NEWSLETTER

Celebrating a milestone!

During the early 1980's the concept of pet provided therapy was introduced to the residents of north San Diego County in California. In providing the service, the founder saw a need for a larger organization to accommodate the growing number of requests she received from assisted living facilities, memory-care facilities, schools and hospitals. Love on a Leash® was created in 1984. The organization was incorporated in 1995 and is a 501(c) (3) charitable organization. This past summer we celebrated our 20th anniversary of being incorporated. It is a huge milestone and we are all very proud of the over two decades of service to our communities that our volunteers have so selflessly provided.

GUIDELINES



As our organization continues to grow we have found the need to update our National Guidelines on a regular basis. Our Guidelines were most recently updated on January 1st, 2016 Some of the items that have been updated are our Owner/Handler agreement, our annual renewal information, and our "manners on visits" section. Please take the time to review the guidelines to be sure you are up to date with the most current information.

Chapter Leaders and Visit Captains - please be sure that your new Teams in Training are also aware of our updated guidelines and are using the most current forms when submitting their applications.

Here is the link to our guideline page.
http://www.loveonaleash.org/Documents/Guidelines.pdf



Assistance or Service Animals vs. Therapy Pets - Understand the difference

One of the most common questions our therapy teams are asked is "How do I get my animal to be a therapy animal?" What we've discovered is that most people are confusing a service animal with a therapy animal. Below is some helpful information.

Therapy Pets -sole function is to provide comfort or emotional support. While they do provide a valuable service, they do not qualify as service animals under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). A therapy pet does not have the same legal rights as an assistance or service animal.

Service Animals - defined as animals that are individually trained to do work or perform tasks for people with disabilities. The work or task an animal has been trained to provide must be directly related to the person's disability. ***Remember - misrepresenting an animal as a service or assistance animal may be punishable by incarceration and/or fines including, but not limited to, other local or federal laws.***



Spotlight on Who We Help: College Students

According to a research study conducted by Georgia State University, animal-assisted therapy resulted in a 60 percent decrease in anxiety and loneliness symptoms in college students. The study suggests animal-assisted therapy could be an effective way for college counseling centers to meet the growing demands of their students. Within the past 10 to 15 years, college counseling centers aren't seeing students struggling with academics, they're seeing students struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety disorders, mood disorders, stress concerning what's happening in the world, as well as medical and family health issues. Source: ScienceDaily.com

Love on a Leash is doing its part to support college students!

Here's a link to news coverage of a Love on a Leash visit to Indiana University—Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI)
http://www.theindychannel.com/news/local-news/love-on-a-leash-local-nonprofit-brings-furry-friends-for-much-needed-stress-relief



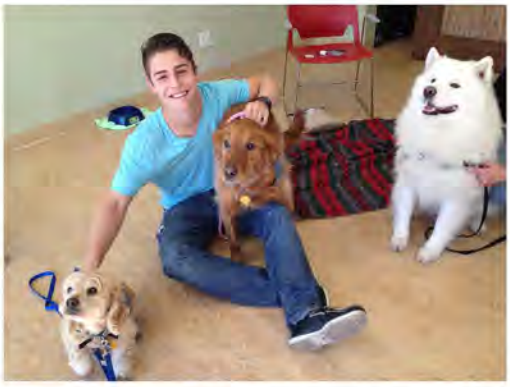
Love on a Leash: Local nonprofit brings furry friends for much-needed stress relief

BY: Lauren Casey
POSTED: 6:08 PM, Apr 27, 2015
UPDATED: 7:18 PM, Apr 27, 2015





The University of California, San Diego hosts Love on a Leash teams weekly as part of its Therapy Fluffies program offered by its on-campus wellness center, The Zone. UC San Diego is one of the few college campuses in the country with a facility devoted to health and well being de-stress programs. UCSD also brings in Love on a Leash teams for Family Day, during finals week, and for special events. During the 2014-2015 academic year the Therapy Fluffies program served nearly 4,000 students.





