

## Welcome New Members!

Barbara Boutsikaris & Phoebe (*Border Collie Mix*)  
 Wendy Huntley & Cullie (*Golden Retriever*)  
 Jennifer Olson & Owen (*Golden Retriever*)  
 Paula Bennett & Conor (*Golden Retriever*)  
 Cathy Braun & Axel (*Australian Terrier*)  
 Larry Koolkin & Roxanne (*Leonberger*)  
 Kim Lutchko & Clover (*Beagle-Hound*)  
 Michael Richey & Camden (*English Golden Retriever*)

Joe Considine/Kathy Mack & Ty (*Golden Retriever*)  
 Meredith Anderson & Morning Star (*Golden Retriever*)  
 Lori Ploof & Chloe (*Maltese Poodle*)  
 Carol Lee Mason & Rosie (*Chocolate Lab*)  
 Heidi Considine & Zeus Lee (*Chihuahua*)  
 Susan Chinnock & Meece (*Bichon Frise*)  
 Teresa Watson & Daisy (*Brittany Spaniel Mix*)  
 Greg Anderson & Kaya (*French Bulldog*)  
 Martha Leach Chaiken & Coco (*Schnoodle*)

## Thanks to Bel-Aire for Another Successful Volunteer Banquet

*The Bel-Aire Center in the Northeast Kingdom hosted its annual volunteer banquet in November for those who take time to make a difference in the lives of people who call Bel-Aire "home."*

Marie, Rosemary and their crew of helpers put on a fabulous dinner that rivaled any five star restaurant. The food was bountiful, the company stimulating and the recognition of volunteering humbling. Events like the Volunteer Banquet are a great way to meet other people in the community who bring cheer and compassion to those who reside at Bel-Aire.

The staff at Bel-Aire is a very dedicated group of professionals who take pride in their facility and the quality of care they provide. Being recognized as volunteers by the facility, especially by Marie, Rosemary and Ruby, highlights the importance of volunteers and their roles in the well being of the residents.

We were touched by the wonderful dinner, conversation with other volunteers, homemade baked treats and dishcloth decorations that every volunteer received. It is an evening that we hold dear in our hearts and we greatly appreciate the effort and time that was spent planning this event. Our role as volunteers (along with our four-legged

companions) has strengthened with every visit we make. To know that we make a positive difference for those we visit is a passion that we share. To be recognized by those who see the difference our visits make is truly heart-warming and humbling.

We would like to thank Bel-Aire Center for its hospitality and wonderful banquet. May we continue to make a positive difference for the residents and staff of this fine facility.



*L/R: Pepper, Handler: Beth Wadleigh; Fanny, Handler: Raymond Belanger; Sheeba, Handler: Nancy Suitor*



## Ask Isa

*Isa and Deb Helfrich*

If you have a question for me, please e-mail it to: [admin@therapydogs.org](mailto:admin@therapydogs.org). I can use your name or you can remain anonymous! Looking forward to your questions! —Isa

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### Dear Isa:

*I am a new therapy dog and we're about to go on our first visit. Me and my handler are both a little nervous! Do you have any tips for how we can remember what to do before we go into a patient's room?*

*—Poopers, Malamute*

### Dear Poopers:

*Excellent question! Read on—maybe this will help. Also, good luck with your visits!*

### At the Door: A Mental Checklist

It can be tough for new teams to remember everything they need before they enter a room for a visit with a patient or resident. Sometimes it's nerve-wracking enough to make new visits when you're just starting out, let alone trying to remember the many policies in place for safe, happy visits.

So, here's a quick checklist for the most important things you should be aware of when you're standing in that doorway about to ask a person if they'd like a visit with your therapy dog.

**C – CHECK PRECAUTIONS** the patient may have with nurses and staff or look for signs on the door. Are there any isolation, no visitation, caution, or stop or precaution signs anywhere on the door jam, or outside the door near the patient's room? Likewise, is there any other information outside the door about the patient that you may find helpful to your visit (such as if the person is hard of hearing or unable to communicate)? Do this every time, as the status of a patient's health may change between visits. Also, looking for a person's name can make your introduction a bit more personal.

**H – Scan** at the room for anything potentially **HARMFUL** to you and your dog. Look for unsafe items that your dog may step on or ingest (pills on the floor, cookies on a table, tubes, wires, etc.). Look for space where you could position your dog comfortably (for example, a tight space between a bed and medical divide, with a curtain on your dog's back, may not be to your dog's comfort). Notice room activity.

**A – ASK** if the person would like a visit. Introduce yourself and your dog. Identity yourselves as a therapy dog team from TDV. Always respect the wishes of someone who doesn't want a visit.

**R – As** you enter the room, **RECHECK** resident/patient and the room. Look for bandages, wounds, tubes, medical equipment—anything that your dog could interfere with or get tangled in.

**T – THANK** the person for spending the time with you and your dog.

If you ever have any questions related to making safe visits, please do not hesitate to e-mail Deb or Isa at [admin@therapydogs.org](mailto:admin@therapydogs.org) or Christy and Andy, your member support officers, at [membersupport@therapydogs.org](mailto:membersupport@therapydogs.org).



