

Research Briefs



Working with Pet Partners teams from Delta Society Affiliate **Paws for People**, Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine at Tufts University conducted a study of reading aptitudes and attitudes of second graders who read aloud to dogs for 30 minutes once a week in the summer of 2010. Published in August 2011, the study revealed that students who read to dogs experienced a slight gain in their reading ability and improvement in their attitudes toward reading, while those who read to people experienced a decrease on both measures. The rate of attrition among students in the group who read to people was high. A third failed to complete the program, whereas no students left the dog-reading group.



Delta Society Affiliate **American Humane Association Animal-Assisted Therapy** has launched a study of the benefits of Animal-Assisted Interactions for children with cancer and their families. The study seeks to promote innovation, evidence-based practice improvements and knowledge advancement in the areas of AAI and pediatric oncology. Over the next three years, American Humane will conduct a randomized control

trial at three to five hospitals or clinical settings throughout the United States and examine the medical, behavioral and mental health benefits of AAI to quantify its effects on children with cancer as well as their family as a whole. Delta Society Pet Partners teams will be incorporated in the research study, which is sponsored by Pfizer Animal Health.



A three-year study led by Dr. Sabrina Schuck of the University of California–Irvine has completed its first phase. The study measures the effects of animal-assisted interactions on 7- to 9-year-old children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. The overall goal of the project is to study the effects of a standard 12-week social skills training program enhanced with AAI to determine whether training appropriate behaviors with animals provides a non-pharmacological alternative to improve self-regulation, self-esteem and social skills. Delta Society board member **Dr. Aubrey Fine** is consulting on the study, which incorporates Pet Partners teams. It is funded by an RO1 Grant from the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development.

PET PARTNERS – STATE BY STATE



Arizona

SIERRA VISTA

Once a week, retired elementary school teachers and Pet Partners **Sharon Raymond** and **Sharon Selvy** walk the halls of Pueblo del Sol Elementary with their Golden Retrievers **Splash** and **Toby** to participate in the school's R.E.A.D. program. The teams work with first-, second- and third-grade Title 1 students in Lisa Wilkinson's class. Each of the eight students gets to read with one of the dogs for 15 minutes during the sessions.

"The kids come in very excited," says teacher Wilkinson. "For many of these kids, school isn't their favorite place to be because reading is hard for them. Having the dogs here is such a positive part of their day. We have one little boy who doesn't want to leave. He always says, 'One more book? One more book?'"

Selvy sees the benefits, saying, "I think this works because a child gets one-on-one attention. In the research, it says a child's blood pressure will drop. When you're petting a dog, you're not thinking about how you hurt or what problems you have at home. If children are reading while interacting with a dog, they're relaxed." Raymond agrees and believes that the dogs bring a calming presence to the reading sessions.

In May, both dogs were honored as special guests of the school as part of "We Love to Read" week.

PET PARTNERS...CONSIDER SENDING IN A STORY ABOUT A SPECIAL VISIT FOR THE SPRING 2012 ISSUE OF INTERACTIONS. PHOTOS OF YOUR TEAM "AT WORK" ARE ALWAYS WELCOME.



Arkansas

SEARCY

Thanks to Pet Partners **Steve Brackins** and Australian Shepherd **Lulla Belle**, a visiting animal program is taking hold at Arkansas State Hospital. Working with Rehabilitation Instructor **Sherrie Wilson**, Steve and Lulla Belle visit with pediatric patients in acute care units and in the Forensic Day School. Steve and Lulla Belle were the first team to assist Sherrie, visiting once a month for five months. He recalls one young girl who became enamored with Lulla Belle's bright blue eyes.

Sherrie is looking forward to taking the visiting animal program facility-wide, and sees the benefits as opening a channel of emotionally safe, non-threatening communication between patient and staff, having positive psychological effects, lowering heart rates and blood pressure, decreasing signs of depression and increasing motivation.

With Steve's help and both word of mouth and handing out business cards for the newly named ASH Pawsitive Visitation program, Sherrie now has four teams that visit. The teams include, in addition to Steve and Lulla Belle: **Stacy Mullins** and **Dixie**, **Jackie Amadeo** and **Cooper**, and **Jeanie Calhoun** and **Scarlett**.



California

LOS ANGELES

At Cedars-Sinai Hospital, **Dana Herko** and a 140-pound giant of a Golden Retriever, **Henry**, were going through their usual paces — sit, smile, hold out paw, hold out other paw, smile,

welcome hugs, repeat — in the waiting room, when a man made a request. “Could you visit my wife?” he asked. The couple was from the Midwest and the woman was awaiting a heart transplant, missing her home and their son. The man felt that a visit from a dog would cheer her up.

Dana tells about what happened next. “Usually when Henry visits a patient, he lays his head on the bed and offers his paw. Then he settles down on the floor, providing love and empathy, and the occasional sigh as he listens to the patient’s story. But on this particular day, Henry made a mighty effort and lifted himself onto the bed. He wanted to give more than his paw. He wanted to give his heart.”

Dana continues, “A month later, Henry and I were walking through the cardiology wing when we heard, ‘Henry!’ Henry ran over to his old friend. The transplant was successful, and she was finally going home. As for Henry, the look on his face said it all!”
EDITOR’S NOTE: To see a photo of Dana and Henry with this special cardiac patient, see the donation envelope enclosed in this issue.

YORBA LINDA

“Is Muffy coming today?” That’s the question I hear most from the pediatric patients as Thursday approaches,” says Stacy Smith, the Child Life Specialist at Kaiser’s Anaheim campus. “The kids who know Muffy love their special visits and look forward to them. The kids who have not previously met her are always impressed with her dance moves on the hospital floor. She knows when to be silly and knows just the right time to snuggle close. We are thankful to have Pet Partners Muffy and **Kim Kane** visit us weekly. They make a wonderful team!”