Here's what Debbie Kim, Program Manager at The Zone had to say about Love on a Leash visits to UC San Diego.

"Therapy Fluffies at The Zone has proven to be one of the most popular de-stress programs at UC San Diego. The Zone is a lounge for student well being designed to promote healthy, balanced living to UCSD students. Students are able to attend a variety of programs such as massages, DIY craft workshops, fitness classes, meditation, and more - all for free!

It seems as if The Zone is now synonymous to Therapy Fluffies as we are often referred to as the 'puppy people' at UCSD! One of my favorite comments during our 'Therapy Fluffies Extravaganza' where we have up to 2 dozen dogs during Finals Week, is when a student said that being at the program and playing with the therapy dogs was the first time he wasn't stressed out in a couple of weeks due to finals. Therapy Fluffies has become a beloved tradition on this campus and has flourished and grown year after year and has proven to further the health and well-being of our students at UCSD!" Visit this link for a video of more LOAL teams working their magic at UCSD.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-qgZCw2cXI





Spotlight on Research: The Health Benefits of Companion Animals



While therapy pets are not technically companion animals (well at least not to those they visit) the difference they make in the lives of the people they visit is evident to every Love on a Leash member. Pets are Wonderful Support (PAWS), a non-profit organization based in San Francisco, has documented the benefits of interacting with animals in its publication: The Health Benefits of Companion Animals.

Here are some of the benefits they cite:

• Pet interaction, whether passive or active, tends to lower anxiety levels, thereby decreasing the onset, severity, or progression of stress-related conditions.

• Enhanced hormone levels of dopamine and endorphins associated with happiness and well being, and decreased levels of cortisol (a stress hormone) follow a quiet 30-minute session of interacting with a dog.

• Patients with Alzheimer's disease showed increased calmness and improved social interactions when they received visits from Golden Retrievers.

• Animal-assisted therapy can effectively reduce the loneliness of residents in long-term care facilities.

• A single session of animal-assisted therapy significantly reduced patients' fear by 37% prior to serious medical treatment.

Source: The Health Benefits of Companion Animals http://www.nps.gov/goga/learn/management/upload/Comment-4704-attachment.pdf



In each issue we focus on one section of the Love on a Leash Member Guideline. We want to make it easier for members to stay "brushed-up" on their responsibilities as LOAL volunteers and so all visits may run smoothly.



In this issue we're shining the spotlight on :
Manners for General Visits.

1. Your pet must be groomed and tidy – pay special attention that nails are trimmed and smooth.
2. We recommend your pet wear his vest or bandana on all visits. It identifies your pet as a certified therapy pet and is an honor to wear. Members are required to display both their ID and their Pet's on their person.
3. "Meet and greet" other teams before you go in to a visit. Be sensitive to new pets.
4. Keep sensitive pets apart from each other.
5. Any pet that appears "out-of-control" (lunging, pulling or barking etc.) should be asked to leave before you enter a facility for a visit.
6. Know your pet and be alert to signs of discomfort, stress or fatigue. If he shows signs of being tired or irritable, simply excuse yourself and notify the visit captain or another team you are visiting with that you are leaving.
7. Visits may be social, but you must maintain control of your pet and know what your pet is doing at all times. Pay extra attention to long wagging tails. Never drop, let go, or hand-off the leash during the visit.
8. Keep all conversations appropriate. Personal conversations between visiting teams should be kept to a minimum. Remember, we are there to visit patients/clients, not each other.
9. Plan ahead of time how you will handle your pet being offered treats by others and always get permission to give treats to other pets.
10. Some people may be afraid of pets. It may be because they have had a negative experience or they have no experience with pets at all. Either way, respect the person and do not force the pet on them.
11. Be prepared to clean up after your pet. Take potty breaks away from activity. Pick up waste and dispose of it properly. (Stress levels can be high – especially for the first few visits.) If cleanup inside is required, notify staff immediately.
12. Remember that the staff in the places you visit like to be visited, too.

