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On the Cover

Meet Hannah Malan, age 10. Hannah loves animals! She has lots of pets, including a puppy named Thandi. "Thandi likes to be in charge," Hannah says.

"When we go for a walk, she goes where *she* wants to go. She'll jump up, grab the leash in her mouth, and start walking me!"

Hannah Malan



"Mrs. Holman loves getting hugs—from me and from Buffy!"



Buffy photos: Chris Hamilton

Lending a Paw

By Andrea Ptak

Kristy Johnson, 11, and her springer spaniel Buffy, 10, know what it means to lend a hand—or a paw. They're part of a volunteer program called Pet Partners. Pet Partners sets up visits from animal-human



Kristy and Buffy check in.

teams to patients in nursing homes and hospitals. Kristy first heard about the program from her grandmother. Later, when she read about how much Pet Partners teams cheer up the people they visit, she was convinced to join.

Being happy helps people feel better—and Kristy knew her gregarious dog had a special talent for making people happy. Plus, Kristy says, "Buffy loves people petting her!"

To take part in the program, the Florida pair had to attend classes to review basic dog commands like sit, stay, and down. Buffy practiced getting along with other dogs, and she learned not to eat anything off the floor. After seven weeks of class, Buffy took a test to make sure she would be comfortable visiting patients in hospitals. "Buffy stayed calm no matter what," Kristy says proudly. "We passed!"

Buffy and Kristy started visiting nursing homes right away. "I love listening to people's stories," Kristy says, "and seeing how they love Buffy." Mrs. Holman, one special friend they've made, always enjoys spending time



Any calm pet can be a Pet Partner.



As you can see, Buffy makes friends fast!



Buffy is trained to stay calm around wheelchairs and canes, with Kristy and her dog. And Buffy's quite fond of Mrs. Holman, too. She runs to Mrs. Holman whenever she sees her. Mrs. Holman, a lifelong dog lover, knows how to make Buffy happy. She bought her dog friend a special water dish so she can have a drink during her visits.

For information on how you and your pet can get involved with Pet Partners, visit www.deltasociety.org or call 1-800-869-6898. Kristy recommends the program for anyone who loves pets—or helping people. "It's indescribable how you feel after a visit," she says. "It just makes you so happy!" 🐾