



NEWSLETTER

for the
Foundation for Pet Provided Therapy



AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM YOUR NATIONAL BOARD:

LOAL Foundation Board Members

Your VOLUNTEER LOAL Board members serve with enthusiasm and strive to improve our organization and continue to expand our national presence.

President: Kate Abbott

Vice-President: Bonnie Biggs

Membership Secretary: Susie Blake

Treasurer: Sue Matthews

Secretary: Laurie Freeman

Newsletter Editor: Margaret Eggers

Board members: Mary Lee Kendrick, Sheri Wachtstetter, Beverly Hodges, Connie Kelly, Lynn Parazak, Sandi Stewart, Tammy Goerzen

DRESS and ID REQUIREMENTS FOR THERAPY TEAMS

Your membership card must be visible, such as being worn as a badge or on a lanyard, during all visits. Your pet's I.D. must be carried and presented upon request. It is an honor to be identified with Love on a Leash as it sets you and your pet apart from other therapy organizations. Anything that identifies you as a Love on a Leash member must adhere to the following:

- Our official color is medium blue.
- The words Love on a Leash must be part of a chapter's name.
- Our official logo is a paw print within a heart with Love on a Leash written at the top (right). Your chapter name may be written at the bottom of the logo. *Revised 4-1-10*



We are presently in the process of making available for purchase an official Love on a Leash short sleeved T-shirt and pet scarf. Both will be medium blue and display the LOAL logo. While it is not required at this time that your pet's or your attire be LOAL identified (other than your ID card), the above instructions are mandatory.

You will be notified as soon as the shirt and scarf are ready for purchase should you wish to do so.

A new and more comfortable design for our pet vests is in the works. The new vests will be smaller – much like service dog vests without the pockets – thereby leaving more petting room as well as being cooler.





CSI: LOAL - We need YOUR help! The Foundation for Pet Provided Therapy is working on establishing our Trademark logo and name “Love on a Leash”. Although our organization goes back to the 1980s, we need to document this. Unfortunately, we’ve been unable to locate any documentation prior to 1994. If you have ANY newsletters or documents older than 1994 we need copies or scans.

We’re looking for items which would have a date, and include the name “Love on a Leash”. This might be a newspaper article, a newsletter from a school or hospital where our teams visited, magazine article, or dated, Facility newsletters from schools, hospitals, rest homes, hospice facilities etc. that would include the name “Love on a Leash”. Please dive into those memory boxes and closets and see what you can find, or if you know of a long-time member, maybe ask them. We need the information by JUNE 10th. Please contact board member Bonnie Biggs at bbiggs@csusm.edu or mail a copy to Love on a Leash, P.O. Box 4115, Oceanside, CA, 92052.

Thanks in advance for your help! *The Editor and the LOAL Board members.*

Nominate your “Care Bear” & “Golden Nugget” for our annual awards

The **Care Bear** and **Golden Nugget** Awards were originated in 2004 as a way to honor all our volunteers. The Care Bear honors a special human volunteer, and The Golden Nugget recognizes an extraordinary animal volunteer. The Nugget is named for Joanie Shugar’s yellow lab Nugget (photo below). Nugget earned five ThD e:sv awards over the years, and she and Joanie made at least one or two weekly visits to 12 Ventura county facilities every month. Joanie is still active with the Poinsettia chapter of LOAL. The Care Bear is named for our Founder Liz Palika’s aussie “Watachie’s Big Bear of Starcross”, CDX, HIT, CGC, ThD (photo right).



Although originally called “Bear”, Liz’s sister Mary called him Care Bear because of the strong empathy he showed. Liz didn’t know it then, but her sister was terminally ill. Care Bear knew it, and glued himself to Mary, providing much warmth, affection and laughter. This began Liz’s interest into the then relatively unknown field of therapy dogs. She eventually formed Love on a Leash, and Care Bear was the first LOAL Therapy Dog. He and Liz visited once or twice a week over 14 years, and he retired just 6 months before crossing the rainbow bridge. Truly there would be no Love on a Leash without Care Bear.

Take time to recognize and honor that special Nugget or Care Bear in your Chapter or visit group. To nominate a person or animal volunteer: 1) Write a short description about why that individual or animal should be given this honor; 2) Include as much information as possible and include pictures (small file jpg’s) if you have them; 3) you **MUST** include the specific award (Care Bear OR Golden Nugget), the person or animal’s full name, the Chapter if you know it, and your name. Nominations can be sent via email to loalnewsletter@gmail.com. Please put “NOMINATIONS” in the subject line. Or you can mail it to “Nominations”, Love on a Leash, P.O. Box 4115, Oceanside, CA, 92052. This annual award is given in November. **Please submit your nominations no later than September 1st.**



“Something to Bark About!”



