs junior member, Anders Wang, replies, “Yes it does. This is my therapy dog, Riesen, and he would love for you to pet him.” Anders readily admits some of the questions are repetitive, but he reminds himself the passengers don’t know “what these dogs are doing here” and they always think “are these dogs up for adoption?” When these same questions become tedious for Anders, he told me he reminds himself of what the zen monk (Shunryū Suzuki) says: “In the beginner’s mind, there are many possibilities, but in the mind of the expert, there are only a few.” So, at the airport, we should think like beginners and all the questions the passengers ask will seem like ones that we ourselves would be asking if we were in their shoes.

Anders and his family almost always have at least two dogs in their home. Right now, one is Riesen, the ATD chocolate lab, and soon they will receive a new pup from the guide dog program as they recently returned Esme, a yellow lab, to the guide dog organization for advanced training and for eventual placement. This family has fully trained two guide dog puppies so far. The Wang family adopted Riesen at 17 months old after he had been diagnosed with Stargardt, an eye disease that can lead to blindness. Due to Stargardt, he was career changed and is now working as an ATD therapy dog at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. The program is called “Paws 4 Passengers” (P4P) and Anders (accompanied by his mom Sandra) is the first junior member in the program’s 10-year history. The woman who runs the airport security badge office told Anders and his mom “You are the youngest person the airport has ever granted a security badge.” At the time, Anders was only 12 years old! Both he and his mom were very proud to have the airport authority put that much trust and faith in him!

According to Graham Ritz, director of airport operations, “We are thrilled to have our first Airport

Therapy Dog junior member and his dog, Reisen, join our Paws 4 Passengers program at the Reno-Tahoe International Airport. The P4P program continues to be an invaluable asset to our traveling passengers and airport employees adding smiles throughout our concourses. We hope additional junior members and their pups join our team or other therapy dog programs at other airports nationwide.”

Anders will be entering the 8th grade in the fall at the Davidson Academy, on the University of Nevada, Reno campus. The academy is for gifted students and encourages community involvement. Either Riesen (or their service dog in training) attends classes with Anders. The dog’s presence at the academy is fully supported by the school administration and the teachers. This is an important piece of the puppy’s training and socialization process. Anders handles this responsibility all on his own.

The 30 P4P volunteer teams work with at least two teams at a time. More often three teams work together on the two-hour shifts. Anders seems to work well with all the adult dog owners. In speaking with a fellow team member, Doug and his dog Aja, Doug told me “Working with Anders, Riesen (and mom Sandra) is a pleasure. Both Anders and Riesen seem very much “at ease” in the airport. Anders has obviously taken his training and dog handling seriously and it shows. I look forward to volunteering on many more shifts with them.”

Another team who has worked with Anders on several occasions is Teresa and her dog Barely. Teresa said, “Anders is a perfect addition to the Paws 4 Passengers pack. He is very attentive to the needs of the passengers and his therapy dog. I am grateful for the opportunity to watch Anders share his time and talent with the traveling public.”

Immediately after this academic school year ended for Anders, he left Reno for a month-long visit with his grandmother in Taiwan. It was his first time to fly



unaccompanied. His mom was with him from Reno to San Francisco but after that, he was on his own. He generally presents himself much older than his chronological age. The hours he has spent at the airport doing therapy dog volunteer work allowed him to be situationally aware, but also with a high level of calmness during his airport and airplane time without his family. The side benefits of volunteering never

cease to amaze!

Anders has a message for any “junior” thinking of volunteering with their therapy dog: “Therapy dog work is amazing! No matter where you and your dog work, people always appreciate your dog and they will support you, no matter how young you are.”

*Debbie Harvey, Reno, NV*



# Tale of the 'DALE-One Terrific Terrier

Murray's story began before conception. My husband and I were familiar with Airedale Terriers (having had three prior). We wanted to do therapy dog work as we were retiring, but recognized the breed was not an ideal fit due to their highly independent nature. We researched Airedale breeders of merit and found one that conducted the PAT test (Puppy Aptitude Test). Based on PAT results, we chose Murray in March 2014 and began his socialization and training at 9 weeks of age. He attended a puppy kindergarten class, was introduced to various walking surfaces - interior and exterior, met many pets and their owners, greeted people at events at the local convention center and was welcomed into the dog-friendly lobby at the local Sheraton Hotel. Murray accompanied us at local cafes, took auto trips and navigated stairs and elevators. He was exposed to wheelchairs and people with emotional and physical disabilities. In short, he was building confidence as he learned to take the cues from his uprights in a myriad of situations.

Finally in March 2018, Murray and my husband became a certified therapy team with Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD). Since then, he earned CGC (Canine Good Citizen), THDN (Therapy Dog Novice), THD (Therapy Dog), THDA (Therapy Dog Advanced), THDX (Therapy Dog Excellent), THDD (Therapy Dog Distinguished), CGCU (Canine Good Citizen Urban), and RN (Rally Novice) - all AKC titles. In May 2019, he and Doug also became certified as a HOPE AACR (Animal Assisted Crisis Response) team.

He logged 542 visits at grade schools, high schools, universities and libraries. He visited autistic classes, special reading programs, hosted virtual COVID events,

"manned" booths for community awareness about ATD, reduced stress for college students during finals, walked in suicide prevention walks, participated in scholarship auctions and health clinics, visited fire stations and women's centers. He was a regular at senior centers, hospitals, nursing homes, the regional cancer center and the veteran's hospital. He participated in a 911 event, worked one-on-one with hospice patients and visited a blind gentleman (on a regular basis) who could no longer care for his service dog. Monthly, he visited a behavioral health care facility, comforted mourners at funeral homes on request, attended sessions for Erie Adaptive Sailing (special needs children's event). He represented therapy dogs for presenters who discussed various types of working dogs at community programs and de-stressed reporters and staff at a local television station.

After 15 months with ATD, Murray also tested with me (his human mom) and we became a team for ATD as well.

Murray utilized these impressive credentials while continuing to meet his ATD commitments. He eagerly donned his red heart tag, working vest and one of his signature bandanas. This "uniform" signaled a chance to comfort acquaintances and make new friends. In fact, work was never a four-letter word to Murray. ATD was his calling.

Our community is so appreciative of his legacy and wishes he was still here. But our amazing "King of Terriers" left us on March 5, 2024. We are all better having known him.... forever wagging his tail.

*Doug and Linda Dunbar, Erie, PA*

*Alliance of Therapy Dogs*



# Peyton's Miracle Moments

**11/5/2023.** It was our first visit to the Coronado Skilled Nursing & Rehab facility since late 2019 when we first tested to become a therapy dog team. The center is five minutes away from our home and it seems like it was Peyton Manning Cash Garcia Suller's (he likes me to use his full name when introducing him) destiny to deliver his happy, playful spirit and much needed smiles to the patients there. It was on this visit in November that those memories came back of his testing and how nervous I was. But I knew how much Peyton had grown and matured, and that he would be great for this job.

As we walked the familiar halls, we made our first visit. He tuned right in as he heard the facilitator introduce his name to the patient and approached with a wagging tail and a big smile. The patient enjoyed petting his soft fur and talking about their love for dogs, as well as the ones they miss from home. After the first patient visit, the nerves turned into gratitude and love to be able to share Peyton with the patients in need.

The facilitator escorted us to each patient's room and asked if they would like a visit from Peyton. There were two miracle moments that occurred on this day. The first happened after a reluctant patient accepted the invitation after looking at Peyton. After the visit, the patient stated, "That was the best medicine I've had all day."

The next miracle moment occurred shortly thereafter when we visited a lady who had her daughter visiting at the time we arrived. This patient was reluctant to receive a visit from Peyton, but her daughter encouraged her. It seemed as if she was new to the facility and not very happy about the idea of being there. But as soon as she saw Peyton, his smile and wagging tail, I could sense her spirit lighting and lifting up. She began smiling bigger and bigger as she petted Mr. Peyton. As we began to leave for the next visit her daughter thanked us and stated, "I haven't seen my mother smile like that in a while."