Excerpted from the Love on a Leash Member Guidelines, Revised 1/1/2016. You will find the full Member Guidelines available in PDF format at http://www.loveonalseash.org/documents/guidelines.pdf

The End of an Era ~ Marley's Fairwell

Many of you may not be aware of the fact that Love on a Leash used to be able to certify not only dogs, cats and rabbits, but also miniture horses and birds! Due to changes in insurance and liability factors we are no longer able to do so. Below is the story of Marley, the last of our bird therapy teams. His story is lovingly shared my his owner Joanie.



I rescued Marley a Peach Face Love Bird in the year 1999. He was a couple of years old when I rescued him from a local pet store. He loved to be handled and wasn't afraid of anything. It was love at first sight. I brought him home the day before Thanksgiving and that's when we celebrated his birthday. He became certified with Love on a Leash the year 2000. He visited Oak Tree House an Adult Day Care center, The Ventura Townhouse. The Early Intervention School visiting children. As the years went by we added other facilities. He also in the last two years visited the Veterans Home in Ventura. They have a bird aviary there so we would bring millet for birds. He was loved by all. Marley has a huge scrapbook filled with cards from places he visited and friends. Marley traveled to the bay area to visit first my Dad when he was ill and then my Mom. He went to both funerals and cheered family members and friends.

Parrots love to travel. Marley earned three advanced therapy "bird" degrees over the years. Marley loved visiting with my past Labradors, Nugget and Goldie. The past few months with our new Labrador, Dustie. They were more afraid of him. He loved to walk on their backs as they were sleeping. Christmas time was his favorite as we would travel to the Ojai Humane Society for the Santa Clause shoot for our Christmas Cards. Marley passed away June 3 rd, 2015 from a stroke. He was around 20 to 22 years and lived a wonderful life. Dr. Janet McNeil an avarian veterinarian in Ventura took excellent care of him over the years. When my heart heals I will get another Love Bird.



Dustie, my Labrador Retriever misses him.

Poinsettia Chapter Leader,
Joanie Shugar





Introducing one of our newest chapters. Music City Love on a Leash currently has 14 certified dogs and 1 very brave certified cat and they are recruiting new members. They are very active in their local communities and bring joy to many people every day.To learn more about the Music City Chapter please visit their website at www.musiccityloal.com.

Talk to Taco!



Meet Taco, our resident expert in all things pet therapy oriented. Taco's owner, Connie Kelly, has many years of experience not only with pet provided therapy, but also as a certified dog trainer. In each newsletter we will feature a "Talk to Taco" column answering your questions about unusual situations or problems you may have encountered while working as a therapy team. You (or your owner) can write to Taco and with the help of Connie he'll give guideance and suggestions. Share your experiences with other LOAL teams and help others who may be experiencing the same thing. Email "Talk to Taco" c/o our editor at newsletter@loveonaleash.org. Be sure include "Talk to Taco" in the subject line.

Contributions to the Newsletter

To contribute to our newsletter, you may email a story or article to newsletter@loveonaleash.org. Please note that the Editor will revise for length and content as dictated by available space so be concise. Try not to exceed 300-400 words so we can include everything. If you would like to email photos to go with your article, please select one or two (NOT ten or twelve) photos and make sure that you have the permission of anyone in the photos to use their picture. Many patients or residents do NOT wish their picture to be taken and certainly not published! Please be respectful. - The Editor



By the Numbers

Our organization contineus to grow by leaps and bounds. We now have over 2100 active members who volunteer with their pets on a regular basis. We have members in 46 states and even a member in Canada! We currently have over 54 chapters in 21 states. While the majority of our members volunteer with their dogs, we do have approximately 120 cat teams and 20 rabbit teams.

Did you know that you and your therapy animal can apply for an Advanced Therapy Degree from Love on a Leash? Pets that have passed the intial control and visit evaluations for membership and certification can be awarded the degree "Therapy Pet (ThD)." There are a number of different advanced degrees available depending upon your individual interests. Remember, advanced degrees require teamwork; this is a joint effort between you and your pet. If you are interested in learning more about these opportunites, and wish to learn about the complete application process, please visit our web site (loveonaleash.org) - click on "Forms/Guides" and then select "Member Forms."

