



NEWSLETTER

Winter 2026



Love on a Leash® Board – Your Volunteer Board members serve with enthusiasm, strive to improve organization and continue to expand our national presence.

Vince Cupo - President
Margaret Eggers - Vice President
Susie Blake - Secretary/Membership
Janet Herron - Treasurer
Sue Subkow - Chapters Coordinator
Beth Hulsart
Julie Hernandez
Deb Lee
Theresa Schwarz
Ana Cianciola

Inside this Issue...

Regular Features:

From the Board.....	1
Taking Care of Biz	2
Guidelines.....	3
Phone Volunteers.....	3
Shop Online.....	5
Spread the Word.....	5
Fun Giveaways	6

By the Numbers	6
Pet Panel.....	7
Advanced Therapy	
Degrees	13
Recognition Patches	14
Rainbow Bridge	15
Put Yer Feet Up!	16
In Memoriam.....	16-17

In Remembrance	18
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Featured Stories:

New Fees.....	4
Caleb, Come	4
Winter Quilt	8
Chapter Spotlight.....	9-10
Meet Maverick.....	11
Meet our Cats.....	12

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From the Board – Leading with Kindness

As Love on a Leash® continues to grow, we are excited to welcome new pet therapy teams into our community. Each new volunteer brings fresh energy, unique experiences, and a shared passion for making a difference through the healing power of animals.

Starting something new can feel exciting and a little overwhelming. Learning visit procedures, understanding expectations, and getting comfortable in different environments takes time. That's where our experienced teams play such an important role.

A friendly face, a simple greeting at a visit, or an offer to answer questions can make all the difference for a new handler. Small gestures help new teams feel seen, supported, and truly part of the Love on a Leash® family. Remember, every one of us was new once and we likely benefited from someone who helped us learn the ropes.

There are many easy ways to support newer teams:

- ♥ Introduce yourself at visits and include them in conversations.
- ♥ Offer tips about specific facilities or visit routines.

- ♥ Walk through the visit process. Each facility is different and knowing what to expect helps to put new teams at ease.
- ♥ Provide reassurance and constructive feedback after each visit. Remember to point out the good things, too, because a little encouragement goes a long way!



When new teams feel comfortable and confident, it strengthens Love on a Leash® as a whole. Supported volunteers are more likely to stay involved, take on more visits, and grow into mentors themselves one day.

Most importantly, kindness and patience help create the welcoming culture we all value. Our mission is not only about the comfort we bring to those we visit, but also about the supportive community we build with one another.

Thank you to all our dedicated volunteers who continue to lead by example and help make Love on a Leash® a place where both people and pets can thrive. Let's keep reaching out, lending a hand, and showing our newest teams just how glad we are they've chosen us.

– Sue Subkow
Board of Directors & Chapters Coordinator



Taking Care of Business

Pet Profiles!

For insurance purposes, we ask all volunteers to submit two different body photos of their therapy pets (ideally left and right sides). Photos can be uploaded to your online member account, or by emailing your pet's photos directly to info@loveonaleash.org. Thank you for helping us keep our records up to date!

Pet Panel

Had an experience on a visit and not sure how to handle it? Ask our Pet Panel! We'll keep your privacy and provide trainer-approved advice in a simple, helpful way. Just email your question to newsletter@loveonaleash.org with "Pet Panel Question" in the subject line.

Logo and Visit Requirements

We're proud of our official color – medium blue – so please try to wear it during your visits! Please also make sure your ID card is visible at all times (on a badge, lanyard, neck wallet, or retractable holder). Don't forget to carry your pet's ID, too, and present it when asked. Wearing our name helps set you and your pet apart as a pet therapy team from a recognized organization.

We Want to Hear From You!

We know that every day brings heartwarming moments and inspiring stories from our visits, and we're lucky to witness them all. However, for our newsletter to serve as a valuable resource for everyone, it's essential that we focus on content that helps support, improve, and strengthen the Love on a Leash® experience for all of us.

If you've had a unique experience, a lightbulb moment, or any ideas that could help us all become better pet therapy volunteers,

we want to hear from you!

We also welcome your heartwarming photos and stories – they're what make our community so special! We love sharing these moments, and we will include them when space allows.

You can easily share your ideas through our convenient [Google Forms](#) or feel free to email your submissions directly to newsletter@loveonaleash.org. Articles should ideally be no more than 400 words and may be gently edited to fit our space limitations. Please remember to include appropriate photo release forms when necessary.

Membership Updates

Log into your account online anytime to update your personal details. If your pet has retired or passed away, please let us know at info@loveonaleash.org. No internet? No problem. Call us at (760) 740-2326 or mail in your updates.



Guidelines in the Spotlight

As Love on a Leash® continues to grow, so do the types of visit requests we receive. One type of visit that has been gaining momentum is **in-home visits**, and we want to be sure our volunteers feel informed, supported, and safe when considering these opportunities.

Guidelines for in-home visits have been added to the **Membership Guidelines** on **page 35**. Above all else, our priority is the safety and well-being of our volunteers and their pets.

