



# NEWSLETTER

Spring 2025



**Love on a Leash® Board** - Your Volunteer Board members serve with enthusiasm, strive to improve organization and continue to expand our national presence.

Vince Cupo - President  
Margaret Eggers - Vice President  
Susie Blake - Secretary/Membership  
Janet Herron - Treasurer  
Sue Subkow - Chapters Coordinator  
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*\*In some browsers, page hyperlinks may only be active when newsletter downloaded.*

## From the Board

One of the unique things about Love on a Leash® is that we require 10 successful, supervised visits to certify. This is often mentioned when I talk to people who are familiar with, or looking to change, their pet therapy certification. After years of being on the Love on a Leash® National Board, I am convinced that these visits are the key to successful, safe, and effective pet therapy teams. Supervised visits are a terrific way to help a team new to pet therapy gain a fuller understanding of what pet therapy really consists of, and just what facet of all the possible types of pet therapy visits will work best for them and their pet. The KEY element in that process is....All of YOU! The experience and knowledge of our Love on a Leash® teams are essential in the success of any new pet therapy team. It's where we can find out if the pet (or owner) are really a good fit, and what types of visits might work well. Often this is where we see that perhaps additional training is needed. Our Board has worked

with many teams who had an issue during their supervised visits, to determine what kind of additional training might help them be more successful. There have been some wonderful new teams who ran into an issue, worked on that issue with a trainer, then came back to successfully certify and visit. YOUR experience, your observations and caring, helpful mentoring of a team-in-training puts them on a successful path to volunteering in our communities, and our hope is that they will "pay it forward" and supervise new team(s) in their area. So if you supervise new teams occasionally on your regular visits, THANK YOU!!! And if you haven't yet, please consider doing so. There is helpful information in the Guidelines for Visit Evaluators, and if you ever have a problem or question, you can always talk to your Chapter Leader, or email us here at [info@loveonaleash.org](mailto:info@loveonaleash.org).



— Margaret Eggers  
Vice President, Love on a Leash®



# Taking Care of Business

## **Pet's Profile!**

For insurance purposes, we ask all teams to upload two side-body photos of their therapy pets to their profile on the Love on a Leash® website. To do this, simply log in, navigate to your pet's profile, and click Pet's Profile. Please ensure that your pet is not wearing a costume or outfit in the photos. If you run into any issues, feel free to email [info@loveonaleash.org](mailto:info@loveonaleash.org) for assistance. Thank you for helping us keep our records up to date!

## **Pet Panel**

Had an experience on a visit and not sure how to handle it? Ask our Pet Panel! We'll protect your privacy and provide trainer-approved advice in a simple, helpful way. Email your question to [newsletter@loveonaleash.org](mailto:newsletter@loveonaleash.org).

## **Logo and Visit Requirements**

We're proud of our official color – medium blue – so please try to wear it during your visits! Please also make sure your ID card is visible at all times (on a badge, lanyard, neck wallet, or retractable holder).

Don't forget to carry your pet's ID, too, and present it if asked. Wearing our name helps set you and your pet apart as a pet therapy team from a recognized organization.

## **We Want to Hear From You!**

We know that every day brings heartwarming moments and inspiring stories from our visits, and we're lucky to witness them all. However, for our newsletter to serve as a valuable resource for everyone, it's essential that we focus on content that helps support, improve, and strengthen the Love on a Leash® experience for all of us.

If you've had a unique experience, a lightbulb moment, or any ideas that could help us all become better pet therapy volunteers, we want to hear from you!

We also welcome your heartwarming photos and stories – they're what make our communities so special! However, please note that while we love sharing these moments, they will only be included in the newsletter when space allows.

You can easily share your ideas through our convenient [Google Forms](#) or feel free to email your submissions directly to [newsletter@loveonaleash.org](mailto:newsletter@loveonaleash.org). Articles should ideally be no more than 400 words and may be gently edited to fit our space limitations. Please remember to include appropriate photo release forms when necessary.

## **Membership Updates**

Log into your account online anytime to update your personal details.

If your pet has retired or passed away, please let us know at [info@loveonaleash.org](mailto:info@loveonaleash.org). No internet? No problem –call us at (760) 740-2326 or mail in your updates.



# Guidelines in the Spotlight

## Nice to meet you!

Love on a Leash® therapy teams bring comfort and joy to those they visit, but a smooth and successful visit often begins before ever stepping foot into a facility. One key element in preparing for a stress-free visit is ensuring that therapy pets meet each other beforehand.

While all Love on a Leash® pets have passed their evaluations and demonstrated excellent behavior, introducing them before a visit offers several benefits that contribute to a more positive experience for everyone involved.

**1. Reducing Stress and Anxiety** - Therapy visits take place in a variety of settings, from hospitals to schools to senior living facilities. These environments can be new, exciting, and even overwhelming for therapy pets, especially when meeting other unfamiliar therapy animals at the same time. A pre-visit introduction allows them to become comfortable around one another in a neutral and relaxed setting, reducing potential stress on visit day.