Kim says, “Muffy and I have had so many experiences together, and I’m always awed at how well she handles herself when the unexpected happens. I’ll never forget the day we stepped off the elevator at Kaiser and heard the most awful caterwaul! It seems a 3-year-old girl was giving the nurse a hard time. The nurse had loaded a child-sized

wheelchair with all kinds of stuffed animals and was trying to get her little patient to walk by pushing the chair, but the child was having none of it! When the nurse saw Muffy, she actually ran over and begged for help. Well, we took the toys out of the wheelchair, put Muffy in, and that was the ticket! The little girl pushed her all around the floor, and then the girl sat in the chair with Muffy on her lap and her mom pushed them both. Mission accomplished.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: Muffy retired as a Pet Partner at the end of 2010 at the age of 14.



Kim Kane and retired Pet Partner Muffy

 **Colorado**
AURORA

July is usually a hot, dry month in Denver, but July 2011 proved to be more like May and June, with late afternoon thunderstorms and tornado warnings galore. This particular Thursday evening started off as usual as Lab-mix **Ellie T. Dog** and **Lynn Crocker** made their rounds through the Emergency Room area of the Medical Center of Aurora. Even busy as they were, it was hard not to notice everyone remarking on the unusual direction of the rain — it was coming down sideways.

That’s when the tornado sirens sounded. “That’s that, then,” the staff said, and herded everyone into a back hallway. There were several small children in the crowd, a group of siblings in bathing suits, and various other people. “The kids were scared,” says Lynn, “and I saw my chance. I told them that Ellie was afraid of the thunder, too, and asked if they could come over and help her not be scared? The oldest was about six and the youngest was just learning to walk. They amused the sardine-packed adults with their questions about Ellie and their excitement over having a dog at the hospital!

“The highlight came when one barely walking toddler gave up on wanting to pet Ellie and opted for the well-known trick of using a dog as a walker. He grabbed Ellie’s back end and walked with her up and down the crowded hallway, much to the amusement of the adults, who cleared a path for their travel.”

Lynn continues, “As is typical, the storm soon blew over and we were allowed back into the waiting area. The kids had pictures of Ellie to color and everyone was in good spirits. Successful visit? I’d say!”

A young boy happily reads to Brasil at the East Warwick Library

 **Connecticut**
DARIEN

Brasil, a 5-year-old Whippet, and **Donald Paul Smith** head up a 63-canine therapy unit, Healing Hounds of Stamford Hospital. Brasil has more than 2,500 hours of service in Stamford Hospital and its outreach programs serving the surrounding communities. In addition to the hospital’s patients, Don and Brasil touch a variety of people from children in a R.E.A.D. program to seniors in nursing homes.



PET PARTNERS – STATE BY STATE

There was one special lady Don will never forget — Alice. “I had been bringing communion to a 103-year-old woman who had been transferred to a nursing home,” he says. “When I first went to visit her, she had a picture over her bed of the exact image of my dog! I asked her where she had gotten that picture, and she told me that her husband had given it to her as a wedding present 65 years ago.”

Alice had not walked in several years. Don proposed a challenge: He told Alice that if she could get out of bed and use a walker, he would visit her three times a week and they could take a walk with Brasil. Alice got out of bed and the trio took regular walks for one year before she lapsed into a coma. At that time, Don brought Brasil to her bed, where the dog would lay with Alice each day until the day she died.

Jojo, who visits with her team-mate Elizabeth Bosco, reminds many seniors of Lassie

FAIRFIELD



Two Pet Partners teams meet on as many Friday nights as possible and do rounds at Bridgeport Hospital — Dennis Gallagher and Gracie, Elizabeth Bosco and Jojo. Both dogs are Rough Collies. “People don’t generally even see one ‘Lassie’ dog walking around, much less two at a time,” remarks Elizabeth. “We visit the patients, but the staff knows the dogs well. They are always greeted by name and with much fanfare and affection. We volunteer for everyone’s benefit.”

She continues, “On one particular night, we visited the 7th floor of the hospital. It was quiet. People were sleeping, eating or chatting with visitors. While I was in one room, a nurse named Jane asked Dennis and Gracie to enter another room that is adjacent to the nurse’s station. The staff reserves it for someone who needs particularly close attention and care. Jane relayed to Dennis that the woman in the room had not spoken at all during her hospital stay of more than a week, but had a feeling she might enjoy seeing a dog. She had suffered a stroke and had become totally unresponsive.

“I finished up with one patient and then wondered where Dennis and Gracie had gone. They had entered in one doorway of the special room just as Jojo and I came in the other. As Dennis and Gracie stayed at the foot of the bed, Jojo and I came to the side. I picked up Jojo’s front paws and lifted them onto the woman’s bed and said, ‘Hello.’ The woman’s eyes lit up. She noticed Jojo’s photo ID tag and immediately spoke, ‘What a beautiful dog you are, Jojo,’ she said. Then she began telling her about all the animals she had at home — a cat, birds, the neighbor’s pets. She chatted on and on very excitedly, telling Jojo all about her lifetime adventures with animals.

“We spent quite a while at her bedside. When we finally went back out into the hall, Dennis asked me if I noticed the crowds around the doorways. I had not. I’d been too involved with the patient to see that all of the nurses, techs and doctors had been crowded around the two small entrances getting a glimpse of the mute woman talking up a blue streak to a therapy dog.”



Florida

FORT WALTON BEACH

What a day it was for 8-year-old Colin, who entered the library holding hands with his older sister and mother. Colin was born with Down syndrome and had been diagnosed with cystic fibrosis. In spite of his disability and medical condition, which had progressed to require round-the-clock oxygen therapy, Colin was living his life to the fullest as a fun-loving boy. Unfortunately, he was no longer able to attend school because of his high risk for infection from the potential germs in his classroom.

Exceptional-education teacher **Kathy Baratelli** explains, “I had the honor of serving as Colin’s homebound teacher for nearly two years. He had made wonderful progress in all areas of development, but his proudest accomplishments were writing his name independently, recognizing all the letters of the alphabet, and learning to read.”

