



**Furry
Friends**
Pet
Assisted
Therapy
Services

Summer 2020



Short Paws

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

Staying cool indoors



Above: Sagee and Emburr McQueen on a Reading Buddies Zoom

To see more photos, please check out our SmugMug photo album at
<https://patsfurryfriends.smugmug.com/>

Please feel free to submit photos to info@furryfriends.org



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.

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ANIMAL BEHAVIORIST

Julie Bond

When sending in vaccine records for your pet, please let us know your pet's last name!

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A letter from your President



All our lives have changed. We've been missing out on pet therapy visits and feeling the stress that comes with uncertainty.

Sometime in the future, restrictions will ease, and we will gradually restart pet therapy visits. At this point, we don't know when that will be. The visits will inevitably include specific necessary changes. Facilities will upgrade the scope of their mandated hygienic and safety measures for everyone. The Furry Friends' board will be communicating status and changes through this newsletter, emails, and our website.

For new free classes, read Julie's article in this newsletter. Also, please read the article by Anne Tiry about a Zoom Reading Buddies trial. In the meantime, give your furry friends extra love; they miss their pet therapy visits, too.

I wish everyone good health during this challenging time.

Joan



Who Can Attend Furry Friends Visits?

We are often asked if another family member, friend, or out-of-town visitor may attend your Furry Friends visit with you. Unfortunately, our insurance does not permit that. Only Furry Friends volunteers who are on our membership roster and who have attended the etiquette class may attend the visits. So please resist the impulse to bring anyone else with you on your visit.

Editor's Note

Kat Hsueh, Editor
& Mandy, Furry Friend



Happy Summer!

As vacation plans have been canceled and we are shifting to this new normal, what good things have happened during this time of sheltering in place? That's what I've been thinking about. A lot! I'm finally an Auntie because my brother and my sister-in-law gave birth to their daughter, my niece, a little over a month ago. Luckily, I was able to host a virtual baby shower and it was a lot of fun. The attendees created videos for a baby well-wishes video book and she will get to keep that and watch it as she is growing up. Things sure have changed!

An organization stays alive by adapting and adjusting to change. We are still not visiting on-site and instead are figuring out how we can host Reading Buddies virtually and still bring therapy and joy to those in need.

Many events such as Bark in the Park and the Captains' Dinner are canceled until next year.

If you haven't done so, please review **the updated Member Handbook and Captain's Guidelines**. Please read them so you are up to date! (Find them on our home page on furryfriends.org).

Now that veterinarian offices are accepting patients, remember to turn in your pet's proof of vaccination to renew his/her ID badge. Don't forget to submit your annual fecal test results or confirm that you are using a deworming product on your pet.

Take care and be safe!





Volunteers who have hit milestone Anniversaries!

We want to thank everyone for their wonderful support and for volunteering with Furry Friends for so many years! We appreciate your hard work and dedication. We would not have the wonderful organization we do without all of you amazing Volunteers!

**Please note, moving forward, we will be giving the 1st to 4th year anniversary pins to Captains at the annual Captains' Dinner to distribute to their team members. Multi-year hangers will be mailed directly.*

~1 Year~

Diane Tarquinio
Nancy Ditzler
Carol Lane
Deanna Mitchell
Jonelyn Weed
Bonnie Brown
Zachary Dovel
Bonnie Emerson
Michael Emerson
Fumi Maeda
Aloka Naskar
Kelly Clarke
Kathleen O'Donnell
Deborah Butler
Megan Butler
Sal Guardino
Terri Hoover
Faun Maddux
Jean-Luc Morano
Dick Swanson
Melissa Watrous

~2 Years~

Paula Cue
Gary Kawanami
Lynn Klein
Michelle Cook
Mitch Mariani
Yoshimi Munch
Carol O'Brien
Diane Rudy
Kassidy Tolbert
Tory Bers
Miriam Malone
Sonja Vaes

~3 Years~

Kate Lenox
Karen Oneto
Pete Trowbridge
Carol Laucella
Don Laucella
Janette Schoeppler
Sandy Martin
Clare Owen

~4 Years~

Barbara Portman
Jennifer Rose
Edith Sutterlin
Dorothy Parrish
Sandra Delvin

~5 Years~

Eugene Ludwico
Susan Powers
Suzanne Roberts
Evelyn Mazzanti
Carol Peters
Karen Yu

~10 Years~

Danielle Kim
Lillian Wong

Virtual Reading Buddies

by Anne Tiry

As you read in the president's letter, our Furry Friends world has changed significantly in these days of COVID-19, and we don't yet know when our visits will be able to resume.