Guidelines for Establishing In-Home Visits

Love on a Leash® does not prohibit in-home visits by certified Love on a Leash® teams. That said, a few extra precautions should be taken to help ensure a positive and safe experience for everyone involved.

- ♥ For new in-home visits, it is strongly recommended that two certified Love on a Leash® teams attend the first visit together. If that is not possible, a family member or caregiver should be present during the visit and for any future visits.
- ♥ Before the visit, teams should confirm that no other pets will be present in the home. If other pets



are present, teams should confirm they are comfortable with unfamiliar animals. A meet-and-greet ahead of time is encouraged. Otherwise, other pets should be kept in a separate area during the visit.

- ♥ If a volunteer is unfamiliar with the location, but would still like to proceed, they may suggest holding the visit outside the home, such as in front of the residence, if the patient is able.
- ♥ All new in-home visits should be scheduled during daylight hours.
- ♥ The decision to establish an in-home visit rests with the Chapter Leader, where applicable. If there are any concerns or uncertainties, it is always appropriate to graciously decline the visit.
- ♥ In-home visits are not permitted for Teams-in-Training.

Official Love on a Leash® in-home visits conducted in accordance with these guidelines are covered under Love on a Leash® general liability insurance.

As always, we deeply appreciate our volunteers and the care they take in representing Love on a Leash®. Thank you for helping us continue to provide meaningful, safe, and compassionate visits in our communities. 🐾

★ Phone Volunteers Wanted ★

We're looking for a friendly and reliable volunteer to help cover the Love on a Leash® phone line on **Wednesdays**. This is a great opportunity to support our community and ensure that we're always available to assist our volunteer teams and new volunteers. If you're comfortable answering voice mails and would like to contribute, we'd love to have you on board! It's a flexible and rewarding way to give back. If you're interested or want to learn more, please reach out to us at info@loveonaleash.org.

Thank you for helping us continue our mission to spread love and comfort through therapy animals! 🐾



Reggie (2015-2022)



New fees as of Jan 1, 2026

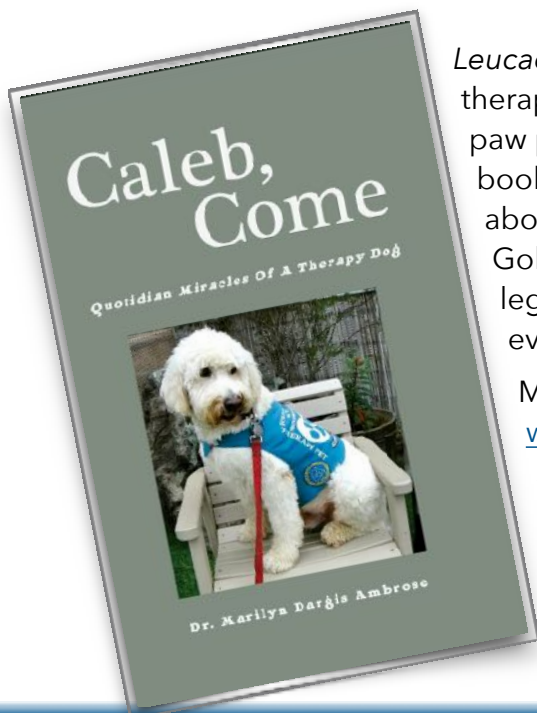
The Love on a Leash® Board has worked hard over the last 30 years to keep our pricing low and we have made every effort to make as few increases as possible. Unfortunately, we have also been impacted by economic realities, inflation, and rising postage, manufacturing, and labor costs. After much discussion, the Board had to make the difficult decision to increase our current fees. The updated fee structure is provided below and became effective Jan 1st, 2026, regardless of application status. ★ **Supervisors, please provide teams-in-training with a copy of the new fee sheet which can be found at the bottom of the [Forms/Guides](#) page on the Love on a Leash® website.** ★

New team	\$100
Add pet	\$80
Add handler	\$30
Renewal	\$50 (1 handler+1 pet, more than one pet renewal \$25 each)
Bandana	\$30 (new, softer, 2-ply fabric with <u>embroidered</u> logo, included with each new Welcome packet)
Vest	\$35 (optional purchase; no longer included in Welcome packets)
Neck wallet	\$15
Decal	\$5



Caleb, Come

Quotidian Miracles of a Therapy Dog



Leucadia, CA – Caleb and Marilyn Ambrose were a Love on a Leash® pet therapy team for 13 years from 2009 to 2022. While his legacy continues in the paw prints of Marilyn's second therapy dog, Grace, Marilyn decided to write a book about her pet therapy journey. "Caleb, Come is a heartfelt memoir about family, service, and the author's extraordinary bond with a gifted Golden Doodle named Caleb. It is the story of a very special dog and his legacy of love, comfort, healing, and joy. This is a book for anyone who has ever been, or wants to be changed by a dog to become a better person."

Marilyn's alma mater, Saint Mary's College in Notre Dame, IN, wrote a [wonderful feature](#) about Dr. Marilya Ambrose's journey to pet therapy.