*Ann Marie Schwein shown with her Georgia Frontiere Community Quarterback Award.
With Ann Marie is Lucia Rodriguez,
Frontiere's daughter.*

LOAL member **Ann Marie Schwein** (St. Louis Chapter) would take her two certified therapy dogs each Wednesday to visit a former teacher who was terminally ill. *"Each time, I'd read a book to her and the dogs would be at either end of her bed,"* Schwein said. The teacher was just one of the hospice patients whom Schwein, of Manchester, has regularly visited since starting to volunteer in 2002 with the Visiting Nurse Association. She never expected to be rewarded for something that enriches her life. But Schwein was one of 10 people to receive the 2009 Georgia Frontiere Community Quarterback Award, which recognizes outstanding volunteers. *"It feels so cool to be singled out, though so many other volunteers do what I do and more,"* said Schwein, 48. She came to VNA through her volunteer work with Love on a Leash, a not-for-profit, pet-assisted therapy organization. As a volunteer, Schwein has taken her dogs each Saturday for 11 years to visit residents of three or four nursing homes. Then

every Friday, she puts on her "VNA cap" and she and the dogs visit those in local hospices. If that weren't enough, she also volunteers periodically with the non-profit IMPACT for Animals organization. Plus, her "day job" is as a senior career consultant with the Impact Group, a career management firm in West County. Schwein praised the contributions of her lhaso apsos, Shelby, 13, and Casper, 9, who have been doing pet therapy for 11 and four years, respectively. *"With Love on a Leash, they visit with the elderly, do tricks, and let people touch and talk to them,"* Schwein said. She started her Love on a Leash and VNA hospice work with Buddy, a shih tzu, who died four years ago. *"The leader of Love on a Leash was in a Humane Society training class with me and said Buddy and I should go into pet therapy work,"* she said. Later, Sue Risch, volunteer coordinator at VNA, asked Love on a Leash to involve their dogs in hospice work. *"Hospice work is very grounding to me. The person eventually will die, yes. But the idea is to live in the moment and enjoy it"* Schwein said. For VNA, she's now visiting four hospice patients at Garden View Care Center in Chesterfield. Visits can vary, based on the person's condition, from a few months to years. *"We are honored to have such a dedicated, tireless volunteer like Ann Marie. She is simply an inspiration,"* said Carol Emmerich, director of VNA's Hospice Care. Risch nominated Schwein for the Frontiere award. *"We have seen wonderful, awesome benefits of Ann Marie's pet therapy. She is so committed and dedicated to the mission of hospice."* Schwein also has helped recruit and train other VNA volunteers. Schwein's honor marks the fourth consecutive year a VNA volunteer has been honored as a finalist for the Frontiere award. VNA's Hospice Center received \$1,250 as part of Schwein's award. Schwein just loves the job she does. *"I and the dogs assist people in crossing into their next life. I get more out of it than I give,"* she said. Article by Mary Shapiro, written for the Suburban Journals, STLtoday.com.



UPDATE from our *INLAND EMPIRE CHAPTER*

Just wanted to let you know about the great work we are doing here in the Pass to the Inland Empire Chapter. I became Chapter President a couple of years ago, and have been blessed with the most amazing volunteers. They are always ready to make a visit, even at the last minute without a single complaint. They greet and visit with all different kinds of people - with a loving spirit and kindness of heart not found



everywhere in today's world. The recipients of our visits, young or old, are always left with a smile on their faces and a lifting of their moods. That describes the dogs we have - their handlers aren't so bad either. 😊 Respectfully, Sharon Arvin

and now.... a message from our *MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY*

Hi Members. My name is Susie Blake and I am the Membership Secretary for Love on a Leash.

Don't forget that when you renew, I will be sending you a letter and a form to be filled out with any changes in information. **Please make sure you update phone numbers and email addresses.** Then return the renewal form with your check or money order. Additionally, you need to **send a photo of your pet's face (head shot) for the ID card** to info@loveonaleash.org. Everyone with a pet must submit a photo at least once. I do not have one on file. Once you have submitted a photo, I will continue to use this one for future cards as well. If you are not sure, then send a photo anyway.

Keep your membership information up to date! If you've moved or changed your phone or email, there are TWO WAYS to notify National so you can continue to receive notices and newsletters. **1) EMAIL:** email your updates to Susie Blake at susieszoo79@aol.com. Please put your change of membership information in the subject line. **OR - 2) SNAIL MAIL:** you may also send changes via regular mail to "Love on a Leash", P.O. Box 4115, Oceanside, CA, 92052-4115. Please put "Attention Membership" on the front.