**2. Ensuring Positive Interactions** - Even the most well-mannered therapy pets have individual personalities. Some may be eager to interact, while others prefer their space. Meeting in advance allows handlers to observe how the pets respond to one another and ensure they are comfortable together before being placed into a working environment.

**3. Creating a Cohesive Team Environment** - Therapy visits are a team effort. When pets and handlers work together harmoniously, visits are more effective and enjoyable. Pre-visit introductions help build a sense of familiarity and teamwork among pets, reducing unexpected surprises during the visit itself.

**4. Enhancing Safety and Comfort for Everyone** - The safety and well-being of therapy pets, handlers, and those we visit is always the top priority. A pre-visit meeting allows handlers to recognize any signs of discomfort or overstimulation, ensuring that all therapy pets are comfortable in close proximity before entering a facility. 🐾



# Shop for Love on a Leash® Gear

Show off your Love on a Leash® pride with a custom embroidered patch!

These patches make a fun and meaningful addition to your therapy pet's vest or bandana, allowing you to personalize it with special details.

Our **2" patches** and **3" patches** can be embroidered with your **Chapter Name, Handler's Name, Pet's Name, or "Since YYYY."** Pet and handler names are stitched in **ALL CAPS with BLACK thread** for a polished and professional look.



To order, simply add the patch to your cart and use the "Additional Information" section to specify your customization. If you're ordering **only patches**, don't forget to use **Coupon Code (PC)** for a **\$6 shipping discount!** 💙



## Spread the Word

Love on a Leash® is proud to offer printed brochures and educational cards, illustrating the differences between therapy, service and emotional support animals. We provide these at no cost to our teams. If you would like some of these to provide to prospective teams in training, the facilities you visit, or for an upcoming event, please email us at [assistant2@loveonaleash.org](mailto:assistant2@loveonaleash.org).

Please include the quantity you would like and let us know whether you would like brochures, comparison cards or both! 💙





# Fun Giveaways Adored by All Ages



Love on a Leash® is partnered with Creative Instinct, Inc. to offer Therapy Pet Trading Cards to our teams nationwide.

The order process is easy and the cards are very popular, especially with our younger fans.

Love on a Leash® bookmarks are also a big hit with our avid readers.

Available as single or double-sided; minimum order: 25 pcs.



**Log into your Member Account to order both the trading cards and bookmarks in the Order Merchandise section.**



## 💙 By the Numbers 💙

As of April 2025, Love on a Leash® has grown to 2,626 certified volunteer pet therapy teams in 46 states! Did you know that 81% of our teams belong to chapters? At this time we have 66 active chapters in 27 states. Thank you for continuing to bring comfort and joy to those in need!





# Our Newest Chapter!

## Northeast Ohio



Massillon, OH – We are excited to welcome the Northeast Ohio Chapter, the very first Love on a Leash® chapter in the state of Ohio!

Chapter Leader Donna Stottlemeyer brings a wealth of experience, having previously led the Rockwall/Royse City Chapter in Texas. After moving to Ohio in 2021, Donna was eager to continue her involvement and help bring pet therapy to her new community. With her certified Irish Wolfhound, Albus, she has now launched the Northeast Ohio Chapter, which covers a wide area including Cleveland, Akron, and surrounding towns.

The chapter began with five certified teams: Janet Grasso & Herbie, Sandy Denman & Sweetie, Jerry Seiter & Teddy, Linda Carr & Hudson, and Abby Brenner & Joe. Since then, Sandy Williams & Sir Murphy have joined the roster, and Jenny Smith & Guster have completed their supervised visits and hope



Donna and Albus

to be official in the coming weeks!

The chapter has already received outreach from individuals eager to become involved – including someone interested in certifying their dog to participate in USO events for military families. The chapter's teams are currently visiting nursing homes, hospitals, and even participating in library reading programs.

We are so happy to have them on board and look forward to seeing the positive impact they bring to their communities throughout Northeast Ohio! 💙



***Chapters are unique to Love on a Leash®. A chapter provides support, motivation, and social interaction for you and your pet. More teams mean a greater variety of pets, talents, and interests. One established visit and 5 or more certified teams are needed to start a chapter, plus the chapter leader has to have been a certified Love on a Leash® team for at least one year. Interested? Learn more on our website under [Chapters](#).***





## Ask Our Pet Panel



Dear Pet Panel,

I have a small therapy dog, Fluffy, who has always been friendly and outgoing. However, during a recent walk to a visit, we encountered an aggressive German Shepherd, and it was a terrifying experience for both of us. Since then, Fluffy has become reactive, especially when larger dogs come too close. He stiffens up, growls, and sometimes even barks at dogs he used to be fine with. I'm worried this might affect our therapy work. How can I help Fluffy regain his confidence and feel comfortable around other dogs again?

Sincerely,  
Concerned Handler



Have a question for our Pet Panel? There isn't a sticky situation they haven't addressed! Send your pet's questions to [newsletter@loveonaleash.org](mailto:newsletter@loveonaleash.org).

