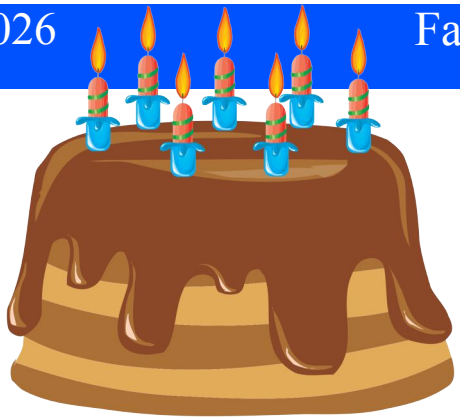
Companions, Inc.

Paws for a Cause since 1986

The Tailwagger

November 2026 Fairbanks, Alaska



A

Happy 40th Birthday to Companions, Inc.!



When a handful of Fairbanks pet owners decided to come together and create a program of healthy, well behaved pets visiting local care centers, hospitals, and other community sites and events back in 1986, little did they know Companions, Inc. would celebrate 40 years and growing, with over 30 dogs actively visiting in the Interior area. Turn the page to see fun photos of our birthday party on October 28 at Fairbanks Memorial Hospital, our official home base.

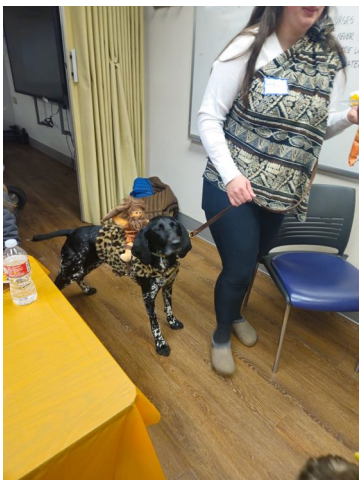
Pictured above, a handful of our dedicated volunteers and their human handlers during summer!

COMPANIONS ANNUAL MEETING AND HALLOWEEN BASH



























Hear ye, hear ye.....

Our meeting was joined by AK State Rep. Maxine Dibert and AK State Senator Scott Kawasaki, representing the local governance, missing a few local mayors who were down with the flu. We were presented with a Proclamation from the mayors of Fairbanks, the Fairbanks North Star Borough and North Pole and a letter from the American Kennel Club recognizing Companions, Inc. as a model pet therapy program. In the last year alone, our volunteers put in 868 hours of service (possibly more — do YOU remember to log your hours regularly?!)

Two large groups of costumed dogs and owners took a "Trick or Treat" tour of Fairbanks Memorial Hospital's wings, bringing joy and laughter to both staff and patients, with the dogs receiving treats and so much attention most of them promptly fell asleep when returning to the party room.

Part of our annual meeting is electing new Board members. This year Glen Anderson was elected and Erin Parcher-Wartes was reelected for another term. Glenner does great publicity for us and Erin is our Sign-up notice giver, so we already appreciate what they contribute!

The recipients of our annual monetary donations, this year $1000 each, were the Alaska Spay/Neuter Assistance Program and also Alaska Native Rural Veterinary, Inc. Both organizations are operated solely on donations, so were grateful to Companions for recognizing the extreme need for support for their services.

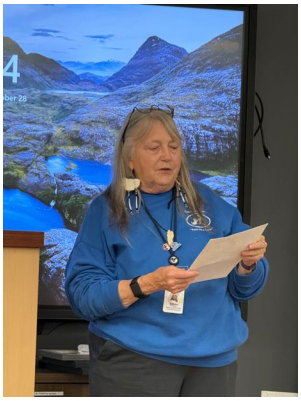
The Business of the Year award was given to Gerry Richards/RJG CPA for their help in our accounting. Kris Capps for the Fairbanks Daily News Miner was given an appreciation award for her longtime and continuous coverage of Companions, Inc.

