



**Furry
Friends**

Pet
Assisted
Therapy
Services

Spring 2017



Short Paws

The Official Newsletter of Furry Friends P.A.T.S.

Note from the President

Dear friends, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new volunteers to our organization. Welcome New Furry Friends Members!! This is a very exciting time for our organization, your organization, as we are growing by leaps and bounds. Consequently, we have hundreds of furry friends licking loneliness to individuals during monthly visits to various sites throughout the area. As a new volunteer, you will have so many stories and experiences to share with your family and friends. I have so many wonderful memories with Furry Friends that fill many evenings of pleasant conversation. As President, I am excited that you will be extending kindness, love, and compassion to the people you meet during your visits.

As your President, it is important for me to meet and become acquainted with everyone. Therefore, I have dedicated the year to meeting everyone in our organization. Starting in March through December I will be making visits to all of our teams. I am excited to meet you and your furry friend and witness and hear about your experiences.

I would also like to inform the new volunteers of our fundraising events this year. We are currently planning on having two of them and expect them to be very fun affairs. We are planning a fundraiser in June. We will send details closer to the date. Then in September we are having our First Annual Gala. I hope to see you at these events.

Before closing, I would like to tell you a little bit about myself. Professionally, I am a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner and am dedicated to our children and families in our community and throughout the world. I have a Masters Degree from UCLA and spent six years at the Stanford Packard Children's Hospital. I currently volunteer with a nonprofit to provide medical care to children throughout the world. I have been involved with Furry Friends for four and a half years with Trinidad, my faithful thirteen year old Chihuahua. 'Trini' as she is called, has been to many senior centers and a Reading Buddy as well. In May 2013 I joined the Furry Friends board of directors and was elected President in January 2016. I welcome meeting all of you and assisting you on your path to bringing love and joy to the community through our hard efforts and, of course, our furry friends. Please contact me with any and all questions.

Sincerely,
Karen Davis-Garber

Volunteer Milestones

15 Years

Anne Tiry
Judy Lipp

10 Years

Carol Gessell-Rossi
Sandi Diamond
Janice Chalfant
Teri Shipe
Tom Shipe



Furry Friends
Pet Assisted Therapy Services

Our mission is to consistently facilitate delivery of the love and affection of our volunteers and their pets. We enhance the lives and touch the hearts of people with special needs.

Board of Directors

President
Karen Davis

Vice President
Joan Peterson

Secretary
Kat Hsueh

Treasurer
Randee McQueen

Directors
Rhonda Hardy
Anne Tiry
Patty Guthrie

Administrator
Loree McQueen



Pets that have earned their wings

*Jake Tiry
Gordo Carr*

George Levich



Welcome our new Reading Buddy evaluators, Ella, Eddie and Zac who are hanging out with Desi from the Los Altos Reading Buddies team.



Do we have your correct E-mail Address?

If in DOUBT....

Send an email with your name and current e-mail address to admin@furryfriends.org

These Los Altos Library Reading Buddies are all ears

reprinted from the Los Altos Town Crier

<https://www.losaltosonline.com/news/sections/community/177-features/54618>

Published: 01 February 2017 Written by Megan V. Winslow - Staff Writer/meganw@latc.com

Carter's preferred snack is freeze-dried liver, "Clifford the Big Red Dog" is his favorite book and eating is featured prominently on his list of daily activities. Torrey likes bananas, "Henry and Mudge" stories and dressing up. Desi's jam is bacon, "Madeline Finn and the Library Dog" and napping in the sunshine.

As profiled on their respective promotional bookmarks, each four-legged Reading Buddies participant boasts a distinct personality. But it's the canines' ability to listen without interrupting that consistently attracts the program's two-legged participants – struggling readers who gain confidence by reading aloud to therapy animals. Saturday marked the post-holiday return of the free monthly drop-in sessions at the Los Altos main library.