Dear Concerned Handler,

First, we're so sorry that you and Fluffy had such a frightening experience. It's completely understandable that an encounter like that could shake his confidence. As a therapy dog, it's essential for him to feel comfortable, cordial, and at least tolerant of being around other dogs. The good news is that with patience and the right approach, you can help him rebuild his confidence.

**Always advocate for Fluffy.** If you know he is feeling nervous around larger dogs, it's okay to politely inform other handlers during meet-and-greets that you'd prefer to keep a little distance. Avoid forcing interactions, as that can increase his anxiety.

In the meantime, here are a few things you can work on to help Fluffy feel more secure:

- **Recognizing early signs of stress** – Watch for subtle signals like turning away, avoiding eye contact, or lip licking. These indicate discomfort before a reaction escalates.
- **Creating positive associations** – Gradually reintroduce him to calm, well-mannered dogs at a distance where he feels safe. Reward him for calm behavior with treats or praise.
- **Giving him space when needed** – If a situation becomes overwhelming, remove Fluffy from the encounter before he reacts. This helps prevent reinforcing fear-based responses.
- **Seeking professional guidance** – If his reactivity continues, a certified dog trainer or veterinary behaviorist can help with targeted confidence-building exercises.

Fear-based aggression is often a response to feeling vulnerable rather than true aggression. With time, patience, and support, Fluffy can regain his confidence and continue his great work as a therapy dog. Keep advocating for him, and know that you're not alone — many therapy dogs have overcome similar challenges!

Best wishes,  
The Pet Panel



## 👉Chapter Spotlight: Kennebec Valley👉

*Augusta, ME* – The Kennebec Valley Chapter of Love on a Leash® has seen remarkable growth and resilience over the years. Originally founded by three individuals, the chapter was later taken over and nurtured into what it is today. Before COVID-19, the chapter had nearly 40 active teams, though the pandemic led to a decline. Through dedication and hard work, the team has rebuilt to approximately 25 teams, covering central Maine and its surrounding rural areas. With members spread across the state, some volunteers even travel up to 2.5 hours each way to participate in visits and enjoy the camaraderie

of their fellow handlers.



Sadie (left) is approaching retirement and prefers libraries and reading time, as does Jasper (right).



The chapter primarily conducts visits in groups of two or three, though some teams visit facilities independently, fostering strong bonds with residents. Visits span a wide variety of locations, including nursing homes, rehabilitation centers, schools, universities, libraries, airports, veterans' homes, and even private hospice care. Due to high demand, requests consistently outnumber available teams.

Scheduling is handled through a simple but effective method: a Word document is sent out

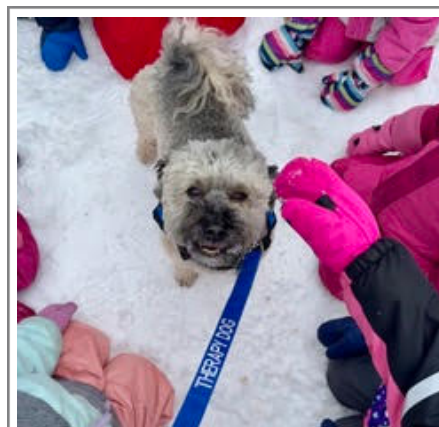
three times per month, listing upcoming visits chronologically. This system ensures accessibility for those who may not be active on social media or comfortable with complex scheduling tools.

Beyond therapy visits, the chapter boasts a diverse array of volunteers with unique skills and experiences.

Some teams participate in agility and nose work, while others specialize in cooperative care and behavior modification.

### **Pat Koven,**

the current chapter leader, even coauthored and coedited a book on therapy dog training. Many members embrace the festive



Chevy, a Havanese, is always a big hit at school's and children's centers.



Finley, a lab who loves all people and all other animals and always seems to be laughing.



## 👉Chapter Spotlight ctd: **Kennebec Valley**👉



Hank, a VERY popular lab, who visits all types of facilities: nursing homes, schools, libraries. His new passion is agility.

spirit, dressing themselves and their dogs for various holidays to spread even more joy.

While they would love to expand

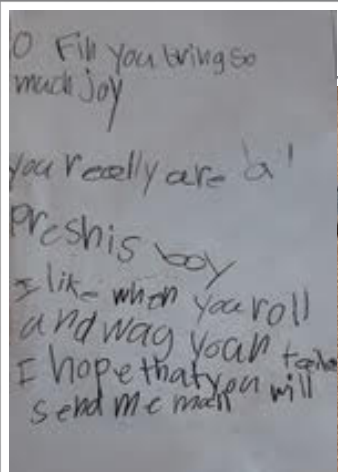
their ranks with feline and rabbit therapy teams, so far, the chapter remains exclusively canine. Nonetheless, the focus remains on creating meaningful connections and bringing joy to those in need. For many, volunteering is not just about service – it's a special time spent bonding with their

beloved dogs and making a difference in the lives of others.

Finn, an Aussie, who loves his time at assisted living facilities but also hanging out with kids at libraries and schools. This is a letter one of the kids wrote to Finn.