It was a comment that touched my heart, and I'm sure it touched Peyton's, too. It was one of those moment that makes your eyes water and brings meaning to why we share our special best friends. Visiting a medical facility can be challenging, but the healing the patients receive from the visit makes it all worth it. I am truly grateful for ATD and the courage and strength God granted us to overcome the challenges of 2020/2021 – our first year as a member. We stuck with it and led Peyton to a miracle moment. God is love, and dog is God spelled backwards.

*Shaun Suller, Las Vegas, NV*



# Library Champion

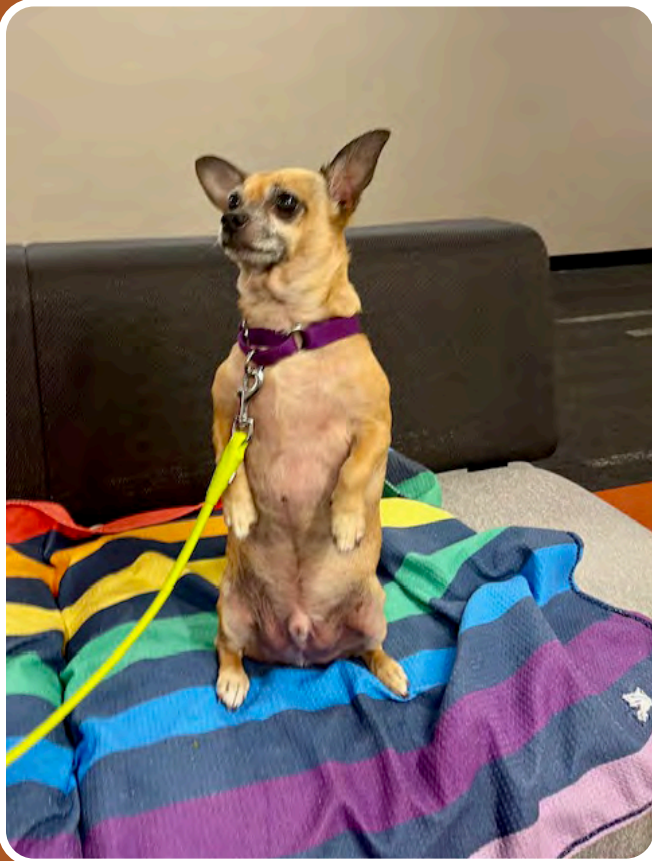
Northeast Florida Library Information Network (NEFLIN) is a community of more than 2,700 staff from 550 public, academic, school, and special libraries across Northeast Florida.

I received an email from the children's librarian, Coleen Tobin, at the Millhopper Library in Gainesville, FL, telling me that I had been selected as the winner of the 2024 NEFLIN Library Champion for organizing and promoting our local therapy dog group, Gator Paws, in the library's Read to a Dog Program. I look forward to representing Gator Paws at the annual meeting in September.

The award should go to the outstanding dog teams who participate every other Thursday at Millhopper Library. Every other Thursday, three teams are scheduled to come to the library. Each team follows all of the ATD rules, and each team is situated at least 10 feet apart. This allows the children to have a one-on-one interaction with a team. The library staff makes sure that each child gets to Read to a Dog.

What this experience has taught me is simply this: If you knock on a door and someone doesn't answer, continue to knock on the door by reminding the staff that you are there to help improve literacy for children. The process to get the Gator Paws into this library took perseverance, reminding the library staff that we were ATD-certified, covered with insurance and deeply interested in literacy, as well as promoting good interactions between humans and dogs. If you are interested in such a program, remember to keep knocking. At some point, someone will open the door.

The program has been a success because every team that participates loves what they are doing. Our county library system has nine branches and several of them have also started Read to a Dog Programs through Gator Paws. We all know that by our simple act of presenting well behaved canines, we are promoting a future of individuals who have discovered that dogs do good work.



*Pat Bellis, Gainesville, FL*

*Alliance of Therapy Dogs*



# “What’s wrong with his eyes?”

A patient asked this during a hospital visit with my dog, Chevy. Chevy was seven years old when he was diagnosed with Progressive Retinal Atrophy (PRA). I was told that PRA is an inherited condition which leads to blindness. Most dogs with PRA are totally blind within one to two years. Sadly, there are no medical or surgical options to slow or stop the degenerative process. I was heartbroken. What would Chevy’s life be like in the future? Would we still be able to volunteer as a therapy team? At that time, Chevy and I had been a team for three years and we had developed a special bond volunteering together. Later that week, my husband surprised me when he said he wanted to become a therapy dog team with our other dog, Mazie. “Mazie will be Chevy’s seeing eye dog,” he told me.

My husband and I adopted Chevy from English Springer Rescue of America (ESRA) when he was between 2 and 3 years of age. At the time of rescue, his fur was so badly matted he had to be shaved. He was heartworm positive and lacked social skills. When we adopted him, he always looked down and was fearful of almost everything, including people, other animals, cars and thunderstorms. As we socialized him to new people, places and things, Chevy began to be admired for his calm, laid-back temperament. I was so proud when Chevy and I became a certified therapy dog team a year later. Our first year we volunteered at cancer centers and hospice. Post Covid, we began volunteering at a 560+ bed hospital, which gave us a multitude of areas in which to visit. I have always loved that I can count on Chevy to be consistently calm, have good manners and to sense when someone needs him.

It has now been two years since Chevy’s original eye diagnosis. We continue to volunteer together, often



with my husband and Mazie. Gary loves volunteering with Mazie as much as I love volunteering with Chevy. Along with the hospital, we have recently added the Veterans Affairs to our visiting schedule. My husband is a veteran. It has been wonderful for us to see the responses when our two English Springer Spaniels (both former rescues) come to visit.

Although Mazie is older, Chevy is always mistaken for being the older of the two. His face is graying and his eyes look like clouded discs. If light shines on them in a certain way, they appear goldish in color. I know when people take photos of him, the photos will not reflect the beautiful young dog he once was. Fortunately, Chevy’s eyesight has deteriorated slower than we had previously anticipated, and he still moves through spaces with ease. Unfortunately, he has recently had noticeable hearing loss. I have begun to cue him in different ways to help him compensate.

Chevy remains the sweetest dog. I do not know what the future holds for us as a team. I look forward to volunteering as long as Chevy enjoys it and our clients welcome us. I am open about his condition on our visits. We elicit smiles, not pity, when I say, “Chevy’s losing some sight and hearing and he’s getting gray hair - so am I.”

*Suzanne Zimmerman, Ormond Beach, FL*

## *Tessa Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Life of a Therapy Dog*

Yesterday - Tessa was born September 4, 2011, at Tanglewood Goldens in South Carolina. She was to be our fourth Golden Retriever, but only by providence did we get her. Eight puppies were born. We were in line for number eight, but one did not make it. Then someone backed out and lo and behold Tessa came home to us in Memphis, Tennessee. Tessa was sweet, loved people, calm and hated walks. Her mother, Annie, was a therapy dog. I said, "What is that?" The breeder got me in touch with Joanne Fusco in Memphis who had Boss and Kicker from the same breeder. Joanne told us about Alliance of Therapy Dogs and the journey was on. Tessa had to be one year old to be tested -- so we prepared. Puppy class, daily short training sessions and Canine Good Citizen at seven months. Trips to Petco, Home Depot, the bank, etc. to acclimate her to noises and crowds. Finally, at 13 months, we did our test. At the end, the T/O said Tessa was a rock star and certified. Our first visit was with Joanne and Kicker at the Memphis Oral School for the Deaf. I was nervous, but Tessa was great and loved the attention from the kids and the teachers. And we were off!