"Dr. Mom" as Marilyn's children affectionately call her, is generously donating all proceeds from the book equally to Love on a Leash® and the Rancho Coastal Humane Society.

Caleb, Come is available in paperback or hardback on [Amazon](#) or directly from [Caleb's website](#) and soon as an audio book.



Shop for Love on a Leash® Gear



Stay warm and comfortable on visits with our Port Authority Value Fleece Vest – perfect for layering in any season! This super-soft, anti-pill, mid-weight fleece provides excellent warmth without bulk, making it ideal for therapy visits or everyday wear.

Made from 8.3-oz, 100% polyester fleece, it features a twill-taped neck, reverse coil zipper with chin guard, bungee cord zipper pulls, and front zippered pockets for convenience. The open hem with draw cord and toggles ensures a comfortable, adjustable fit.

Show your Love on a Leash® pride while staying cozy and polished wherever you go! 



Spread the Word

Love on a Leash® is proud to offer printed brochures and educational cards, illustrating the differences between therapy, service and emotional support animals. We provide these at no cost to our teams. If you would like some of these to provide to prospective teams in training, the facilities you visit, or for an upcoming event, please email us at assistant2@loveonaleash.org.

Please include the quantity you would like and let us know whether you would like brochures, therapy comparison cards or both! 



Fun Giveaways Adored by All Ages



Love on a Leash® is partnered with Creative Instinct, Inc. to offer Therapy Pet Trading Cards to our teams nationwide.

The order process is easy and the cards are very popular, especially with our younger fans.



Love on a Leash® bookmarks are also a big hit with our avid readers.

Available as single or double-sided;
minimum order: 25 pcs.

Log into your Member Account to order both the trading cards and bookmarks in the Order Merchandise section.



💙 By the Numbers 💙

Happy New Year! 🎉 As of February 2026, Love on a Leash® has grown to **2588** certified volunteer pet therapy teams in **44** states! Did you know that **81%** of our teams belong to chapters? At this time we have **66** active chapters in **28** states. Thank you for continuing to bring comfort and joy to those in need!





Dear Pet Panel,

My handler and I noticed something was off during a visit recently, but my person was wary about submitting an Incident Report. They didn't want to appear like a tattletale. I'm scared it will happen again or worse. Why is it so important to speak up?

– Signed, Ball o' Nerves Buddy

Dear Buddy,

This is an important question. Incident Reports are one of the less enjoyable responsibilities of being a Love on a Leash® volunteer, but they play a vital role in keeping our visits safe, positive, and trusted by the communities we serve. While no one *enjoys* submitting or receiving them, Incident Reports exist to support our volunteers, not to punish them.

With nearly 3,000 pet therapy teams nationwide, Love on a Leash® depends on clear, consistently applied guidelines. These standards begin with the Control Evaluation, continue through supervised hours, and extend into ongoing member accountability. Incident Reports are a key part of this system, helping ensure that expectations are upheld across all chapters and visits.

Animal behavior can change over time and environments can shift in ways that create unexpected stress for pets and handlers. Sometimes an incident may seem minor in the moment, but reporting it allows leadership to identify patterns, address concerns early, and prevent more serious issues from developing. **If something feels “off,”** that feeling alone is reason enough to **submit an Incident Report.**

Reporting is not tattling. It is a shared responsibility that requires humility and understanding from everyone involved. Each report is a reflection of our collective commitment to

safety, transparency, and the well-being of our pets, our volunteers, and the individuals we serve.

It is also important to emphasize that no volunteer should ever fear retaliation for submitting an Incident Report. **Bullying, exclusion, or negative comments,** especially from Chapter Leaders or Visit Captains, **are never acceptable.** All Incident Reports are reviewed by the Love on a Leash® National Board of Directors, who investigate and consider all perspectives before making any decisions.

If you are the subject of, or are considering submitting an Incident Report, please know that **almost none of them result in certification revocation.** Many are resolved through further training, additional supervised hours, or are dismissed entirely! The Board's goal is always education, support, and returning teams to the visits we all love so much whenever it is safe to do so.

Incident Reports are not about punishment. They are about protecting our pets, supporting our volunteers, and maintaining the integrity of Love on a Leash®. If you are ever unsure about whether an Incident Report is warranted, please email us at info@loveonaleash.org!

Thanks for looking out for all of us!
The Pet Panel 🐾

Have a question for our Pet Panel? There isn't a sticky situation they can't handle!
Send your pet's questions to newsletter@loveonaleash.org.





A Labor of Love – Patti Moreland’s Quilt Tribute

From the Archives



Wildwood, MO – In 2019, longtime Love on a Leash® volunteer **Patti Moreland** shared a quilt that beautifully celebrates her former therapy dogs **Annie** and **Molly**. Patti has been volunteering since 2013 and her handiwork reflects the same care and patience she brought to every visit. The quilt showcases Annie and Molly, who were described as calm, comforting, and full of quiet joy by those who met them.