One particularly touching visit

showcased the incredible



impact of therapy dogs. During a hospital visit, Pat and her therapy dog, Willy, were called to comfort a frightened four-year-old girl who was both blind and deaf. Willy gently lay beside her, and with her mother's guidance, the little girl's hand brushed against his soft curls. After a brief moment of stillness, she suddenly burst into laughter – for the very first time in her life. The unexpected joy brought tears to her parents and

the hospital staff, as they witnessed the profound connection and comfort that Willy had given her in that moment.



Willy, an Aussie, owned by Pat Koven, LOVES puppet shows and kids!



The Kennebec Valley Chapter

continues to thrive, thanks to the dedication of its volunteers and their amazing therapy dogs.

While the chapter is always open to welcoming more teams, they emphasize the importance of genuine commitment – volunteers who wish to share their pets with others, not simply obtain certification for personal use. Love on a Leash® National provides unwavering support, ensuring that the chapter can focus on its mission: bringing smiles, comfort, and joy to those who need it most. 🐾



# 🎤 A Night of Comedy Benefiting Love on a Leash® 🤡

La Jolla, CA – What an incredible night it was at The Comedy Store in La Jolla, on February 12th, 2025, where laughter and generosity came together for a great cause! Love on a Leash® was honored to be American Me Comedy's charity of choice for their special benefit show, featuring an unforgettable lineup of talented comedians.

With the support of a fantastic group of performers and so many amazing attendees, the show raised much appreciated donations for Love on a Leash® – contributing to our mission of educating the public about pet therapy, while supporting our teams in training and certified teams nationwide so that they can continue to bring comfort and joy through pet therapy in their communities. A special shoutout to San Diego Chapter Leader and National Board Chapters Coordinator Sue Subkow for taking time out of her busy visit schedule to coordinate and promote this special event with American Me Comedy, and to National Board President Vince Cupo for representing our organization at this fantastic evening of comedy and community.

We are beyond grateful to American Me Comedy and The Comedy Store in La Jolla for hosting this event and to our two Board members and many others in attendance who made this night a success! Their support makes a difference, and we look forward to more events like this in the future! 💙



*Love on a Leash® Board President Vince Cupo with Greta (left), and San Diego Central Chapter Leader & National Chapters Coordinator Sue Subkow joined by Grace (right).*



# Therapy Tails: Dominic's Story of Love and Healing

Submitted by Danna Abraham, PhD

San Diego, CA – **Dominic** came into my life when he was five years old, patiently waiting for his forever home at the San Diego Humane Society. From the moment we met, we formed an indescribable bond and I knew we had something special to do.

At the time, I was working as a mental health clinician in an outpatient psychiatry setting, providing therapy to children and families navigating behavioral challenges. A simple photo of Dominic on my desk sparked unexpected curiosity and conversations among my clients. How old is Dominic? What does he like to do? Where do you take him for walks? My client's interest in him inspired me to enroll Dominic in obedience classes, and together, we worked toward

earning his Canine Good Citizen (CGC) certification.

With his training complete, I was eager to start the process of integrating Dominic as a therapy dog at my workplace. However, I was met with heartbreak: a breed-specific policy that excluded him from being able to volunteer. Although the news was disheartening, defeat was never an invited guest in our home. I was determined to find another path. That was when I reached out to *Love on a Leash*®.

I still remember the moment I picked up the phone and spoke with Sue Subkow. I had tears in my eyes when she warmly reassured me, *"Absolutely, we would love to have Dominic on our team. All dogs who are CGC-certified have the ability to become volunteers."*

That conversation changed everything. Thanks to *Love on a Leash*®, Dominic was given the chance to bring smiles to those who opened their hearts to our therapy dogs. But even as I approached our training with LOAL, I noticed we still faced challenges. His appearance and breed often invited unfair judgments. Some people hesitated to visit with him, while



others made hurtful comments, assuming he was aggressive simply because of the way he looked.

Through the guidance and the supervising teams that helped us, we learned together to be patient and realized that changing deeply embedded stereotypes related to dog breeds takes a lot of time. We stayed the course and found a way to meet people with less resistance by giving Dominic glasses. The hope was that by wearing those glasses, people could see him more clearly.

For ten years, Dominic and I volunteered together, learning to navigate what we couldn't change while staying true to our mission. We wanted to share our journey becoming a pet assisted therapy team and felt inspired to write a children's book: *Therapy Tales from Dominic the Pit*.



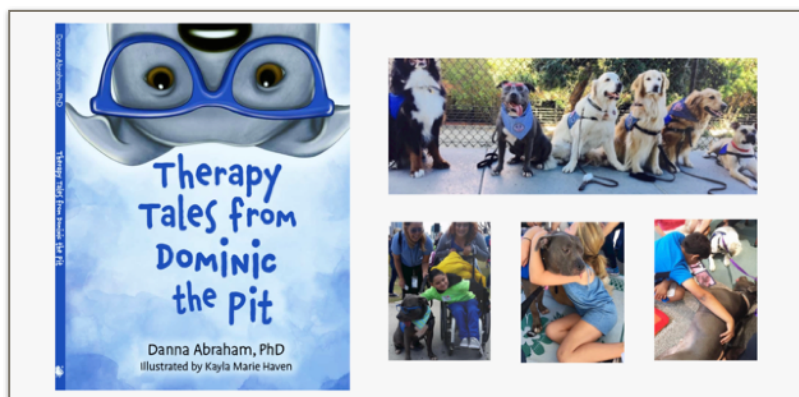


## Therapy Tails, ctd.

Told through Dominic's voice, the book narrates his path to becoming a therapy dog and the challenges he faced along the way. His story reminds the world that sometimes adversity can be a powerful teacher.