Kathy knew he would enjoy participating in a R.E.A.D. program and suggested his mom bring him to the one where she and her Pet Partners teammate, Greyhound **Gracie**, volunteered. “When Colin entered the children’s library where several R.E.A.D. teams were working, he held on tightly to his mother and sister, as this was a totally new experience for him. When he spotted Gracie and me in the back of the room, his eyes lit up, and he grinned ear to ear with excitement. Colin and his sister joined us on our R.E.A.D. quilt. Colin quickly chose a book he was learning to read during our homebound sessions and began reading to Gracie, pausing now and then to show her the pictures in the book and to point out the letters he could name.

“Once Colin had finished reading, I presented him with a laminated bookmark with a picture of Gracie and awarded him a paw print sticker to place on the back of the bookmark. I explained to Colin and his family that he would receive a brand new book ‘pawtographed’ by Gracie or another R.E.A.D. dog when he had read 10 times to a dog at the library.”

Colin reads to Gracie and Kathy Baratelli during a library R.E.A.D. session

Colin was so ecstatic about his first R.E.A.D. experience that after the session, his mother helped him apply for his own library card — on which he proudly printed his first name. He selected a few books to check out and proudly carried them to the car. “During our next homebound session, he showed me the books he had checked out and told me that he and his mother were planning to return to the library for more books the following week,” says Kathy. “He couldn’t stop talking about reading to Gracie and wanted to know how soon he could come back to the library to read to her again.”

Unfortunately, Colin would never read to Gracie again, as he was rushed to the hospital a few days later where he spent two weeks in intensive care before losing his battle with cystic fibrosis. Sadly, Gracie also lost her battle with osteosarcoma six months later.

In closing, Kathy says, “I will always remember vividly the joy Gracie brought to Colin and his family that morning while she lay quietly listening to Colin proudly read to her. It was also a very emotional moment for Colin’s mother, sister, and me as his homebound instructor. When Colin and Gracie left this world, they took pieces of my heart with them, and I look forward to seeing them both again one day.”

 Georgia
ALBANY

In April, Delta Society and Albany, Georgia lost one of its most dedicated Pet Partners. Pat Howard left behind a legacy of

healing through the human–animal bond at Albany, Georgia-area hospitals, nursing homes, schools and centers for the disabled. For eight years and thousands of hours, she represented the former Affiliate Paws Patrol and Delta Society with her Pet Partners teammate **Charlie**.

According to Team Evaluator and Instructor **Marty Harris**, “Pat never gave up on the at-risk youth in our community. She and Charlie gave their time in the Paws to Read program at Albany Regional Youth Detention Center. She also gave humane education and compassion presentations with our group.”

All of the Albany-area Pet Partners served as an honor guard at Pat Howard’s memorial, which was also attended by retired Pet Partners teams and representatives from Phoebe Putney Memorial Hospital and local nursing homes. Marty says, “Pat requested that donations in her memory be made to Delta Society, which she loved so much. The donation envelope from last fall’s Interactions has a story and picture of Pat and Charlie, and we put them out at the funeral home.

“I am honored that Pat entrusted me with the care of her 13-year-old partner Charlie. Charlie became registered as Pet Partners with me and **Betty Hester** in July. Now he can continue the work he loves with the people and dogs he loves until Pat comes to take him home.”

BELOW: Front row, L to R: Albany-area Pet Partners Betty Hester & Happy Jack, Marty Harris & Charlie, and Linda Prisant & Buddy. Back row, L to R: Pet Partners Carol Edeker & Whistle, Virginia Gray & Dewar, Linda Grimes & Eli, photo of Pat Howard & Charlie, Brenda Horton & Bear, Judy Landau & Belle and Cheryl Cohen with Mini & Buster.



 **Indiana**
CARMEL

Her name was Margaret. She may not ever remember meeting Shane and Mary Beth Googasian but Mary Beth notes that her life will never be the same for having met Margaret.

Golden Retriever Shane was on his very first visit to an Alzheimer's and dementia facility near their home. "The director of the facility walked us through to introduce us to the residents," says Mary Beth.

"We moved from area to area with Shane in tow eagerly approaching people. As we walked down the last hallway, the director turned to tell me about an elderly woman sitting in a chair out in the hall. Our path would take us right by her. I was told she was Margaret, and that she was mostly non-responsive and had been for many years. I nodded and thought, 'Let's just see what happens.' As we approached her, I placed Shane in a sit-stay command right at Margaret's knees. She was slumped over like a rag doll.

"The director gently roused Margaret, saying right next to her ear, 'Margaret, Margaret, there is someone here who would like to meet you.' There was no response. She tried again. 'Margaret, can you hear me?' Margaret stayed slumped with her chin to her chest. Just as we turned to continue our tour, Shane nudged her hand very gently with his nose. Margaret's head rose and her eyes opened like window shades. She blinked several times trying to come out of her slumber. She looked at the director and then at me, trying to make sense of who was talking to her. Then her eyes fell to Shane and filled with tears as she leaned forward to stroke his head. She looked up to me, locked my vision and said, 'He's gorgeous!'

"I knew that at that moment I was in the right place at the right time. It has set the stage for biweekly visits to this very special place where the wonder of the animal-resident connection is alive and well!"

LAPORTE

Chihuahua Abby and Katherine Albrecht have logged a lot of time helping the sick, educating children and being a great friend and companion. At a local hospital, Abby and Katherine visited a young girl named Rachel, who was staying in Wee Care, a program that cares for sick or injured children while parents are at work. Rachel's mom sent the following story:

Rachel went over to a new neighbor's house to play and, as she and the other children went around the back of the house to play, she did not see their dog as it came up behind her. She was bitten and scratched on her back (to where it tore her shirt) and bitten on the right wrist, requiring stitches. We were so blessed it was not worse — not on her face. She has had some fears afterward of our dog, cats and other animals.

While at the hospital, I ran into Katherine and Abby. Knowing Abby's gentle disposition, I told Katherine about what Rachel had been through and asked if they could stop by and try to visit with her. Abby and Rachel hit it off wonderfully! Rachel did not have any problems with being afraid of her, and she still talks about Abby's visit and keeps the picture of the two of them together on our refrigerator. She likes to show



Abby brings comfort to Rachel

the picture of "her friend Abby from the hospital" to her friends and people who come over.