Annie and Molly visited several assisted living facilities where residents would light up at the sight of them. They also spent time at a school for special needs children, helping students feel safe and engaged. At Whiskers and Tales in the St. Louis County libraries, children practiced reading aloud while petting the dogs, turning nervous moments into small victories.



Patti’s beautiful quilt has become more than a personal keepsake. It has also immortalizes two dedicated pups who showed up week after week to bring comfort and connection for a decade. This piece is a reminder that service can take many forms. Sometimes it is a soft nose nuzzled up against a grateful hand. Other times it is a careful stitch that holds a treasured memory in place.

We hope the spirit behind this quilt inspires our community. It honors Annie and Molly, celebrates the power of the human-animal bond, and reflects Patti’s belief that kindness can be both seen and felt. 

Chapter Spotlight: Angeles Valley Foothills

Chapter Leaders Kathy Pilos and Monica Nolan, CA

You became Love on a Leash® members in 2013 and Do your volunteers visit facilities as large groups, 2019, respectively. How has the chapter changed smaller groups of 2 to 3, or are the visits more over the years? individual?

Kathy: I originally became a therapy dog handler in 2003 through another organization with my first two German Shepherds. When it came time to certify my next dogs in 2013, we chose Love on a Leash® [LOAL], and I have since certified multiple German Shepherds through LOAL. Over time, I also took on the role of Chapter Leader, and the Angeles Valley Foothill Chapter was formed. Covering the Greater Los Angeles area proved to be a big task, so LOAL supported splitting the territory, which made a huge difference.

Monica: The chapter has grown tremendously since I've been involved. A big part of that growth comes from offering CGC and Love on a Leash® classes three times a year. This helps expose more people to therapy work and shows them how to take the next step toward certification.

Do you remember how many volunteers joined your chapter at the outset? How many volunteers does your chapter have now?

We currently have a little over 75 certified members and about 15 teams under supervision. Offering CGC classes has really helped grow our chapter, as people already training their dogs learn about therapy work and are excited to get involved.



We send out a monthly visit list by email that includes locations, dates, times, and visit captains. Most of our regular visits are to assisted living and memory care facilities. We also do one-time visits for schools during finals, wellness events, and after tragedies. Two years ago, we organized a week of visits after a tragic student loss at a local high school, and last year we did a week of visits at an elementary school in Malibu after evacuations during the fires. One especially touching visit has been to a federal halfway house, where parolees are working to reenter the workforce. Watching tough-looking men soften when greeted by a dog never gets old.

What kind of facilities do you visit? Do you receive requests or reach out?

Early on, we reached out to facilities. Now, most of our visits are requested by the community. We currently visit assisted living, memory care, skilled nursing facilities, hospitals, rehabilitation centers, facilities supporting individuals with traumatic brain injuries and PTSD, schools, universities, medical and law schools, government facilities, and even armed forces locations such as Air National Guard and Coast Guard facilities. Our teams have also visited studios like Warner Brothers, Universal Studios, NBC, and

CBS. We've provided comfort after wildfires and shootings, supporting both first responders and affected community members. ↘



Chapter Spotlight ctd: Angeles Valley Foothills

Do you have any Advanced Therapy Degree recipients in your chapter?

Kathy: Many of our teams have achieved advanced therapy titles through AKC. Most have Therapy Dog Novice and Therapy Dog titles, several have Advanced titles, and a few have earned Excellent and Distinguished titles. One of our teams, Karen and Kylo, recently completed their 600th visit, which is incredible to witness.

Do you have any unique teams or unique animals in your chapter?

Monica: We have a wide variety of breeds, from Chihuahuas to Newfoundlands, along with German Shepherds, Golden Retrievers, Aussies, doodles, pit bulls, and mixes. One of our more unique teams currently under supervision is a sweet three-legged pup named Livvy.

Kathy: We also have one certified cat in our chapter. Depending on the occasion and the dogs' comfort levels, some teams enjoy dressing up for themed visits and special events.

Do your volunteers get together socially outside of visits?

We don't have formal social gatherings, but visiting together builds strong friendships. Many of our members also participate in dog sports like obedience, agility, and nose work, so we often see each other at events. Our therapy dogs really bring people together in meaningful ways.

What is your favorite part of volunteering with Love on a Leash®?

Kathy: The miracles we witness. One of our most meaningful experiences involved a young woman in a wheelchair who was



nearly quadriplegic and nonverbal. Over time, through interactions with our dogs, she began communicating and using her hands in therapy. The staff now incorporate our dogs into her rehabilitation, and we continue to visit her and support her progress. Watching therapy dogs help unlock moments like that is truly unforgettable.

Monica: For me, it's seeing someone smile and remembering the joy of having a dog. One visit that stands out was to a retirement home for nuns. One woman had been afraid of dogs since she was bitten as a child. Little by little, she worked up the courage to pet one of the dogs. The smile on her face in that moment was priceless. 🐾

🐕 Jack of All Trades: K9 Maverick Vom Hazak 🐕

Submitted by Jackie Plubell [member since 2024]

Clearfield, PA – Born on National Puppy Day in 2021, **K9 Maverick Vom Hazak** has spent his life bringing joy, comfort, and purpose to everyone he meets. For his owners, **Jackie** and her husband, Maverick is more than simply a therapy dog. He's family, motivation, and a daily reminder to stay active and connected. As Jackie shares, "He and his sister, K9 Sadie Vom Hazak, keep us busy and moving. They give us purpose since our kids are grown and on their own now."

