

Dogs On Call Inc.

► **Fall 2016**

Letter From The President

It is starting to look like fall outside in my area. Leaves are starting to change, and it is slightly brisk on our morning walk.

With the change of seasons, DOC is also looking at a few changes. We will be signing everyone up differently for their evaluations in 2017. Look for more on that on page 2. Our reading program has had a name change due to changes from Pet Partners. Our reading teams will continue to provide the same quality reading program they have in the past, just with a new name. If you have questions about this please contact me at: laurak@dogsoncall.org

DOC will be at the Badger Kennel Club Dog Fair in November. Watch for an email if you are interested in volunteering at that event. It is always busy and fun.

Our dorm visits for the fall are being scheduled. If they are visits you enjoy doing, watch for the email with dates and times.

Please keep up with your "normal" hospital, skilled care, and library visits in between our special events.

Thanks for all you do for DOC!

Laura, Kooper, Oliver and Shadow

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Elections

The results of the 2016 Dogs On Call elections are:

Laura Kuchta, President, and Karen Peckham, Secretary, will each serve another two-year term.

There are four open Director-At-Large seats on the Board Of Directors. If you are interested in serving a two-year term on our board, please contact any board member for information. We would love to talk with you!

Jen and Honey In The 4th Of July Parade



The idea of our adventure in pet therapy began at a parade. We were watching from the front porch of my mother & father-in-law's house when we noticed that Honey was making her way around the front yard greeting family & friends and sitting next to each person to get attention and give love. A relative mentioned that she thought Honey would do great visiting people in the hospital or nursing homes to bring them a little joy. After thinking more about it and doing some research, we found Dogs On Call & Pet Partners. We've been members of Dogs On Call since 2012, visiting as a R.E.A.D. team at the DeForest & Columbus libraries and also visiting an assisted living home in Fall River.

The DeForest Library invited us to join them in the 4th of July parade to promote the R.E.A.D. program in an attempt to get more families interested in R.E.A.D.ing to Honey. We're happy to report that this alternative to advertising the program worked very well and we've had 5-6 kids there to R.E.A.D. with us ever since. We're glad we thought outside the box on how to promote this and get more exposure to people in the DeForest community. Weather permitting, we plan to join in the fun next 4th of July!

Jen & Honey

Changes In Our Evaluation Process

Pet Partners is in the process of moving all Pet Partners Workshop and Pet Partners Evaluation steps to online. For most of us, it only involves the evaluations. You must now sign up for all evaluations online through the Pet Partners website instead of contacting DOC directly. They will notify us when you have signed up online, then we will contact you with more info. We will send a more detailed explanation via email at a later date, but for now, if you are not already registered on the Pet Partners website, you can get that much done.

Although this is a huge change, it is going to benefit us. We can submit your test scores online immediately, which will allow you to register much quicker. We have had many teams who tested on Sunday, submitted all the necessary info online, and received their OK and new expiration date by the end of the week.

More info to follow!

Artie & Henry

This Is Why We Do This - Deb and Swing

Swing & I volunteer occasionally at the Rock County Youth Services Center which consists of a lock down section for juveniles who have committed offenses and a residential wing for children who typically are awaiting placement in foster care. "Jimmy" lived in the latter and was perhaps about 10 years old. Swing & I had met him on several previous visits, which meant he had been staying in the residential section for quite some time. Generally, during our visits, he was polite and somewhat quiet but always interested in the dogs. One evening when we arrived, the staff person in charge alerted us to the fact that the boy had had some behavior issues that day and things might be unsettled in the living quarters. We went to interact with the other kids and he went to talk to Jimmy. I could hear him try to explain over the boy's sobs how his behavior had been inappropriate and how he would be able to pet the dogs if he would promise to try harder to control his responses in the future. Jimmy's crying became louder and more distressed and I heard him say "I just want to kill myself." I remember thinking that, at ten years old, I didn't even know what that phrase meant, much less ever be upset enough to utter it. That made me realize yet again, how lucky I am to have had the stable childhood I did, one that kids like Jimmy had probably only experienced for brief moments in their lives, if at all. The supervisor asked for a dog to join them, so Swing and I went over to where Jimmy was hunkered down just inside his room, still crying, and sat on the floor next to him. I told him how soft Swing was because of his bath that day and invited him to feel for himself. I told him how much Swing liked belly rubs and Swing proved my point by lying on his back, body pressed against Jimmy's legs. In a moment, Jimmy's sobs had subsided to a snuffle and he asked if he could join the other kids who were petting the two Pet Partners dogs that had accompanied us. Swing and I have visited many different venues — nursing and assisted living facilities, the VA Hospital, dormitories, the Ronald McDonald House, etc.— and although people always seem happy to see us and are very appreciative, I always wonder if we are truly "making a difference" in someone's life. That evening at the Youth Services Center, I had my answer.