Here are some of our most recent Advanced Therapy Degree Recipients



Meet Chuckles, a lovely little Papillon, owned by Lorraine. They are members of our Gold Country chapter in Lincoln, CA. Chuckles and Lorraine visit three Care Centers. At just under 5 pounds, he is always the "little guy" in the group, just perfect for sitting on laps and visiting on beds. Lorraine and Chuckles enjoy attending community dog events with other LOAL teams, educating other dog owners about our group and encouraging them to consider joining Love on a Leash.

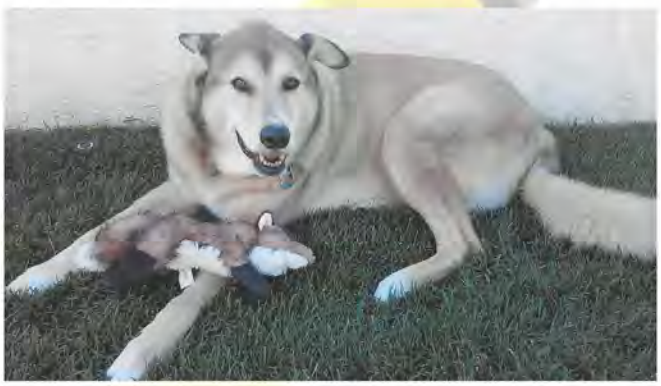


Introducing BreeAnna, a five year old Irish Wolfhound. BeeAnna is a big girl, standing 36" tall at the shoulder and weighing in at 160lbs. She is a good height to visit with people in their wheelchairs or in their beds because they can easily reach her. BreeAnna and her handler Donna are members of our Rockwall/Royse City Chapter, in Royse City, Texas. Together they enjoy visiting nursing home and specifically the VITAS and Gentiva Hospice patients. They also enjoy being part of a PAWSitive Reading program at the Rockwall County Library.

Shining the spotlight on more of our Advanced Therapy Degree Recipients



Say hello to Frankie! Frankie was a rescue dog that had been turned in by her previous owner when she was only a year old. Thankfully she was rescued by Olga, a retired teacher, who has a passion for literacy and helping children. Frankie and Olga traveled an hour and a half each way to do supervised visits and to learn to be an effective LOAL team with other members of the Coastal Carolina LOAL chapter. They now enjoy spending two to three days a week visiting a nearby primary school and library to listen to children read.



Lonnie Boy and his handler Cindy are relatively new to Love on a Leash, but being a senior gentleman, Lonnie Boy has been around the block. Cindy and Lonnie Boy have been with the San Diego Central LOAL chapter since November of 2014, and Lonnie is now 12 years old. Together they enjoy vising seniors several times a month. When they started the process of becoming certified Lonnie Boy was terrified of tile surfaces. Now he does U-turns on command while negotiating any surface. It just goes to show that you can indeed teach older dogs new tricks!



Meet Comet, a 5 year old border collie. Along with his handler Diana, Comet enjoys visiting senior living facilities in the Nashville area on an average of twice a week. Comet thrives on his visits and loves bringing comfort, happiness and laughter to the residents. Comet and Diana have shared several heartwarming and tender moments together during their time working as a therapy team. They have cultivated special relationships with several of the patients in the rehabilitation facilities they visit.

Advanced Therapy Degrees Continued...



Meet Koshi, a 9 ½ year old Catahoula Leopard dog. Koshi is a Hurricane Katrina survivor and was adopted by her owner Bonnie in 2006. Bonnie knew that Koshi would have some challenged ahead of her in terms of building trust and self esteem, but she was willing to take the time and give her all of the love and training she needed. During her early training Koshi proved herself to be a quick study, and blossomed into a patient, compliant, confident and intuitive dog. She and Bonnie focus their visits primarily on children.