Hospitals, school, assisted living and special events followed. I retired, which made it easier to schedule. I had traveled a lot and became aware of therapy teams at an airport near Los Angeles. Joanne had a contact at Memphis International Airport and set up a meeting with us and Kicker, her golden, and Tessa. MEM agreed to have us on board as volunteers, checked our backgrounds and gave us badges to access the terminals. More teams were added over time. We also were there for special events like WWII veterans leaving for Italy.

We lived part time in Chattanooga. I became aware that Erlanger, the regional hospital, was looking for therapy teams to be part of their Patient Life program. Tessa and I went to the evaluation with 20 other teams and passed.

Life with Tessa continues: 400 visits for ATD, 6-8,000 people, two airports (I convinced Chattanooga CHA that a therapy team would be wonderful). Then one morning, Tessa did not eat and lay by my chair staring at me. The vet thought it was cancer in the abdomen with only a few months to live. She went to a specialty veterinarian here in Chattanooga. Initial tests indicated cancer in the abdomen; chemo would be of no use. Surgery was immediately scheduled for 1 p.m. I was in tears by myself in the waiting room. Just so sad. The surgeon came in to report Tessa had a ruptured kidney for an unknown reason but would be fine. After all, humans can live on one kidney. Prayers answered. Her recovery was quick and we resumed our visits after she was fully healed.

Today - Tessa will be 13 on September 4, 2024. She is doing well, but is a bit hard of hearing. She loves to lay on the floor by my wife and me. She has her favorite people: -a UPS driver and a friend in the neighborhood who give her wonderful treats. She had two mast cell tumors removed this spring, but no return of the cancer so far. Daily walks and an airport visit are scheduled every six to eight weeks. She retired from Erlanger and other visits in December of 2022. It had been an amazing trip together but became hard for both of us.

Now tomorrow - This is where the tears start. Tomorrow is not here, but it will be. We have had Goldens for 46 years. Tessa is my friend, my therapy, my get up and walk, my way to meet people and help others. How can I face what is coming with Tessa. I know those who read this will understand. Twelve plus years we have done so much together, seen so many people, petted her so many times, and loved her. Did I mention tears? I can't talk about it to anyone, but I felt the need today to write this story. Tessa - you are the best one for me; I love you to the dog park and back and forever.

*Pete Friedman, Chattanooga, TN*





## Partner in Crime

Participating in therapy dog work for more than seven years at Cape Coral Hospital has allowed me to develop many strong relationships with employees. My current canine partner, Sophia, is a 4-year-old Lab/Bernese Mountain Dog weighing in at 100 pounds. She is a large, gentle soul who is exemplary at this kind of work. She instinctively adapts to our encounters regardless of how complex or simple they may be. Most of our time is spent in the emergency room but we also regularly visit many other parts of this large hospital.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we now focus as much attention on the nurses and staff as we do the patients. These frontline heroes were stretched to their limits and found Sophia's enthusiasm and joy helped enable them to get through some very challenging times.

We often start our shift on the second floor, visiting nurses in the birthing center. Typically, we don't go into the infant patient rooms unless it is OK'd by the supervisor. Last April, a woman approached us in the birthing center and asked if we could visit her family. The supervisor gave us permission, so we followed this woman into her family's room.

Two hours earlier, her daughter had given birth to a little girl. The mother was laying propped up in bed with the new baby on her chest surrounded by the father and grandparents. They immediately started interacting with Sophia. I asked the new mother if she had named her baby yet. She said, "Yes, her name is Ella Grace." We talked for a while about the joys of being a new parent and how quickly Ella Grace would become a young lady. As we started to leave, the young mother said, "I hope you realize that Sophia is the first dog Ella Grace has ever met in her life!" I thought her statement was beautifully insightful and told her we were honored. I also said I was sure Ella Grace would have many wonderful dogs in her life.

Sophia and I went to the intensive care unit (ICU) for a visit with the nurses, when a woman asked if we could visit her father in one of the rooms. I checked with his assigned nurse, and she enthusiastically granted us permission as it was an end-of-life situation. Having done several end-of-life visits, Sophia and I know they require special sensitivity and empathy. Upon entering the room, there was an elderly gentleman propped up in bed who was very pale and struggling with his breathing. His daughter and granddaughter were next to him. He appeared to be unconscious, so I sat Sophia next to his bed, then took his hand and placed it on Sophia's head.

He immediately smiled and started to scratch her head. He opened his eyes a little and said, "I had a dog. I had the best dog!" I asked him his dog's name, but he was unable to answer. Despite his inability to respond, he kept smiling and patting Sophia. Instinctively, Sophia knew what her role was here and patiently stayed next to him so he could easily reach her. We spent some more time with him, his daughter, and granddaughter and then took our leave as he faded.

As we left the ICU, I reflected on the irony of being present for the arrival of one life and the departure of another in such a short time span. Being witness to the full circle of life in this manner is both humbling and a privilege.

I can't think of another job Sophia and I would rather have!

*Don Irwing, Alton Bay, NH*

# Meet Lola

Lola is a 17-year-old, blind, Toy Poodle. Seventeen dog years typically means she is 119 years old in human years. Lola's doctor says she has a big healthy heart. She was born in Tampa, Florida. The first three years of her life were spent at a puppy farm. Lola was thrown into motherhood immediately. Hillsborough County Animal Services (HCAS) rescued her and close to 99 other Poodles, both male and female. Lola weighed 3 lbs. and was pregnant with two puppies. The HCAS veterinarians were miraculously able to save both puppies and Lola. Lola was extra special. All 99 of the dogs were turned over to HCAS and were put up for adoption. Florida law states that puppy farm owners must give up all the rescued dogs. The puppy farm owners are allowed to keep one dog. However, that dog must stay in the HCAS facility. The dog is not adoptable, until the case is settled in court.

I was a volunteer at HCAS. Lola was kept in a separate inside, air-conditioned kennel by herself. Being by yourself can be very depressing, as Lola became. She needed some attention. I brought her back to the desk I was working at. It was love at first sight.

Two days later, my husband and I completed the paperwork to foster Lola. She became part of our family, which included one teenaged boy, one 60-lb. Boxer, Hattie, and one Eclectus Parrot, Kingston.

The day finally came when our family adopted Lola. We moved to the Florida Keys and then up to North Carolina. Lola became a Tar Heal Paw for University of North Carolina (UNC) Hospitals. She loved visiting patients and staff. She retired after two years. At 17, she decided she wanted to work part time for Alliance of Therapy Dogs. She graduated with honors in August 2024.

Lola looks forward to working with Vets To Vets United, Inc. (VTVUI) a Durham, NC, -based, nonprofit organization. VTVUI rescues dogs from shelters. Those untrained dogs are then partnered with a military veteran suffering from PTSD, traumatic brain injuries,



depression or physical challenges. Together, the dog and veteran train for up to up two years to become a certified therapy and/or service dog family. Lola had previously been trained by VTVUI to obtain her therapy certification. She has decided to pay it forward and return to help train new therapy/service dog teams for VTVUI.

If she has time, she will volunteer at the UNC Student Center during final exam weeks.

She may possibly volunteer at a local school for the deaf or blind.

Lola is very proud and honored to become a part of the Alliance of Therapy Dogs family!

*Laurie Schroeder, Pittaboro, NC*



# Homeless Hound to Hero



Photo Credit: Hero photos provided by the Arizona Pet Project

Teddie's journey began in March 2022 in Alabama when her owner decided he didn't want her anymore and left her in the forest to fend for herself. She found a busy road, and as she attempted to cross, a speeding garbage truck was headed her way.

Perhaps it was destiny that it was a rescue coordinator that ran out into the road and stopped traffic and scooped her up just in time. After a bath and a meal, she was off to the vet for an exam. There was no explanation why half of her tail was missing. She was malnourished and needed major dental work due to bad nutrition.