Deb & Swing

Grant Received from Friends 4 Friends

Dogs On Call was the recipient of a \$400.00 grant from UPH-Meriter Hospital's Friends 4 Friends organization. This group provides financial gifts to local non-profit organizations that improve the health and well being of the Madison community. The funds were used to buy supplies used in the Pet Partners evaluations (a portable scanner and collapsible cones) and classes (luggage to protect class supplies during transport).

Karen & Pete

Kromrey Middle School Visit

Dogs On Call was asked to visit Kromrey Middle School in Middleton to help with the anxiety and sadness the children and staff were experiencing after two middle school girls were hit by a car earlier in May. Three visits were scheduled on three separate days; Wednesday, May 25th, Friday, May 27th, and Tuesday, May 31st. Our DOC teams visited with an estimated 450 students and school staff. It was truly a wonderful visit. These young people were very considerate of us and our dogs. They were also extremely appreciative of us sharing our pups with them during this difficult time.

To show how much Kromrey Middle School loved having DOC visit with them, many students wrote thank you notes and cards with pictures of dogs inside. One of them even drew a picture of Charlotte with a little piggy nose. Quite a likeness!

Thanks to all of the DOC teams who answered the call to help with this crisis at Kromrey. Your presence there was extremely appreciated by all.

This Is Why We Do This - Karen and Pete

Dogs On Call received an email from a woman, "S," out east. Her sister's husband is at UW Hospital with a serious injury. S wanted to do something for her sister and related that her sister, "M," said how much she wished "someone could just bring her a dog." S found DOC online and asked about arranging a therapy dog visit. Coincidentally, there would be two teams at UW Hospital the next day, doing the regular Thursday evening visit.

We couldn't visit M in her husband's room for a couple of reasons, but arranged to meet M in UW Hospital's Surgical Waiting Area after our regular Thursday evening shift. S just told M to be in the waiting area at 7:30. M didn't know why she was supposed to be there; S wanted it to be a surprise.

We walked down the hall at the waiting area and I asked, "Is M here?" about the same time she saw the dogs walking toward where she was sitting. "Is this for me?!" she managed to say before the tears started. She composed herself quickly and had a nice 30-minute visit petting Daisy, Yvonne G.'s Lab mix, and Gypsy, Lynn K.'s Lab, sitting on the floor, with a dog on each side. Yay!

We will be visiting other Thursdays, as long as M's husband is in the hospital. S was so grateful that we made the visit happen that she made a donation to DOC.

That particular night, the teams had a good evening, with a patients, family, and staff in cardiology and cardiology ICU, a visit request and other patients, family, and staff in neuro ICU, a good crowd in psych, and the grand finale of this Surgical Waiting Area visit. This is why we do this!

Karen & Pete

Member Profiles



Cricket, age 4, is a Pembroke Welsh Corgi and Pet Partner with Megan M. Also in the household are three cats – Greyson, Mootsie, and Alex.

Megan would like to explore visiting children with emotional difficulties or really just about anything except bedside visits. Cricket is height challenged and too big to lift, so on-the-floor visits will be just fine.

Despite the height issue, Cricket runs agility. In addition to running agility with Cricket, Megan likes to read and create art in various media.

In 2014, Mary F. became a foster mom for Lambeau through Golden Retriever Rescue of Wisconsin. He needed surgery on both knees and Mary nursed him until he was finally healed several months later. By then, she was smitten and adopted Lambeau into his forever home.

Mary plans to start visiting with Lambeau at nursing homes and see what develops after that.

In her free time, Mary enjoys gardening, hiking, and swimming.



Kathy H. comes to Dogs On Call from Monroe, WI, but she traveled even farther to get Keva, her Catahoula. After researching the breed, Kathy made a trek to Arizona to get Keva from a breeder. She joins three other dogs at Kathy's – Kiya, Willow, and Taco – and five cats – Jack, Blaine, Ryker, Huntley, and Dinha.

At this point, Kathy would like to investigate visiting with Keva on campus, at the airport, hospital waiting areas and common areas, and maybe correctional facilities.