Recently, Abby participated in Indiana University Health Foundation's Lil' F.I.S.H. (Feel Important, Stay Healthy) program to educate students about pet care and dog-bite prevention. "During our local schools' final semester, Abby and I also visited several schools and more than 1,000 fourth-grade students. During the presentations, it was interesting to note that nearly all of the students had dogs. Of those students, approximately one-fourth indicated they had been bitten."

Katherine says, "Abby and I provide materials to each student to educate them on how to best care for and approach dogs to avoid dog bites and to promote their safety while in the presence of their own dog or when approaching a stray or unfamiliar dog."

Each year, almost 800,000 Americans, half of these are children, seek attention for dog bites. Perhaps, because of the focus and education about dog-bite prevention by programs such as Lil' F.I.S.H. and the work of Pet Partners like Katherine and Abby, this number might be considerably reduced.

 **Louisiana**
SHREVEPORT

Maverick, an 8-year-old Bouvier des Flandres and Pet Partners teammate to Leisa Tompkins, is one special guy. He has a way of making the day of everyone he comes in contact with at the facilities where the team volunteers. On one of his first visits to an assisted living and retirement home, the team was introduced to Miss Ann, a middle-aged woman who has cerebral palsy. Leisa explains what happened next:

"Upon our introduction, Miss Ann rolled quickly in her special chair toward Maverick and me as we stood in her doorway — she was so intrigued with his incredible size and stature. He is a large fellow — 130 pounds, with big brown eyes and a broad, strong chest.

"I was anxious at first about Miss Ann's approach — arms flying about and chair wheels screaming. How would Maverick

react to this abrupt encounter? Just as always, he received her with calm, stillness, acceptance and love. She hugged and loved on him, and he just soaked it up, never backing away from her. I was so proud.”

 Michigan
SAGINAW

Preschoolers had a chance to learn about veterinary care with the help of Pet Partners **Charla Soehnlen** and her cat **Oliver**. First, Oliver visited with each of the children individually, and then he sat on a stool with them while Charla read them a story. The children then practiced their veterinary skills by giving Oliver pretend shots and heart checks with their toy equipment.

The team got to experience some excitement too when a surprise fire drill was held. They helped keep the children moving quietly as they exited the building. Charla notes that the teachers commented on how calm Oliver was through it all. She believes it is important for very young children to spend time with calm, well-trained animals, saying, “Hopefully this will foster respect and understanding of animals as the children mature.”

 Minnesota
ALBERT LEA

Kim Anderson, MSW, LGSW, notes, “During 20 years as a school social worker I’ve asked students, ‘What would make school a happier place?’ The students would answer, ‘To have a pet at school!’

“Last year I started working with my Pet Partners teammate **Poet**, a Golden Retriever. He was listed on the school’s ‘Welcome Back’ celebration poster as a new staff member and even has his own employee ID! The first week of school, we visited every classroom to introduce him to the students and set guidelines to aid in everyone’s success.

“I had researched therapy animals, but none of this prepared me for the astounding impact Poet would have. He brightened everyone’s day but seemed attuned to certain students who needed his special attention. Several students identified Poet as a coping strategy to help regulate extreme emotions. One day a boy who was visibly upset came for a visit. He plopped down in a beanbag chair and Poet immediately went to him. I tried to offer support by reminding him that Poet was an awesome listener, to which he replied, ‘Don’t you know, with animals you don’t need to use words. They just know how you feel!’”

Kim continues, “Some of Poet’s best work is with students who struggle with emotional regulation and self control. At the end of the year, he was 100% successful in helping these students regain control, stay in school and continue their education. One student identified Poet as his hero and wrote a letter thanking Poet for helping and giving him confidence.”

 Missouri
LIBERTY

Pet Partners Instructor and Evaluator **Heddie Leger** stood at the door, waiting for a good time to enter. When the chaos appeared

to diminish somewhat, she invited her Rottweiler **Hero** to enter the room with her. Heddie says, “He did not hesitate in the least and calmly yet confidently sauntered into the room where children of varying degrees of special needs were waiting for our reading session. Most of the children were able to manage their behavior and impulse control. They looked forward to hearing and interacting with the story ‘Stone Soup’ and making imaginary soup with Hero.”

The teachers marveled at the children’s attentiveness and ability to manage the activity as Heddie read the story. However, in another part of the room a young boy named Lucas wandered aimlessly, waving his arms and muttering unintelligible sounds. Hero gently gazed at the young boy, drawing him in with his eyes. The boy engaged for a second, but then wandered off.

The team moved on to the next learning activity — reinforcing sight words. Special words were chosen in order for the children to interact with Hero, words like sit, down, stand, wait, back, left, right and under. Heddie began the activity by having Hero stand facing the dry-erase board. One by one, she wrote the letters of the word “sit.” The children repeated the letters, and then put the sounds together to sound out the word. Heddie gave Hero the hand signal for “sit” and he complied. The children believed they taught Hero to read, and they all sat in unison!

Heddie continued the process with several words, ending with “under.” After repeating the letters and sounding out the word, each child crawled under Hero’s belly.

Heddie shares what happened next: “We were so involved with the story that we did not notice that Lucas, who had been disengaged with everything we were doing, was beginning to draw closer. He was entranced with this activity. As Hero stood for the children to crawl under him, Lucas moved closer and held out his hand. It appeared that he wanted to hold the leash so we let him hold the extra leash I always have at the ready.

“As the children crawled under Hero, repeating the word and action, Lucas continued to lie there holding the leash. When the children were done, Hero lay back down and gazed into the boy’s eyes. I could hear this gentle whispering taking place between the boy and the dog. Lucas reached out to touch Hero, and the teachers watched in amazement. The boy barely touched Hero on the top of his head and said, ‘Bubba!’ Then Hero did the most remarkable thing — he makes a gurgling sound like he was trying to talk and blew a bubble, and Lucas laughed. The teachers watched in amazement with tears in their eyes. They had not seen this type of positive interaction or verbalization from Lucas. The boy and Hero had bonded at some level that no one understood.”