Ask Walter!

Have you encountered a problem or unusual situation while working as a therapy team? You (or your owner) can write Walter and his owner (our own President Kate!) for suggestions. *Share your experiences with other LOAL therapy teams! Email "Ask Walter" c/o our editor at loalnewsletter@gmail.com. Include "Ask Walter" in the subject line.*



Dear Walter,
I have nice soft ears at just the right height for someone in a wheelchair or bed. Some people who are hurt in their heads like to pull my ears. Usually we see it coming and I duck or my owner

moves me out of the way. But sometimes we don't. How can my partner stop someone who is holding tightly onto my ear and pulling or twisting?

Sincerely, Cobalt "Cobie" Townley

PS: I don't get mad, I just am sad when it happens. As dictated to Nancy Townley

Dear Cobie,

First of all, thanks for being such an understanding therapy dog. I know, the whole "pat on the head, pull on the ears" thing can get real annoying. And you're right; you have to rely on your human partner to help you out of these situations.

When I give my human, Kate, the look that says, "help!" I rely on her to extricate

me. Usually, Kate will slide her hand between me and the overly loving person's hand--not trying to pry their fingers away, but gently easing her hand in-between. Ideally, Kate ends up holding hands with the person we're visiting and I get to take a break.

Hopefully we both remember to be more careful the next time we visit that person. There was one gentleman we saw who was just too rough for me to get near. The first time I said hi to him, he tried to lift me off the floor by pulling up on both my ears! Kate had to quickly pick me up and get help from a nearby aide. On subsequent visits, I'd do a few tricks to make him laugh and clap—but I just couldn't risk getting close to him again.

Another thing I like is when Kate is first introducing me to someone, she'll keep her hand resting on my head while, with her other hand, she guides the person's hand to my shoulders, back, or my chest—that's where I really enjoy being scratched and petted!

And, something you might want to try: a friend of mine, also a therapy dog, wears a brightly colored elastic collar made of many pieces of fabric. It often draws the interest and hands of people to feel the fabric instead of pulling on doggie hair.

Anybody else have any suggestions for Cobie? Write and share!

Signed, Walter



LOAL Volunteer aids the Red Cross at the La Conchita Mudslides

Going to the Red Cross Evacuation Center for the La Conchita and hwy 101 mud slides was a very touching time for Chico and me.

We spent time with the children first. Only one of the children spoke English, but that was ok. Showing them how to make Chico do tricks and watching their faces as they got Chico to perform his various tricks was heart warming. One of the little girls was afraid of dogs so I held Chico in a way that made her feel safe. It didn't take long before she was petting Chico on his head. The little boy that spoke English had lots of questions about how to train dogs and he told me about his dog that he had to leave when the family moved down here from northern California.



The little girls would ask their brother questions and he would translate to me. We gave them first pick of the Teddy Bears from the Chaplains Program. They would pick one and then put it back and pick another one. In the end, I told them to pick as many as they wanted. By the time Chico and I were ready to move on to the next area, the children were ready to go to sleep. Chico had worn them out....

Next we went into the main room of the shelter which was setup in 3 sections; the La Conchita residents, college students and the homeless that had previously been moved from the river bottom. I don't know if it was intentionally set up that way or the people just gravitated into sections. I hope the situation was a result of the latter.

Chico didn't care who was asking him to do tricks, as long as they had a little treat for him. At times we had as many as 10 to 15 people around us. Chico and I were neutral, therefore safe to talk to, play with and get Teddy Bears from. There were a lot of hugs and "God Bless you". Some of the women didn't want to take Teddy Bears because they were afraid that some child might not get one. I had to reassure them that I had taken care of the children first. Some talked about their animals, some talked about their children and some just sat in a world of their own holding the Teddy Bears.

The volunteer workers were busy trying to get answers about things like when showers were open and when they would have a chance to retrieve their belongs. Evacuees were returning after getting an escort back to their homes. Some people were eating the dinner that was brought in; others were getting their beds ready for the night and Chico went from place to place with his tail wagging as fast as it could go.

When Chico and I left the Red Cross Evacuation Center, my husband drove us to the Fire and Rescue staging area that was almost in the center of the parking lot. There were 5 or 6 trucks in line to get inspected. Chico and I went to each truck and talked briefly with each rescue team. Some of the rescue workers jumped out of their trucks to pet Chico. They thanked me for giving them some therapy too. They were returning from La Conchita, so getting a smile or a laugh was a huge reward for me. I thank GOD and Pastor Dan Green for giving me the opportunity to serve.

