

# “Paws & Hearts”

Animal Assisted Therapy

Fed. Tax ID #91-2096569

FALL2010

NEWSLETTER

## Board of Directors

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“Paws & Hearts”

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Windsor Court

## *Executive Director’s Message*

For us desert rats fall can’t be too far away. Cooler days and even cooler evenings start eight months of glorious weather in the desert.

What can I say about the year 2010? Challenging? Worrisome? ..... always praying that the next large donation will come in the mail. If ever an Executive Director was met with challenging times, this would sure be it. And it is not only “Paws & Hearts” that is experiencing this challenge. From what I hear in the non-profit community, every agency is struggling to keep afloat. I’m just glad that I have always saved for a rainy day.....and it’s been pouring this year!

One of the responsibilities of any Executive Director is raising money, and I’ve had to become very good at asking for donations. This is not always easy. It is a balancing act. You don’t want to offend anyone, or wear out your welcome. However, if non profits are to survive, the Directors have to be bold enough to just tell it like it is and hope their audience will be forthcoming. So far I’ve been pretty lucky. Let’s hope it continues because after 10 years I am eager to start the second decade.

*Richard Waxman*

## **Upcoming Events to Put on Your Calendars!**

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**Halloween Dog Costume Party  
Vista Cove at Rancho Mirage  
Saturday, October 30, 10 am**

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**10<sup>th</sup> Annual Dog Walk/  
Fundraiser  
Saturday December 4, 9am  
Westin Mission Hills Resort**

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## *.... “Lucky” & “Scruffy’s Views*

As we are about to celebrate our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Dog Walk it is time I acknowledged that my brother “Scruffy” helps me compose this corner of the newsletter and time I shared the title with him. After all he is always by my side on our visits!

We managed to get through the summer reducing our 3 times per week visits at Eisenhower Medical Center to only 2 visits. A little more walking, and a little more hopping on the beds, but it saved getting back into a hot car one of the days.

The nicest story *we* (see, there I am including “Scruffy”) have to share this time around comes from a patient we visited in early September. She told Dad that a few years ago her husband was in Eisenhower and she had seen us walking down the hall and she approached Dad to bring us into the room.

This woman’s husband was unable to communicate and as usual “Scruffy” and I were up on the bed. I layed my head across the man’s lap and he whispered the name of his last dog. According to the patient, her husband hadn’t been able to speak in months and this was the last word he uttered before he passed away. This woman could not thank us enough for what we did for her and for her husband. (Is there a box of Kleenex anywhere?) *What a lovely thank-you she gave us!*

*“Lucky” Waxman*

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### Volunteers.....the backbone of non-profits!

Where would non-profits be without volunteers? The volunteer core in the Coachella Valley is one of the strongest of any community, with over 800 registered 501c3's in operation. Every time I attend a volunteer event at Eisenhower Medical Center I am left speechless at the number of volunteers they have and the number of years that some of the volunteers have donated.

In terms of volunteer retention “Paws & Hearts” has a pretty good track record. We still have some of the original volunteers who started with us ten years ago, and every month brings us new volunteer teams. One of the aspects of volunteering with us is the fact that as volunteers we touch the lives of so many individuals who are experiencing challenges, and the visit our *Canine Ambassador's* provide are never forgotten. Because I wear the volunteer shirt daily, I am stopped constantly by people who share with me their story of the visit they or family members experienced with one of the volunteers and it is heart-warming to hear.

Over the course of the first 10 years I have temperament tested almost 1,000 dogs, many of whom became volunteers. I still get excited when a new dog passes the test and is placed in a facility, and am always saddened when a potential dog doesn't quite make it, because I feel I am disappointing the canine as well as the handler who had the best of intentions wanting to volunteer with us.

Volunteers help to foster community support especially in our case because as a group we are so visible out in the community. We all wear the volunteer polo shirt and our dogs wear the red bandannas. And volunteers lend an air of credibility to a non profit that paid staff can not do. After all, each and every volunteer *chooses* to volunteer and to contribute their time and energy because they believe in the mission statement that the organization has put forward. And in our case, our volunteers are living and breathing the mission statement with their weekly visits!

At 10 years of service we are incredibly well known in the Valley and that is due to the caliber of current and past volunteers. Our volunteers feel very passionate about their dogs and the work their dog is doing and their enthusiasm shines through and is constantly renewing and revitalizing the organization. Your weekly volunteer stories tell of your visit and I smile with gratitude to each and every one of you as I read them.

I have been blessed with having the very best of the volunteers, both human and canines the Valley has to offer and I thank all past and current volunteers for their donation of time, talent and treasure to “Paws & Hearts.”

*Richard Waxman*

#### Our Mission Statement

“Paws & Hearts” is a leader in the field of “Animal Assisted Therapy” (AAT) and it is our mission to enrich the lives of the frail and special care cases that require the loving attention and affection that only a “four-legged” healer can provide.

### Amelia Earhart June Exhibition

Last summer "Lucky", "Scruffy" and I were visited by some of the students from Amelia Earhart School who were putting together a presentation dealing with the topic of animal abuse and rehabilitation. We were part of the rehabilitation topic because so many of our Canine Ambassadors started out as shelter dogs. The boys and I were invited to the presentation and these students put together a power-point presentation that blew me away!

Not only did they get the facts correct their presentation was precise and accurate. They even sold chocolate bars to give us a donation! A winning morning for "Paws & Hearts!"



From left to right: Klara Kinsey holding "Lucky", Rylee Freeman, Richard holding "Scruffy", Drake Mekemson and Kyle Moe.