To me, Dominic is my greatest love story. His velveteen face would melt any trouble away; he only happened to be wearing a pitbull outfit.

Together, we shared unforgettable moments, and through him, I grew into the person I was hoping to be. In 2024, at 16 years old, Dominic passed away as a beloved senior dog. He had love, he had joy, he had companionship, he had safety, he had life, and I was the lucky one to have him for 11 years on earth. 🐾



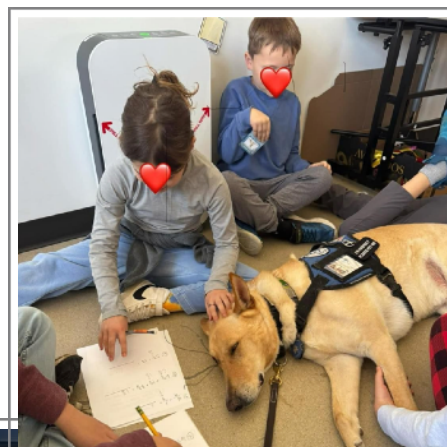
## Bringing Comfort After the Eaton Fire 🔥

Los Angeles, CA – On March 10th, 2025, several Love on a Leash® volunteers from multiple chapters attended a very special visit to support some of the youngest victims of the recent Los Angeles fires. The effort was organized by the San Diego North County Chapter and brought together volunteers from across the region.

The group traveled 125 miles north to Altadena, where they visited neighborhoods impacted by the fires and spent meaningful time with Saint Mark's Elementary School students who had lost both their homes and their school. These students are now attending a nearby school where they have had to quickly adapt to a new environment amidst significant emotional upheaval.

The therapy pets brought comfort, smiles, and a much-needed sense of peace to the students and staff. In such a difficult time, the presence of a gentle furry friend made a lasting difference.

A local news outlet featured the visit in a recent story – [\[click here to view the coverage\]](#).





# The Heartwarming Impact of Festus: Bringing Comfort and Joy to Hopkins Court Residents

Brashear, TX – Michele Baird and her therapy cat, Hephaestus, have been spreading joy and comfort at Hopkins Court for about a year. What started as a certification process with her mentor, Menzie Chase, has blossomed into a weekly visit that Michele and "Festus" continue to enjoy. Even after a seven-month

few words with the grieving family, offering comfort and connection in a deeply emotional moment. It was a beautiful reminder of the power of pet therapy to bring joy even in difficult times.

In another visit, Michele had been visiting a couple where the wife was living with Alzheimer's. The couple had a small white dog, and Festus and the dog would often have a little

sniffing session. On one visit, the wife enjoyed having Festus on her lap and petting him. Unfortunately, the following week, the wife passed away, but her husband later told Michele how much the visits had meant to both of them and how much comfort they had brought his wife during her final months.

Michele, a retired registered nurse, is deeply moved by the impact these visits have on the residents. Festus, a Maine Coon with a past of his own, was adopted after a farm accident left him with a disability. He spent months recovering at a veterinary clinic before Michele took him in as her companion. Together, they traveled

to many states during her years as a travel nurse, and now, Festus brings others joy through pet therapy.

What's truly special about Festus is how much he enjoys his role as a therapy cat. When Michele gets his stroller ready and puts on his "outfit," Festus knows exactly what's happening. He enjoys riding in his stroller and has a gentle, loving presence that lights up the room wherever they go. His calming presence, combined with his adorable outfit, helps make each visit a positive experience for residents at Hopkins Court.

Michele and Festus are now expanding their visits to skilled nursing facilities, eager to continue bringing comfort to more people. Through their work, they've seen firsthand the positive impact therapy animals can have on people's lives, offering companionship, joy, and emotional support in ways that only a pet can.



hiatus to care for her mother in Kansas, Michele was eager to return to Hopkins Court and resume bringing comfort to the residents.

One of the most memorable moments from their visits happened recently when Michele and Festus were invited to visit a room where a gentleman was actively dying. The family was gathered, and Michele entered with Festus in his stroller. When the gentleman's young granddaughter saw the dressed-up cat, her eyes lit up, and for a brief moment, her joy and excitement filled the room. Michele shared a



# Advanced Therapy Degree recipients (since our last issue)

Advanced Therapy Degrees (ThD) from Love on a Leash® are available to teams once they become certified teams. There are a variety of specialty fields depending on where your team enjoys volunteering most. Advanced Degrees showcase dedication and teamwork; this is a joint effort between you and your pet. If you are interested in learning more about how to earn this award, please log into your [Member Account](#) and navigate to Helpful Documents.



