



Journal and Activities of PFH Canine-Assisted Therapy Teams
Volunteering in Napa, Sonoma, Solano and Marin Counties

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Recent Research Studies Confirm PFH Volunteer Teams' Experiences

Two recent studies have been making news in the medical and canine worlds, reaffirming that dogs are indeed good for people who are sick, lonely or isolated.

The first study appeared in the American Heart Association publications and was done by an MN, CCRN and a clinical nurse at the UCLA Medical Center in Los Angeles.

The canine visits lasted only 12 minutes, but results were clearly therapeutic for patients with some benefits lasting after the canine visitor departed.

The study determined what potential health benefits were

cont. on page 5

This study demonstrates that even a short-term exposure to dogs has beneficial physiological and psychosocial effects on patients who want it... Dogs are a great comfort. They make people happier, calmer and feel more loved. That is huge when you are scared and not feeling well.

—Kathie M. Cole, lead author, RN, MN, CCRN

To see the actual studies, go to www.americanheart.org/presenter.jhtml?identifier=3035300 for the Cole research paper. For Banks' work, see medicalnewstoday.com/medicalnews.php?category=37.

What's in this issue?

<i>Research Studies</i>	<i>pages 1 and 5</i>
<i>Volunteer Comments</i>	<i>page 2</i>
<i>News and Notes</i>	<i>pages 3 and 4</i>
<i>Roundtable Potluck</i>	<i>page 4</i>
<i>Appreciation Tea</i>	<i>page 4</i>
<i>Donation News</i>	<i>pages 6 and 7</i>

What our Canines Teach Us:

Notes from PFH Volunteer Teams

Each year, PFH volunteers must recertify, meaning that their canine is updated on all vaccinations, has a physical examination by its veterinarian, and, after eight years of age, is re-evaluated to verify its ability to work in demanding environments. There is also a questionnaire to which our volunteers respond and some of their comments are included here.

Q: What have you learned about your canine after working with him/her as a canine therapist?

- “The depth of her compassion. Although she’s ‘at work,’ she gives her all, endearing her to those we serve with her unconditional love.” Sharon Schaefer about Megan (NorthBay Hospital and David Grant)

- “He is so incredibly patient and accepting of everyone! And the fact that Jake makes so many patients and staff happy.” Jacquie Fitch about Jake (Napa State Hospital)

- “She knows it is a special ‘job’ as soon as I put on her vest. She feels she has a real purpose.” Joan Douma about Jorgee (Hospice of Napa Valley)

- “His incredible patience and gentle playfulness with the students. He makes everyone smile.” Joanne Yates about Sandy (Robert Louis Stevenson Middle School)

Q: What do you think has contributed most to making your visits positive?

- “Acceptance of therapy team by the staff; we are made to feel very welcome and everyone is so appreciative.” Elaine Fohr and Maya (Queen of the Valley Hospital)

- “I really enjoy the staff. They are so welcoming and tell us how much they enjoy the visits.” (Lisa Stewart and Bo (Queen of the Valley Hospital)

- “The patients seem to be very happy to see a dog.” Laura Erickson and Dylan (Kaiser Permanente - Santa Rosa)

- “Appreciation of patients, welcoming attitude of staff.” Linda Howard and Joey (Napa State Hospital)

- “The ability to move about freely and the love and acceptance of patients and staff for animals.” Maria Delmas and Luke (California Veterans Home)

These comments are a tribute to the canines that “give their all,” and to the staff and people our teams visit. PFH is grateful for the respect our volunteers receive and appreciation of the healing powers of our canines.

News and Notes on PFH Activities

ADVANTAGE® for Certified Canine Therapy Teams to be Donated by Bayer Animal Health

Bayer Animal Health has instituted a program for PFH canines for a supply of ADVANTAGE® or ADVANTIX® at no cost.

PFH will send out a postcard to those teams that are current with insurance and recertification and have sent in their monthly volunteer hours to Meir Horvitz (mihorvitz@comcast.net) over the last year.

As requested by Bayer, the program will be administered through Frontier Pet Clinic in Napa. In order to receive a free packet, PFH volunteers must bring in the postcard after making an appointment with the clinic. Contact number and directions will be included.