She was transferred to a rescue in Tennessee called Hero Hounds. She was named Teddie because she is soft like a teddy bear. A picture of her famous head tilt was posted on Facebook and my heart just melted. I made the comment, "I wish she was in Arizona." They told me to complete an application. I was the lucky one selected to be her fur mom. Teddie was transported by air because by car would be too traumatic.

In April 2022, Teddie's flight was reserved and she was on her way to Arizona. Everyone who met her at the airport loved her. The volunteer who traveled with her witnessed first-hand that she had a lot of love to give. Teddie noticed a nervous passenger and got into his lap and nuzzled her head under his chin. The volunteer said if Teddie doesn't become a therapy dog, she is missing her calling.

When she arrived, she was still a little nervous but trusted us. With love and training, she was ready to show her "Paws had a Purpose."

Teddie finished obedience and therapy dog training in December 2022.

Teddie joined the Arizona State University Sun Devil Paws Therapy Team in April 2023. She visits the students during Wellness & Mental Health Awareness events. She likes to get the attention of the students by going into the library and Starbucks strutting off her ASU jersey, bandana and tutu. The students love taking their pictures with her and collecting her trading cards and stickers. She always leaves them smiling.

Teddie joined Honor Health Hospital - Caring Canine Program in July 2023. Teddie likes to visit the staff

in many departments. They're always happy to see her and say she brightens their day. She just recently started visiting the waiting area where anxious families are waiting to hear news about their loved ones.

Teddie joined Gabriel's Angels in September 2023 to work with children with emotional and special needs. Teddie has had a positive impact on the children at Ironwood Elementary. There was a girl that was shy and scared, only whispering. She would not lift her head or have eye contact. Teddie could feel she was apprehensive and slowly moved closer to her. After a few interactive games, she started to pet Teddie, and before we knew it, Teddie was in her lap, lying in her arms. The girl began to get engaged. Now when she sees Teddie, she yells, "Teddie is here!" She volunteers to escort Teddie to class.

There was a boy who did not want to be involved with the other students or Teddie. He grunted and threw things. On our second visit, he still wouldn't speak, just grunted. When we asked if he wanted to sit with us, he grunted and moved to the corner of the room. I started asking him questions about his pets. I did not know if he could speak until he started saying the names of his pets. Teddie moved a little closer towards him then he moved a little closer and eventually he was in the circle with the other children. He reached his hand out and Teddie put her paw in his hand he started petting her. The frustrated wrinkles on his forehead started to disappear. He started interacting with the group and wanted Teddie in his lap. He went from grunting to smiling all because of her paw. The social worker told me if starts to act out in class, they tell him if he behaves, he will be allowed to visit with Teddie and his behavior improves now he repeatedly asks, "when is Teddie coming?"

In March 2024, Teddie was the recipient of HERO of the year award in the "Survivor" category from the Arizona Pet Project.

Teddie is a survivor and a true HERO to those with a broken body, heart and soul.

Teddie signed.

PAW HUGS & KISSES

  
*Kimberly Smith, Phoenix, AZ*

# Love Never Fails

She yelled at them and threatened them to within an inch of their lives. As I stood outside the classroom door of the hard school, I could tell they had been rowdy and on her last nerve. As we stood there and she continued the, "If you do this one more time . . ." I figured I could help more on the inside of the room rather than outside of it, so I slipped Sky and myself through the door. Just inside the door, I stopped, took a stance like a gun slinger, kick started the theme song to the Good, the Bad and the Ugly inside my head, squinted my old lady eyes, and gazed around the room at the 10 10-year-olds. I was not afraid. I had been a teacher in my early life so I knew better than to show fear or tears. I picked my target -- the one who dared to lift his head and look into my eyes. I started his way with Sky . She was not afraid either. He had bright - red hair, shaved close to his head. He had sparkling blue eyes that twinkled and his smile looked more like a challenge. I matched it with my own, turning up my shine. As we went down his row of seats, he tossed out a question, "What's she eat?" "Everything," I flipped the answer back over my shoulder, cool like, in a loose toss. "Carrots," he asked, chin jutting out, in a double dog dare. "Spits' em out," I answered. "You?" "Same," he said. Friends, that quick, that fast. When I walked into the middle of the room with Sky, she sat. This was not her first rodeo either. "Gather around," I said, "Move slow, keep your energy down so you don't spook her." I knew they wouldn't spook her, at six years old, full Golden Retriever, she has a coat that catches all the colors in a sunset. She's the kind of therapy dog that will sit and stare into your eyes for ages and just pour love into you. In a blink, they circled her

as she gazed softly into their eyes, each one in turn put their arms around her and hugged her gently. Each class was like that, gathering around Sky and giving her gentle hugs. Each class was like entering a storm, but a calmness trailed her and wrapped around the rowdiest. Occasionally, she would pick out one kid and place her paw on them, I think, to soothe them, encourage them maybe.

She seemed to know the hurting, and teachers would confirm that later. As I left that classroom, I turned to the teacher and said, "I really enjoyed your boys today. They were all kind, and they were all gentlemen, impressive."

Love never fails. . .

1 Corinthians 13

*Terry Calico,  
Germantown, OH*





## Double Back

I cried as I drove off from our third visit with the Kettering Health Behavioral Medical Center (KHBMC) with Angel.

It's always interesting to watch the reactions of people when they see a pup, any age, any size, anywhere. It is especially meaningful to me to walk into the KHBMC and see the reactions there. Hospitals are not the happiest of places, no matter if the pain is on the outside of a person and easy to spot, like broken limbs, or on the inside with haunted eyes, and train tracked arms.

As we walked in today, I could tell immediately if someone wants a visit. They smile. So, I go there first. Angel is so full of energy it spills out as she rushes into their out reached hands. Some are taken aback and pull away, but some people join in, ruffling the fur at her ears, smiling back as she makes tiny figure eights, weaving back and forth. I look around the room and look for eyes that are eating her up, tracking her every move.

"Would you like to say hi to Angel," I ask, waiting for their response, remembering my lessons of not presuming anything.

"Yes," they reply, and we step over.

The crowd began to gather in this large room. I searched for the next hopeful face and go there, often with squeals of joy or high-pitched baby talk. As I search, I see eyes aimed at Angel and I see eyes focused inward some lost, sad, hurting place. I go there next and softly ask how they are, giving them one of my old lady smiles. Angel smiles too and waits.

Sometimes patients and staff approach us, and their need is so great in hurting or in helping that Angel feels it, and she steps back toward me, leaning into my knee. I learned this from Chewbacca, my first partner in therapy work with Alliance, that I can lean into this hurting and hold it until she gets her bearing. I support her until her smile comes back.

As the crowd gets larger with patients and staff, a young lady walks in and spots Angel. She loudly gasps and puts a hand over her heart, and slowly melting down to the ground to wait her turn. The crowd, who was caught by the gasp, watch and then chuckle as they seem to understand. Angel sweeps into her grasp and wags her winged tail, fanning the air as if in so doing she is the one creating the smiles.

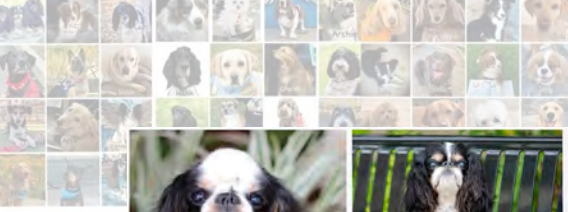
Everyone has one now, big smile, leaning over to each other, shoulders almost touching, exchanging their stories. It feels like the very best kind of a party.