Lucas and Hero (a.k.a. Bubba) spent the entire next year working together on life and language skills. Heddie documented their work in a PowerPoint presentation and booklet.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Beyond Limits Award finalist Hero passed away after a six-year career in the Pet Partners Program in June 2011. True to his name, he was a hero to the many children such as Lucas whose lives he touched.



New York

HALCOTTVILLE

Peggy was the first resident **Keirsten Rain** and her Fox Terrier **Schnoz** met when they started visiting at the Mountainside Residential Care Center. Rain relates, “The wagging of Schnoz’s tail practically propelled her into the woman’s lap. Peggy admired Schnoz’s smooth nose, her black and white markings. Schnoz nuzzled the woman as she told stories. They gazed into each other’s eyes, and Schnoz’s tail was in perpetual motion.”

Each week Peggy’s wheelchair was stationed directly across

from the elevator. At every visit, Schnoz hopped from Rain’s arms into Peggy’s. Peggy would repeat her stories and Schnoz would listen, cocking her head attentively. As time passed, words became hard for Peggy to put in order. But Schnoz had no problem understanding. Their bond only tightened.

Rain continues, “One day I was told that Peggy was agitated. What she wanted was ‘Black ‘n’ White,’ her nickname for Schnoz. When we entered her room, Peggy was restrained in her bed, hooked to machines and

an I.V. Schnoz didn’t seem to notice. She pressed her whole body into Peggy’s, helping her to relax. Schnoz and Peggy fell asleep together.

“A week later I asked a nurse how Peggy was doing. I was told she was in a coma, but we could still visit. Schnoz was subdued, her tail barely moving. When I placed her on the bed, Peggy’s eyelids quivered and tears slowly seeped down her already wet cheeks. Schnoz gazed at her friend.

“After another long sigh, Schnoz gave me a questioning look. ‘You’re a good girl, sweetheart,’ I said. She stood and walked into my waiting arms. Peggy died that night.”

LARCHMONT

Chocolate Labrador **Moose** and **Mary Dell Harrington** returned to their parked car on a hot Monday afternoon in August after completing a visit to New York Presbyterian Hospital in White Plains, one of two assignments they fulfill every week as part of the hospital’s Paws for Patients program.

Mary remembers, “As we walked together I reflected on the session that had just ended. There was a typical number of

participants that day, 15 or so, who suffer from schizophrenia and other difficult psychological conditions. Moose is well known by several of the patients who have been in the residential treatment program for many months or longer. Due to the nature of the participants’ conditions, it was challenging work, as usual, but I thought it had gone well.

“Saturdays are different: the group is smaller, usually attended by just a handful, and the participants are often in residence for a few weeks while being treated for addiction or depression. To all, we are known only as ‘Mary and Moose,’ and our involvement with them ends once the doors are locked behind us.

“On this particular Monday, however, we noticed someone slightly familiar who was heading toward the same parking lot. As he was about to get into his car, he saw us and came over to offer a greeting with a brighter smile than we had ever seen him show during our Saturday sessions months before. He leaned down and gave Moose a thorough scratch behind the ear. It looked like a thank you.”

NEW YORK CITY

Pet Partners since March 2011, **Charley Bednarsh** believes the “Muppet-like appearance” of his Australian Labradoodle **Paz** helps to engage the traumatized children they visit at the New York City Family Justice Center in Brooklyn, where Charley is Director of Children’s Services. The Center serves victims of domestic violence and their children, and Paz’s gentle presence brightens the day of children who often have witnessed unspeakable domestic violence.

In August 2011, Paz provided invaluable support to a 9-year-old girl whose testimony was required at the trial of a man she had witnessed shoot her mother. (Miraculously, the mother survived.) The trial took place in criminal court in Brooklyn and the child was terrified to enter the courtroom. With the hope of reducing the child’s anxiety, the prosecutors asked if Paz could spend time with her prior to her testifying. In response to the prosecutor’s request, Paz and Charley spent several hours with the little girl. At one point, the emotionally exhausted child fell asleep with her arms wrapped around Paz.

Charley explains, “Therapy dogs are not permitted into the courtroom, so the little girl clutched Paz’s picture while she gave testimony that helped convict the man. The prosecutor and staff at the Center all credit Paz’s ‘magic’ with helping this child have the courage to testify, as well as gain power over a horrifying event which had left her feeling powerless.”



Visits from Schnoz brightened Peggy’s final days



Dog or Muppet? Labradoodle Paz delights children at the NYC Family Justice Center in Brooklyn



Ray and Mandy celebrate their Jefferson Award recognition with Ray's wife Carol (right) and Lima Memorial's Volunteer Manager Janice Daley (left)

Ohio

DELAWARE

Team Evaluator **Ray Ward** and his Pet Partners teammate **Mandy**, a Shepherd mix, had been visiting Lima Memorial Hospital's Cancer Institute for several years when it was decided the hospital would benefit from a greater pool of therapy dogs. In 2003, an expanded visiting animal program at the hospital was founded by Ray, and soon after the program began to add additional volunteers. The program now reaches into all critical care areas of the hospital.

In March, Ray's and Mandy's public service efforts were recognized when they were chosen to receive the national 2011 Jefferson Award for volunteer service in their community. In addition to a bronze medallion for Ray and Mandy, Lima Memorial received a cash award.

LAKESWOOD

You never know where you can help the most. **John Stuchal** found that sometimes it is at the unexpected times when you may be needed the most. He and his Pet Partner **Edkie**, a Labrador mix, visit at the large Cleveland Clinic complex. Many Pet Partners enjoy volunteering there because they can easily get good exercise and meet interesting people from many different places while walking around the complex.

John recalls one visit, "We were making our rounds, passing a sitting area, when we stopped to talk to a man who was resting. While we were chatting, a little boy passed by us. The man encouraged the boy to pet Edkie as well. The boy started petting him carefully while we continued talking. The boy then started telling us that he had a dog at home.