Maverick's training journey began early, starting with S.T.A.R. Puppy class and progressing through Canine Good Citizen (CGC), Advanced CGC (CGCA), Urban CGC (CGCU), and Trick Dog Novice and Intermediate titles. His enthusiasm for learning has taken him beyond pet therapy into exciting new areas such as Search and Rescue tracking, Shed Find, Wounded Game Tracking, Barn Hunt, and Agility.

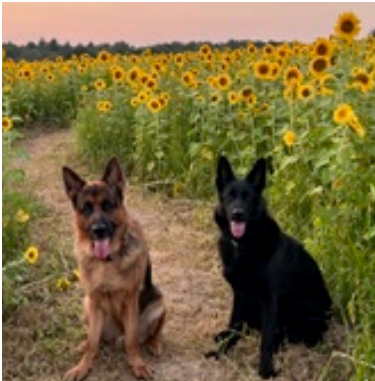
When they decided to pursue pet therapy, Maverick and Jackie first completed six weeks of training with instructor Kelly at a local training facility called Waggin' Trains, followed by their requisite ten supervised hours at

nursing homes before being officially certified as a Love on a Leash® pet therapy team.

In addition to pet therapy visits, Maverick thrives in other activities that keep his working mind engaged. He excels at Barn Hunt, where his natural curiosity and problem-solving skills shine, and enjoys the teamwork of Agility, an activity that keeps both him and Jackie active. "He gives me a reason to keep moving," she says. "I may not be able to hike the way I used to, but my dogs inspire me to try new things and stay involved."

Jackie's journey reminds us that pet therapy is only one of many ways our Love on a Leash® dogs can enrich our lives and communities. Exploring new activities like agility, scent work, or trick training, not only strengthens the bond between handler and dog, but also provides wonderful, fresh ways for teams to grow together.

K9 Maverick Vom Hazak may have started as "just a family companion," but his joyful spirit and boundless enthusiasm have made him so much more: a friend, a healer, and an inspiration to everyone who meets him. 🐾



🐾Therapy Cats of Pensacola🐾

Submitted by Wayne Epley [member since 2018]

Pensacola, FL – I am honored to have been asked to share a few stories about my wonderful therapy cats over the past few issues. I am a 63-year-old disabled Air Force veteran who has also been an animal trainer for over 40 years. I have been happily representing Love on a Leash® for the last 7 years. I currently have 3 “working” animals and in this article I’d like you to meet our sweet girl, **Solara**, who is a Flame Point Siamese.

I rescued Solara’s mom, Daisy, and when I found Daisy, she was very pregnant and about to have her kittens any day. Daisy was a kitten herself and only about 7 months old. She was a stray living out in the open, and would likely have lost her kittens simply trying to survive. With my help, the next day she gave birth to six kittens. We were able to find homes for all of them, but I had to keep my lovely little Solara.

Solara Teaches Me How to See

Solara had been certified for a few months when we visited the facility where I got my start visiting with my cats. We are always warmly welcomed there, and the residents look forward to Tuesdays when the “cat man” comes.

We were nearly done with our visit one day, having already seen 45-50 friends, when we met a wonderful gentleman who already had visitors, but really wanted to meet the therapy animals that had come to see him. Once his other guests left, we had the chance to talk and interact with him. Being blind, he was so happy to learn that the animal beside him was a kitty.

We’ve had many special moments with the people we visit, but this one stayed with me. He said it was deeply comforting to have this little cat so close and even though he was blind, he told me, in that moment, it didn’t matter.

I described what Solara looked like, her age, how long she’d been certified, and how happy she seemed to be there with him. He loved feeling her long Siamese ears and was touched by how patient she was, letting him explore her features with his hands to feel what she looked like.

Solara is much smaller than Aslan and Thumnus and very quiet. She loves to sit or lie with the people we visit. Many describe her as being like butter, melting into their arms. She

has tiny paws, which our new friend found such joy in stroking. Most cats don’t like having their paws touched, let alone stroked, but Solara just gazed at him lovingly and purred.

When our visit ended, he gave us such a peaceful, happy smile. We didn’t get the chance to see him again, as he was moved to a different facility, but when people ask why we do this, I only have to remember that smile.

Each of my animals seems to have a special gift. Solara’s is helping people reconnect with the memory of a beloved pet from long ago. I can see the years fall away in the faces of those holding her. The joy begins in their eyes and spreads to a smile that lights up their whole face.

Thank you for giving me the chance to share the joy these incredible animals bring. I feel truly blessed to walk alongside them as they offer comfort, connection, and a little healing to those who need it most. Sometimes, all it takes is a soft paw, a gentle purr, and a few quiet moments to remind someone they’re not alone.