The award for most hours visiting went to John Bunten and Angel, who barely edged out Sarah McConnell and Bug. The Volunteer of the Year award went to Erin Parcher-Wartes, who keeps us on our toes knowing what sites are available for visits.

















Office of the Mayor
Fairbanks North Star Borough
Alaska

Proclamation

WHEREAS, *the Companions, Inc. Fairbanks mission is to provide comfort, company, and caring to the community through the human-animal bond by visiting hospitals, nursing homes, senior centers, other facilities, and community events where the benefit of therapy animals is needed; and*

WHEREAS, *Companions, Inc. was founded as an all-volunteer nonprofit organization in 1986 by a small group of community members who wanted to share the benefits of the human – animal relationship with the Fairbanks North Star Borough community, especially with people who may be separated from their animals or not able to have them; and*

WHEREAS, *Companions, Inc. currently has 30 certified therapy dogs regularly visiting 12 sites, plus many special events. From July 2025 through July 2026, Companions, Inc. dogs (with their human handlers) provided 868 hours of visits to the people of the Fairbanks North Star Borough. Of those hours, 343.45 hours were at Foundation Health Partners sites, and 216.50 hours were at UAF sites; and*

WHEREAS, *all Companions, Inc. therapy animals and handlers are carefully screened by Companions, Inc., Fairbanks, and all dogs must pass the AKC Canine Good Citizen test of basic positive behavior; and*

WHEREAS, *Companions, Inc.'s therapy animals come in all shapes, sizes, breeds, ages over 1, and species, and have included cats, a rabbit, and others, though currently all animals in the organization are dogs; and*

WHEREAS, *after 40 years of volunteer service, Companions, Inc. Fairbanks remains a 100% volunteer organization committed to its mission, and looking forward to continue sharing the well documented benefits of the human-animal connection;*

NOW, THEREFORE, *we, Grier Hopkins, Mayor of the Fairbanks North Star Borough, Mindy O'Neall, Mayor of the City of Fairbanks, and Larry Terch, Mayor of the City of North Pole, do hereby recognize:*

Companions, Inc.

For their volunteerism and service to the Borough and its residents, and celebrate with the organization on the occasion of its 40th Anniversary. We look forward to many more years of Companions, Inc.'s therapy pet visits to the Fairbanks North Star Borough's hospital, schools, senior services, and non-profit organizations.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, *we have hereunto set our hands this 6th day of October 2026.*

10-16-26

Grier Hopkins, Mayor
Fairbanks North Star Borough

Mindy O'Neall, Mayor
City of Fairbanks

Larry Terch III, Mayor
City of North Pole

ATTEST:

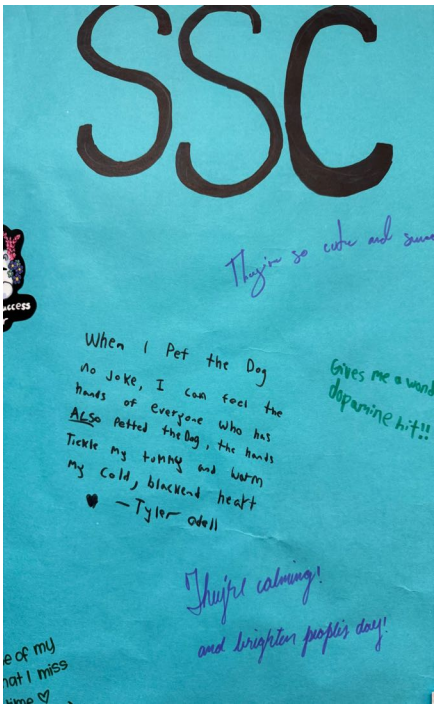
SEAL

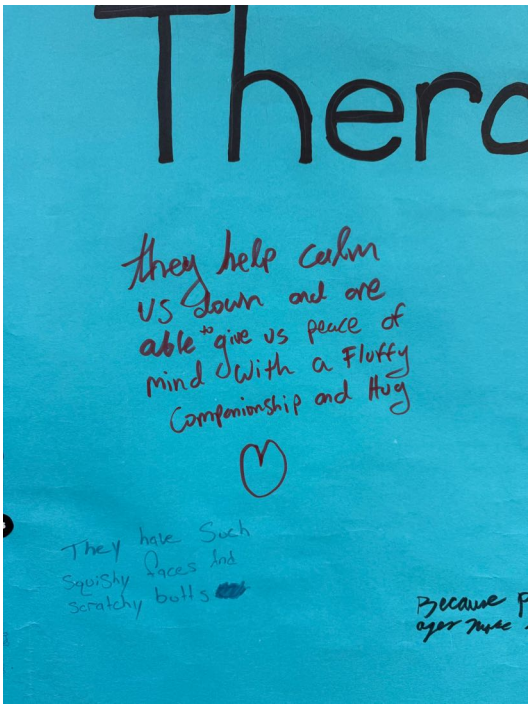
April Trickey, Borough Clerk





The Student Success Center at UAF is one of our most popular areas to visit. Signing up for this site is a competitive venture! The students there created a poster of what they like about our Companions visits. The poster was hung at our party, and here are just a few of their fun comments:





*But that's not **all** we've been doing! Here's more:*









BONE BASH









Six Companions dogs and their owners participated in Forget Me Not Animal Rescue's "Bone Bash" Halloween party in October at Hawk's Greenhouse. The greenhouse was full of dozens of happy dogs playing games, getting photographed, groomed, and having many, many treats. FMN's events are a fun way for us to meet dogs whose owners may want to get involved in pet therapy, and we can observe the dogs and talk to them about the expectations, requirements and benefits of joining us. And if you are looking for a pet to foster, they are the folks to talk to!

And visits to the Veterans Center always bring smiles!



Companions Inc had a great time at The Veterans Center's open house, as Thea and Little William Shatner hung out with some of America's finest, along with The Vet Center Director Brad Bunnell with Eve and Glenner

A few Reminders:

ALWAYS wear your blue Companions shirt and your name tag whenever you visit. Your dog must wear their bib and be on a 4-foot leash at all times.

If you do not yet have your new Companions gear to wear, cafter you have visited for at least three months, contact Shirley Winther to get your shirts, jacket, maybe a vest. Then wear it proudly as you represent Companions! If you do not yet have a blue plastic name tag, contact Jamie Marschner to order one.

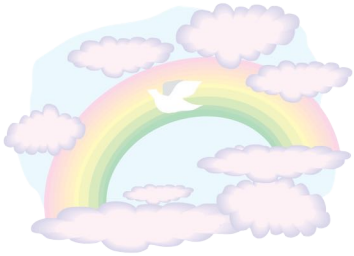
Watch for emails from Erin Parcher-Wartes re the Signup opportunities! This is usually the only way you will know what sites are available and when, so don't skip these emails.

Regarding visitation sites, think about visiting one you haven't visited before if there is an opening. Sites such as the Pioneer Home and Denali Center do not require specific times. Others such as the SSC at the Rasmusson Library at UAF are highly competitive!




"One of the nicest evenings I've ever spent at the Wilsons' ... and then you had to go and do that on the rug!"





Rainbow Bridge

Kristi Davis' beloved Katia has crossed the Rainbow Bridge. Katia was one of our most devoted dogs at the North Pole Library Read-to-a Dog program.



Board Members:

President Kate Lamal
katelamal@gmail.com
Text (907) 388-7102

Recording Secretary Jamie Marschner
Treasurer Shirley Winther

Other Board Members

Erin Parcher-Wartes Dave Stewart
Joan Mc Glinchy Daisy Huang
Pauline Alis Glenner Anderson



Fairbanks Memorial Hospital
Volunteer Services,
Roxanne Slater (907) 458-5599

Companions, Inc.
PO Box 73601
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707
(907) 687-4247 msg or text