"From behind, I noticed a women walking toward us who looked like she was starting to cry. When she came to us, she said, 'I don't believe it! He is petting your dog. He is a patient here who was admitted early this week because his dog had bitten him. I thought he would always have a fear of dogs now. So I gave his dog away. Now I don't know what to do.'

"While she continued watching wide-eyed, the boy smiled as he continued to pet Edkie and hug him. As we moved on, I felt like we had mended a child's life that day."

MASSILLON

Pet Partners **Sheila Stumbo** and her 6-year-old Great Pyrenees **Hope** have been part of the Pet Patrol team at Mercy Medical Center for five years. Patients, visitors and staff all benefit from their visits. Sheila recalls a recent visit:

"After we had finished our visits and were on our way back to the car, I heard someone yelling 'Stop!' I could hear footsteps coming up behind Hope and me. I stopped and turned around. A young man approached and asked if we were in a hurry. He wanted to know if his mom could see my dog. He explained that his mom saw us go by while they were sitting inside the building and started talking about the dog. He said if I was in a hurry he would understand, but it would mean so much to him for us to visit his mom and lift her spirits. I told him Hope and I would be happy to visit with her.

"Hope looked up at me and I told her to head back toward the entrance, 'We have one more visit before we can go home!' Walking back to the building, the young man told me his mom had been in the hospital for five months. She was struggling with many of life's challenges. I told him Hope and I would do our best to put a smile on her face and brighten her day. I explained that is why her name is Hope. That is what she does, 'help others with positive encouragement.'

"The young man's mother was so happy to see Hope! She was beaming with excitement as she smiled and commented on Hope's soft, fluffy coat as she petted her. Her son wanted to know if it would be O.K. to take a picture of Hope with his mom. I told him absolutely! You could see the satisfaction on the young man's face that he had accomplished his mission.

"Before we left, I gave her Hope's Pet Patrol card along with a picture of Hope that I had in my bag. She thanked us for visiting with her and told us to be sure to come back and visit another day — she was not going home anytime soon. I told her that we would be sure to stop in and see her again on our next visit. It is such a blessing to know that Hope and I had made a positive difference in someone's day."

Texas

GREENVILLE

When Newfoundland **Darcy** was nine weeks old, **Dianne Klepin** and her daughter **Francesca** began training her with the aim of becoming Pet Partners. Darcy and Dianne passed easily, but it took a bit of extra training for 85-pound, 11-year-old Francesca to establish the right relationship with 130-pound Darcy — but pass they did in March 2011.

Since then, all three of them have been volunteering at their local hospital on the inpatient rehabilitation floor. Dianne says, "The delight we see in patients' and employees' faces is incredible. Every time we visit, we see a change in people."

She continues, "One stroke patient was nonverbal and not making any eye contact. His adult daughter repeatedly told him, 'Daddy, there's a dog here. You know you love dogs!' Darcy walked up to his bed and put her chin down on it next to his arm. The



Francesca Klepin and Darcy — one of Delta Society's youngest Pet Partners teams

man slowly inched his hand over to her head and laid his finger on her nose. She waited there until he moved his hand away.”

She recalls other memorable moments. “We walked into a patient’s room and the man said, ‘Oh, come here! I love you! I love you! I love you!’ And one nurse on the floor is terrified of dogs and has only touched one dog in her life. After two visits she began petting Darcy, and now she greets her with a big hug.”

LUBBOCK

A feral kitten filled a hole in **Philip Wischkaemper’s** heart after the death of his beloved cat and opened his life to the joys of being Pet Partners. Philip named the kitten **Dakota** and immediately began socializing him.

“During that period in my career, I traveled extensively, providing continuing legal education for lawyers across Texas. Whenever possible, Dakota would travel with me,” says Philip. “He would also go with me to PetSmart, Lowe’s and any other place that would let a cat in. When we stayed in hotels, we would simply ride the elevators, getting off on different floors, walking on his leash, meeting people, getting petted, getting back on the elevator and riding some more.

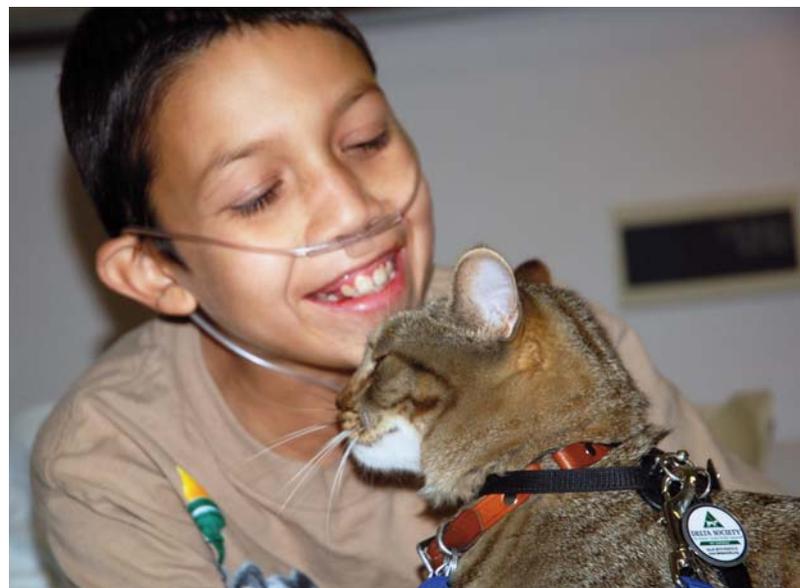
“When researching organizations that registered therapy animals, it became apparent that Delta Society was the only one that would evaluate and insure a cat. After passing our evaluation came the hard part: getting the hospital to let him come in. They were used to dogs, but cats were, literally, another species. It took some convincing, but about two months after his evaluation, Dakota and I started making visits to University Medical Center in Lubbock.

“Although Dakota now specializes in children, his first rotation was in orthopedics and rehab. It was there he spent his probationary period. In time, we were allowed into the children’s hospital.”

Although pediatrics is his specialty, Dakota also gets requests from adults. “One day I received a call from the hospital’s head of volunteer services asking if we could return that afternoon for a special visit,” notes Philip. “She told me the patient loved cats and had four of them at home. And that her prognosis wasn’t good.

