

September 2023

# Dogs On Call, Inc.

## Letter From The President

Hello again everyone and a special hello to those who recently have joined Dogs on Call.

It has been a busy summer for Dogs on Call with evaluations, a handler class and hospitals restarting visits. In addition, UW Madison is back in session with plenty of visits planned for our partners. As you can imagine, we have more requests for visits than we can possibly fill which indicates how valued our visits are to the community.

A special event is on the horizon for 2024 – The 25th anniversary of the founding of Dogs on Call! We are starting to gather ideas on how best to celebrate this milestone and we would love to hear from you on how you would like to mark this occasion. Please email or chat with us at events with any ideas you might have. A 25th anniversary is not possible without your contributions, and we want to be sure to say thank you.

We are also looking for assistance with writing and applying for grants. As with most groups post COVID, our income has not kept pace with our expenses. As a nonprofit, our goal is to break even but we are a bit behind in that area. We have formed a committee that will write grant proposals and ask for donations. You can help by identifying businesses or organizations that we could approach for donations. Please contact Sally Greenwood at [SallyG@dogsoncall.org](mailto:SallyG@dogsoncall.org) with the organization names and any contacts you have there.

As always, please feel free to contact us with any questions or ideas that you may have. Dogs on Call is stronger when its members contribute ideas, and they are always welcomed.

Again, thank you for all that you and your pet partner do.

Karen Smith  
DOC Board President

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# Upcoming DOC Events

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## COMMUNITY EVENTS

### **Sunday, October 1, 2023**

Czar's Promise "Inspiring Hope" Walk (DOC Info Booth)

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Winnequah Park, Monona

artieb@dogsoncall.org

## UW CAMPUS VISITS

Watch for email with sign-up information for these and other campus visits.

### **Wednesday, October 18, 2023**

UW Campus/Steenbock Library  
6:30-8 p.m.

### **Thursday, December 14, 2023**

UW Campus/Study Day at the Chazen  
11:00-12:30 p.m.

### **Monday, December 18, 2023**

UW Campus/Helen C. White Library-Finals Week  
3:00-5:00 p.m.

### **Wednesday, April 17, 2024**

UW Campus/Steenbock Library  
6:30-8:00 p.m.

### **Friday, May 3, 2024**

UW Campus/School of Engineering  
Outdoor Event  
1:30-3:00 p.m.

### **Monday, May 6, 2024**

UW Campus/Helen C. White Library-Finals Week  
3:00-5:00 p.m.

## Good-bye, Charlotte

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A lot of members remember Liz & Charlotte. For our newer members, Liz and her wonderful French Bulldog Charlotte were long time members of DOC. Liz was a very active member with Charlotte, and her second therapy dog, Lovie, a Smooth Collie.

For many years, Liz coordinated our dorm visiting program where Charlotte was very popular and well known. Liz and her crew moved to Minneapolis to be closer to family.

We are sad to report that Charlotte passed away at 15 years old. Liz said, "It was hard letting my girl go, but it was time. She lived a good life and made a lot of people happy."

Charlotte and my Newfie, Sacajawea, were good friends. Charlotte used to cuddle up to Sach to get warm.

Artie



# Program Updates

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## HOSPITALS

Hospitals are still feeling the loss of teams after COVID restrictions. Most are back to pre-COVID visit status, allowing patient and staff visits.

-- **SSM St. Mary's** just transitioned from staff-only visits to patients and staff visits.

-- **UPH-Meriter** is continuing patient and staff visits in the Hospital and the Child & Adolescent Psych Hospital

-- No word from **UW Hospital & Clinics**.

-- **UW Health Rehabilitation Hospital** starting animal-assisted therapy sessions and dayroom visits for patients.

-- **Stoughton Hospital** has patient and staff visits in select units.

-- **VA Hospital** – Ed Lawson says, “We are back visiting the Community Living Center (CLC) surgery rehabilitation ward, working with the staff on therapy and comfort visits. We also visit the small hospice wing, as well as the PTSD ward. We have added visits during the week and night visits to the PTSD ward for group therapy. Sadly, we have had three teams lose their dog partners. Currently we have four teams that visit. I encourage anyone that wants to make a difference in the lives of veterans, their families and the VA Hospital staff to consider visiting the VA Hospital. Please contact me at [elawson24@charter.net](mailto:elawson24@charter.net) with any questions.”

All hospitals would like more teams to visit, but particularly St. Mary's, as they have just one DOC team visiting. Contact [karenp@dogsoncall.org](mailto:karenp@dogsoncall.org) for more info about getting started on these rewarding visits.

