



Letter From The President

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This year is proving to be another busy year for members of Dogs On Call. We have dog bite prevention presentations scheduled for this spring and summer. Our UW Madison dorm schedule continues to be full of visits. The libraries that work with Dogs On Call have their summer schedules out and will soon be looking at fall dates. With all of these scheduled visits, often times the “unscheduled” visits that we do at hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities suffer.

Please remember that the patients in these facilities love to see us. One very wise member of Dogs On Call told me when I first started visiting at a nursing home to “Remember that this may be the only visit this person gets this week.” My therapy dog has since retired from nursing homes because of his age, but I still remember what I was told and do my best to visit at nursing homes where my two therapy cats are welcome.

DOC is often contacted by new facilities looking for a therapy team to visit them. If you are looking for a place to visit, please let a member of the board know. Thank you for everything you do.

Laura, Kooper, Oliver and Shadow

2016 Evaluation Dates

We have added April 24th to the evaluation schedule this year. Please check your badges. If you expire this year, please sign up for one of the dates below as soon as possible. We have 70 members needing to retest this year, plus the teams we test who have taken the Pet Partners online course, and the four classes that DOC hosts each year with 15-20 students in each, so you can see how these dates fill quickly.

Remaining 2016 dates:

Apr 24	May 15 - full	Jun 5
Jul 31	Aug 14	Sep 18
Oct 16	Nov 20	

Evaluation Day

Shelby and I are newbies. We passed our first evaluation in May 2015. I've been to three evaluation days now and Shelby has attended two. *How come so many evaluations in just 9 months?*

Here's our story.

Everyone's first glimpse at the Skills and Aptitude Tests is at the training class. While sitting and watching an experienced team (Liz and Lovie) run through the test, I had reservations about being able to do all of that. Not Shelby mind you, she is an amazing dog, but me... how could I remember all those things? The instructors seemed kind, but who volunteers their time to do all this instruction and evaluation on top of their personal visits? How many volunteers (and hours) does it take to do all these evaluations at 40 minutes each? *You're kidding, you do 80-100 evaluations a year...*

It looked to me like the Pet Partners evaluation test was CGC on steroids! So we practiced, took our CGC class and passed that test ... MORE PRACTICE ... the local dog friendly stores got to know us well and Shelby was having a ball!

Evaluation day 1: Day of THE TEST, OMG do I have test anxiety? How will this translate down the leash? BREATHE, smile (like Mom said, things are easier when you smile), remember Shelby's with me and she'll get me out of any trouble (trust her). My turn. Listen, BREATHE, remember Shelby's with me... To be truthful, I don't remember many details about the test except Shelby's trusting brown eyes, her calming presence and the little voice in my head "DON'T DROP THE LEASH!"

We PASSED! Incredible. That was the beginning of what I hope is a long adventure in the therapy dog world ... Safety Town, my local retirement home, visits at UW, Dog Fair, Barnes and Noble gift wrapping, CCI, R.E.A.D. ... and yes, helping with evaluations.

Now a few words about our other evaluation experiences...

Evaluation day 2: Artie keeps pestering us with emails about needing help with evaluations... OK, OK another new experience in Animal Therapy. I can be a good crowd - amble around, pet the dog, ride in the wheelchair, act goofy in a robe, make noise. Someone did it for us. *These folks are fun, and watching other dogs is interesting.*

Evaluation day 3: Another email from Artie... not going to be great weather, so what the heck. You want to try Shelby as neutral dog?? Sure, she'd love to go somewhere else to sleep for the afternoon! *This is different than being dogless, more responsibility. Thank goodness I have Shelby!*

Evaluation Day - Continued

My observations...

I've met such interesting folks who share my passion for animals and helping others, discussed using vodka to clean teeth (dog and human), watched experienced teams gracefully protect their dog by locking the wheelchair, talked cats, felt part of a community, and not least, appreciated my incredible dog even more as she calmly played the role of neutral dog as I fumbled my way through (promise to get better Shelby!).

Yup, we'll help with evaluations again. It's a small price to pay to be sure that the evaluation team will be there when we retest in a year. The up side of volunteering is that it's SO MUCH FUN!

Give it a try – you don't know who you'll meet or what you'll learn!

Here's the math:

9 evaluation days X {reception desk (2 volunteers/day) + evaluators/scribes (3-4/day) + the crowd (6 volunteers/day) + neutral dog teams (2/day)} = 126 volunteer slots

Now if we assume there are about 140 active teams ... (don't worry, we aren't doing the simultaneous equation for the limited number of folks who can be evaluators/scribes; or handlers with more than one pet partner; or subset of teams that enjoy being neutral dog)

The bottom line is that it takes eight people and one dog to do each evaluation. Do the math, in a perfect world, each active team is responsible for 1.11111111 volunteer slots per year to do evaluations...

Thanks to all the volunteers who do so much more!

Joan and Shelby

THE AMERICAN KENNEL CLUB THERAPY DOG TITLE: YOUR DOG MAY BE ELIGIBLE!

We have all sorts of dogs in DOC, both purebreds and mixed breeds. The American Kennel Club has a program that recognizes the good work that all these dogs perform through their therapy dog visits. The AKC Therapy Dog™ title may be earned by reaching a certain number of visits and being registered with an AKC-recognized therapy dog organization (Pet Partners qualifies). Your dog must also be registered with the AKC – both mixed breeds and purebreds are eligible. For more information, go to:

<http://www.akc.org/dog-owners/training/akc-therapy-dog-program>

Hospital News

WE NEED MORE!

