

DOGS ON CALL, INC.

December 2023



HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL OF YOU AS WE ENTER THE SEASON OF MANY SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

As we enter this very busy time of year, I want to thank each one of you for making time to visit with your pet partner. This certainly can be a difficult time of year for many people, and visits from you and your partner are sincerely appreciated.

Our evaluations and in-person Pet Partners classes have finished for the year. We should be posting schedules for both after the first of the new year. Because of problems with snow and cold, we typically do not schedule anything for January and February. You will want to sign up soon after we post the schedule if you are expiring early next year, to avoid a lapse in your visiting. Our evaluations have been filling with our renewing members, people from our classes, and people from out-of-town where evaluations are proving to be rather scarce.

We have some fun things to look forward to next year including our 25th anniversary. You can read about one of our ideas for marking the occasion in the newsletter. (Hint: A Dogs On Call badge is underway).

I would also encourage members to think about visiting somewhere that they have not visited before. We have a large list of organizations and places that would love to see a therapy dog or cat especially during the holiday season.

Again, wishing you and yours a joyful season and thank you for all that you do.

Karen S.
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DOC Board President



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EXPLORE CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

We were asked back for a second time to visit the kids at the museum in Sun Prairie. Once again, our animals were a big hit. Explore Children's Museum is a non-profit providing hands-on, interactive play learning opportunities for children. They have amazing exhibits. You can check them out at www.explorechm.org.

The children at this visit were too young for our Dog Bite Prevention program, but they sure enjoyed interacting with our dogs. Some wanted to just look, some were unsure so started petting at the back end and worked their way up to the head, and some hugged and kissed the dogs. This was one of those times when we wished we could have felt comfortable taking pictures. I'm sure we will be asked back again.

Our volunteers were Artie, Katie, Kristin & Louie, Shelly & Bennie, Amelia & Jolene.

Artie

artieb@dogsoncall.org



Bennie



Louie



Jolene



L-R: Katie, Shelly, Amelia, Kristen



VISITS TO VETS

DeAnn and Lyra visit the VA Community Living Center every Tuesday. Below is a note from DeAnn as an example of what impacts we have on the veterans.

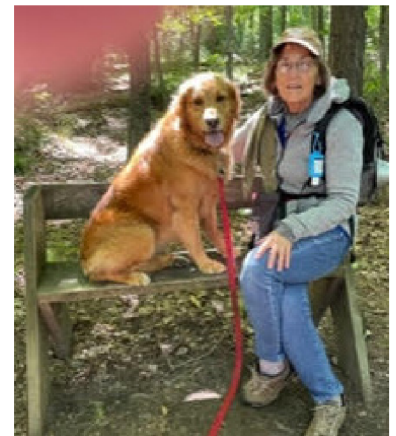
“I had an experience yesterday which ‘made my day’...and brought more smiles to the staff as well. We have been interacting with a veteran for several months, but he never wanted to pet Lyra. He was always busy and organizing and not interested in seeing her. We would always chat, with Lyra sitting beside me.

Yesterday, I thought it would be the same. I asked him if he would like to pet Lyra and he hesitated and then said, ”I guess so.” Once he started, he was beaming and didn’t stop petting her, following us around for more pets.

While some of our ‘rewards’ are small, we just don’t always know if we make a difference in their lives. It might have been a change in his medications, improvement in his medical condition, or who knows what, but at this time, for this veteran, our visits seem to have made a difference.”

Nicely said. Thanks, DeAnn & Lyra for your work at the VA Hospital.

Ed L. & Fletcher



Lyra & DeAnn

A CAMPUS VISIT LIKE NO OTHER

Campus visits usually are pretty much the same, whether the dorm is big or small. Lots of excited students visiting with soon-to-be exhausted dogs. But a few weeks ago, a dorm visit was unique in an unfortunate way. Several teams were visiting at a large dorm on campus when a student visitor suddenly had a seizure with convulsions.