Kathy fills her spare time with playing with her grandchildren (lucky kids!) and making dog tug toys (lucky dogs!).

Karen & Pete

Thank You!

I wanted to take the opportunity to thank everyone for their thoughtful responses to my losing Sacajawea. I knew she was well known, but I had no idea how well. It's still hard, as many of you know, but time does heal. I had a dream recently that I went down to visit Joyce, and came home with two Newfies; so who knows what will happen. But in the meantime, please know how all of your wonderful messages and kind words helped.

Artie & Henry

Hospital News

Stoughton Hospital Now Signing Up DOC Teams

We've recently added Stoughton Hospital to our facility list! This small but progressive community hospital is welcoming DOC teams to its Geriatric Psych unit (for dayroom visits with dementia patients) and a general medical unit (for in-room patient visits). DOC members are required to go through the hospital's volunteer process, which involves an application, background check, health records check (including drug testing), and orientation. Once through that process, you will be trained on the units where you will be visiting. If you're interested in visiting this facility, contact Karen at karenp@dogsoncall.org.

UW Hospital Program Evolving to Meet a Growing Need

Visit Captains, More Flexible Visit Schedule, and a Three-for-One Deal

Dogs On Call volunteers at the main UW Hospital on Madison's west side get a special bonus – their own "visit captain." This dog-loving UW Hospital volunteer accompanies each Dogs On Call team on their visits. The visit captain administers hand gel to patients and other visitors, moves chairs and bed trays to allow the team easier access to patients, and generally does what is necessary to allow the handler to focus on the dog and the visit interaction. Pretty deluxe!

At the main UW Hospital, the scheduled visits are on Thursday evening and Saturday afternoon. We're exploring the workability of drop-in visits in select units to attract more teams to the facility and increase the number of patient visits. Units involved at this point would be in-room visits in cardiology, neurology and neuro ICU, the surgical waiting area, and the psych unit dayroom. We plan to keep the scheduled visits, but see how the drop-in visits work, too. And, if everyone's schedules mesh with your planned visit, you could have a visit captain come along, too.

The UW Hospital is a busy facility and there are always patients, family, and staff wanting the attention of your therapy dog. You'll find patients who have a short-term stay, but also many who are long-term, maybe waiting for a heart transplant or recovering from a brain injury. The visits from our therapy dogs means so much to these patients and their families. You can be sure that the happiness you bring to these patients (and, really, patients in any hospital) is having a definite impact on their mental well being and recovery. A little effort on our part can make such a big difference for someone.

Hospital News - Continued

As with all the hospitals, there is a volunteer application process. But once you get through the UW Hospital process, you are also eligible to visit at the UW Rehab Hospital and the UW Health – The American Center facilities, both on the east side of Madison. Three hospitals to visit for the price of one!

The UW Hospital program has a high demand for patient visits and we need to get new teams on board. Please consider volunteering! Contact Karen at karenp@dogsoncall.org.

Meriter Team Meeting

In July, 14 Meriter DOC handlers met at the hospital for a Meet & Greet, to introduce newer and experienced members to each other, briefly review visiting guidelines, talk about new areas to visit, ask questions, and share stories. We started with each handler introducing his/herself, talking about their dog, where they visit in the hospital, and what other facilities they visit. We have busy teams! The informational part of the evening was followed by a lively session of questions, comments, and shared stories. We had to cut the evening short, or we might have greeted the 3rd shift coming to work! Several new ideas were implemented as a result of the meeting and all agreed that we should have these sessions periodically. It will be fun to hear another collection of ideas and new experiences!

Karen & Pete

Suggestion Box

We had our first suggestion come into the suggestion box. It was asking if we could create a handbook that would be available at the evaluations for quick reference to assist newcomers to the different volunteer positions.

The board discussed this at our last meeting. We are in the process of putting together an information sheet that will give an overview of each of the volunteer opportunities that are recurring. This will be available in the members-only section of the website.

Please know that anytime a call goes out for volunteers, if you have any questions about the event, you can email the member that is organizing it. They will be happy to answer any question you may have.

Thank you for the suggestion—we hope to hear from more of our members through the suggestion box which is accessible through a link in the members only section of our website. If you have any questions about accessing the suggestion box please contact a board member.