*Congratulations!*

ThD (ht)

**Hospital Therapy**



**Molly (NC) - May '25**



**Neoma (WA)**  
1. c:rp (Mar '25)  
2. e:sv (Mar '25)



**Bella (WA)**  
1. e:sv (Aug '23)  
2. ht (May '25)

**2 Degrees**

**3 Degrees**



**Bärli (WA)**  
1. e:sv (Jan '24)  
2. hcv (Apr '24)  
3. cr (Mar '25)



**Lincoln (KS)**  
1. c:rp (Dec '23)  
2. e:sv (Sep '24)  
3. tcs:sr (May '25)



**Comet (CA)**  
1. c:rp (Dec '23) 3. e:sv (Jun '24)  
2. ht (Dec '23). 4. jv (Feb '25)

*\*Unless indicated otherwise, all pets are active as of this publication; dates indicate when degree was earned.*





# Sandi Stewart Therapy Pet Recognition

Sandi Stewart Therapy Pet Recognition patches from Love on a Leash® are available to teams once they become certified. Sandi Stewart served as a Love on a Leash® Board member, and ultimately penned documentation about therapy work with rabbits. Sandi left a lasting legacy with a generous bequest to Love on a Leash®. In 2022, we proudly introduced this program and these patches in her honor, recognizing our pets' selfless service bringing love and comfort to those in need in our communities. To learn more about how to earn this award, please log into your [Member Account](#) and navigate to Helpful Documents.



**Dale & Bella (WA)**



**Chevy & Anastasia (ME)**



**Jake & Lynda (KS)**



**Leah & Lincoln (KS)**



**Neoma & Darcy (WA)**



**Wendy & Jeff (WA)**

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*Congratulations!*

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[www.loveonaleash.org](http://www.loveonaleash.org)  
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# *Till We Meet Again...*

As we go through the natural ebb and flow of life, we must inevitably say goodbye to some of our dearest friends. While it's hard to part with them, we take comfort in celebrating the wonderful life they led. We are so grateful for the joy they brought into our lives and for the way they shared their lively spirit with everyone around them. They will always be remembered fondly and missed dearly. Honoring the memory of those since our Fall 2024 newsletter. **Years indicate service with Love on a Leash®.**