Contributed by Elizabeth Knudson, eknudson@msn.com





Central Kentucky LOAL:

Pat Marcum, newly elected President of the Central Kentucky Chapter, sends this photo of TWENTY! of their Therapy teams. Pat says this is only a third of their group and it was a special moment to get all the dogs and people together for a photo. Pat also just completed the Chapter's own website. Visit them and catch up on what's going on in central KY at www.loalcky.com.

Advanced Degrees:

Marley's second ThB title



Marley – A Peachface Lovebird has made a hit at a local Physical Therapy Group called “Sunrise” in Ventura, CA. This will be Marley’s second ThB title. Marley is a small parrot who has been certified with Love on a Leash for at least since December, 2000. Marley received his ID tag in January of 2001. He has made many visits to the Adult Day Care center, Help of Ojai, The Ventura Townhouse and Aegis assisted living over the years on regular visits. Marley has a special travel cage with a Love on a Leash bumper sticker on it. His ID cards are attached to the carrier along with his CA drivers license. Owner/LOAL member Joanie Shugar writes that she had developed painful carpal tunnel and tendonitis from

dog training and dog showing with her Labrador Retriever, “Goldie” who is also certified with Love on a Leash --- I saw my physician six months ago and he recommended physical therapy. I decided it would be a great place to take my parrot. My therapists Jeff Wilson PT and Linda Watts-Silva PT, said I could bring him in for my one hour therapy treatments and the rest of the patients could visit with him. Many



Above, Marley perched on Joanie Shugar's head, at Sunrise Physical Therapy. With Lynda and Marie, two therapists.



were interested in the pet therapy program and I would tell them how to get involved in it. Everyone fell in love with Marley. Marley has become attached to Jeff Wilson. Marley likes men. Just like my Labrador Goldie also likes men when she is visiting. Probably because I have trained them both. I am now able to take him to Sunrise Physical Therapy in his travel cage for visits while I



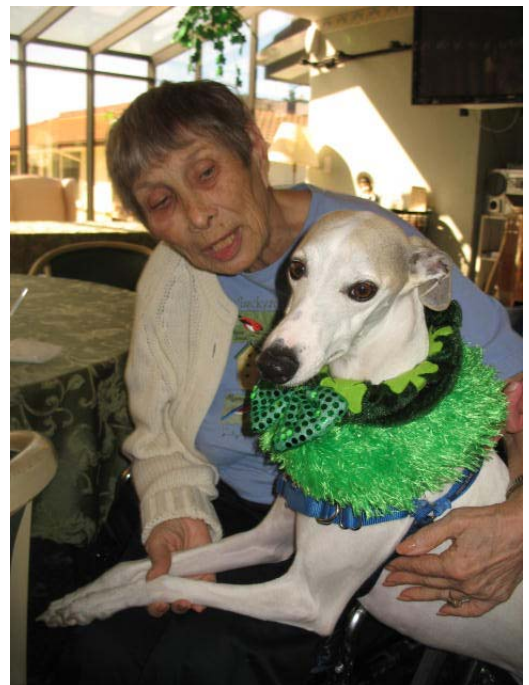
Above, Marley visits with Jeff Wilson, who also was a member of Love on a Leash with his Golden Retriever.

continue to have treatment. After six months of treatment I was able to stop. I did o.k. for two months but now I am back at physical therapy once a week seeing Jeff Wilson. With Goldie's dog showing, training and pet therapy visits her mom needs those hands. Having physical therapy treatments has been a life saver for my hands. Jeff owned a Golden Retriever who was certified with Love on a Leash. His dog passed away a few years ago. Marley is going with me again in his travel cage. Staff and patients love to see him. We have done enough hours now for Marley's second ThB award. Being I couldn't bring Goldie with me and I was able to bring Marley and it made me feel better going through the treatment having him close by.

Marley has made over five hundred visits since his first ThB award, but we are only sending the ones in for our physical therapy visits. It was special as it involved my own health and I could feel what people felt when they saw him. Marley is extremely healthy and loves people and traveling. He is quite the little companion. Contributed by LOAL Member Joanie Shugar

Donny's Therapy Journey - Donny is a Whippet and was such a social puppy that I knew he would make a great visiting Therapy Pet. He became a member of our local kennel club pet therapy group so that we could do the visits needed for our initial Love on a Leash membership and be covered by the club insurance. Donny was approved by the kennel club after approaching the first few members. They said, "*We can see that Donny is a very people-loving dog.*" He passed with flying colors. (Donny in the photo (right) with a Lodge Patient)→

Donny earned the AKC STAR Puppy and the AKC Canine Good Citizen (CGC) certificates at his training class graduation. Donny's STAR Puppy photo was published in the AKC Gazette. Donny earned his Rally Novice (RN) and Rally Advanced (RA) titles with four qualifying scores for each. Donny has two legs toward his Companion Dog (CD) title and we hope to finish his CD this summer. He is now in a beginning Agility class and loves it. The training classes and shows have provided Donny with a good foundation for becoming a Therapy Dog.