As I drive home, I'm just overwhelmed by the goodness of God. I was reminded of the Double Back rule. Read the first and the last chapter of the Book of Job. Whatever Satan was allowed to take, in the end God gave back double. Double. Even now what we have lost to Covid or lost to anything, I am counting, I am waiting, I am praying for the 'Double Back.' I will see it come to pass. Not because of anything that I have done but because God is good and faithful.

Today felt like Angel and I were stepping in to the 'Double Back' from losing Chewbacca to seeing all those patients with smiles. I was overwhelmed, by the joy of it and it leaked down my face on the drive home.

More to come. I know it.

*Terry Calico, Germantown, OH*



# Our Village of Volunteers: Therapy Dogs of SLO



To recognize any one person or team for their commitment to therapy dog work in our county would be a difficult task. Each team brings something unique and special to our visits. We are a group of therapy dog teams who work together to meet as many needs and requests for therapy dogs in our community as possible. I am so thankful for this amazing village of volunteers that I am a part of.

My own therapy dog journey started with a small local dog club about 16 years ago. Then in 2012, I became a member of Therapy Dogs Inc. (now ATD). There was no tester in our area when I joined so I had to go through the ARC process. Part of why I applied to become an ATD T/O was to help new applicants through the process of becoming a certified therapy dog team, and to be available to go on visits with them once certified until they felt comfortable on their own.

I quickly saw the need for mentoring new teams and helping them find places to visit. I started organizing group visits and managed to build relationships with people in our community who wanted therapy dogs in their places of business. This is when the real village started to grow - community coming together with therapy dog volunteers.

Over the years, I've met many wonderful people - both the community members in need of therapy dog visits, and the volunteers in our therapy dog community.

I started tracking how many visits, hours, and different types of locations our growing therapy dog village was providing services to. In tracking, what I observed was how much is possible when we work together. One person can help, but when many come together to share the workload with the ability to help others, we can help many more while working together as a community.

In the first half of 2024 (January thru June), our group completed 117 different group visits at various locations, with a combined number of 504 volunteer hours! These numbers do not include visits volunteers did individually.

I refer to our "group" as Therapy Dogs of SLO - mainly the name of our distribution list. By working together, we are able to provide services to libraries, elementary schools, a youth academy for at risk high schoolers, two colleges, multiple hospitals, multiple senior homes (including assisted living, skilled nursing & memory care), miscellaneous requests, and the newest location is our local airport where one of our newer local members took the initiative to reach out to the airport staff which has resulted in a year-round airport program, SBPaws.

I am so appreciative of each of the local ATD members (Therapy Dogs of SLO) whom I'm privileged to know, who are working together as part of this group, who allow me to include them in my distribution list for group therapy dog opportunities. Each member is very much appreciated, and I hope they know this! Without each of these members, it would be impossible to support all the requests we receive.

I'm also grateful for my four dogs I've been privileged to partner with on therapy dog visits over the years. For without these special partners, I would have never been able to get involved.

It truly takes a village. What we can accomplish working together is great.

*Denise Fitzgerald  
Templeton, CA*

# Yoda Makes a Discovery!



Yoda loves being in the Alliance of Therapy Dogs. I will never, ever like a job as much as he loves his! He and I have been visiting our local hospital for several years. Our current schedule is the hospital every Tuesday and the cancer center every Thursday. I vary the time of day of our visits to the hospital, so we sometimes see the staff who work during the day and sometimes see the staff who work in the evening.

Early one evening on our way into the hospital, Yoda started sniffing around and pulled me over to a trash can just outside the entrance. I peaked in to see what had attracted his attention and up popped a head with a telltale mask. Hello little raccoon!

I wasn't sure how to handle this situation, so I went to see Security. They said they see raccoons all the time and usually put a stick into whatever hole they've gotten themselves in, just to make sure the raccoon can get out. They gave me a broom to put in the trash can. We walked back to the entrance, pausing to take a shot of Yoda with his trusty broom.

We deposited the broom as instructed, much to the consternation of the raccoon. We went back inside, and Yoda carried out his usual duties, sharing love and wags with patients and staff. Later, we went back out. The raccoon was hissing and very upset with us. I was holding Yoda in my arms to make sure they couldn't have any contact. We absolutely followed the two-foot rule plus a bit more for safety! Unfortunately for the raccoon, even though they were well-separated, that put Yoda right at eye level with him. I told Yoda not to take it personally – that raccoon would have been upset with any dog. The raccoon dropped back down into the garbage, and I retrieved the broom. Mr. Raccoon may have been young, but he had proved he was tough enough to take care of himself. We washed the handle and returned the broom to the Security office. When we left for the evening, I glanced in the bin and could just see the ears and eyes of the raccoon, snuggled down in the trash ready to receive the yummys that people tossed his way.

*Kath Rooney, Kalamazoo, MI*



# Wings for All

“Wings for All” is a special event allowing children and families with intellectual and developmental disabilities to experience air travel. This helps as a practice run or to assess if the disabilities can be overcome for a future family adventure. Complete with tickets, security checks, boarding, and a ride around the airport in a plane, this makes it as close to a real travel experience as possible.

Complete with tickets, security check, boarding, and a ride around the airport on a plane make this as close to a real travel experience as possible. At CAE (Columbia Metropolitan Airport), the therapy dogs come in to join the fun, and even ride on the plane with the kids. Abbie was a big hit in her airplane costume at this event!

*Laura Fulmer, West Columbia, SC*



# Dogs in the News

**Have your furry friends been in the news?  
We'd love to hear about it.**

**To submit your news, check out the guidelines on page 11.**



Moosh and I were featured in a New Times SLO article in January 2024 in San Luis Obispo, California, entitled “Healing Hounds.” As a dedicated volunteer and T/O with ATD, alongside my beloved therapy dog, Moosh, we spread compassion and joy on our visits. We uplift spirits in assisted living facilities, nursing homes, and with hospice patients. With Moosh by my side, we form an extraordinary team, bringing smiles and healing to those in need. Moosh, my gentle and empathetic 12-year-old Australian Shepherd, embodies friendliness with a calm demeanor, making him the perfect partner for our work. Through volunteering in our community, it’s been a joy seeing the sometimes-profound difference we make in the lives of the elders we volunteer with.

*Elise Mabel, San Luis Obispo, CA*

# Dogs in the News (continued)



Jared Wadley and his collie, Bree, appeared in three news stories in 2024: Michigan State University held a memorial vigil, where thousands gathered for the one-year anniversary of students killed in a mass shooting on campus (Lansing State Journal); Mott Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, Mich., invited characters such as Spider-Man, Batman and Thor for Superhero Day to interact with children and their families (MLive); and the American Lung Association Fight For Air Climb involved more than 300 firefighters and first responders who climbed 1,300 steps at Comerica Park, home of the Detroit Tigers (Fox TV-Channel 2).

*Jared Wadley, Gpsilanti Township, MI*



Kona featured on KWQC-TV6 and in the Quad City Times for her life-saving blood donations

Did you know dogs can donate blood? A single donation can save multiple lives. Madison Thompson from Animal Emergency Center (AEC) of the Quad Cities (QC) explains, "Red blood cells are used in surgeries, ruptured spleens, anemia, etc. Plasma is used to treat parvo, heat stroke, poisoning, etc."

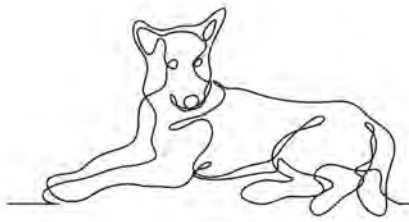
ATD's Kona was featured in local news for donating blood seven times since 2019. Her proud owner, Monica German, of Silvis, Ill., recalls, "When Madison told me Kona's blood saved a dog that ingested rat poisoning, I cried. Kona is my hero!"

Donors must meet certain requirements. To see if your dog could be a life-saving blood donor, contact your local veterinarian or emergency vet center.