Lisa and Olive were visiting with the student when she collapsed. Todd was there (with Millie) and noted that Lisa and Olive were professional and gracious. Olive stayed right by the student’s side the whole time. Olive and none of the other therapy dogs present were upset by the commotion during the episode, while the EMTs were there, and while the room was cleared.

Todd also reports that the students reacted with respect and empathy and the staff was very helpful during this worrisome situation. We all send best wishes to the student and hope she is OK.

Congratulations to Lisa & Olive, Todd & Millie, Kay & Jessie, Mary Beth & Tupelo, Jodell & Jordy, and Wendy & Willow on a great job in a challenging situation.

Karen P. & Pete

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DOC BOARD OF DIRECTOR CHANGES

A few changes to the DOC Board of Directors starting in January 2024.

--A big thank you to outgoing Director-at-Large Melody Moore for her years of service on the Board.

--Welcome to new Board members Directors-at-Large Molly Murphy (whom many of you know as an Evaluator), Anja Wanner, and Tami Rotar.

--The Board is busy with several projects which you can read about in the Board meeting minutes on the DOC website Members' Page.

Karen P. & Pete

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THIS IS WHY WE DO THIS!

Jessie and I had just finished our visit with the Inpatient group at Meriter's Child & Adolescent Psych Hospital. On the way out, we had a very moving experience. There was a girl sitting with a woman in the waiting room, and the girl was sobbing. The woman smiled at me, so I tentatively walked toward them and asked if they wanted to pet the dog. I thought the woman might be the girl's mother, but it turned out the woman was a staff person, and she invited me to come closer. I asked the girl if she wanted to pet Jessie and she definitely did. Then I asked if she wanted Jessie to sit on her lap, keeping an eye on the staff person who nodded her approval. Once Jessie sat on her lap, the girl stopped sobbing and eventually started talking and even smiled a little. We sat there like that for about 10 minutes, talking about Jessie and dogs in general. It obviously made the girl happy. That interaction made me feel so good about going there.



Jessie

Kay S. & Jessie



Shirley & Megan

Shirley and I went on a visit to Stoughton Hospital where I am also an RN. We made our way through the ER and Medical Surgical floor to visit the staff who work so hard. Many folks enjoyed a break in patient care to give Shirley pets and she really enjoyed it as well. We then ventured to the Geriatric Psych floor to visit staff and patients. Shirley went around greeting others including patients, family members, and staff. We then sat down with some patients in the day room. One patient was so happy to see Shirley, especially since she is a Standard Poodle. This patient had two Poodles previously and missed them so much. Shirley could tell that this patient had a kind soul and needed this visit, as she sat right in front of her and took in all the love. This patient told stories about her dogs and at one point became tearful reminiscing about them. It was a heartwarming experience for me, the patient, and others that were in the room with us. Shirley and I received a lot of gratitude as we left the unit...and we were grateful for the opportunity to brighten some people's days!

Megan M. & Shirley

NEW MEMBER PROFILES

Heather and Jasper, a five-year-old Australian Shepherd, live in Portage. Heather dog-sat for Jasper for a friend, but when Jasper was eight months old, the friend asked Heather if she wanted to keep him. Score! Jasper shares attention with Essie, a mix of German Shepherd, Husky, and “many others,” plus cats Chubz, Baby, and Itsy.

Heather would like to visit the UW campus and hospitals. She says Jasper loves all people he’s ever met, but especially kids.

Free time for Heather is spent walking her dogs and reading.



Jasper & Heather



Wendy & Willow

Wendy adopted Willow, her six-year-old “super mutt” (Brittany, Corgi, Border Collie, Terrier mix) in 2017. Willow was a stray in Birmingham, Alabama, and came to Wisconsin on a transport to the Dane County Humane Society. Canine siblings are Juneau (14 years old) and Leo (1 year old).

Wendy is interested in doing campus visits, the Read With Me program, and hospital visits, particularly the VA Hospital.

You can see from their profile picture that they are an outdoorsy family. Favorite activities are camping, hiking, trail running, swimming, and paddleboarding.