## Upcoming Events and Fundraisers

Upcoming events and fundraisers that the board has put together for our volunteers and folks in the community will be listed by date and function. And it will be noted whether the event is open only to volunteers or the entire community. All upcoming events will be board approved and hosted through the office of "Paws & Hearts."

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### **Annual Halloween Dog Costume Party**

Vista Cove at Rancho Mirage  
Saturday, October 30<sup>th</sup>, 10 am

The staff at Vista Cove are dressing up as the characters from the beloved cartoon, The Flintstones. I wonder how many Dino the Dinosaur and Hoppy the Kangaroo outfits we will see?

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### **10<sup>th</sup> Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser**

Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 9 am  
Westin Mission Hills, Rancho Mirage

What a celebration this one will be, as it will be the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Dog Walk. Where have 10 years gone?

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### **"As Good As New" Official Thrift Stores for "Paws & Hearts"**

Please be sure to visit our thrift shop, *As Good As New* located at 44 855 San Pablo Ave. #3, Palm Desert, behind the Angel View Thrift Shop, (760) 341-4660. The store is full of great items and the merchandise changes daily.

*As Good As New* is a terrific way to generate donations for our organization. A whopping 50% of all sales are a donation to us, so your purchases are very important, and your donations of household goods keeps a customer coming back.

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO SEE GARAGE SALES IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD, PLEASE CONSIDER ASKING THE SELLER IF THEY WOULD DONATE THEIR UNSOLD GOODS TO US. WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO ARRANGE PICK UP.

Keep in mind that we are able to *pick up* all of your large donations, so items such as furniture, televisions, even computers can benefit us, but please keep in mind that all items must be in *working* and *saleable condition*. So next time you are cleaning out the house, please give us a call and we will be only too happy to schedule a pick up!

**Summer Hours of Operation: Monday – Saturday 9 – 4 (760) 341-4660**

### Volunteer Stories

*A few of our readers have asked where our Volunteer Stories come from. Our volunteer teams visit their assigned facility each and every week and part of their commitment is to email into our office a weekly report, complete with their visitation story. Some day, these stories along with photographs will be turned into a book because the stories are heart-warming and the patients/clients we visit truly treasure their weekly visit.*

Lucy Curci Cancer Center at Eisenhower Syree & "Cali": Slow start to the day, but it became amazing.....got to meet a new patient who is going through a difficult bout with chemo and radiation. She was with her husband and they were amazing people. She loved "Cali", who made her way right into the woman's lap! When she finished her treatment she came back to say good-bye, and hugged me, and thanked me for what we bring in! Great day!

Vista Cove at Rancho Mirage Mary Carol & "Zorro": This was a nice mellow day at Vista Cove. Most patients were very relaxed and there was no drama. "Zorro" felt the calm as well and sat relatively quietly on several people's laps and let them pet him and give *him* kisses! He seems to get better every week. He will be 2 on October 1<sup>st</sup> (hard to believe) and gets calmer as he gets older. He's such a sweetheart and lover, but still likes to lick the floor, which I don't let him do, but the patients think this is all part of his kissing and they love it!

Eisenhower Medical Center Richard, "Lucky" & "Scruffy": We just had to share this story. A couple months back we visited a tiny, tiny little boy in his crib who was fussing and kicking up quite a ruckus. The nurse told us she was waiting for the boys to come along to see if they could calm the boy down. She asked me to put "Scruffy" in the crib (because he has a way with children). No sooner did "Scruffy" get in the crib that the little boy quit crying. The nurse held the boy up, and I held "Scruffy" up and I'm not sure if the boy even knew this was a dog, but just the visuals and the motion of my waving "Scruffy's" paw seemed to do the trick! It must have, because the minute we left the room, the crying started again!

California Nursing & Rehabilitation Jonathan & "Zoe": "Zoe's" first day went very well. She was well behaved and a big hit with most of the patients and staff. The individual visits were a little short but should become longer with time. Highlights were: one patient, with dogs at home, saying that "Zoe" made her day and one of the nurses said that her patient's visit with "Zoe" was the most outgoing and engaging she has seen. Any fears I had about "Zoe's" ability to do this volunteer work were completely erased by her performance today!

Manor Care Bill & "Fraser": "Fraser" bounded into the facility ready to greet all his friends and announce that he was back from vacation. What a reception it was! Everyone was happy to see him and he did a very good job at communicating his happiness as well. It was a nice visit!

Desert Regional Medical Center Nancy & "Nikki": As usual "Nikki" took on a puppy persona as soon as she saw the bandanna. Her head popped when we arrived at Desert Regional. Her tail started wagging and it was all we could do to keep her in the car until we got her leash on. Once in the hospital she strutted around and happily visited and kissed any patient that wanted to be kissed. "Nikki" loves to kiss! A job well done today! As I write this, she is asleep on her bed, snoring softly, probably dreaming about all the wonderful new friends that she made today.

## 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Dog Walk/Fundraiser

It is just a couple of months away from our **Annual Dog Walk/ Fundraiser**. And this is number 10! Can any of us believe that we have come so far and been around for an entire decade? Just think how many hundreds of thousands of patients we have made feel better with our **Canine Ambassadors**?

We are gearing up for an incredible event this time around and hope you will come out and lend a paw in support of our always growing organization!

### **SAVE THE DATE**

Saturday, December 4, 2010, Registration 9 am,  
Dog Walk 10 am, at the Westin Mission Hills Resort  
Rancho Mirage, CA.