Before each visit, remember **CHART**:  
**Check Precautions, Harmful?, Ask, Recheck & Thank**

## Snowbird Dog Reporting for Therapy Duty

By Micro Reiman

You can call me the Maltutor. Why? I am a Maltese and a tutor. While in Vermont, I regularly visit the Hematology and Oncology floor and Pediatrics at Fletcher Allen Health Care with my buddy, Gus. Once in a while I get to listen to kids read to me at the library. But, my folks take me to Florida each winter. The weather is great, I get to walk with lots of my furry friends in the neighborhood, but otherwise I get bored.

So, my mom has been taking me to a local retirement home where she performs the Sunday non-denominational church services. That's cool, I like old people, I make them smile and ooh and ah, but I miss the kids.

My folks go to a wonderful church down here which has many outreach programs for the community. One of these caught my mom's attention. There is an after school youth tutoring program followed by a dinner available to all members of the community. Mom thought I might be able to help kids learn how to read just like back home in Vermont. After all, some kids don't like to read to adults because they fear correction, or ridicule, and humiliation. But, I don't do that, I just snuggle up to them and listen. Every once in a while, one will point to a picture and say something like "See this, Micro," and I point my nose inside the pages of their book. They really like that part.

So, after extensive background checks on my folks, not on me, of course, we went to our first tutoring session last

night. Mom and I went off to a quiet room in the church where they brought youngsters in to read from the books they had selected. It was loads of fun. I felt like a star. My dad was assigned to tutor a fourth grader in math and geography and they got to be good friends. After that, I sat quietly in a pew while some of the kids practiced playing songs with the choir's hand-held bells. That was awesome and so was going to the dinner afterward which was available to families in the community.

I can't wait to go back next week and every week and read with even more kids.



*Micro listens patiently while the pastor's daughter, Laura Kleckner, reads to him.*

## TDV Presence on Facebook

Therapy Dogs of Vermont has created a page for its members and potential members on Facebook. Are you a current Facebook user? Join our group called "Therapy Dogs of Vermont"; post a photo of your canine companion, share stories about your visits or why you are part of TDV.

As you may be aware already, Facebook is a social networking tool. If you don't currently belong it's free and easy to join ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)). We hope to use this tool to help bring our members together. We hear you loud and clear that you are looking for more ways to meet fellow TDV members and their dogs. Perhaps you are looking for members in your geographic area

or fellow TDV folks to join you on a hike, you can post the request here. The group will be what the members make it, the more often it is posted to, the more interesting it will be for folks to visit.

If you have questions, contact [Katie@therapydogs.org](mailto:Katie@therapydogs.org)

*“ If you pick up a starving dog and make him prosperous, he will not bite you; that is the principal difference between a dog and a man. ”*

—MARK TWAIN

## The Difference TDV Made in Emily's Life

*By Carol Woodward (mom) and her daughter, Emily*

Emily is ten years old and has Cystic Fibrosis. For the past four years she has averaged one to two hospitalizations a year. These stays are for two weeks and consist of IV antibiotics and respiratory therapy treatments.

As you can imagine two weeks in the hospital can be very difficult for a young child. The one thing that keeps her spirits up is the daily visits from Therapy Dogs of Vermont. One of the first things she does after waking up is to look at the schedule to see when the dogs will be visiting.

Words cannot describe how much it means to her to be able to sit and play with a dog after a day filled with doctors, treatments and procedures. The impact the therapy dog volunteers have made on her is enormous. It goes beyond visiting a child in the hospital. By being able to talk to the volunteers and hug the dogs she gets a much needed break from the hospital routine.

Emily says that the time she gets to spend with the therapy dogs is the best part of having to stay in the hospital.



*Emily with Emma, Tyson & Mr. Wrinkles*

## TDV Officers

Steve Reiman *President/Founder*

Deb Helfrich, *Vice President*

Katie MacDonald, *Secretary*

Linda Samter, *Treasurer*

Starr Jewell, *Marketing & Communications*

Beth Alpert, *Fundraising*

Christy & Andy Hollstein, *Member & Facility Support*

## TDV Support Team

Thomas Oliver, *Liaison to UVM*

Cathy Jones, *FAHC Coordinator*

Kristin Jones, *Communications Advisor*

Dr. Lisa Nelson, *Veterinary Behavior Consultant*

Dr. Michael Ricci, *Health Advisor*

Amanda Blaszyk, *Editor*

Starr Jewell Marketing Services, *Design*

## In Memory of Our Canine Friends

### Ralph (12.23.08)

*Handler: Peter Jones*



Died peacefully at home of cancer.

### Buckles (12.08)

*Handler: Amanda Spencer*



Our beautiful Buckles (TDV dog since 2000) became an angel just before Christmas. Those of you who have been a part of TDV may remember this amazing one-eyed Rottweiler who was as loving and gentle as any dog God could create. She began at

FAHC and went to school with me every week, where I worked until 2007.