PFH is extremely grateful to Bayer Animal Health for their generosity and to Drs. Fallini, Haas and Hildebrand for their time commitment to overseeing the program.

PFH teams should receive their cards in early February. If our volunteers have questions, please contact either Meir Horvitz or Joanne Yates (shsirene77@earthlink.net).

Please note that only canines that are certified by PFH and that are active in providing therapy qualify for this incredibly generous offer from Bayer.

Get Your Fabulous Pooch on the PFH Web Site

Meir Horvitz and Cristiano D'Adamo have added a new gallery page to the PFH site for pictures of our therapy canines, on or off duty. If you would like to submit a photo, please email a jpeg copy to Meir at mihorvitz@comcast.net. If you have a photo that's not digital, Meir can scan it for posting. Send it to him at 3414 Glen Ellen, Fairfield, CA 94533.

Please remember that these photos should be only of your canine and not include patients, clients or students they visit—or even your family and friends—because of privacy issues. If you have a short story you'd like to include that explains the photo, email or send that to Meir as well.

PFH Chat Site to Ask Questions and Exchange Experiences

In response to requests from volunteers, Jennifer Golick has

cont. on page 4

More News and Notes about Paws Volunteers, Programs and Events

PFH Chat Room (from page 3) started a chat page through Yahoo.com. In order to access the site, individuals will need to open a Yahoo account (which is free to those who are not Yahoo subscribers).

If you would like to participate, and have a Yahoo account already, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/pawsforhealing>. If you don't have an account and would like directions and an invitation to join the site, please email info@pawsforhealing.org and in the subject line, write Attn: Jennifer.

Roundtable Potluck

Please mark your calendars for our second roundtable gathering on March 21 at the Community Education Center in Napa. The first potluck was a great success in Solano and our volunteers are looking forward

to another social gathering. If you would like to attend, please email or call Marilyn Horvitz (k9grandma@comcast.net) or 707-421-1398.

PFH will supply the basics: beverages, plasticware, paper plates and glasses. Bring a dish to share: salad, appetizer, main course, or side and a spouse, family members or friend. Dogs are also welcome but must be on leash and supervised. Small children must have a parent in charge at all times for their safety,

Appreciation Tea

Don't forget our annual Appreciation Tea on February 25 from 2 to 4 pm at the CEC. There will be lots of door prizes, awards and goodies as a way to say "thank you" to our volunteer teams. Invitations will arrive in early February and the Tea promises to be another enjoyable event. Hope to see you there!

All classes and trainings are held at the Community Education Center located at 1360 Menlo Avenue in Napa. For directions, please consult our website at www.pawsforhealing.org. A map and directions are also sent out with confirmation letters for those attending trainings.

Trainings are held five times a year; for applications please call our hotline at 707-258-3486, or download our forms from the PFH website: www.pawsforhealing.org. Email questions to our staff at info@pawsforhealing.org.

Studies verify positive benefits from the Human/Canine Connection

cont. from page 1

Why dogs really are good for us.

achieved by visiting dogs on 76 hospitalized heart failure patients. They were split into three groups, one receiving visits from a canine team, another receiving visits from humans, and the other having no visitors (“at-rest group”). Those who touched and interacted with dogs on their beds showed the following results:

- Anxiety scores dropped 24 percent (those scores dropped only 10 percent with human visitors and there was no drop for patients at rest.
- Stress hormones dropped 7 (canine visitor group) to 1 (human visitor) and rose in the at-rest group.
- Arterial and lung pressure dropped in the canine group and rose in the others; benefits continued after the canine left.

The second research project focused on the elderly in residential settings and surprised researcher William A Banks, MD and professor of geriatrics and of pharmacological and physiological sciences at Saint Louis University School of Medicine.

Residents who requested dog visits felt greater comfort and less loneliness when they could spend time alone with a dog rather than

with another human or even with a human and canine.

“It was a strange finding,” said Banks who is also a staff physician at Veterans Affairs Medical Center in St. Louis. “We had thought that the dog acts as a social lubricant and increases interaction between the residents.”