A big “Thank You!” to the teams that answered my plea for new teams at the hospitals. Several teams have started the volunteer process and several more have expressed interest. But there are four local hospitals that always need new teams, so WE NEED MORE!

UPH-Meriter, UW Hospitals & Clinics (Westside Madison), UW Health Rehabilitation Hospital and UW Health-The American Center (both Eastside Madison) are calling for more teams to answer the growing number of patient visit requests, from both patients and doctors. Now there are hospitals on both sides of town, so it's convenient for everyone.

If you were kinda, sorta thinking about hospital visits, let me know what I can do to lure you in! Contact Karen P. at karenp@dogsoncall.org

ANOTHER FACILITY TO CONSIDER: SAUK PRAIRIE HOSPITAL

The Sauk Prairie Hospital is a 36-bed hospital located in Prairie du Sac. This hospital provides care for more than 40,000 people in their service area, which extends from Poynette to Lone Rock and from Plain to Black Earth. Their main focus is total hip, knee and joint replacement, so the majority of the visits are to the joint health center patient rooms.

As with other hospitals, you must go through their volunteer process, then go on a shadowing visit with an experienced Dogs On Call team. If you live in our western counties and would like to investigate volunteering at this facility, contact Andrea at andreag@dogsoncall.org for more info.

Karen and Scout

Dogs On Call Website

The Dogs On Call website has a new look! Take a few minutes to look it over, you may find a picture of your Pet Partner on one of the pages. The new site is friendly to both desktop and mobile devices.

www.dogsoncall.org

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM SAFETY EVENT

On the evening of Wednesday, March 2, seven DOC teams helped hundreds of children learn the correct way to pet a dog. Families visiting the Madison Children's Museum that night got free admission and the opportunity to stop at booths with many interactive displays about safety. As you can imagine, the Dogs On Call area was wildly popular! Our teams did a great job showing all ages of children the safe way to approach a dog and always ask the owner "May I pet your dog, please?" Attendees also received the "Fido: Friend or Foe" activity book or a coloring sheet with dog safety info.

Do you remember the "loud noise" exercise with the dropped muffin pan in your Pet Partners evaluation? That exact thing happened at this event! A little girl tripped while carrying a metal pie pan and the pan dropped on the hard floor. We looked at each other with the same thought – "Just like in the evaluation!"

The handlers did a great job of teaching the young visitors while watching out for the safety of their dogs. The dogs were great ambassadors, as always, even in this challenging environment. Thanks to all these great teams:

Andrea & Samantha
Barb & Zora
Chelsea & Captain
Dale & Poppy
Jeff & Bella
Mary & Sully
Pat & Wilson

Karen and Scout



Member Profiles



Not too long ago, **Karen A.** was thinking about getting a pet. Her son's living situation changed and he needed to rehome one of his two dogs. Apollo, a nine-year-old Boxer, came to live with Karen. It was "a perfect fit for both of us," says Karen. He is an "old gentleman," she adds.

Karen would like to work with hospital patients and visit at the VA Hospital. She and Apollo are currently visiting at a nursing home in Dodgeville, near their home.

Though Karen claims she's a novice at both, she is enthusiastic about quilting and flower gardening.



Stefanie N. adopted four-month-old Shepherd mix Jack from a humane society in Iowa. He was surrendered to them at two months old because he was given as a birthday present to someone who didn't want him. He spent two months in a cage at the humane society because that facility doesn't allow puppies less than four months outside at all.

When Stefanie was in high school, she trained and showed Jack in a variety of 4-H classes. Most recently, he was involved in Pet Pals in Iowa for about four years. In that program, he did animal-assisted therapies for people with mental disabilities or traumatic brain injuries. Not only does Jack do therapy work, he is quite entertaining, with a collection of tricks. Now that Stefanie and Jack live in Madison, they hope to continue his good work in a variety of facilities.

Aside from assisting Jack in his therapy work and tricks, Stefanie also enjoys running, spending time by the lake, and reading.

Karen and Scout

Sunset Ridge Visit



I wanted to share two very special visits that Daisy and I had recently while visiting at the Sunset Ridge Elementary School. Both of the boys had special needs, were in wheelchairs, were non-verbal, and had aides accompanying them.

I was in the school office registering as a "visitor," with Daisy at my side. I noticed she had stepped away from me. As I turned around, I saw that she had approached a boy in a wheelchair. The aide brought the boy to the office where it was quiet, so that he could visit with Daisy alone. Daisy had put her head in the boy's lap. It appeared to me that the boy had limited ability to move his arms. But with time, he was able to move his left arm to Daisy's neck area and seemed to know that he was touching her. Soon, you could read his body

language and see the emotion he was feeling. His aides were noticeably aware and mentioned they had not seen that kind of emotion in this boy before.

The second visit happened in a classroom. As I located the room, I noticed the lights were off but went inside to wait for the students who were still out for recess. Two aides entered the room, accompanying a boy in a wheelchair and suggested that they would like to visit while the room was quiet. The boy had autism. They thought that it would be easier for him to be sitting on the floor. That works for us, too. Daisy approached him and put her head near his cheek. The boy very slowly leaned forward and snuggled his head beside hers. You could see the emotion he was feeling. He lifted both of his arms and wrapped them around her neck. It was so sweet. His aides also had not seen this display of emotion in this boy. It took our breath away.

In both cases, I had not instructed Daisy to approach these boys. She made the decision and knew what to do. Our dogs are amazing.

As I was driving away from the school and thinking about all the kids that we had visited with that day, I could not help reflect on the two special boys. How wonderful that they had had a fun day at school. I was hopeful that we had helped to make a good day for their parents, knowing their sons had a great visit with a therapy dog at school that day.

Kay and Daisy

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