

Companions, Inc.



Paws for a Cause since 1986

The Tailwagger

March 2023

Fairbanks, Alaska

President's Corner

Greetings Companions Volunteers!

Today I am celebrating warmer temperatures, fluffy snow and a great ski with my skiing partner, Pronto.

Put it on your calendar! We are having a general membership meeting April 19, 2023 at Ravens Landing, 6:00 PM, Building 4. The address is 1226 Cowles St. And, we will be taking portraits of you and your Companion's pet for an updated poster. The posters are hung in Denali Center and the Pioneer Home. Maybe we can get the Hospital to hang one up. There will be a short business meeting and some time to meet the other volunteers and maybe swap some tips and stories.

Pet Awareness Day will be May 13, 2023. Bobbie Ross is already hot on the planning trail and will be asking for help. Stay tuned for more information in the coming weeks.

The Denali Center, Pioneer Home and some departments at the hospital are begging for Companions visits. They have missed us. Many of you have not been doing visits because of covid concerns but if you feel comfortable please try and do your recommended 2 visits per month. Of course you can always do more~

Don't forget to report your hours each month to Diana LeCorchick (lecorchi@hotmail.com) if you are not logging into the hospital or Denali Center volunteer log in kiosk.

Read about this and more in this Tailwagger and look forward to seeing you in April!

Best wishes and happy longer days,

Kate Lamal

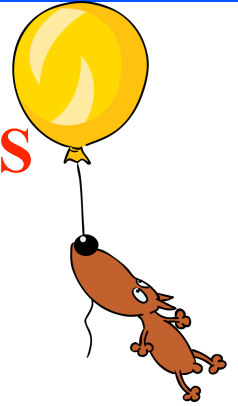
President



PET AWARENESS DAY

May 13, 2023
12:00-4:00

Fairgrounds Borealis Building
Rain or shine, cold or hot!



Many of our members are new, so you have this fun event to look forward to experiencing for the first time. For those of you who have been with us before, you remember this is our BIG EVENT, for which we ask ALL of our members to help as much as they can. Some of you are already gathering donations, some of us have started making up bid sheets for all the great donations for our HUGE silent auction - hundreds of items, the best in town!

We need all kinds of help, beginning at 9:00 am to get everything set up, which is a huge job considering how big just the silent auction is. We could really use you and your spouse or big kids, everybody EXCEPT your dogs for this part of the job. We need help at the end, too, when folks are paying for and picking up items they won at the silent auction and when we are packing up all our Companions gear and taking it back to UHaul storage. In other words, WE NEED YOUR HELP.

Pet Awareness Day is our major fund raising event for the year. We have not been able to have this for the past three years, so we want it to be extra special this year. Please tell everyone you know to come and have fun seeing the displays, the dog parade, eating good food, and finding great deals of all kinds at the silent auction. Best of all, we can all come together wearing a sea of bright blue shirts, promoting our great organization! Please be there if at all possible, and help both before, during and after the event. This is OUR fundraiser.

Spotlight on our members!



Heather Agustines
and her dogs
Keagan, Ripley and
Jax



Dogs came later in life for us - I was in the Navy as a Physical Therapist for 11 years, and moved to Fairbanks with my husband and 2 sons, after serving. We got our first family puppy 10 years ago, a Cardigan Welsh Corgi named Keagan. Keagan has always been a happy, social boy - the life of the party! So much so that my attempts to train him for agility did not go as planned, as he got more joy out of visiting the judge and ring crew, than he did running the courses - LOL. He is the stereotypical big dog in a small body with a presence that will light up the room. He is a favorite of friends and family who visit our ranch, and will often be caught trying to stow away in visitors' cars as they leave for home. Keagan was recently screened and accepted as a therapy dog for Companions Inc - this is truly the job Keagan was meant for.

Ripley is my heart dog. I met Ripley when she was 3 days old and was able to visit her weekly while she and her littermates matured. She has shown me the depths of what a true bond between a dog and human can be. She is 3 years old, and in our short time together we've done a little bit of everything including Conformation Showing, Rally, Trick Titles, all the CGC certifications, and we currently train and compete in agility. Ripley is my best traveling companion, and will often join me on the long road trips to Anchorage for horse shows and clinics as well. She is so sweet and loyal, a little aloof at first - in typical Aussie style- but once she warms up she will smile and wiggle and give all her love to those around her. Becoming a therapy dog just seemed like the perfect next step for Ripley as well. She's been visiting at Denali Center for the past 2 months and now recognizes her regular visitees, greeting them with a big smile upon arrival. Ripley and I also do visits at the Bassett Army Community Hospital, thru the American Red Cross Animal Visitation Program.

My up and coming pup, is our 10 month old Blue Merle boy, Jax. Jax was the boy we didn't know we needed - we weren't looking for a puppy when he came along, but when one of Ripley's littermates had her first litter last year, and this boy became available, well ... how can one say no to that? Jax is one of the most joyful and loving dogs I've ever met. This dog has never had a bad day in his life, and he has so much heart and so much try, he's an absolute joy to be around - he's the sort of dog who will lift your spirits with a single

interaction. Jax has just completed Betsey's Therapy Dog Class thru Pawsitive Dog Training, and I plan to have him screened as well, when he comes of age.