“As we entered the room, we navigated through the various family members and friends present. There were photos of the patient with her husband and their cats. I soon realized that her time was indeed short. She was in a coma. But her family and friends were extremely grateful for this visit. As I placed Dakota beside her in the bed, I asked, as I always do, if it was O.K. for him to lie on her chest. They said it was fine, so he settled in and started purring. The patient opened her eyes. She was still nonverbal, but the family was so appreciative their loved one could have one last visit with a cat.”

Dakota cuddles up to a pediatric patient at University Medical Center in Lubbock



VON ORMY

Middle-aged Rough Collie **Bailey** has had several owners. **Cerina Zamora** is his fourth and gave him a permanent home. A teacher at Big Country Elementary in San Antonio, Cerina overheard some fellow teachers discussing his fate. After seeing his photo, she instantly said, “I’ll take him.” Two days later, Cerina picked him up and knew she had found a dog like no other.

She had seen news reports about dogs helping people in hospitals, nursing homes and schools and made it a goal. In August 2010, the pair became a Pet Partners team and enrolled in Story Tails, a program that pairs struggling readers with therapy animal teams to help build fluency, vocabulary and confidence.

Cerina knew it would have a positive impact on struggling readers, noting, “In a study done by University of California Davis, students who read to a dog had a 12 percent increase in their reading fluency. As a teacher, I know that is significant enough to mean the difference between passing or failing for a student. During the 2010–11 school year, Bailey and I visited every Monday with three students for 30 minutes after school. He loves going to a quiet library, sitting on his blanket, and resting his head on the students’ laps.

PET PARTNERS – STATE BY STATE

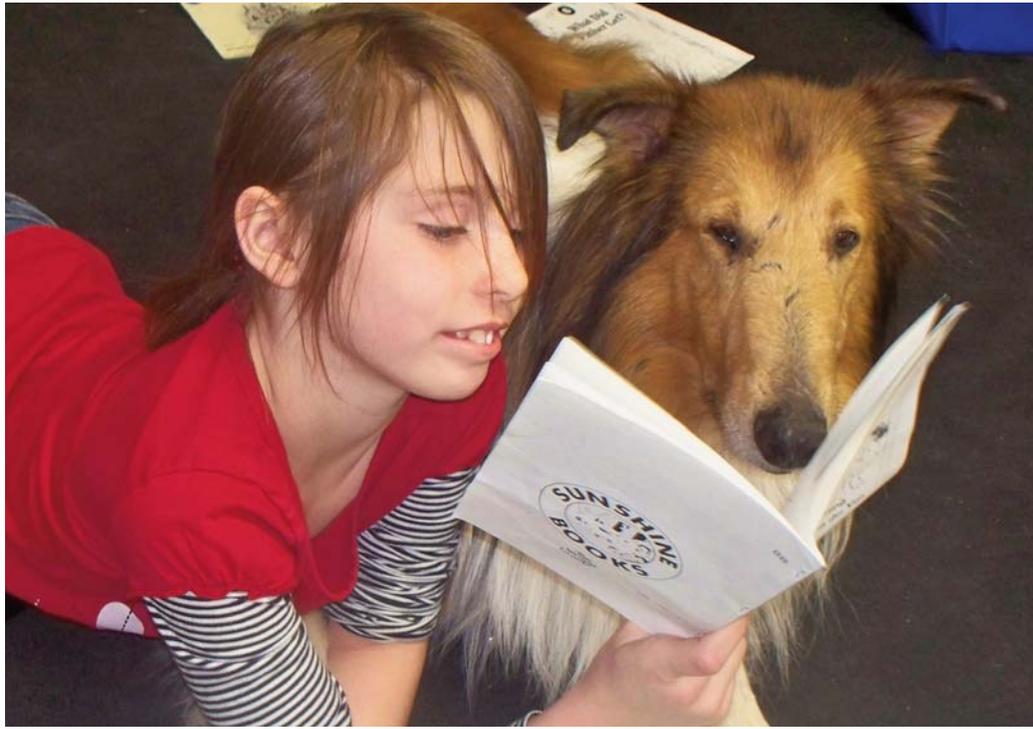
“One particular student in my class never read out loud because she read below grade level. However, after reading with Bailey, she began raising her hand and participated by reading out loud in class more often. It not only helped her be more confident, but also helped her pass her reading tests for the first time.”

Considering Bailey’s history, Cerina believes that their work as Pet Partners not only helps the students, but him as well. “The bond we have has opened him up from being a timid and shy dog, to a friendly and content one. I don’t know why anyone would give this exceptional dog away, but I do know where he will spend the rest of his life,” says Cerina.

Virginia ANNANDALE

When Barbara Akst agreed to foster 10-year-old Golden Retriever Max, she had no idea that his warm, patient and loving personality would steal her heart. He quickly became a part of the family. Recognizing his endearing qualities, Barbara decided to take a Delta Society course with Max and become a Pet Partners team. She took him to visit at a small, family care home located in Charlotte, North Carolina, where her 95-year-old mother lives with two other women and a full-time caregiver. Barbara notes, “The experience was unforgettable. It is not an overstatement to

A moment between 10-year-old Max and Barbara’s 95-year-old mother, a resident of a family care home



say that Max was the highlight of their day — probably of their week. No one wanted to see him leave. He gave each resident the opportunity to exercise their arthritic hands in his soft, golden fur, while experiencing the warmth, love and devotion that only a dog can give.”

Bailey helps reluctant readers in San Antonio

POWHATAN

Since July 2010, Bob Dandeneau and German Shepherd Sagwu have volunteered at Virginia Commonwealth University’s VCU Medical Center in Richmond. The facility is a huge medical complex consisting of four hospitals. Bob writes, “One of my most cherished visits was to the Massey Cancer Center Healing Garden. The garden is built adjacent to the Center. We had received a request from a staff member to visit one of her patients in hospice who was not doing well.