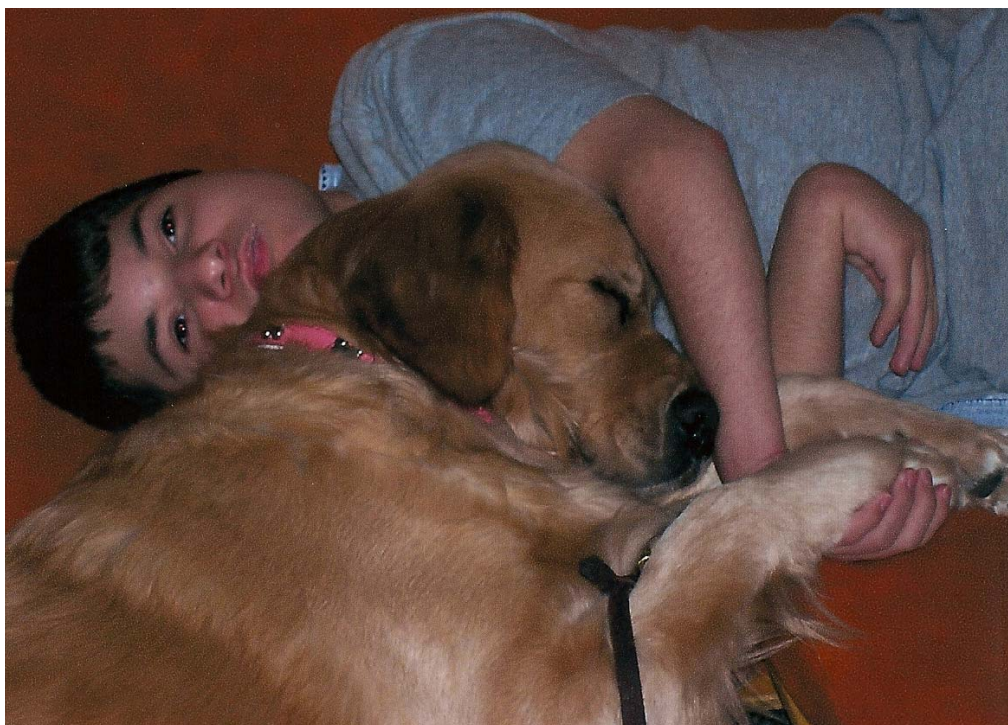
We average nine visits a month to Assisted Living, Convalescent Care, Transitional Care, and Adult Day Care facilities. Donny loves seeing the residents and staff. The staff members love it when he



cuddles up to them. Donny has a special “woo-woo” greeting for his favorite friends. Donny loves seeing all of the dogs we visit with too. Donny is very gentle when he puts his feet up on a chair or bed to greet residents; he does this when a resident invites him to do so. Some of the residents like to have him get on their bed and lie with them. He is very good about lying next to them while they pet and talk to him. They always comment on how soft and silky he is and how gentle he is.

Donny goes with his Aunt Taddie, a whippet and also a Love on a Leash Advanced Therapy pet, to the gift shop at La Purisima Mission where I volunteer two days a month. He stays quietly on a blanket for the five hours we are there. He will not get up to greet people unless he is told that it is OK. We get busloads of school children that come through the gift shop and the whippets lie quietly on their blanket and sleep through most of the children’s visit. Donny goes with us to our weekly crafts class and lies on the blanket after greeting all present. Everyone loves him and he has a couple of very favorite people who join us.

We have done a few school visits which Donny and I really like. We would like to do more school visits and to get involved in a children’s reading program. We have also done several civic presentations on Therapy Pets. I hope to be able to do Pet Therapy Visits for many more years with Donny. Contributed to LOAL Member Jean MacLean.



Abbie Doodle, ThD c:se, t:sd

Abbie Doodle, 2.5 year old AKC Golden Retriever, joined our home (which now consists of three other dogs and four children) as a family pet but was destined from the start to be a Therapy Dog. Abbie came to our home 2 years ago, donated from a well respected breeder and friend to our handicapped 8 year old twins. Abbie was born with a malformed tail, which we later found out was a mild form of spina

bifida. Abbie was an instant treasure to the girls and provided them comfort on tough days. Occasionally we would take Abbie for visits to the regional special needs school that the girls go to. On one such visit when Abbie was about 6 months old, a little boy, who normally says NO words in school, saw Abbie and was instantly attracted to her. In the few minutes he was petting Abbie, he said "Hey, Doggie. Come, Doggie." Needless to say, the staff and I were in tears as we witnessed this. At that point in time, I KNEW why Abbie had come to us!