Outside of the Dog World, I work full time for the Army as a Physical Therapist on FWW. My husband works in the maintenance dept at the Pioneer Home. Our two sons are currently attending UAF full time. I also have horses and enjoy training and competing in dressage, trail riding, and working equitation. Our dogs are very much a part of our ranch life, "helping" with daily chores such as filling hay bags, mucking, and working the horses. We could not imagine our lives without them.



Melanie Hinzman
with her dogs
Toby and
Thorin, both
frequent
Companions
visitors.

I have been a member of Companions, Inc. since 1986, the year in which Companions, Inc. was founded here in Fairbanks. I served on the Companions, Inc. Board of Directors for over 10 years and was one of the animal screeners for 20 years. Those were all needed, rewarding, and beneficial positions within Companions, Inc. organization. I have continued to be an active member of Companions, Inc. all these years because I believe in the program.

As a member of Companions, Inc. for 37 years, you can imagine that I have had several animals in the program. I started in 1986 with a Dalmatian, named Jason. I have had a Curly-coated Retriever (Zachary), three dwarf bunnies (Snowball, Abby and Gim), three standard poodles (Brooke, Brock, and Thorin) - Thorin is still active in our program and now my newest Companions' animal is a standard poodle/cocker spaniel mix named Toby. These animals have all enjoyed the human animal bond and have looked forward to the visitations. My animals and I have always enjoyed making others happy. In past years, we did most of our visits at Denali Center. However, now we mostly do visits at the Fairbanks Resource Agency Adult Day Care.

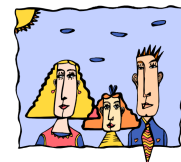
I remember times when the employees at Denali Center were delighted to see their residents reach out to pet my animals, especially when the resident would barely otherwise move. I remember when a UAF student, during finals week, came up to my animal in tears because of her poor test performance. As she stroked the fur she stopped crying and you could actually see the stress leave her body. I remember people saving "dog" treats and were so looking forward to our visits. I mostly remember all the years that my animals have been involved with making a difference in a person's day and bringing smiles to many faces.

Come one, come all! And DO bring your dogs!!

Companions, Inc. April Board Meeting and Social Gathering



April 19, 2023, 6:00 pm
Raven Landing, Building 4 (1226 Cowles St.)



Bring your Companions pets! Come in your Companions shirt and bring your dog in their bib.
New photo portraits will be taken FREE, to post on our Companions pages and other promotions.

This is YOUR chance to meet and greet other people in Companions and for the dogs to meet and sniff. There will be time to mingle, pet, laugh, and eat snacks. We don't often get the chance to all be together in the same place, so everybody please come for this fun social!

Can Any Dog be a Therapy Dog? An abstract of an article by Jen Karetnick on the www.akc.org website

What makes a dog a good candidate for therapy dog work? Companions, Inc. therapy dogs must be at least one year of age and are required to pass the AKC Canine Good Citizen Test as well as the Companions, Inc. therapy dog screening. Therapy dogs must successfully be able to "leave it" on cue and successfully interact with all different types of people including people who have motor control issues, young children, and older adults with fragile skin. Dogs of any breed can become therapy dogs, as long as they possess a naturally social temperament, a calm demeanor, and a desire to "do the job."

Some tips for training a therapy dog include socializing your dog as soon as reasonably possible, training commands such as "leave it", loose-leash walking, and the "watch me" command. Desensitizing your dog (through positive reinforcement) to medical equipment, strange noises (beeping, machine noises) and loud or angry voices is another great way to prepare your dog for therapy animal visits.

The dog, however, is only half of the equation. Another important question to consider is, "what makes a good therapy dog handler?"

Read the full article at the following link: <https://www.akc.org/expert-advice/training/how-to-train-a-therapy-dog/>

THERAPY DOG CLASS

Does your dog love receiving human attention? Are they calm and nonreactive?

Learn basic skills for you and your dog to become a fluent therapy dog team. Students can also earn their Advanced or Urban CGC title.

SIGN UP ONLINE



pawsitivedogtraining.org/therapydog

4-week class

Week 1 is for humans only.
Dogs join weeks 2-4.



Taught by Betsey Jacobs
and Susan Sampson



**Look
What's
NEW!!**

Do people ask you how to prepare their dog to become a Companion? Finally we have a GREAT answer as a first step for them. Please tell them about this new Therapy Dog Class. It's not a guarantee of a dog being screened in, but it's a great start, especially if they have taken other classes here or elsewhere.

Where have our Companions been lately?

Spice and **Daisy** were the canine stars of Companions Inc. when they visited Mt. McKinley bank's downtown office to personally thank the employees who selected our organization as the non-profit to donate some employer-sponsored funds to. We thank all four of the employees who donated, and we have a feeling our furry friends may have inspired a few more to donate to Companions next year! Many thanks to Mt. McKinley Bank.

Does YOUR employer have a similar program? If not, why don't you start one? You can tell them how much our local community benefits from a nonprofit such as ours, although many other types of nonprofit would also be worthy recipients of donations. If you would like materials to share as a way to promote Companions, please call us at (907) 687-4247 and leave a message. We'd be glad to help you spread the word.



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