Peace,
Wayne 🐾



Advanced Therapy Degree recipients (since our last issue)

Advanced Therapy Degrees (ThD) from Love on a Leash® are available to teams once they become certified teams. There are a variety of specialty fields depending on where your team enjoys volunteering most. Advanced Degrees showcase dedication and teamwork; this is a joint effort between you and your pet. If you are interested in learning more about how to earn this award, please log into your [Member Account](#) and navigate to Helpful Documents.



2 Degrees



PJ (WA) – 1. e:sv (Sep '23), 2. cr (Dec '25)



JoBo (MO) – 1. c:rp (Apr '24), 2. ht (Dec '25)

Congratulations!

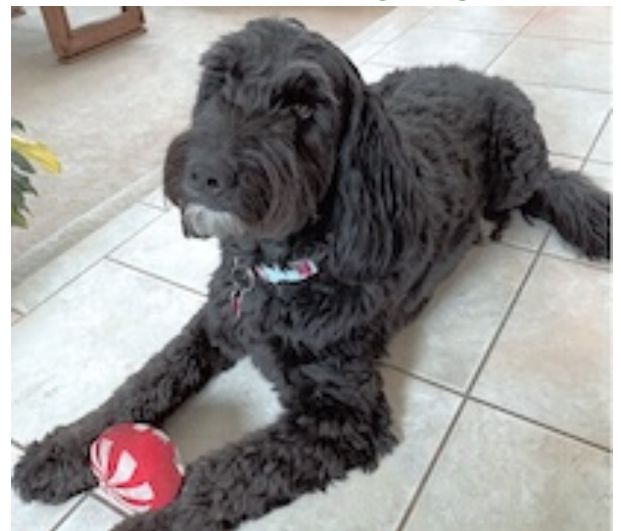
2 Degrees



Shelby (NC) – 1. ht (Dec '25), 2. cdt (Dec '25)

ThD (c:rp)

Children: Reading Programs



Bailey (WA) - Dec '25

**Unless indicated otherwise, all pets are active as of this publication; dates indicate when degree was earned.*



Sandi Stewart Therapy Pet Recognition

Sandi Stewart Therapy Pet Recognition patches from Love on a Leash® are available to teams once they become certified. Sandi Stewart served as a Love on a Leash® Board member, and ultimately penned documentation about therapy service with rabbits. Sandi left a lasting legacy with a generous bequest to Love on a Leash®. In 2022, we proudly introduced this program and these patches in her honor, recognizing our pets' selfless service bringing love and comfort to those in need in our communities. To learn more about how to earn this award, please log into your [Member Account](#) and navigate to Helpful Documents.



Susan & Shelby (NC)

*Congratulations
on achieving these
milestones!*



JoBo & Laura (MO)



Hank & Linda (ME)



Mary, Ray & Robert (NY)

**Unless indicated otherwise, all pets are active as of this publication.*



Till We Meet Again...

As we go through the natural ebb and flow of life, we must inevitably say goodbye to some of our dearest friends. While it's hard to part with them, we take comfort in celebrating the wonderful life they led. We are so grateful for the joy they brought into our lives and for the way they shared their lively spirit with everyone around them. They will always be remembered fondly and missed dearly. Honoring the memory of those since our Spring 2025 newsletter. **Years indicate service with Love on a Leash®.**

Adare (Irish Jack Russell Terrier) 2019-2026 (Berry, KY)

Akira (Labrador Retriever Mix) 2024-2025 (San Diego, CA)

Alfie (Standard Poodle) 2018-2026 (Odenton, MD)

Alfred (Labradoodle) 2024 (Morehead City, NC)

Alley (Persian Cat) 2023-2025 (Ojai, CA)

Andromeda (Labrador Retriever) 2018-2025 (Kissimmee, FL)

Augi (Havanese) 2024-2025 (Bel Aire, KS)

Baci (Boston Terrier) 2015-2026 (Baiting Hollow, NY)

Bailey (Goldendoodle) 2017-2025 (Gulf Breeze, FL)

Bebop (Pembroke Welsh Corgi) 2015-2026 (San Diego, CA)

Benz (Aussie Shepherd) 2015-2023 (Fallbrook, CA)

Ellie (Golden Retriever) 2015-2024 (Omaha, NE)

Fiona (Samoyed) 2025 (West Lafayette, IN)

Gibbs (Pembroke Welsh Corgi) 2018-2025 (Joplin, MO)

Gunner (Chorkie) 2013-2025 (Lexington, KY)

Honey (Dachshund) 2017-2025 (La Mesa, CA)

Jack (Golden Retriever) 2017-2025 (Indianapolis, IN)

Jack (Siberian Husky) 2018-2025 (Babylon, NY)

Kai (Aussie Labradoodle) 2016-2025 (San Diego, CA)

Kim Stoeher (Member) 2018-2025 (Fuquay Varina, NC)

Lady Lilly (Golden Retriever) 2021-2025 (Fort Gratiot, MI)