"It is a wonderful program because all the volunteers, they bring their dogs," said Jean Nei, acting children's library supervisor at the main branch. "The children, especially the young readers, love to come to the library to read to the dogs."

Here's how it works: Children are paired with a volunteer and read aloud to that volunteer's trained therapy pet. No one corrects pronunciation or becomes impatient awaiting the completion of a sentence. Some pets even cock their heads as if following the storyline.

The program is a popular Los Altos Library offering, drawing approximately 10-15

readers each month, Nei said. Some of the young participants don't own pets, and the opportunity to read to a friendly furry ear is a novelty.

FURRY FRIENDS

Certified Animal Behaviorist Julie Bond co-founded Reading Buddies in 2009 with Patty Guthrie, past vice president of Furry Friends Pet Assisted Therapy Services. The San Jose-based organization dispatches volunteers and their pets to libraries, retirement homes and hospitals, as well as to high school and college campuses during exam times. Furry Friends pays monthly visits to more than 60 facilities throughout Santa Clara, San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties, including Lucile Packard Children's Hospital Stanford, The Forum Senior Living Retirement Home and De Anza College. While dogs and cats are the most common therapy animals, rabbits, guinea pigs, miniature horses and even llamas have put in appearances as well. All human and animal volunteers are evaluated and trained.

Three of Bond's own dogs – all collies – have participated in Reading Buddies; Desi, a 6-year-old male Rough Collie, is her latest program companion. His claim to fame is actually his roommate Ozzie, a direct descendant of Lassie from the classic television series, according to his bookmark.

The effects of Reading Buddies' low-stress environment are evident during follow-up

sessions and through reports from students' schools, Bond said.

"This increases their fluency, and it increases their confidence," she said. "It helps them speak up in class."

Volunteer Reading Buddies publicist Maddie Elkin, 14, learned about the program a few years ago when she assisted with ushering participants from the library lobby to their assigned dog or cat within the Orchard Room. Afterward, she listened as the children read.

"I remember they started out really slowly," the Egan Junior High School eighth-grader said. "I think they expected the owners of the pets to

correct them if they made a mistake, but they didn't. In fact, one child had a question and the volunteer said, 'Ask the dog.'"

Elkin created Carter, Desi and Torrey's whimsical bookmarks to reach new readers and enthrall existing ones. She distributed the first batch during Reading Buddies' December session, and they became de facto trading cards.

"One little girl was so happy, she was jumping up and down," Maddie said.

Reading Buddies meets 2:30 p.m. the fourth Saturday of each month at the Los Altos main library, 13 S. San Antonio Road. For more information, visit furryfriends.org.

Just a reminder...

When we visit a Furry Friends site we are visiting with the elderly, sick folks, kids in crisis and others. Furry Friends gives them a little time to be absorbed in something other than the things in their lives that aren't so terrific, such as an illness, and they can forget about those things while we are there. It's truly a privilege that we are able to provide this service with our wonderful pets during what may be a difficult time for those we are visiting.

During our visits, we need to refrain from asking any questions relating to their illnesses or life situations. Not only does this remind them of something they would like to get away from for a few minutes, but it is truly none of our business. Of course, some will offer information about what is going on in their lives, and we can/should listen and let them talk. But as soon as the opportunity arises, a good plan is to redirect the conversation to something else, such as asking if they have any pets. Likewise, we should not be volunteering personal information about ourselves or our families. If asked a question, respond as broadly/generically as possible and, again, redirect the conversation.

Thank you for observing the boundaries!

Critter Doctor

JULIE C. BOND, M.S., ANIMAL BEHAVIORIST



Q My mom and I have been long time Furry Friends members and we are on our 4th and 5th dogs in the program! We have a puppy that we want to add to the program now as well. He is 9 months old and we were going to sign him up for class, but we noticed that he can't take the etiquette class until he is a year old. Does that mean that even as current volunteers, we cannot have him evaluated and start visits until he's over a year of age? He is such a sweet boy and we can't wait for you to meet him!