Briana was smitten with a picture of Zoe’s sweet face on a Dane County Humane Society post. Zoe is a four-year-old Labrador mix and was a transport from a shelter in the southern U.S. Zoe has a sister at home, Lola, a Golden Retriever mix. Briana says Lola tried really hard to pass the therapy dog evaluation. The obedience part was no problem, but Lola will have to try another time after a little confidence-building practice.

Visits to hospitals, schools, nursing homes, and libraries are in Zoe’s future. Outside of those plans, Briana keeps busy with her friends and family, which include a husband and two young daughters.



Zoe & Briana

NEW MEMBER PROFILES, continued

Amanda says Lottie, a Basset Hound/Shepherd mix, is her “best girl since I got her!” Lottie was adopted from Ma, Paws, and Me rescue when she was between three and four months old. Lottie is Amanda’s only girl, too, as there are no other pets in the household.

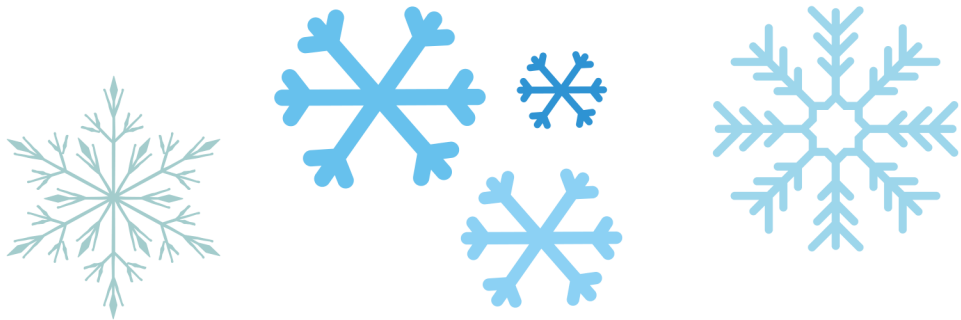
They are looking forward to trying all sorts of visits – campus, skilled nursing facilities, Read With Me – since Lottie likes receiving petting from all ages of visitors.

Amanda enjoys spending time at her friend’s farm, hiking, volunteering as an OccuPaws puppy sitter, working out at the gym, and watching Below Deck, a reality show. She says she is a Minnesota Vikings fan, too, but we’ll forgive her for that.



Amanda & Lottie

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RONALD McDONALD HOUSE EXPANDS VISITING HOURS

The Ronald McDonald House on Madison’s west side is now welcoming therapy dog teams for weekday visits.

Residents of this facility have children who are patients at the American Family Children’s Hospital. The visits aren’t with the patients, but the parents and, often, siblings of the patient. They are stressed and in unfamiliar territory, sometimes traveling a long distance to have their child treated at the hospital. A little therapy animal distraction can help!

For years, visits at this facility have been on Sunday evening. They’re trying something new with weekday visits. Eppli Wiltse, coordinator of the program, says she had a steady stream of visitors around the noon hour. Therapy animal visit times are flexible. If you’d like to give it a try, contact DOC member Eppli Wiltse at eppli.wiltse@gmail.com.

Karen P & Pete
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LET'S GET SOCIAL!

A few weeks ago, a new DOC member questioned whether we had social events for handlers to meet each other. We used to have the annual picnic combined with the annual meeting, where dogs and people could relax together. COVID interrupted that for several years, but plans are to restart that event in the fall.

Tami Rotar, our newest Board of Directors member, volunteered to gather ideas for meet-and-greet events. She's investigating several options for humans only and humans and dogs, such as a paint-your-dog's-picture night, guest speakers, and others.

Do you have any ideas? Let Tami know about them at 2rotars@rcreations.net.