*Monica German, Silvis, IL*

Caption: Madison Thompson (AEC of the QC) and Kona

# Retired



## **Kahlua**

Robert Thames, Tucson, AZ  
Years of Service: 3

Kahlua has been a loyal, devoted and sensitive therapy dog. She has visited and brought joy and comfort to many people including elementary kids, hospice patients, rehab and nursing facilities. At 13 she has slowed down, but still enjoys taking walks, going to the hardware store and doing her tricks.



## **Steve**

Amy O'Neil, Maplewood, MN  
Years of Service: 5

Amy and Steve became partners through the ATD in May 2019. Steve has visited group homes, schools and many special education settings, as well as being an ambassador for his breed. He retired in May 2024 and was recognized for his service by the Northeast Metro 916 School District.



## **Marta**

Louella Stoeber, Denver, CO  
Years of Service: 13

Marta loved her weekly visits to the hospital. Her eyes showed a beautiful soul and so many patients felt her love. She was a blessing to all who met her and will always be loved and missed.

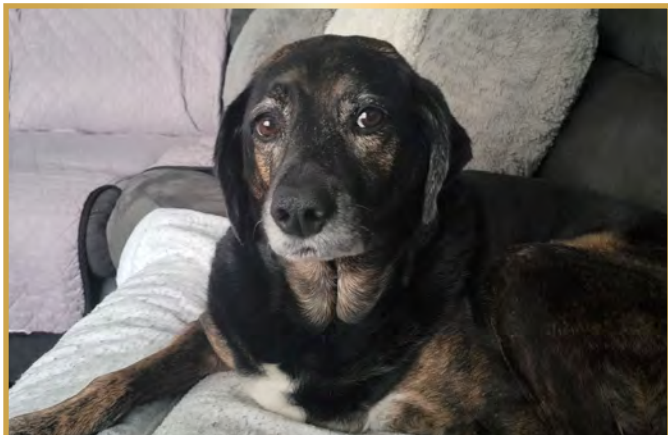


## **Timmy**

Judy Bolton, Landrum, SC  
Years of Service: 12

Timmy's sweet nature brought quiet comfort to hospice patients, in the home and in the inpatient facility. He also visited nursing homes and participated in the library's Read to a Dog program. With his uncanny ability, Timmy (14) always knew exactly what to do to bring a smile.

# Retired



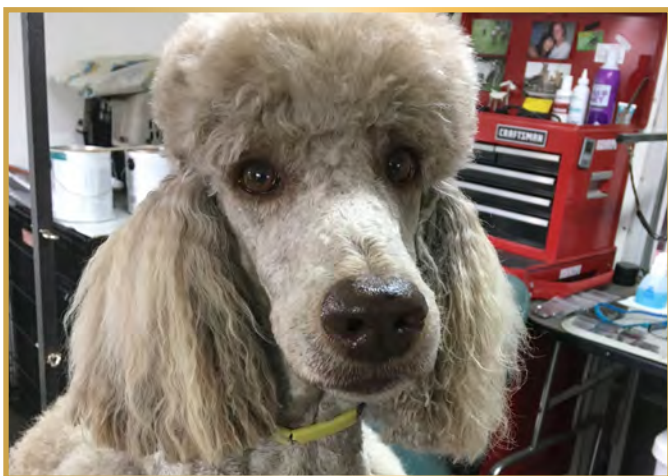
**Mia**  
Samantha Jaikins, Charleston, SC  
Years of Service: 5

Since her adoption in January 2016, Mia "Moose" has loved everyone and sought out every belly rub. She enjoyed visits to children's hospitals and elderly communities. Now retired, she relaxes in the sun and indulges in treats.



**Jackson**  
Melinda Bernhardt, Whittier, CA  
Years of Service: 5

When Jackson came to us five and a half years ago, it was love at first sight. In Jackson's five years of service, we visited weekly at PIH Health. Visiting staff, patients and visitors. The hospital loved him so much, the Volunteer Department hosted a retirement party for him.



**Coco Chanel**  
Joy Dolecki, Ridgeville, SC  
Years of Service: 6

Chanel, a puppy mill rescue, was born January of 2013. After adjusting to her new life, I thought she'd be good at therapy. She did very well at it. Chanel "lives the life" out in the country just being her loving self. She will always be my therapy dog.



## What's Wrong?

(from Page 18)

The rules being broken are:

1. Non-handler giving the dog treats. (II. Visits, 16. Treats)
2. Shoes do not have backs.  
(VI. Attire and Equipment, 29. Handler attire)
3. The use of a slip lead.  
(VI. Attire and Equipment, 30. Dog equipment)
4. No collar.  
(VI. Attire and Equipment, 30. Dog equipment)

Reference the above ATD Rules and Regulations in your Member Handbook.



*Is it time to hang up the **red** heart?*

## **Become a supporting member!**

There comes a time when every team faces the difficult decision to hang up our partner's red heart tag. It might be because of illness, age or death. Sometimes the decision is made for us and other times, it is up to the human to make the decision to no longer be an active Alliance of Therapy Dogs team. It's not easy letting go of that special partnership. However, there is still a way for you to be involved in ATD even after the visits stop. You can become an ATD supporting member!

What does becoming a supporting member mean? It means that for \$20 per year you pay to support ATD, you continue to receive the member handbook, the newsmagazine and member communications. When the time is right and you want to become an ATD team again, you will not need to take the volunteer background check because you are still considered a member of ATD.

When you notify the office that your dog has retired or has passed away, you can let the office know that you want to be transferred from active member to supporting member.



# Somewhere Over the Rainbow

As puppies we must grow and learn  
To walk and sit and stay.  
We learn to listen to our mom  
We get to play and play.

When we are grown at least a year  
We get to take the test.  
We have to mind our P's and Q's  
We have to do our best.

So, now we all are therapy dogs  
Is it work or play?  
We visit friends both old and new  
All takers; come what may.

We visit on throughout the years  
We do our job so well.  
But age is catching up to us  
Look close and you can tell.

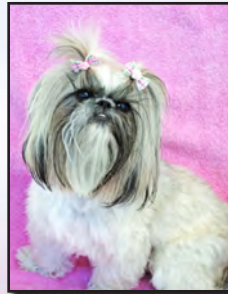
It's time for us to take a break  
We'll shed a canine tear.  
Time to rest our weary paws,  
Retirement time is near.

A time will come when we will pass  
Many hours we did log.  
Time to cross the Rainbow Bridge  
A retired Therapy Dog.

—Sandy Peterson, Boise, ID

## Memorial Submissions

It's never easy to close the "therapy dog" chapter in your dog's life. The memorable connections and smiles created by your loving pet's visits can stir many emotions as you decide to retire your loved one from Alliance of Therapy Dogs. The Newsmagazine wants to highlight these dedicated pets in our section about retired dogs. We will publish profiles recognizing their service to Alliance of Therapy Dogs. In addition to the photo, send the dog's name, owner's name, city and state, years of service and a brief summary (less than 50 words) about the pet's special qualities. Keep in mind that only one submission to the Newsmagazine per issue will be accepted for your dog as it relates to tributes –either "Retired dogs" or "Over the Rainbow."



### Bella

Kathryn Bell, Cherry Hill, NJ  
5/11/08-2/5/24 | Years of Service: 9  
Bella was proud to be a therapy dog. When I put on her vest, she knew it was time to help people and make them smile. She enjoyed having the second graders read to her. I miss her but was blessed to have a wonderful companion for 16 years.



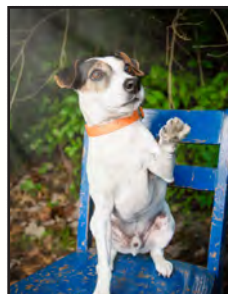
### Couper

Rhea North and Anne Sherman, Adrian, MI  
1/23/17-6/22/23 | Years of Service: 7  
Couper did all his work at Hospice of Lenawee in Adrian. He gave comfort to the patients, family members and staff in the Hospice Home. He always brought a smile to everyone he met, his tail wagging continuously.