**Archie** (Golden Lab) 2023-2025 (Thousand Oaks, CA)

**Bailey** (Irish Setter) 2023-2025 (La Jolla, CA)

**Bailey** (Great Pyrenees) 2019-2024 (Ramona, CA)

**Barkley** (Golden Retriever) 2019-2025 (Rockwall, TX)

**Bella** (Golden Retriever) 2023-2025 (San Diego, CA)

**Bentley** (Golden Retriever) 2022-2025 (Clarksville, VA)

**Betty Hall** (member) 2021-2025 (Royse City, TX)

**Biggie** (English Bulldog) 2017-2025 (Coronado, CA)

**Brooke** (Labrador Retriever Mix), 2024-2025 (Chester, IL)

**Carla** (English Cream Golden) 2022-2025 (Walla Walla, WA)

**Cholula** (Golden Retriever) 2015-2025 (Alpine, CA)

**Cool Hand Luke** (Boxer) 2022-2025 (San Diego, CA)

**Doratea** (Whippet) 2019-2025 (Wichita, KS)

**Ellie** (Shetland Sheepdog) 2023-2025 (Sun Valley, CA)

**Ezra** (Great Dane) 2022-2024 (Mountain Home, ID)

**Fenway** (Mini Schnauzer) 2013-2024 (Gloucester, NC)

**Highway** (German Shepherd) 2016-2024 (Lexington, KY)

**Huck** (Great Dane) 2024 (Lexington, KY)

**Isis** (Sheltie) 2013-2024 (Walla Walla, WA)

**Jimmie Sue** (Grand Basset GV) 2021-2024 (Lexington, KY)

**Jocko** (Standard Poodle) 2014-2025 (Farmington, NY)

**Jocy** (Labrador Retriever) 2024-2025 (Cardiff by the Sea, CA)

**Judith Pittman** (member) Dec 2024-Feb 2025 (Nancy, KY)

**Kali** (Pomeranian) 2015-2025 (Knoxville, TN)

**Kasa** (Great Pyrenees) 2019-2025 (Fayetteville, NC)

**Katie Marie** (Borador) 2014-2024 (Ballwin, MO)

**Kona** (Portuguese Water Dog) 2018-2025 (Ventura, CA)

**Lady Jasmine** (Std Poodle) 2020-2025 (Arkansas City, KS)

**Lilly** (Cavanese) 2014-2024 (Collegeville, PA)

**Lily Lou** (All American Dog) 2011-2025 (Fenton, MO)

**Lucy** (Beagle) 2018-2024 (Palmyra, VA)

**Maggie Mae** (Mixed) 2017-2025 (Lexington, KY)

**Mia** (Sheprador) 2023-2025 (Solana Beach, CA)

**Michael Sutton** (member) 2021-2024 (Mandeville, LA)

**Onyx** (Mini Poodle) 2010-2024 (Tulsa, OK)

**Pepe** (Welsh Corgi) 2015-2024 (Cathedral City, CA)

**Petal** (Golden Retriever) 2018-2024 (Elkhorn, NE)

**Raphael** (Australian Shepherd) 2013-2024 (Greenfield, IN)

**Rolly Jo** (Standard Poodle) 2019-2025 (Greenup, KY)

**Rowdy Rue** (Chihuahua Mix) 2014-2025 (Royse City, TX)

**Scott Grammer** (member) 2018-2025 (Lansing, MI)

**Snickers** (Australian Shepherd) 2023-2025 (Tupelo, MS)

**Tuff** (Australian Shepherd) 2023-2025 (Arnold, MO)

**Winston** (English Bulldog) 2015-2024 (Cumming, GA)

**Zeus** (German Shepherd), 2023-2025 (Raleigh, NC)





## *Paws and Reflect: Celebrating Our Retirees*

As we celebrate the joy and connection our therapy volunteers bring, we also want to give a warm shoutout to those who have recently hung up their leashes (and lanyards)! The following pets and their beloved humans have officially retired from Love on a Leash® – whether it's time for extra naps, more couch snuggles, or simply new adventures, we're sending them off with love and gratitude for all the smiles they've shared. **Years indicate service with Love on a Leash®.**

**Abby** (Blue Heeler Terrier Mix) 2018-2025 (Asheville, NC)  
**Angelica** (Labrador Retriever) 2017-2025 (Ventura, CA)  
**Annie** (Border Collie) 2017-2025 (Liberty, KY)  
**Aye'la** (Golden Retriever) 2015-2025 (Santa Barbara, CA)  
**Baby Jon** (Chihuahua) 2015-2024 (La Jolla, CA)  
**Bailey** (Golden Retriever) 2023-2025 (Benton, KS)  
**Benji** (Labrador Retriever) 2023-2025 (Mesa, AZ)  
**Blakely James** (Golden Ret.) 2015-2025 (Holly Ridge, NC)  
**Brinkley** (Golden Lab) 2017-2025 (El Cajon, CA)  
**Bud** (Labrador Retriever) 2019-2025 (Charlottesville, VA)  
**Cindy Wijma** (member) 2018-2024 (San Diego, CA)  
**Cooper** (Shih Tzu Mix) 2020-2025 (Rancho Santa Fe, CA)  
**Easy Pickins** (Shih Tzu) 2013-2024 (Colfax, CA)  
**Gracie** (Mixed breed) 2024-2025 (Earlsville, VA)  
**Gypsy Blue Belle** (Holland Lop Rabbit) 2023-2025 (Royse City, TX)  
**Hunter** (Shih Tzu) 2024-2025 (Southwick, MA)  
**Islay** (Doxiepoo) 2017-2025 (San Diego, CA)  
**Jack** (Cairn/Welsh Terrier Mix) 2012-2025 (Amboy, IN)  
**Javy** (Chihuahua Mix) 2022-2025 (Wadsworth, IL)  
**Kallie** (Golden Retriever) 2016-2024 (Papillion, NE)  
**KonaCoconut** (Mini Schnauzer) 2015-2025 (Santee, CA)  
**Lexie** (German Shepherd) 2020-2025 (Yaphank, NY)  
**Logan** (Golden Retriever) 2016-2025 (Leo, IN)

**Mia** (Mini Aussiedoodle) 2022-2025 (Rose Hill, KS)  
**Mia** (Golden Retriever) 2023-2025 (Poway, CA)  
**Misty** (Italian Greyhound) 2018-2025 (Westfield, IN)  
**Molly** (Sheltie) 2019-2025 (East Peoria, IL)  
**Nala** (West Highland White Terrier) 2018-2025 (Omaha, NE)  
**Oliver Henry** (Cav. King Charles Sp.) 2018-2024 (Greenfield, IN)  
**Penny** (Golden Retriever) 2023-2024 (Omaha, NE)  
**Phoebe** (Labrador Retriever) 2020-2024 (Charlottesville, VA)  
**Raider** (Goldendoodle) 2017-2024 (Bentonville, AR)  
**Ruby** (Labrador Retriever) 2019-2025 (Claremont, CA)  
**Ruby** (Chipin) 2020-2024 (Omaha, NE)  
**Rusty** (Cav. King Charles Sp.) 2021-2025 (Saint Louis, MO)  
**Rusty** (Mini Bernedoodle) Sep-Nov 2024 (Omaha, NE)  
**Sally** (Australian Shepherd) 2021-2024 (Mulvane, KS)  
**Samson** (Goldendoodle) 2024-2025 (Thousand Oaks, CA)  
**Simon** (Mini Schnauzer) 2020-2025 (Tupelo, MS)  
**Sybil Glinda** (Staffsky) 2023-2024 (Omaha, NE)  
**Sydney** (Yorkie) 2016-2025 (Poway, CA)  
**Taffy** (Maltipoo) 2009-2025 (Thousand Oaks, CA)  
**Takeshi** (Aussiedor) 2023-2024 (Omaha, NE)  
**Tobee** (Swiss Shepherd) 2011-2025 (Oxnard, CA)  
**Zoey** (Havamalt) 2015-2025 (Rougemon, NC)

You'll

be

really

missed!