Since having our special needs girls, I have always volunteered in their schools giving back in any way I can. Having Abbie certified as a Therapy Pet not only fit her personality and disposition, but also provided another way for me to give back to those who have given to us! My goals in working with special education students were threefold: to give special education students the chance to interact in a sensory and reading-oriented fashion with Abbie, to give the teachers a break or new benefit in their day, and to enhance public awareness of the benefits of Pet Assisted Therapy. Most of the training Abbie required for her "work" was already in place because she lives with 2 severely impaired children. Prior to her Control Evaluation, Abbie was taught to "settle" if one of the girls was laying on or near her. She also had basic obedience commands down and learned the "leave it" command right away as we have various medical items that inevitably fall to the floor in our own home. Also, as we have begun our work with severely impaired adults - the wheelchairs and beds are taller and she has to work harder to get to where the students can interact with her. She learned "paws up" and "step up" but it is hard for her to maintain as her spina bifida effects her stability on her back feet. We are currently working on getting her a modified step stool so she can feel safe when she does the "step up" command. Also, we are currently switching Abbie (and our Therapy Dog in training, one year old Sophie) to learning commands via American Sign Language. In our case, it helps one of our deaf young adult students who adores Abbie be able to interact with her directly rather than through her interpretive aide.

Fortunately for us, Abbie's training began in our home and was constant. Additionally, we have a very flexible facility where Abbie is able to learn as she goes. I am constantly problem solving as we go through our work time and always leave our schools with a new way to approach each day with special needs students - whose needs change from day to day. Working with the same student next time may require a vastly different approach. What is amazing to observe is that Abbie knows EXACTLY what each student needs. Often in a given classroom, we see each student for petting and sensory therapy time. Other days, Abbie seems to know which student needs her the most and just parks herself right next to them for our whole visit. Usually the student having the worst day is who Abbie will seek out, often laying right across them as they rest on a big bean bag chair! You can instantly see the change for the BETTER in each of these students! The work with severely multiply impaired students is rewarding and challenging for us both! When we make the effort to help a student whose arms are severely malformed to hold Abbie's big fluffy paws that is often when we see the biggest smiles! Abbie also does some "reading" time with an augmentative Kindergarten Plus class. The teacher often says that on the days the kids read with Abbie Doodle she sees good stuff happening in the classroom after we leave and motivation to read well to Abbie at her next visit. When it is warm enough, Abbie takes walks outside with a young group of Autistic Impaired children. It took some transition time to figure out how to have the students still hold their bug chain (used for walking safely together) AND hold the end of Abbie's leash when it is their turn (I hold the piece of the leash closer to her collar at ALL times). We use the gentle leader for this and it works well to help ensure distractions (i.e. rodents) do not pose any threat. If Abbie alerts to something, a simple redirection is enough to keep her focused on her job with the kids. Also - some of the Autistic students we visit benefit from direct sensory therapy exposure to Abbie's fabulously soft fur-like coat. One student likes to have his belly on Abbie and another likes to massage Abbie with her bare feet! If I were to have done anything differently, I would have started using ASL in training from the start. But you learn what your population needs as you get to know them, particularly in a case like ours where our team just trained ourselves based on having two special need children at home! As Abbie and I work through our visit days, new situations always arise and there is always something new to consider for meeting our students needs better the next time. I keep a notebook and write down each day's events, problems and possible solutions. I always keep up with training for Abbie on basic skills - all dogs have the tendency to forget the key



points if they are not reinforced! Also, it is my hope to encourage and motivate a few more teams in SW Michigan to get certified through Love On A Leash so we can get more teams out in our communities. While this is volunteer work for me, I do believe it is my life passion and calling. I am so grateful to be able to have a way to touch other people's lives with our family pet! Submitted by LOAL member Trish Lewis in Plainwell, Michigan.

Dogs and Students - "Dog-Tired" but ready for Finals Pleasant Valley/Camarillo and Ventura Chapters of LOAL help promote Student Wellness at UC Santa Barbara



On Monday, March 8, the Pleasant Valley/Camarillo Chapter of Love on a Leash went to the first Dog Therapy Day, sponsored by the Wellness Program, at UCSB. Earlier this year, the Chapter Leader, Debbie Norris, had been contacted by UCSB, asking if their chapter would be willing to come and visit with students for the day. The idea was to accomplish "stress-relief" for the students, who would be studying for finals on March 8.