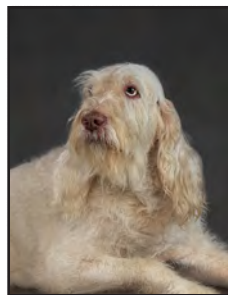
### Tommy

Kelly & Anthony Skiptunas, Wrightsville, PA  
6/12/09-3/17/24 | Years of Service: 10  
Tommy did over 500 therapy visits in his lifetime. He was an amazing therapy partner in nursing homes, hospitals, schools, libraries and at community events. As you can see, he LOVED to dress up for events. He lived to be nearly 15 years young!



### Jango

Laurie Delaney, Burlington, KY  
4/22/08-4/13/24 | Years of Service: 8  
Most people don't think of Parson Russell Terriers when they think of therapy dogs. He was a hard-running dog that enjoyed events like lure coursing and dock diving. But he had a gentle side, who loved people. At 10, he turned his therapy duties over to his three Russell "sisters."



### Floyd

Becky Tevis, Colton, OR  
2/2/10-1/12/24 | Years of Service: 12  
He always loved his work as a therapy dog! He worked primarily with groups of children, and always knew the child who needed him most. With over 12 years of therapy work, it's hard to imagine how many lives he touched.



### Bruce

David Gabel, North Wales, PA  
7/21/12-4/29/24 | Years of Service: 8  
Bruce worked with children and adults at Brooke Glen Behavioral Hospital, The Horsham Clinic and many other places. He loved his "Puppuccino" at Starbucks after doing dog therapy.

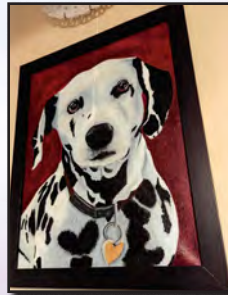
### Grady

Jan Thor, Seattle, WA  
 12/15/09-2/24/24 | Years of Service: 8  
 Grady served at St. Anne Hospital, Merrill Gardens and Solstice Retirement Communities, and a local bookstore. People called him a "godsend," an "angel," and a "gift." Everyone he visited said he "made their day." Grady loved his job and was loved by all who encountered him.



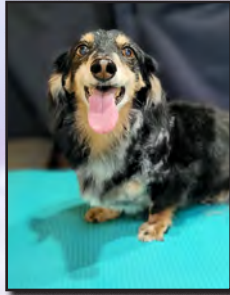
### Dyson

Steve & Wendy Grossman, Middleton, NY  
 9/22/09-3/1/24 | Years of Service: 8  
 Dyson visited Garnet Medical Center weekly, greeting staff, children in the E.D., and patients. During the height of COVID, he met the staff at 6:30 a.m. as they entered the hospital to begin their day. Dyson received a great farewell during his last visit on February 29, 2024.



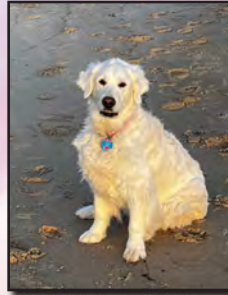
### Harley

Donald Large, Green Valley, AZ  
 6/16/10-12/4/23 | Years of Service: 10  
 Dachshund therapy dogs are rare, but Harley was inspired & loved his visits to nursing homes, hospitals & assisted living facilities. He also visited autistic children at a boarding school two hours away from us. Harley made a total of almost 5,500 certified visits in his all too short life.



### Kate

Jerry Rex, Virginia Beach, VA  
 9/1/10-5/30/24 | Years of Service: 10  
 As soon as the volunteer shirt was on, she was ready to go. She visited a local hospital, schools and nursing homes. She loved to sit on feet to keep you pinned down for a love session. She was known as the dog that would say her prayers for anyone.



### Smokey

Ralph Orlando, Wilbur By The Sea, FL  
 7/10/10-12/21/23 | Years of Service: 12  
 It is hard to even imagine how many smiles Liebchen's Smokey Bones Mountain Mischief left on peoples' faces but it had to be many thousands. The attached photo was early in 2023 at age 12 and wearing his vest with the TD Supreme patch which he had just received.



### Rufus

Karen Davis, Peoria AZ  
 2/5/11-5/28/24 | Years of Service: 11  
 Rufus came to me as a stray when he was 6 months old. I never found his family and I am so glad. He loved his work as a therapy dog. He worked for hospice and could not wait to get there. Everyone there knew him and loved him.



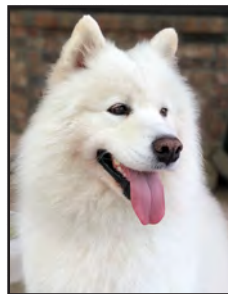
### Jeanie

Lydia Crochet, Lake Charles, LA  
 3/27/07-11/28/24 | Years of Service: 12  
 Jeanie was a star! She won the 2019 American Humane Hero Therapy Dog Award. She had followers from all over the world; from fellow amputees at the Veterans Home to the littlest victims of violent crime at the Children's Advocacy Center, Jeanie loved & bonded with everyone she met.



### Utah

Deborah Ernst, Tulsa, OK  
 7/1/10-6/16/24 | Years of service 6.  
 Utah was truly a dog with a purpose who comforted both young and old alike. He loved everyone he met and served until the day before he passed. He leaves a legacy of love. He will be missed but not forgotten.



### Abby

Lisa Kime, Strongsville, OH  
 Unknown-6/5/24 | Years of Service: 3.5  
 Abby was from Turkey and part of an international rescue mission. Her calm sweet demeanor made her a perfect candidate for therapy work. She brought smiles to a lot of people. She will be forever loved and missed.



### Juliet

Louise Thomson, Melbourne, FL  
 Years of Service: 5  
 Julie was a rescue who is very sweet, calm and protective. She loved going on therapy visits to hospice, nursing homes and to the children at the library. Julie was always eager to make someone smile.



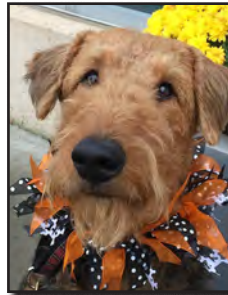
### Henry Higgins

Jan and Dave Monroe, Prescott, AZ  
 2008-4/9/24 | Years of Service: 13  
 Henry Higgins became a therapy dog because strangers would cross the street to meet this handsome 65-lb. guy. He readily provided comfort and smiles to those he visited and was the perfect neutral dog in my T/O work. There will never be another Henry Higgins. RIP, My Big Gray Boy.



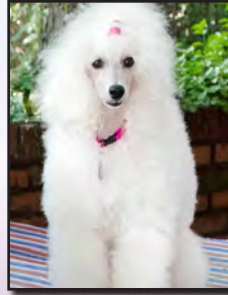
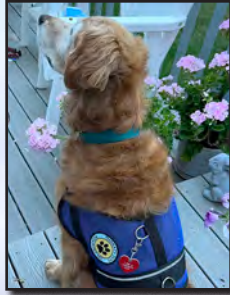
### Murray

Doug and Linda Dunbar, Erie, PA  
 2/6/14-3/5/24 | Years of Service: 6  
 Murray was an Airedale, King of the Terriers, who was intelligent, intuitive and had a sweet disposition. He loved children. Frequented libraries, hospitals, universities, schools, cancer and senior centers, troubled youth-emotionally challenged. Murray made 542 visits and was adored.



### Jazzy

Becky Urbanski, Hermantown, MN  
6/14-6/24 | Years of Service: 1  
Jazzy was the most joyful dog and everyone was her friend. She loved her "job" visiting senior communities including independent housing, assisted living, skilled nursing & memory care settings. Jazzy made a difference to many people and her spirit will always live on in our hearts.