Karen P & Pete

## Read With Me Program

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The Read With Me program was a thriving program pre-COVID. With libraries not being able to have our teams in for reading visits with children for so long, the program has really taken a hit.

Some libraries are just not starting to look at trying to rebuild their programs, some have been working on it for a while and have been successful at it!

If you are interested in the Read With Me program, please email Laura at [LauraK@dogsoncall.org](mailto:LauraK@dogsoncall.org)

You must read through the Pet Partners Read With Me manual, have a meeting to discuss any questions you may have, and talk over different scenarios that can happen with children, then have a mentoring session before you are able to sign up to work in a school or a library as a Read With Me



## Heartfelt Advice From A DOC Member

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Hi, my name is Dana. For over 30 years I did pet therapy with 3 different dogs. My last one, Pierre, a miniature poodle, was a DOC pet therapy dog. Pierre did pet therapy with other organizations until around 2013. Then we joined DOC and continued doing pet therapy through them.

At the end of 2018, I had a stroke, lost a great deal of vision and my driver's license. Artie and her niece, Gina, gifted me a dog carrier so I could continue without a car, but it was not doable with my deficit, and that was the end of our pet therapy experience for me and Pierre.

In 2021, Pierre died at 18 years old ... a most wonderful, cute and happy dog. I was able months later to get another rescue, but not able to train him to be a safe pet therapy dog, nor could I be a safe trainer or therapist. It was really the end of pet therapy and my pet therapist career.

So, I just want to pass on a few things --

Pet therapy is one of the greatest gifts to give. The dog loves it, the therapy person enjoys it and, most of all, the receiver enjoys it.

As a stroke patient in rehab, we had pet therapy dogs visit and they were the happiest, most joyous moments of my entire experience. Seeing my dog was also wonderful. The visit of a dog is so joyful and loving.

As the giver, sometimes I was bored or preoccupied and would come to it at the moment, but never realized until I was the person being visited how absolutely wonderful it was and how good I felt. Giving that joy to someone, I realized, was one of the greatest gifts. Even if it wasn't immediately successful in the moment, there were definitely lasting effects that you all must embrace. To do good for someone is a great thing, but to offer a pet visit to someone compromised is a gift, a warm and touching very personal moment, and a lasting experience for all.

In Yiddish, and in the Jewish vernacular, we call it a "mitzvah," a great unselfish gift. I also want you to know as you do this great mitzvah, that it is something that should keep you in the moment. I had no idea how suddenly things could change for me and how much I miss the joy of being a pet therapy team. So this is really a reminder. What you do is profoundly rewarding to those you do it for, to the animals that get to share the love they have, and to you. You are able to give so much to someone who needs it and would not know how to ask for it, because they may not know what it is they want.

I just love having my rescue dog and that is my full time therapy. I encourage you all to enjoy and value the joy you give by sharing your animal with those that are just a minute short of having a loving animal in their lives. Thanks for doing it and enjoy being in that moment. It is so special to so many.



Pierre



## Member Profiles

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**Abbey & Finn**, a six-year-old Golden Retriever, became a family when the stars aligned. Abbey grew up with Golden Retrievers and always wanted one. But she knew a busy work schedule didn't lend itself to the responsibilities of dog ownership. Then, her job turned into a full-time remote position, and, by chance, a friend told her about Finn being rehomed by a breeder. (Finn is from Italy, was a show dog, and ended up with a breeder in Oregon.) The breeder was looking for a home where he would be around people – a win-win for Abbey & Finn.

They are a brand new team and plan to visit the UW campus, hospitals, and participate in the Read With Me program.

Some of Abbey's free time is taken up with a book club, hot yin yoga, going to state parks, walking with Finn and taking him to places that allow dogs. She looks for places with the most people for Finn to visit – Ace Hardware tops Finn's list lately!

**Toni** and her husband, Zack, adopted **Skip**, a German Shepherd, from a local rescue when he was one year old. They knew that as a working dog, Skip would need a job, so they spent lots of time on training and basic obedience.

A DOC member since 2022, four-year-old Skip visits UPH-Meriter Hospital, Meriter's Child & Adolescent Psych Hospital, and the VA Hospital. Toni says Skip loves all people, but his favorite visits are with children.

Skip's family also includes Saga, a seven-year-old tuxedo cat, and Clyde, an eight-year-old gray tiger cat.

Toni & Skip spend a lot of time outdoors -- hiking, fishing, and camping. In the winter, Toni is a volunteer ski patroller at Cascade Mountain; in the warmer months, she teaches Outdoor Emergency Care, CPR, and Stop the Bleed classes.