Koshi is not a bubbling, bouncing dog but rather a quest, gentle soul and children respond to her on a deep level. They seem to recognize that she is gentle and soft natured. Koshi and Bonnie are members of the San Diego North County chapter and enjoy visits to a Family Recovery Center, and several local libraries, among other places.



Vinny is our newest cat to receive an advanced therapy degree. Right off the bat Vinny's owner knew that he had the right personality to do therapy work. He took to wearing a harness and leash easily and enjoyed socializing while cruising around in his stroller. Vinny primarliy visits nursing home residents and people light up when they see him. He has had some very special visits with patients who previously had no interest in communicating. Vinny is able to bring out smiles and conversation, and even get a stroke patient to move her affected arm, much to the delight of her care giver.



Last but certainly not least for Therapy Degrees in this addition, we would like to share Lily's special story.



Pat and her Golden Retriever Lily were a therapy team with us for over 8 years. In late 2015 Lily was diagnose with osteosarcoma, a horribly aggressive form of cancer. In November of 2015 she had to have her front left leg removed in an effort to help slow the growth of her cancer. Lily may have been going through a tough time of her own, but it didn't stop her from wanting to visit. Once she was healed from her surgery she was back on the job. Lily and Pat were involved in many different venues but Pat realized that Lily's love of working with children was very special. The team became very involved with the R.E.A.D. program at a local elementary school and library in their hometown of Beaufort, North Carolina. Throughout Lily's illness they continued to work with a 3rd grade class. They visited the children weekly, and worked with them individually to help develop their reading skills and self confidence. Lily enjoyed listening to the children read and because of her years of visits she was well known to all of the students in the school. Sadly Lily lost her battle with cancer in late January of this year. Our hearts go out to Pat, and we thank her for her many years of service to her community with Lily.



It is always fun to see our teams out and about in their communities. Say hello to Ollie, Rosie and Caroline. They are members of the Kennebec Valley Love on a Leash chapter in Maine. Along with other members these dogs visit the Waterville Public Library.

LOAL Foundation
Board Members

Your VOLUNTEER LOAL Board members serve with enthusiasm and strive to improve our organization and continue to expand our national presence.

President: Margaret Eggers
Vice-President: Bonnie Biggs
Secretary: Susie Blake
Treasurer: Randy Willox
Membership Chair: Keith Edleman
Newsletter Editor: Sue Subkow
Board Members: Bev Hodges, Mary Lee Kendrick, Meredith Rose, Debbie LaChusa, Angie Huser
Emeritus Board Members: Connie Kelly, Sue Matthews, Sheri Wachtstetter

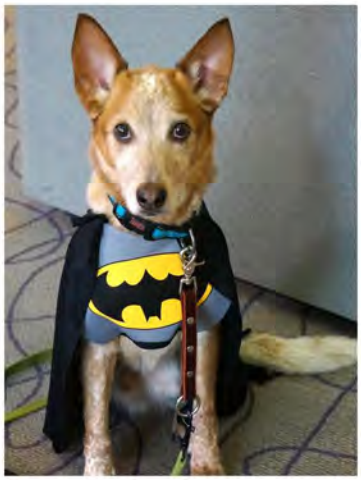
Dressed for the Occasion!



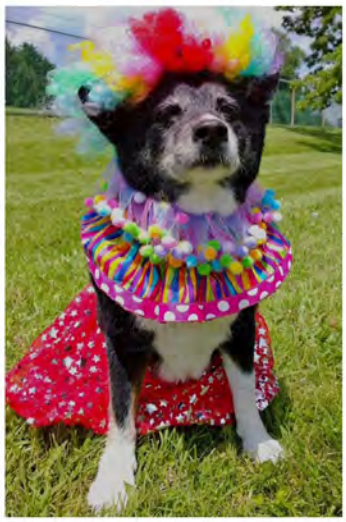
















If you have a fun photo of your therapy animal dressed up for a special occasion or visit, we'd love to see it! Please send your photo to newsletter@loveonaleash.org and write "Dressed for the occasion" in the subject line. (Please send .jpg version only, and keep files size to no more than 300KB)