“We entered the beautiful garden to see a patient in a bed surrounded by nine family members. As we approached, one of the family members said, ‘Look, Jane — a German Shepherd!’ I said to Sagwu, ‘Go say hello.’ He went directly to the patient, bypassing the family members around the bed, and put his head on the bed so she could pet him. He somehow knew the patient was who he was meant to visit. While Jane was petting Sagwu, one of the family members showed me a picture of Jane’s dog. It was also a German Shepherd. Jane had wanted to see her own dog but couldn’t. The family thanked us for our visit and said it made her day. Unfortunately Jane passed away the next day.”

Washington

SPANGLE

During one of their regular visits to a local nursing home, Pet Partners Patricia Williams and her Chesapeake Bay Retriever Sandy stopped to chat with a new resident who was sitting in the hallway. He petted Sandy, and when Patricia asked if he had previously owned dogs, he talked about his ranch in Montana

and the various animals he had kept. Patricia relates, “We had about a 10-minute chat before saying our goodbyes. The staff person with us was beaming as we left the new resident. She said he had been in the facility for three days and during that time had not said more than about 10 words — until our visit. We now see him during our regular visits and, although very quiet and introspective at other times, he always has a chat with Sandy and smiles during the entire visit.”



Wisconsin

PORT WASHINGTON

As Anne Davis and Ruth Driewer were walking down the hall with their Pet Partners teammates after a group session at Lasata Care Center, a nursing home in Cedarburg, Wisconsin, a woman came up to them to admire Ruth’s Golden Retriever Bessie and Anne’s Husky-mix Caesar. She told them how much she loved dogs and how much her mother

loved dogs, too. Then she said her mother was upstairs in hospice care and asked if they could visit her. Although her mother was unresponsive, the woman felt sure a visit from the dogs would calm her as she prepared to take the next step on her journey. The teams quickly agreed and followed the woman upstairs.

Anne tells what happened next, “Caesar and I went in first. The woman’s mother was in bed — eyes shut and breathing slowly. Caesar went up to her and gave her arm a gentle nudge. Then he reached up and gave her a tiny kiss on her face. She didn’t speak but I could see her eyes move. She knew we were there.

“Then it was Ruth and Bessie’s turn. A nurse helped move the woman’s arm and placed it on Bessie’s head so she could stroke her beautiful fur. The daughter broke into tears and thanked us. We left knowing we had helped two people that day — a daughter and a mother as they said goodbye.”

BOOK REVIEW

WALK A HOUND LOSE A POUND: HOW YOU AND YOUR DOG CAN LOSE WEIGHT, STAY FIT, AND HAVE FUN TOGETHER

By Phil Zeltzman, DVM, DACVS and Rebecca A. Johnson, PhD, RN, FAAN
ISBN 978-1-55753-581-8, Purdue University Press, 150 pp.

This book is not meant to scold you or guilt you into taking your dog for a walk. But really, what are you waiting for? Walking for exercise is one of the healthiest things a person can do, and this book tells you why. Some of the benefits you’ll already know, but some will be new to you.

Walking is also great, low impact exercise for our dogs.

“There is something in this book for everyone...”

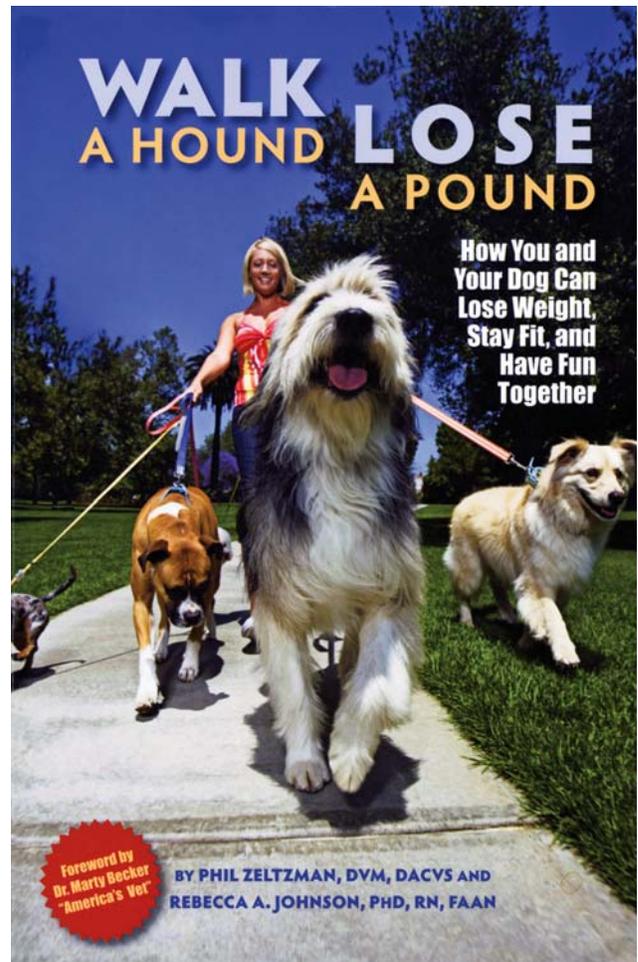
Probably they’re not as interested in learning what the healthful benefits to walking are or how

many diseases they can avoid by maintaining a healthy weight, but put on your tennis shoes, use “leash” and “walk” in a sentence together and just see who gets to the door first. This book encourages you to allow that enthusiasm to rub off on you.

There is something in this book for everyone: maybe you and your dog already exercise on a daily basis but want some tips on varying your routine, maybe you want to increase your daily level of exercise with your dog, or maybe you want to begin exercising with your dog and are looking for ways to get started. This book addresses all levels, making “Walk a Hound” a thoroughly informative and enjoyable lifestyle read.

My dog Hank and I found the equipment checklists particularly useful, and we review these together just before heading out. Also not to be missed are the handy resource and index section and the excellent forward by Dr. Marty Becker.

As obesity grips this country with both people and pets tipping the scales, this book reminds people what our pets already



seem to know: taking a walk is fun and it makes us feel good! The couch can take care of itself. But our dogs need daily exercise, and so do we.

—Jill F. Bentler