The Chapter talked it over, and decided it would be a fun thing to do, and they got ready! Little did Debbie know (having taken over as Chapter Leader mid-year 2009) that going to visit a new place took a lot of planning! There was a flurry of email with headquarters and the chapter, trying to get over the red tape of insurance forms. But once that was completed, it was smooth sailing. Mark Shishim of the Wellness Center at UCSB prepared everything on his end, and when the day came, it was a huge success! Their team set up tables for student groups as well as several covered areas for the dogs. Debbie had been concerned about rain that day; instead, it was a sunny, beautiful Santa Barbara beach day! The dogs were fortified with water bowls and treats, and even before the Chapter got settled, students began swarming toward the dogs. Nine individuals with their dogs came from the Camarillo Chapter, and one person rallied from the Ventura Chapter. It was a good thing there were as many dogs as there were - especially when the hordes of students poured out of the buildings during the class period break! The Dogs were so popular that many students could be seen and heard texting and

calling friends on other parts of the campus, telling them to come and visit. Many of the students were heard exclaiming how much they missed their dogs at home, or how much they wished they had one of the dogs. Hugs, pats, kisses and snuggles were exchanged, and there was enough love to go around for all. Just as in the rest homes they visit, many individuals enjoyed talking with the dog owners almost as much as visiting with the dogs. It felt like a dog "love fest" that day, as the four hours flew by. Upon leaving,





however, the Chapter members talked among themselves as they watched their "dog-tired" pups slowly leaving and decided that next time, maybe it should be shortened to THREE hours. The dogs AND the owners were all exhausted, but in a great mood. Immediately, Mark Shishim emailed and invited the Chapter to come at the end of next quarter, and everyone readily agreed. The entire Ventura Chapter has said they would also like to come along next time. As the students said, "The more, the merrier!" Contributed by Debbie Norris, LOAL member, Pleasant Valley/Camarillo Chapter, CA.



**HARLEY BLACKBURN
10/2004 - 3/25/2010**

While Harley blessed our lives for such a short time, it was his work with LOAL that really inspired him. He had a "fidgit fit" when we put on his Therapy Pet jacket. He loved the stop, sit, and read program at the Highland Library. He loved the kids most of all, and of course all his buddies in the Redlands Chapter of LOAL, Heavenly Healing Paws, led by Deborah Van Gelder. Deborah was more than a trainer, she has been, and will continue to be, one of our best friends. Harley gave more than he received, and he received a lot. Everyone that met him once, asked about him the next time he revisited a place. Saying we will miss him does not come close to conveying the loss we feel at this time. Thank You

LOAL, and all our friends in the Redlands chapter, Heavenly Healing Paws, for giving him, my wife Elizabeth, and I, a way for Harley to give back to his community. He was my wife's service dog as well, and we took him everywhere we went. We love you Harley, and hope to see you again someday in the sweet by and by,





Remembering Gusto,
beloved pug of Justine
Janice Tompkins. Justine
writes that Gusto had “the
gift” and was the one doing
the volunteering, she just
held the leash. “He was a
Therapy Dog in every sense
of the word.”



*Above, Gusto eyes the camera, and (left) captured on canvas
with JJ, Satchmo the French bulldog (also a LOAL dog) and
the family cats.*

Remembering AMRC’s Simba, ThD, CGC

Simba’s mom Sandy writes
that “with great sadness I let
you know that Simba has
crossed the Rainbow Bridge.
He was a great Therapy Dog
and touched many lives.”

Remembering Caspar

Born in Philo, Northern
California, on July 23,
1997, Caspar was the smallest, whitest of her litter of 7.
She was ½ lab and ½ golden retriever, with angel wings
and white eyelashes. After 2 puppy years of puppy hell,
psychiatric sessions, chewed walls, electrical cords and
couch arms, she settled in as the most loving, calm dog I



had ever had. She became my shadow...Her temperament made her perfect for therapy work, and she was certified in 1999 and received her Advance Degree in Alzheimer’s Therapy in 2002. She visited assisted living facilities in Orange County, delighting the residents with her calming presence and personality. They always gave her a birthday party each year, where we wore party hats and ate her favorite food, bagels! Mostly she loved being with her mom, following her everywhere, indoors, outdoors... always just a paw away. Our black lab/coon hound rescue, Rosie, joined her in her therapy work in 2003. Although she started to slow down after she turned 11, she still enjoyed visiting her friends at assisted living every week, bringing happiness and joy. After an ACL surgery in November of 2008, although she recovered beautifully, she became very ill after a series of medical issues and passed over the bridge on March 23, 2009. She’ll forever be my pumpkin girl. Joanne Fountain, San Clemente, California.