Lilly (Chesapeake Bay Retriever) 2018-2025 (Paris, IL)

Lily (Aussie Shepherd) 2022-2025 (Madisonville, KY)

London (Standard Poodle) 2018-2025 (Omaha, NE)

Lucille (American Bully) 2021-2024 (Port Huron, MI)

Luke (Golden Retriever) 2018-2026 (Woodland Hills, CA)

Mia (German Shepherd) 2018-2026 (Canaan, ME)

Niko (Collie) 2014-2025 (Indianapolis, IN)

Ollie (Mini Aussie Shepherd) 2022-2026 (Oxnard, CA)

Panzer (American Bully) 2018-2025 (Port Huron, MI)

Ripp Wheeler (Border Collie) 2025 (Vestal, NY)

Roxy (Lab Hound Mix) 2017-2024 (Wilmington, NC)

Rudy (Newfoundland) 2018-2025 (Fort Gratiot, MI)

Sara (Standard Poodle) 2018-2025 (Joplin, MO)

Scarlett (Frenchie) 2020-2025 (Carlsbad, CA)

Scruffy (Golden Retriever) 2019-2025 (Davenport, IA)

Sigmund The Seamonster (Formosan Mt Dog) 2017-'25 (Encinitas, CA)

Sir Gibson Paddington (Yorkipoo) 2014-2025 (Houston, TX)

Sky (Greyhound) 2021-2025 (Omaha, NE)

Skyler (Labrador Retriever) 2015-2025 (Omaha, NE)

Sophie (Goldendoodle) 2023-2026 (Freeburg, IL)

Walker (Labrador Retriever) 2021-2025 (Indianapolis, IN)

Watson (Shih Tzu) 2016-2026 (Jenks, OK)



🐾 Paws and Reflect: Celebrating Our Retirees 🐾

As we celebrate the joy and connection our therapy volunteers bring, we also want to give a warm shoutout to those who have recently hung up their leashes (and lanyards)! The following pets and their beloved humans have officially retired from Love on a Leash® – whether it's time for extra naps, more couch snuggles, or simply new adventures, we're sending them off with love and gratitude for all the smiles they've shared. **Years indicate service with Love on a Leash®.**

Biggs Barksdale (Aussie Labradoodle) 2013-2025 (Columbia, MS)	Mitch Esters (Continuing Member) 2015-2025 (Omaha, NE)
Bree (Golden Retriever) 2023-2025 (Kingston Springs, TN)	Molly (Golden Retriever) 2024-2025 (La Jolla, CA)
Brisa (Portuguese Water Dog) 2015-2025 (Cherry Valley, IL)	Patches (Beagle Mix) 2016-2026 (Mitchell, IN)
Cooper (Standard Poodle) 2019-2025 (Wagoner, OK)	Ripley (Golden Retriever) 2022-2025 (San Diego, CA)
Dana (Carolina Dog) 2024-2025 (Westfield, MA)	Samson (Doxie-Chon) 2017-2025 (Marion, IN)
Gryffin (Goldendoodle) 2019-2025 (Waynesville, MO)	Sky (Blue Heeler Terrier Mix) 2023-2025 (El Cajon, CA)
Linda Penkalski (Continuing Member) 2014-2025 (Lamoine, ME)	Vikki Franklin (Continuing Member) 2015-2025 (Lexington, KY)
Louie (Jack Russell Terrier) 2017-2025 (Carlsbad, CA)	Willow (Labradoodle) 2022-2025 (Omaha, NE)
Maggie (Border Collie) 2018-2026 (Signal Mountain, TN)	Yogi (Goldendoodle) 2022-2024 (Wichita, KS)
Max (Terripoo) 2016-2025 (Jonesboro, AR)	

Macey, One Singular Sensation – 4/12/11 ~ 10/29/25 🌈

Submitted by Sandy Pearson [member since 2015]



Fishers, IN – Macey a black and tan Cavalier King Charles Spaniel was born in Iowa and arrived in Indianapolis on July 14, 2011 to meet her parents Tom and **Sandy Pearson**. She made many friends all along the way because there were many special notes on her boarding and handling tag. She was already providing therapy to those she met. She was a calm, kind, and gentle soul and set a great example for those in training. During her 10 years as a therapy pet she earned two Love on a Leash® Advanced Therapy Degrees. Macey and Sandy visited numerous facilities hundreds of times. Macey was always happy to see old friends and make new ones. She particularly loved getting dressed up for holidays and special occasions.

Macey never met a person or dog that she didn't like. She spread joy, comfort, and love to everyone. One of her favorite things during college and high school visits was to have multiple people petting her at once. When visiting senior centers, she was small enough to lay next to someone in bed. She had favorite people at some senior centers and always wanted to sit on their couch or in one of their chairs. Her hobbies were loving her people, visiting friends, playing with toys, riding in the car, going on trips and barking at squirrels. We were blessed to have Macey in our lives for 14.5 years.