R in Cupertino

A That is true. We had to put in place some rules with regard to age of pets starting our program. Given that puppy and kitten behavior can and does change with maturation, we felt it best to ask that dogs and cats be a year of age at or before scheduling to attend the etiquette class for evaluation. We have had a few volunteers over the years sign up for class with puppies as young as 4 months, for example. Not only are puppies this young not fully vaccinated, it is hard for me to predict what their behavior will be like when they are adults. It is certainly the case that our pets' behavior can change after a year of age, but my hope with these age restrictions is that we will have the best possible chance of determining a pet's potential in our program. Volunteers looking for the specifics with regard to the age restrictions for different animal species in our program can see details on the website. I will look forward to meeting your new dog in a few months!

Q I just attended my visit and we have a new dog on our team who hasn't been fixed. I thought all of our animals had to be fixed in order to participate in Furry Friends. Am I wrong?

J in San Jose

A We have never required that animals be spayed or neutered in order to participate in our program. In fact, we have had show dogs doing visits over the years when they aren't competing; dogs shown in confirmation must be intact. We simply ask that any female dogs in season not attend their visits as that could create issues for other dogs on those same visits. As always, a team captain has the authority to pass on having a

volunteer with an intact/unfixed animal join their team if they feel strongly that the animal poses a distraction or risk for the team. If you have any concerns about the new animal on your team, check in with your team captain. If this dog didn't have any issues with the other animals on your team and vice versa, then this new dog may be an asset and not something to be overly concerned about.

Q When I attended class two years ago, you told us that we aren't supposed to give our dogs treats on visits. You even said we should discourage others on our visits from giving them treats! I have been doing that as I thought it seemed like a great idea too. However, yesterday on my visit, I saw one of my team members giving her dog treats. I said something to her about how we aren't supposed to use treats on our visits...I was nice about it even! She got kind of nasty with me and said she was training her dog not to look at other dogs on the visits so he stays calm and that she can use treats for training. Was I wrong to say something?

L in Morgan Hill

A You were not wrong to say something and I so appreciate you having the courage to say something to your teammate. Treats are not to be used on ANY of our visits. If someone is working on training with their dog, that is great, but they should not be working on that training during their visits per se. That is, they can be working on keeping their animal's focus on the job at hand or on a particular behavior like gentle head placement on a patient's lap, for example. However, they cannot use treats to reinforce those behaviors or to distract/interrupt their pet's behavior. Please let your team captain know if you have not already done so. If need be, I can speak with this volunteer as well.

Q I just ordered a bunch of super-cute seasonal leashes for my dog. There is an Easter one, one for Halloween, one for Christmas, and even one for Valentine's Day! When I told my team captain, however, she said I couldn't use the leashes because they aren't purple like the one you gave me in class. I was going to use these seasonal leashes for fun since my dog will not wear a costume, or bunny ears, or any cute stuff; he freezes if I try to put a bandanna on him - Will I be able to use the leashes I bought?

C in Los Altos

A Of course you can use those cute leashes you bought! All we ask is that you use your purple leash for the visits other times when you don't have a seasonal one. Costumes, bandannas, fun collars, and seasonal leashes are absolutely appropriate for use on your visits as long as your pet enjoys them too. They are conversation starters/ice breakers when talking to patients and residents at the facilities we visit. Be sure and send pictures in for use in a future newsletter!



Few things in life are as sweet as being with loved ones on Valentine's Day.

This handmade valentine is a gesture of thanks from a family staying at our House and we are delighted to share it with you. Your friendship makes an incredible impact on our efforts to keep families close in times of need and we sincerely appreciate your support.

From the bottom of our hearts, we wish you a happy Valentine's Day!

Lucas Jeff Cynthia Bri Ann
 Ronald McDonald House at Stanford *Ray*