What Banks found was that residents had little personal time with a pooch when visited by a human or in a group activity. It was more important to the residents to have quality time with a pooch, and those who had one-on-one time with a dog experienced a much greater drop in loneliness after several weekly visits.

In nursing home situations, Banks realized that dogs or pets weren’t needed to enhance the social environment because the residents already lived, ate and played games or went to other social activities together. What they really needed was affection and a sense of being loved unconditionally.

The findings from both studies reaffirm the service our volunteer teams provide to hundreds of community members who need to know they are worthy of being loved.

Thank you for your generous contributions during November through December

PFH is honored to accept these donations made in the name of beloved family, friends and companion animals —

*In Honor of
Mary & Michael Dudley
❧ Glenn and Dolly Matteucci
*
In Honor of Chris Maudlin
❧ Linda and Steve Goldfarb
*
In Honor of Marilyn Horvitz
❧ Don and Joanne Yates
*
In Memory of Karen Umbenstock,
a wonderful friend and
fellow PFH volunteer.
❧ Thomas and Mary Lou Gracy
*
In Memory of Oliver “MRO”
The Wonder Dog –
16 ½ years of loyalty.
Col. Stanley L. Wellins*

*In Memory of Annie Horvitz.
❧ Tracey L. Wingerter, Joyce
Bristow, Clare B. LeBrun
*
In Memory of Sophie Baracosa
❧ Clare LeBrun, Sandy Yates
*
In Memory of Penny, my lovable
shopdog and best friend.
❧ Linda Allen
*
In Memory of IRIE: we always
love you. ❧ Jeff Popick
*
In Memory of Sham and Summer
Lewis ❧ Patricia Peterson
*
In Memory of Bud, Gram’s Little
Darling ❧ Florence Stegman*

If you want to make a contribution* to Paws for Healing to honor or in memory of a beloved friend, please provide us with the information that will enable us to acknowledge the person, family and companion animal. The enclosed envelope is for your convenience.

In Honor of _____ **or**

In Memory of _____

Send acknowledgement to: _____

** All donations are tax-deductible as allowed by law. PFH is a 501 (3) (c) non-profit corporation.*

All donors will be acknowledged with a letter as well as those families or individuals who are honored or remembered.

Donations can come in many forms

Rainbow Bridge

Paws for Healing is grateful to the many individuals who donate their time as well as to those who contribute financially. We want to acknowledge Roy Massen, owner of ARTech Digitizing in Geyserville who was extremely generous in helping with a special project.

For those of our readers unfamiliar with the Rainbow Bridge, it is a symbol for the place where our canine companions cross over into heaven. The idea comes from an anonymous poem in which our four-legged companions wait on the other side of the bridge for their humans.

There have been many artistic renderings of the bridge and we are lucky to have a volunteer who designed an embroidery pattern especially for Paws for Healing volunteers who have lost a canine companion. Roy digitized the pattern and donated most of his time and costs to PFH because of what our volunteers do. This design will be embroidered by our volunteer and sent to our volunteers who lose one of their beloved canine companions. Thank you, Roy, for helping with this work of love.

News Flash!

PFH was awarded a \$3000 grant from the Dey Community Fund

of Solano for the continuing work of our volunteer teams at David Grant Medical Center at Travis Air Force Base. The Board of Directors are very grateful for the ongoing support from Dey and their employees.

November and December Donors

Thank, friends, for your generosity and belief in our programs.

500+

🐾 Frontier Pet Clinic 🐾 Nikki Godfrey

200+

🐾 United Way of the Bay Area: Trent Vannieuwberg 🐾 Jeff Coyner

100+

🐾 Deborah and Howard Wheeler 🐾 Ms. Bridget Binko 🐾 Emil Maxton 🐾 Alan C. Boone 🐾 Donald Niemann 🐾 Diane Resetar Farmer

50+

🐾 Diane Brisbois Petersen 🐾 Robin and Karl Pintar

25+

🐾 Vasconi Drugs 🐾 Charles and Betty Rushton 🐾 Suzanne Pate 🐾 Jule Grant

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