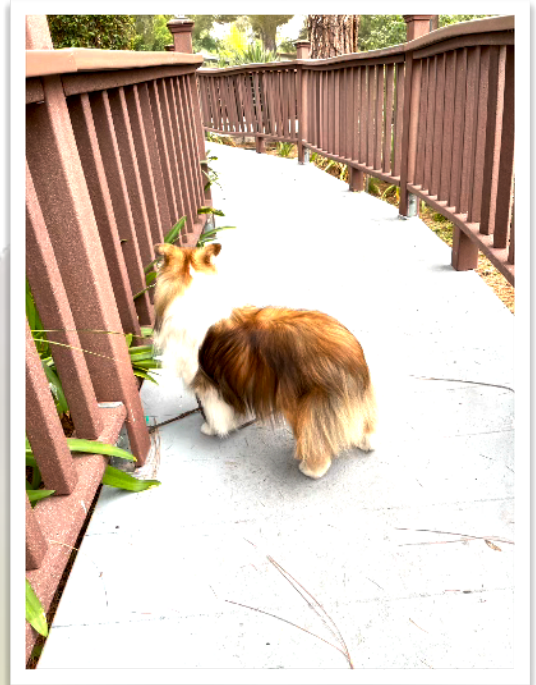
## Honoring Ellie – A Life Full of Love and Adventure 🌈

Ellie & Karen Otani volunteered with the Angeles Valley Foothills Chapter

Sun Valley, CA – **Ellie** made her journey over the Rainbow Bridge on January 5, 2025, at the remarkable age of 15.4 years. She lived a life filled with adventure, accomplishments, and unwavering devotion to those around her.

Ellie's journey began in the world of obedience and rally, where she excelled in competition. But her talents extended far beyond the show ring – she was even invited to appear on *The People's Court* and *Hot Bench*, and made a cameo on the TV series *Winning Time*.

Though retired, Ellie was called to pet therapy at the age of 13 to step in for her brother **Wes** and offer her services as a therapy dog. Though only certified for two short years, she brought comfort and joy to the residents at the Motion Picture & Television Fund (MPTF) retirement facility, where she was adored by those in the entertainment industry who had dedicated their lives to storytelling.



A true treasure, Ellie left her mark not only through her many achievements but also in the hearts of those she met. She was more than just a talented competitor, therapy dog, and TV star – she was a beloved companion who shared her love and kindness wherever she went.

### Ellie's Legacy

SUNSET COSMO GIRL BN, GN, CDX, RE, TOP DOG TEAM MEMBER 2014 & 2015; CGC ADVANCED; TRICK DOG-N; AKC & LOVE ON A LEASH® THERAPY DOG; TV ACTOR.

(9/13/2009 - 1/5/2025)

Ellie's memory will live on in the lives she touched, the comfort she provided, and the love she shared. Rest well, beautiful girl – you were truly one of a kind. 💙



# In Gratitude & Remembrance



**Tommy Dickey 1945 † 2025** – Angeles Valley Foothill Chapter

Oak View, CA – **Tommy Dickey** was certified as a Love on a Leash® pet therapy team with three Great Pyrenees pups over 12 years – **Teddy, Linkin, and Summer** between 2012-2024.



More than a dedicated dog trainer and therapy dog handler – he was a mentor, a friend, an author (**Ted E. Bear and Friends**), and an inspiration to so many in the dog community. His kindness, encouragement, and unwavering belief in the potential of both dogs and their handlers left a lasting impact on everyone who had the privilege of knowing him.

## A Mentor and Friend – Kerstin Ullman

"Tommy and I met while training our dogs for rally. He was one of the kindest people I ever met. I had a Rottweiler at the time, and we would run into each other at rally trials. Tommy once suggested that I should get my dog, Kona, certified for therapy work. I thought he was joking and said, 'People are terrified of Rottweilers.' But he insisted, and Kona passed with flying colors.

*Sometimes we must say goodbye to handlers that have left an indelible mark in our local communities. Their untimely loss reverberates deeply and they are greatly missed. "Goodbyes are not forever, Goodbyes are not the end. They simply mean I'll miss you, Until we meet again."*

I am so thankful for his encouragement to trust in my dog's abilities. We stayed in touch through messages, and he always kept me updated on whatever project he was involved with. He will be greatly missed by many."

## A Passionate Advocate for Pet Therapy

– Karen Otani

"I was so sorry to hear of Tommy's passing. We didn't visit the same venues, but I do remember Tommy and his gentle giant Great Pyrenees. They came to my dog club, Pasanita Dog Obedience, and gave the most interesting presentation.

He went into great detail about the Love on a Leash® organization and how rewarding the experience had been. He was a great motivational speaker, and at the close of the talk, three members from the club decided to go forth and get their dogs certified.

Never enough beautiful words to describe Tommy. May he rest in peace."