Though her paw prints have vanished, the marks she left on our hearts will remain forever. Run free sweet girl. 🐾

In Remembrance 🌈 Akira's Bright Light

Submitted by Erica Diamond [member since 2024]

San Diego, CA – There are no words to fully capture what it was to know **Akira**. Through her life and service with Love on a Leash®, she showed us what resilience truly looks like, not in leaps and bounds, but in steady, hopeful steps forward. She reminded us of the beauty of second chances and the power of hope and joy. She was a bright light despite the cards life had handed her.

Akira was surrendered to a rescue for senior dogs after her owner entered a care facility and she was found starving and unable to walk. As a 12-year-old, paralyzed pit bull mix, Akira waited more than 90 days with zero adoption interest before coming home with me for what was meant to be a short foster stay. It quickly became clear she was extraordinary, steady, gentle, and completely unshakable. Even when people and her body had failed her, her spirit never did. She showed up anyway. She loved anyway. She healed anyway. Hoping others might see what I saw, I had Akira take the Canine Good Citizen test, which she passed effortlessly. When someone suggested pet therapy, it felt like the missing piece fell into place. She was meant for this “work”, and her foster stay soon became adoption and a legacy of bringing comfort, joy, and inspiration.

Someone once described Akira as “a cup of love that anyone could come and take as much as they needed,” and that was exactly who she was. She shared that same steady heart everywhere, from the

DEA's office and NICU reunions to children's camps, college campuses, hospice centers, cancer events, and countless classrooms, but her favorite place was always Rady Children's Hospital. That's where her gentleness shined the brightest, where she seemed to know exactly when to be silly and when to simply be still. Her wheelchair didn't set her apart; it made her an inspiration, reminding patients and families that even in the hardest moments, strength, joy, and hope can still move forward.

Akira was a complete puddle of love, bulldozing her way through life on her wheels. She had a presence that people felt. She showed up fully and confidently in spaces where dogs like her weren't always expected, or always accepted, and somehow made herself belong. People were drawn to her everywhere we went. She had a way of making strangers slow down, smile, and believe in something good. She reminded everyone she met that age and disability do not diminish worth, they reveal resilience, grace, and the power of love.

Akira means “bright light,” and she lived up to her name every single day. Because she was given a second chance, her final chapter was filled with purpose, adventure, and unconditional love. She was seen. She was cherished. And she changed the world simply by being fully, unmistakably herself. Loving her changed my life forever, and I will always be grateful for everything she taught me, and countless others, through her service with Love on a Leash®. 🐾



🐾 In Gratitude & Remembrance 🐾

Pam Schuman 1947 † 2025 – Ventura Chapter

Ventura, CA – Pam began volunteering in 2002 and quickly became a pillar of pet therapy in Ventura County. What started as a personal passion grew into a community movement, one that continues to comfort hospital patients, lift up students, and bring neighbors together through the steady, joyful presence of therapy animals.

Building Programs that Last

In the late 2000s, Pam helped bring together a small circle of handlers who were eager to serve. She embraced mentorship and program-building with enthusiasm, collaborating early on with local leaders to launch Paws for Reading. Working closely with Star, she helped shape and then steward the library program so children could relax, practice reading aloud, and discover confidence beside a calm, friendly dog. What began as a simple idea became a staple in Ventura's literacy efforts; many of today's reading-team volunteers trace their inspiration back to Pam's gentle example.

Comfort in Clinical Settings

Pam also poured her heart into visiting hospitals, helping organize therapy dog teams at Community Memorial Hospital and later Ventura County Medical Center. Week after week, she and fellow volunteers offered quiet moments of relief to patients, families, and staff, those small but significant visits that turn sterile corridors into places of connection. Beyond hospitals, Pam made time for residents at Ojai

Extended Care, where her calm presence and the soft muzzle of a therapy dog brightened long afternoons and eased hard days.



The Dogs We'll Always Remember

Over 23 years, Pam visited with four beloved Bearded Collie companions: Magic, Chad, Livi, and Nina, who like Pam, had that special gift of making people feel seen and at ease. In photo after photo, from early group shots in 2008 to recent gatherings, Pam can be spotted at the heart of our chapter events, smiling, encouraging, and ready to lend a hand.

Pam's Enduring Gift

Pam's legacy lives in the programs she helped create, the teams she mentored, and the countless quiet moments of comfort she and her dogs created. Her spirit lives in the laughter at library story times, in the grateful nod of a nurse on a difficult shift, in the relaxed shoulders of a patient who forgets to be afraid for a moment. She continues to live, most of all, in the community she knit together: handlers, pets, families, students, and staff who now carry her spirit forward.

To the volunteers who walked beside her from 2002 through today, thank you for sharing your memories and photos; they testify to a life of consistent kindness. As we honor Pam, we recommit to the service she loved: showing up, listening, and letting our animals do what they do best, bring comfort where it's needed most. 🐾

Sometimes we must say goodbye to volunteers that have left an indelible mark in our local communities. Their untimely loss reverberates deeply and they are missed greatly. "Goodbyes are not forever, Goodbyes are not the end. They simply mean I'll miss you, Until we meet again."