**DeAnn** got **Lyra**, a Golden Retriever who is now four years old, from a breeder in Mineral Point. They visit at UPH-Meriter Hospital and the VA Hospital.

DeAnn also is a volunteer nurse with the Red Cross, helping with deployments, and also with the Red Cross' Service to the Armed Forces. Lyra helps with that group, attending meet-and-greets during pre- and post-mobilization events. DeAnn & Lyra also have Animal-Assisted Crisis Response certification, related to DeAnn's time in California when she worked for the Sheriff's Department and trained search dogs – one for live/cadaver search and one for explosive detection.

Other than all her dog activities, DeAnn enjoys studying genealogy, hiking, traveling, playing piano and recorder, taking ballet lessons, and volunteering at the Overture Center.

## Member Profiles - Continued

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**Shelly** knew she wanted to do therapy dog work and a breeder in Kansas City chose **Bennie**, a Havanese, especially for Shelly. Bennie, now four years old, joins two other Havanese in Shelly's family – 1.5-year-old Theo and 10-year-old Gidget.

The team has visited various venues and events, but Shelly's passion is with the Read With Me program. As a two-time cancer survivor, she is also looking forward to helping others heal with visits to the UW Health Rehab Hospital.

Shelly's free time is spent walking, lifting weights, gardening, watching movies, and spending time with friends.

**Annette**, a retired nurse, is a partner with **Kaiser**, a nine-year-old Golden Retriever. Kaiser came from a breeder in Indiana.

These two have their goals set on visiting the VA Hospital and participating in the Read With Me program.

Annette creates pottery and plays tennis when time allows.



**Shannon** got **Anny** (now three years old) from a breeder in Menasha. Other four-legged members of the family are Arty, an eight-year-old tuxedo cat, and Hanzo, a seven-year-old tabby cat.

Visits for the team will now focus on the UW campus and they will soon get started with the Read With Me program.

Kids are a favorite of Anny's, including her new human baby brother. Spare time activities also involve Anny, as she tags along to Shannon's disc golf games and is a willing food taster for Shannon's cooking projects.

**Lindsey** and seven-year-old **Dixie**, a Pomeranian/Pekinese mix, are one of our newest teams. Something good did come out of COVID, as Lindsey adopted Dixie while quarantining with family in Illinois.

Dixie is the only pet that Lindsey owns and notes that Dixie probably prefers it that way.

Hospital visits and the Read With Me program are of specific interest for Lindsay, but she says visiting anywhere Dixie can bring comfort to people is fine with her.

Lindsey enjoys staying active with pickleball, hiking, yoga, cooking, reading, and enjoying live music.





## Member Profiles - Continued

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**Craig and Debby** are partners with **Flik**, a five-year-old Poodle-Springer mix. As a puppy, Flik locked eyes with their daughter and her son and they couldn't resist.

Both Craig and Debby have had many pets over the years, but Flik is their solo buddy now. They have no specific places in mind to visit, but they will experiment, to see where Flik fits in best.

Living on Lake Wisconsin means many of Craig's interests are focused on the water – boats, fishing, and swimming. He also enjoys hiking and researching genealogy. Debby, too, enjoys hiking and also golfing with friends.



## This Is Why We Do This

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I admit that hospital visits can be more challenging than campus visits, but their effects on patients can be life changing. Here are stories from DOC teams showing how you could be a life-changer, too.

Contact [karenp@dogsoncall.org](mailto:karenp@dogsoncall.org) to get more information about the various types of hospital visits you'll find in our community.

-- From a nurse in the cardiology unit: "Thank you so much for helping us set up a time for XXXX to see the dog; he was still raving about it this morning when I came in!! Most of us have never seen him smile, and from what I heard, he was grinning ear to ear this weekend! Thank you all for being so helpful and therapeutic! Patients like XXXX really benefit from these meetings."

-- Gina and Daisy visited a couple of veterans in the dayroom of the VA Hospital. One man had not eaten or been out of this room for two days, but, so he could see the dog, he got up, showered, brushed his teeth, and made his way to the dayroom for a long visit.

-- A man who had a stroke lay quietly in bed with his eyes closed. His daughter put his hand gently on Raider's head and helped the man stroke the dog's ear. The corner of the man's mouth slowly moved into a smile, to the shock and surprise of his family.

-- The woman lay in bed, staring into space. Zombie and Karen came in for a visit. The woman's hand was placed on Zombie so she could feel his fur. Karen spoke to the woman, telling her about Zombie. The woman quietly said, "Good dog." The nurse watching the interaction said that was the first time she heard the patient speak.

Karen P & Pete

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