The Dogs On Call Board Of Directors

Molly 2002 - 2016

Thanks to all of you wonderful DOC members for your kind and comforting messages on the loss of sweet Molly. Molly started her therapy dog work at the age of 2 and continued until a few months before she died in May at the age of 14. She was still chasing the tennis ball with Emmy and Charlie the morning of the day she died. She had a wonderful life and brought joy and comfort to so many. Children were her special love. I miss her every day.

Molly started her therapy dog career at Mendota Mental Health Institute working with young children. At the time, children at MMHI had to earn the privilege of spending time with one of three therapy dogs from DOC. Many of these children had a history of severe trauma and of abusing animals. Molly would meet one-on-one with a child. I have to say that Molly was perfect with every child, and we never experienced a single moment that was not positive.

Over the years, Molly attended almost every venue that DOC has offered, from the first Safety Towns to the more recent prison and juvenile detention center visits. She has been to nursing homes, schools, universities, museums, the VA hospital, University Hospital, Meriter, St. Mary's, and, probably her favorite place of all, Meriter Child Adolescent Psychiatric Hospital. She was part of the first group of dogs to visit there when the facility opened in 2006 and stayed until her very last month of life. Molly was also one of the first R.E.A.D. dogs in Madison. She ended up on television at one of her first READ visits at Monona Public Library and in a Madison newspaper at one of her last visits at Pinney Library, where she visited for many years until she 'retired' in 2015.

Two things made Molly so special. She loved every person she ever met, and she worked to make a connection with each and every one. She actively sought out interaction with each person. She had those Labrador eyes and would gaze, longingly and lovingly, into someone's eyes until they had to give in and reach out to her. She had a gift for seeking out the one person or child who was withdrawn or grieving or afraid to interact. She would patiently keep going back in her quiet and sweet way until a connection was made. Molly was bombproof. She was the dog that could be brought in to calm an out-of-control child just by her quiet, accepting presence.

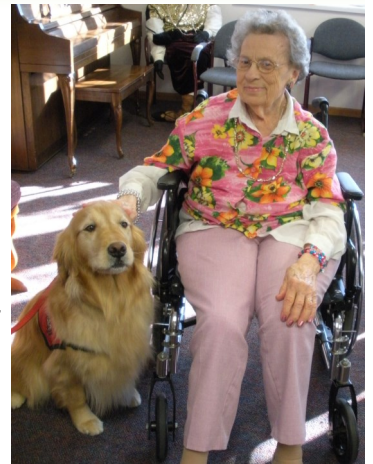
All of our therapy dogs are so special. Cherish every day you have with yours.

Sue



The Fearful Lady & the Therapy Dog

Molly and I had been visiting at the Meadows Assisted Living in Spring Green for several months when a new resident joined the group in the activity room for our visit. Mrs. K. was sitting in the far corner, and assuming she was there for the dog visit, I headed her way to introduce her to Molly. In a panic-stricken voice she shrieked at me, "Stay away! Stay away! I'm afraid of dogs! Don't come over here!" So, I stayed far away. Each week for the next three, I stopped to visit with her and brought Molly a few steps closer each time. Molly would sit quietly next to me and not advance any closer while we chatted. Mrs. K never took her eyes off Molly as she and I visited — she was still very afraid of her. She told me she was 83 and had never petted a dog in her life! And although she had never been bitten, she had always been morbidly afraid of dogs. About the fourth visit, when I stopped to talk with her, Molly was within reach of Mrs. K. I asked her if she would like to just touch the top of her head and feel how soft her hair was. She tentatively reached out but then pulled her hand back several times. Finally she touched Molly's head like it was burning coals for all of one second. When I said, "Now that wasn't so bad, was it?" she smiled a little and agreed. Each week she got braver and was soon petting her with no reservations. Before long, she was the first one to the activity room waiting to pet Molly and she began making trips to the activity room for the sole purpose of spending time with Molly. She wanted me to take her picture with Molly to show her family ("What do you think my family will say when I tell them I petted a dog?") She proudly displayed the photo of her & Molly outside the door to her room. While petting Molly, she would laugh and tell me she didn't know how to "talk" to a dog, so I told her to sing instead. Her favorite song to sing to Molly was "You Are My Sunshine."



Soon Mrs. K. became the self-appointed "Molly Ambassador" of the Meadows, telling all the new residents her story — how she petted Molly, the first dog that she ever touched in her life, and if she could do it, so could they! Mrs. K, who has very limited sight, even wrote the following tongue-twister (the project in activities that day was alliteration).

"Mistress Maiden Mollie (sic) met many Meadows members on Mondays.

Many Meadows members Maiden Mollie met on Mondays.