In the meantime, we are working on being able to do Reading Buddies visits via Zoom. An organization similar to ours in the Washington, D.C. area is doing this, and they were very willing to talk with us and share their process.

Pets/handlers and children sign up for scheduled sessions via Sign-Up Genius. Session size is limited, in order to keep the mechanics manageable. In addition to the volunteers with their pets, two additional people are required to manage the meeting itself.

Initially everyone joins the main meeting, and the meeting host welcomes everyone and explains how the process will work. At the same time, another person (the "breakout boss") creates one breakout room per child and assigns a pet/handler and a child to each room. When that's ready to go, all participants are moved to their assigned breakout rooms. Children read to the dogs for 10-12 minutes, and then everyone is brought back to the main room.

The meeting host asks about the books that were read, etc. while the "breakout boss" moves each child to a different breakout room so they have an opportunity to read to a different pet. There is another 10-12 minute reading session, and then everyone comes back to the main room for a recap prior to the meeting's end.

Our small test run was successful, and thanks go out to Julie Bond, Kathy Harris, Loree McQueen, Randee McQueen, and Anne Tiry for helping with this, as well as our readers: Ely Garibay, Ella Heard, John Heard, and Aidan Heard.

Any volunteer and their pet will be able to participate in these Zoom Reading Buddies sessions; completion of a Reading Buddies class is not required. Your pet does, however, need to be able to lie quietly in front of your PC/laptop camera so they are visible to the reader.

If anyone is interested in helping out by being a host or breakout boss, please contact Anne Tiry, annemtiry@comcast.net.

We are still working out details, including how many additional hosts and breakout bosses we need, so stay tuned for details!

Here are some fun photos from our test session!



Left: Desi looking at the screen

*Below Left:
Eli Garibay read in Spanish to Sagee and Emburr*

*Below Right:
Paying close attention to the screen!*



The AKC sent us the note below--we hope you can help!

You can view the note online at:

<https://link.akc.org/view/5e83985eee45023fd77fa501buasu.17/4ef3b229>

Here is the link to the AKC PupPals Program:

<https://www.akc.org/public-education/akc-puppals-program>



AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB

Dear Furry Friends Pet Assisted Therapy Services,

The COVID-19 crisis has changed the way we live and interact with each other. It has also limited our interactions with loved ones who count on our visits and quality time. We want to assist them by bringing some joy and you can help!

The [AKC PupPals Program](#) provides people in need of uplifting with a video message from a canine friend. Anyone is eligible to receive a video, including people who are struggling with an illness, the illness/death of a loved one (human or pet), loneliness, or who are otherwise struggling through a difficult time.

Now, more than ever, we would like to bring joy to those who are directly affected by our current world pandemic.

AKC Education is seeking nominees to receive a video as well as videos of dogs to send to people in need of a PupPal.

[Learn More About Enrolling a Person or a Dog](#)

[Full directions on how to submit your video and a sample video are also available here.](#)

Critter Doctor

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



So many of you have reached out to me during shelter in place over the last couple of months to find out when we will be able to resume our pet therapy visits. Many of our volunteers have expressed concerns about having potentially COVID-19 infected people petting and touching their pets during visits. Lots of you have had concerns as well about potentially exposing the high risk populations we visit in the community including the elderly, infirmed, and immunocompromised, to our volunteers who may be asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19. I have tried to respond to each of your questions when you sent them my way, but now feel that addressing all of these concerns (and a few more!) can best be done here in our newsletter.

First off, please keep your pets up-to-date on all of their vaccinations, yearly health exams, fecal exams, etc. I realize that your vet visits look very different now as well with staff coming out to your vehicles to collect your pets, leaving you in the parking lot while your animal is cared for. Even still, these routine appointments are necessary to the health and well-being of our pets and a required part of participation in the Furry Friends organization. When you take your pets to the vet for these appointments, don't forget to have them complete the necessary paperwork for Furry Friends which can be found on our website in the members section. That paperwork can then be scanned and emailed to admin@furryfriends.org to keep your pets' records up-to-date.