In Loving Memory of my beautiful Farah Shi' Rayan Mariah, CGC

Mariah was a Sloughi, (pronounced slu:gi). The breed is an ancient desert sighthound which originated in North Africa. I adopted Mariah when she was 5 years old, after her owner died. The deceased woman and her four dogs were not found for several days. When my friend picked up all of the dogs from the animal shelter their vet records were included, and we learned that Mariah had been diagnosed with incurable PRA (Progressive Retinal Atrophy) which causes gradual blindness. At the time I had a rescue Borzoi and I agreed to "foster" Mariah. What an incredible journey we began. We started visiting Care Facilities in 2003 when a friend's Mother was a resident at an Alzheimer's Care Center. I noticed right away that the residents had a special connection to her because of her disability; they seem to relate to her since many of them have disabilities as well. Although totally blind by 2004, she was such a trooper she did not let that keep her from living a long happy life, touching the lives of many, many people. When I moved to Santa Maria in 2005 we started visiting Marian Residence, and in 2006 we joined the SMKC Furry Friends, and began monthly visits at several facilities. In 2007 Mariah passed the AKC Canine Good Citizen test, which was quite an accomplishment for a ten year old, blind dog, and she was recognized as a Love on a Leash Therapy Pet. She even visited on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, just 3 days before she passed away. Mariah had completed over 145 visits. Mariah was truly one of those dogs who was extraordinarily special, and she enriched my life and the lives of everyone who met her. I think that maybe now she can see clearly and is running like the wind. Contributed by Janet Epperson



ANDI STRANGE - Andi Strange, Sheltie cross, shown with her adopted sibling and canine friend Ellie, at the Wrightwood, California, Public Library, crossed the Rainbow Bridge on February 15, after suffering a debilitating stroke the night before at home in Wrightwood, where she lived with Susan and Phil Strange and her two friends and fellow therapy pets, Ellie and Joshua. She is also survived by her human sister Sarah Strange, with whom she lived for many years, and who loved her devotedly. Andi was the oldest member of Heavenly Healing Paws chapter of Love on a Leash. A loving and gentle girl, she was a favorite of the children who read to her at the

Highland and Wrightwood Libraries. Andi became a therapy pet at the age of sixteen, after passing her obedience training and supervised internship, proving that an old dog can learn new tricks. Chapter leader Deborah Lewis VanGelder praised her as an ambassador for the group, proving that one is never too old to make a contribution to society, or to bring joy to others. Andi never admitted that she was somewhat hard of hearing, as she stared intently at a child's face or the book being read.

As she waits for her family on the other side of the bridge, they want to thank her for her faithful companionship and her love. Go with God, sweet little girl. Contributed by Phillip Strange.





Remembering Tina

We are sorry to inform you that Tina left us to Rainbow Bridge on Feb. 06 2010. She had chronic Kidney disease which took her life much sooner than we expected. She was a very talented special sweet little Princess. She enjoyed visits to the Jewish care center where she worked. She gave us & others great joy & fun. People would love to see Tina. It was a gratifying & rewarding experience indeed. We miss her so much, but her memories will be always with us everyday of our lives.

Sincerely, Terry Doran

Contributions to the Newsletter – To contribute to our newsletter, you may email a story or article to loalnewsletter@gmail.com. Please note that the Editor will revise for length and content as dictated by available space so be concise. Try not to exceed 300-400 words so we can include everything. If you would like to email photos to go with your article, please select one or two (NOT ten or twelve) photos (.jpg please, keep file size to maximum 200KB), and make sure that you have the permission of anyone in the photos to use their picture. Many residents do NOT wish their picture to be taken and certainly not published! Please be respectful. *The Editor*



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AND now for something COMPLETELY different!

LOAL dog hangs-twenty while having fun in the sun!



Kalani, a Golden Retriever surfs with her therapy partner, Andra Lew at Imperial Beach. Kalani was one of several dogs who were on hand as extras in new Marmaduke movie where the Great Dane tries his paw at surfing! San Diego is a popular place with surfing dogs and there are several events such as the Loews Dog Surfing Competition – the nation’s original surfing competition for man’s best friend. This popular competition is an extension of Loews Hotels’ award-winning Loews Loves Pets program and has become a hugely successful fundraiser for pet-related charities. This year the event will benefit the San Diego Police Department Canine Unit through the San Diego Police Foundation. Kalani also tandem surfs with her sister Ricochet (photo right). Check out a video on U-tube – just look for “Twisted Sisters tandem surfing”



Do you do something fun with your Therapy dog in your “off-hours”? Share the fun (and crazy?) things you do with your LOAL dogs to relax, refuel, have fun or just when you’re hangin’ out. Email text and a photo or two to us at loalnewsletter@gmail.com. Just put “Something Completely Different” in the subject line. Share the fun with your fellow two-footed LOAL members.