If Mistress Maiden Mollie met many Meadows members on Mondays,

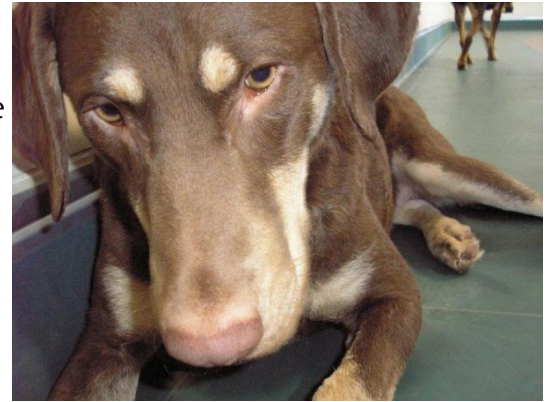
Where are the many Meadow members that Mistress Maiden Mollie met on Mondays?"

At the Volunteer Tea a few years ago, she told all the residents, volunteers, staff, and guests the story of how she overcame 83 years of being fearful of dogs and now gladly pets Molly and looks very much forward to her visits. When I told her about our Dogs On Call Newsletter, she wanted me to tell her story here to help others who may need to overcome a similar fear of dogs. Mrs. K. passed away quite suddenly and unexpectedly a few months ago and sadly, because I had procrastinated so long in writing her story, she never got to see this article. I'd like to think that somehow Mrs. K. knows that I finally got around to telling her story and just how very proud of her I was.

JoAnn & Molly

A time to retire...

Kenny and I started volunteering in 2010. He was 4 — my age doesn't matter :) Since the day I met Kenny - at a gas station in Kansas City, MO where I met with his foster mom - he has been the laziest of dogs. Any of you who have met him, know this to be true. Kenny is best known for falling asleep on the Psych floor at UW Hospital.



After six years of monthly visits at UW Hospital and Clinics, UW Rehab Hospital, UW dorms, R.E.A.D. visits at Lakeview Library, and the occasional Dog Fest and Safety Saturday thrown in there, Kenny is hanging up his therapy vest for retirement. As he still gets excited when the vest comes out, it was very hard to make this decision, but with his shaky back legs, a rough recovery from an eyelid mass removal, and our move out of Madison, I have decided it was the best time for him to enjoy his retirement. He will celebrate by counter surfing and trying to clean out the cat boxes every chance he gets.

I hope to rejoin as a Pet Partners team just as soon as I adopt a dog that will pass the test! Be sure to follow us on Instagram (@furstars) to see his Kenny antics in full force as well as the rest of my crew!

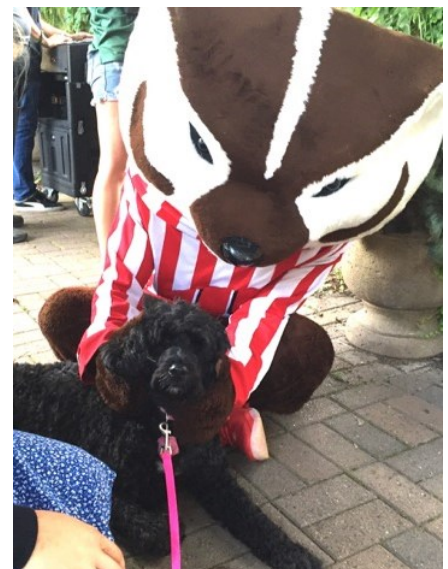
Michelle & Kenny

UW Centennial Gardens



Todd and Izzie

A few of our teams were able to meet Bucky while visiting students at the UW Centennial Gardens.



Ella

Dogs On Call Annual Picnic



Our crowd was a little small at the annual picnic this year, but the company was great. About 20 of our fellow DOC members came out this year bringing a variety of food to share as well as their Pet Partners. Don was our grill master and did a fantastic job on the burgers and brats.

The weather was a bit cool, we had a mix of sun and a few light rain showers, but the dogs enjoyed running in Don's large fenced in yard, and a few even went for walks in the woods. Door prizes were great, food and company was excellent. We hope to see all of you next year.



Laura, Kooper, Oliver & Shadow



The DreamBank



Dogs On Call was invited back to the DreamBank this year. We had about 400 people come through to visit the nine teams we had present during the two shifts. There were both adults petting and asking about our program and children reading books to our Pet Partners. It was a great day for everyone that was there.

Laura, Kooper, Oliver & Shadow



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