With regard to our pets being carriers of COVID-19 or spreading the virus, here is the official statement from the AVMA, the American Veterinary Medical Association:

Infectious disease experts, as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), indicate there is currently no evidence to suggest that animals incidentally infected by humans, including pets, play a role in the spread of COVID-19. Human outbreaks are driven by person-to-person contact.

COVID-19 appears to be primarily transmitted by contact with an infected person's bodily secretions, such as saliva or mucus droplets in a cough or sneeze. It appears that COVID-19

can also be transmitted by touching a contaminated surface or object (i.e., a fomite) and then touching the mouth, nose, or possibly eyes, but this appears to be a secondary route. Smooth (non-porous) surfaces (e.g., countertops, doorknobs) transmit viruses better than porous materials (e.g., paper money, pet fur).

Because we have no confirmed examples of where viruses have been transmitted by contact with pet hair or skin, the use of alcohol or hydrogen peroxide containing cleaning agents, hand sanitizers, or sanitizing wipes to clean your pet's fur or paws in an effort to prevent contracting COVID-19 is not recommended and may be harmful.

Given these statements, it appears that while our pets could carry the virus on their fur, this is a highly unlikely form of transmission. Washing our hands before and after our visits, and reminding the facilities we visit to have their staff, patients, and residents do the same, would be the key.

So, given that our pets cannot transmit the virus to the people we visit, when can we resume our visits? Even if we have our volunteers wear masks, and have the people we visit wear masks as well, there is still a risk of transmission in the small, enclosed spaces where we most often conduct our visits. Because of this risk, all of the major pet assisted therapy organizations across the country have suspended visits for the time being. A few smaller groups have tried having their volunteers mask up and walk around the outside of facilities, where possible, so that patients and residents can see the pets and volunteers through the closed windows. While this might be possible and desirable by some of the facilities we visit, it unfortunately isn't feasible across the board for all of our visits. And for the special visits we conduct outdoors, there is still a concern about gathering that many people together, even if everyone is wearing masks. At this point in time, we need to adhere to the guidelines being set forth by the Governor of California and the individual counties where we conduct our pet therapy visits. When they deem it safe to resume our visits, we will do so.

The Furry Friends Board of Directors has diligently been trying to come up with a way for some therapy visits to be done remotely via Zoom (see the President's note and Anne Tiry's column in this newsletter). We have conducted one test run of a reading buddies type visit where children read to our pets over Zoom. We are hopeful that we can set up more of these Zoom reading buddies visits and have them available for all active Furry Friends members to participate in very soon. The up side of doing these visits over Zoom is that even pets who've not gone through the Reading Buddies class can still participate in the virtual reading program, as long as they can sit or lay quietly in front of your computer's camera.

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Another exciting new development is that our organization has received a grant that will cover the cost of continuing education classes for all of our volunteers! There will be two classes offered, one for volunteers who have not attended a class in the last 5 years, and one for volunteers who have attended classes more recently. There have been many changes our organization has faced with regard to human behavior on visits, and the behavior of our pets, and those are shared during our regular etiquette classes. Volunteers who have not attended a class in a long time are missing out on that important information. In addition, both of these new classes will address the latest information we will have with respect to pet therapy visits during COVID-19 and beyond. We had originally hoped to do these classes in person, but given current circumstances, they will now be offered online via Zoom. There will be several different days, times, etc. offered to accommodate all of our volunteers. We have some amazing “swag” planned for the volunteers completing these classes and that will be mailed out to participants following their participation in a class. Keep an eye on your email for further details on these classes and how to sign up.

Please feel free to continue to reach out to me with your questions. We are all in this together!

Pets that have crossed the rainbow bridge



Django King

Has your FF pet passed and you want to stay involved in Furry Friends?

If you are still wanting to do pet therapy but don't plan on training another animal or are in process of training, you may want to captain a visit without an animal.

Being a captain without a pet is really FUN! You still get to love all the pets, talk to the students and school/site staff about what we do, and help direct traffic and answer questions.

Please contact

admin@furryfriends.org