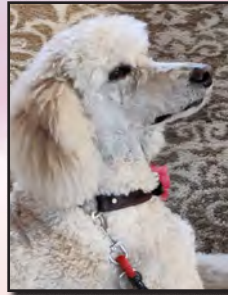


### Tia

Barbara Blanchfield, Monroeville, PA  
12/12/06-5/5/24 | Years of Service: 13.5  
Seventeen years is not long enough to love a precious best friend. Tia loved to put smiles on everyone's face at all the schools, nursing homes and hospitals she visited. With the many titles she earned, her favorite was "Therapy Dog." Tia will be forever loved and missed.

### Aleeza (Leezi)

Barb Ribner, Decatur, GA  
Unknown-6/15/24 | Years of Service: 5  
Aleeza (Leezi) was about six years old when she entered my life. I adopted her from a rescue organization and immediately began training her as a therapy and read dog. She was terrific in those roles and created lots of smiles at schools, colleges and memory care centers.

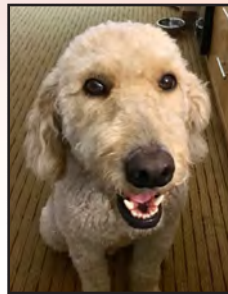
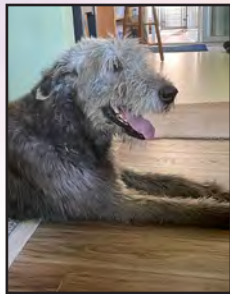


### Daisy May

Carol Barstow, Dover, NH  
2/18/14-12/8/23 | Years of Service: 8½  
It is with deepest sorrow that Daisy May has passed away, very suddenly on December 8, 2023. She was almost 10 years old. She is deeply missed by all who knew her. I am so blessed to have watched her countless works of magical happiness everywhere she went.

### Howling Hall Jake's Ransom of Massapeag

Karen Eberl, Uncasville, CT  
10/9/16-6/10/23 | Years of Service: 5  
You gave yourself to your community: Backus hospital patients, hospice clients, Hospice Expressive Arts program kids and parents, many Irish parades, Big E AKC meet the breeds, Sayles elementary school kids, and East Lyme Schools visits (elementary, middle and high school).



### Shadow

Angela Learn, Gilbertsville, PA  
3/31/15-8/9/24 | Years of Service: 6  
Shadow provided emotional support to special needs students, he was an amazing listener for children in the READS Program and he visited weekly with hospice and memory care residents in several senior care facilities. Shadow was loved by all. The memory of his sweet gentle soul will forever be cherished!

### Bailey

Sharon Cramer  
4/14-4/24 | Years of Service: 9  
An AKC Distinguished Therapy Dog and part of the Trinity Caring Canines, served her community and was the greeter at our church. She was well known, appearing on TV many times. Her low-key demeanor and loving personality made her an outstanding therapy dog loved by everyone who met her.



### Marcus

Joyce Kilgard, Coal City, IL  
7/4/11-7/16/24 - Years of Service: 6  
Marcus was a rescue who loved all people, especially children. He loved to show off all kinds of tricks especially waving bye-bye. He dressed up for all the holidays. He will be greatly missed.

### Honey

David and Tara McClenthen, Belvidere, IL  
4/4/10-5/20/24 | Years of Service: 8  
Honey loved life sharing smiles and joy with hospice, the hospital, retirement centers, etc. Honey enjoyed dock, diving, playing with dog friends at the dog park, and being with Mom and Dad. To God be the glory ... thank you Alliance of Therapy Dogs for making this possible.

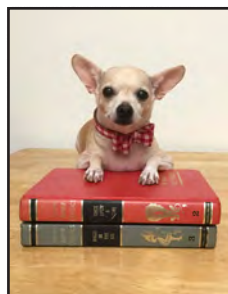


### Carl

Susan Van Buren, Medina, NY  
9/9/11-8/19/24 | Years of Service: 7  
Carl was the sweetest boy of all. He was a perfect therapy dog. He loved people. Carl fulfilled his destiny as an ATD team. He loved all 523 ATD visits - bringing smiles and joy to young and old in northwest Georgia, Tennessee and New York. Forever in My Heart.

### Deacon

Lori Coleman and Austin Coleman.  
Keystone Heights, FL  
4/22/14-3/18/24 | Years of Service: 8  
Deacon was my best hello, and my hardest goodbye. My work companion, dog sport competitor, therapy partner and family member. Deacon was everything I didn't know I needed in a dog. And I'll be forever grateful for God giving me this partner.



### Pierre

Maile Pavao, Hilo, HI  
5/8/11-11/26/23 | Years of Service: 9  
Pierre and his "mom" started and volunteered over 100 times at Hilo Public Library for "Reading Tails" program where children would practice reading to him. Pierre was also a good agility dog and accompanied his mom to work as a therapist.

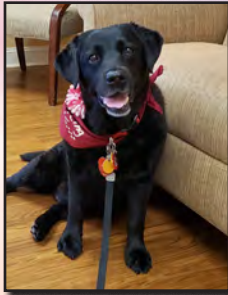
**Marlena**

Cathe Bodie, Banks, OR  
Unknown-3/19/24 | Years of Service: 5  
After spending six months in a shelter, Marlena was a natural for therapy work. Her signature headbands and calm presence were enjoyed by seniors and kids alike. She instinctual knew who needed her the most and made sure to draw them out. Loved and missed by all!



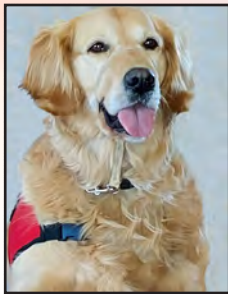
**Annie**

Melissa Saul, Newnan, GA  
Dog's name: Annie  
3/28/09-6/12/24 | Years of Service: 13  
Annie greeted everybody with a vigorously wagging tail and that famous Labrador smile! She visited regularly at our local nursing home, hospital, airport, colleges, libraries and more where she spread joy and happiness to everyone she met.



**Dillon**

Dan and Kathie Brusseau, Rapid City, SD  
6/10/17-5/29/24 | Years of Service: 3  
Dillon was the first airport therapy dog in South Dakota, a Red Cross therapy dog and visited numerous places around our community. He was intuitive and compassionate beyond comprehension and drawn to those who needed him most. He received outstanding service awards from the Red Cross (twice) and Rapid City.



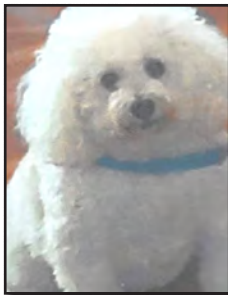
**Chaos**

Diana Verhagen, Green Bay, WI  
10/15/13-8/12/24 | Years of Service: 10  
Chaos provided comfort, laughter, love and memories to over 4,686 campers during her lifetime. I was blessed to be on the other end of Chaos's leash. A huge smile enlightening my face and pure joy in my heart for Chaos and her gift to others. Thank you ATD, for everything.



**Wylie**

Judith Keim, Milledgeville, GA  
12/8/13-7/2/24 | Years of Service: 9  
Wylie was one of Cupid's offspring! She began her career right at one in 2014. She and her sister began their work at the same time. Wylie was the "cuddler." She would happily snuggle whenever and wherever she was needed. She was active right until the very end in April.



**Cupid**

Judith Keim, Milledgeville, GA  
Unknown-10/17 | Years of Service: 10  
Cupid was a happy, inquisitive dog from the very beginning. He loved everyone, of every age! He began His "career" in 2007 and served continually (no vacations allowed!) until his passing in 2017.



*"How lucky are we  
to have something that  
makes saying goodbye  
so hard"*

-Winnie the Pooh



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Page 40



Page 42



Page 21