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NEW TRADING CARD OPTION

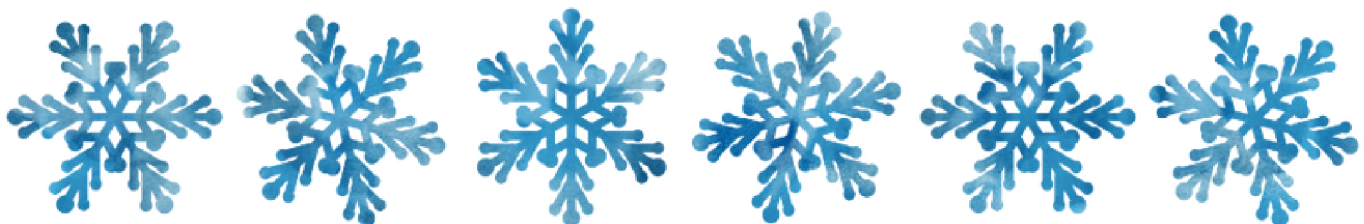
If you are in the market to print more trading cards, we have a resource list on the DOC Members' Page. Here's a new business I've added, which is the least expensive depending on your choice of printing options. Of interest to Read With Me teams, they also print bookmarks.

Note -- You can order fewer than 1,000 cards at all of the printers listed.

If you've found other printers you'd recommend, let me know and I can add them to our resource list.

GotPrint – gotprint.com
1,000 cards, \$53.38, plus \$7.96 shipping (this estimate for standard paper, both sides color)
Many options available, upload or design online.

Karen P. & Pete
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PET PARTNERS / DOGS ON CALL BADGES

Pet Partners is no longer providing a free physical ID badge to their therapy animal teams. (They email you a copy of your Letter of Acceptance and printable ID badge.) If you want a plastic, wearable Pet Partners ID badge, it is available for purchase from the Pet Partners store at Raspberry Field (raspberryyfield.com) for \$10, plus \$7 shipping.

Additionally, Pet Partners is no longer providing a free collar tag for your therapy animal. A tag is available for purchase from Raspberry Field for \$6.50, plus \$7 shipping. Pet Partners says it is no longer required for your animal to wear this tag.

Pet Partners says you should carry a paper copy of your Letter of Acceptance/ID badge or have the digital copy available on your phone, in case a facility asks to see it. But Pet Partners has assured us that your insurance will still be in effect if you do not have those items with you. (I have email confirmation from two representatives of Pet Partners.)

The Dogs On Call Board of Directors is investigating options to provide a wearable Dogs On Call-branded picture ID badge for Dogs On Call members. We feel that wearing an ID badge is more professional, serves to identify the team as a Dogs On Call & Pet Partners member, and distinguishes Dogs On Call therapy animal teams from other therapy animal groups and from just anyone with an animal coming to a facility. More details on this project soon!

Karen P. & Pete
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

UW CAMPUS

Monday, December 11	Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel	6:30-8:00 p.m.
Tuesday, December 12	Red Gym, Gender & Sexuality Campus Center	6:30-8:00 p.m.
Wednesday, December 13	Presbyterian House	6:30-8:00 p.m.
Thursday, December 14	Chazen Art Museum, Campus Study Day Event	11:00 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
Friday, December 15	Merit Library	12:00-1:30 p.m.
Monday, December 18	Helen C. White Library – Finals Week	3:00-5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, April 17, 2024	Steenbock Library	6:30-8:00 p.m.
Friday, May 3, 2024	School of Engineering Outdoor Event	1:30-3:00 p.m.
Monday, May 6, 2024	Helen C. White Library – Finals Week	3:00-5:00 p.m.

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DOC Newsletter

The contents of the DOC Newsletter represent the views and opinions of the authors and not necessarily those of the DOC organization or its members, nor does publication constitute any endorsement.

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Submission Deadlines

News and Articles are due:
--April 20 for March issue
--May 20 for June issue
--August 20 for September issue
--November 20 for December issue

We welcome articles written by members of DOC on any topic or subject that may be of interest to DOC members. Non-copyrighted articles or those that can be reprinted with permission are welcome as well.

Articles that are submitted may be edited for proper grammar or clarity.

Send all submissions to:
Karen P. at
karenp@dogsoncall.org

