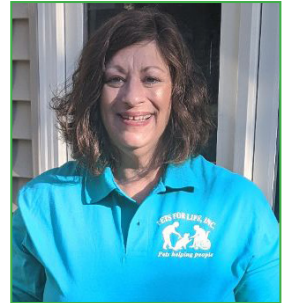


A Word from Pets for Life Director *Mary Sellano*



The year 2020 has brought changes and challenges, and now as it has nearly come to an end, 2021 is quickly coming into view. Covid 19 has tremendously impacted our ability to visit in person, however, it has not affected our volunteers devotion to Pets for Life, or passion for sharing their pets and touching lives.

The Pet Parades were very successful, as the volunteers were able to visit from a distance. The warm reception and smiles is proof the pets are able to make a connection even while practicing social distancing and being separated by windows.

The end of 2020 signifies a new beginning for me as I continue to learn and settle into my new role as Program Director. I am more than ready to take on 2021, and not only continue the work in progress, but move forward with new ideas. I am most excited to work with and get to know our volunteers, the board and everyone involved with Pets for Life.

In closing, sending out a huge heartfelt thank you, and wishing everyone Happy Holidays, and a safe and exceptional New Year.

PETS HELPING PEOPLE

Shared by Kathy Brock

Thanks for asking us to be included. We so miss getting to visit people. This is a hard one! I feel like he has had some really visits. But the last time he got to go was a really moving one for me. Let me know if this is okay or if you'd rather have something different. I'm horrible at getting photos of Ghost and me together – I'm usually taking the pictures! But, I'm going to him to the park tomorrow and I'll try to get a good one to send. Again, just let me know if this story is okay or if you would like something else. I have others! He's really good at his job!! lol

Ghost and I were out at Church of the Resurrection greeting people, as we had the pleasure of doing quite frequently. Ghost particularly got excited about his visits there – lots of children and, as much as he loves everyone, he REALLY, REALLY, REALLY loves kids! We had been there about an hour and half and Ghost was ready to go home. He starts getting warm in the building and the crowd had thinned out, so it was time to make our exit. He was laying in the middle of the room and all of the sudden, he stood up and zeroed in on something or someone across the room. I knew it wasn't a child without even looking. He turns into a ridiculous, wiggling blob of dog when he sees those. This was different. I look over and there was an elderly woman with a walker by leaning on a desk. I walked him over to her and as I approached, I said "I hope you don't mind but for some reason, Ghost really wants to say hi to you." She looked at Ghost and looked up and me with a big tear running down her cheek. She asked if she could pet him and I explained how that petting was what he was there for – actually what he lives for! That he is a therapy dog who takes his job very seriously. She asked, with a little laugh, if he was an "emotional therapy dog" and I told



PETS HELPING PEOPLE

her he was just a regular, attention needing, therapy dog. As she was petting him, she told me that her golden retriever had died the week before and she was having a very hard day as she had spent it looking at pictures of her dog. She said that Ghost was just what she needed. She even asked if she could give me her card so that I could send her pictures every once in a while. She didn't have any with her but I told her we'd be back next week and would look for her. That wasn't to be. It was just a day or so later that we had to stop visits due to Covid. I still think about her and feel so bad we didn't get to see her again. I know there are lots of things that therapy dogs can help people with, and maybe losing a pet isn't the most "important", but for her, that day, it was. I'm so proud of Ghost for finding her.

"If the kindest souls were rewarded with the longest lives, dogs would outlive us all." – Unknown



Keeping Pets Social and Busy During Covid

By Mary Sellaro

The current pandemic has made keeping pets busy and social somewhat of a challenge. However, by being creative and providing structure we can help keep pets engaged, calm and prepared for when, and as, the world opens up again.

- Pets thrive within a consistent routine. Confidence and comfort is gained through a regular food and walking schedule. Full or half meals can be given in a food dispensing toy instead of a bowl, or hand feed part of a meal and practice training. (Be sure to practice social distancing, masking and safety protocols as determined for your area.)

- Walks are a great way to get pets out, exercise, train, see new things and explore. Keep the walk interesting- ask for a sit or down in the middle of a walk, change your pace while walking, call the dog and treat, jump over a low wall or stop and find a place to practice stay. Cats may enjoy getting out in a stroller or harness and leash. Bring treats, start out slow and be mindful the environment is not overwhelming to make the experience fun.

- Provide mental stimulation in the form of food dispensing toys, hide treats through the house for pets to find, teach tricks, set up a small obstacle course inside or out-find things to jump over, go under, around or through.

- Keep cats busy by looking for toys which encourage movement and engagement.

- Combine fun and learning whenever possible to build positive associations for a confident pet.

He Will Be Missed

Wally Zimmermann crossed the rainbow bridge Monday, August 17th, 2020 peacefully in the loving presence of his family.



Wally,
Loved by
Laura Zimmerman
and Many, Many Others

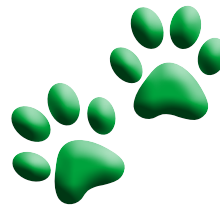
Born January 5th, 2008, in Louisburg, KS, **Wally** was the son of Laura & Tim Zimmermann, brother of Henry, Josie, & Holden Zimmermann, and fur brother (AKA...role model & confidence builder) of Eli Zimmermann. **Wally** was the dog all other dogs will be compared to. We were so lucky. We absolutely trusted him and loved him in every way. **Wally** joined our family when he was 13 weeks old. A happy accident.... half Golden Retriever and half Black Labrador. The dog of a lifetime!!

Wally's favorite activities included long walks, stick collecting, swimming, ice chewing, fetching, tail wagging, snoozing, counseling on behalf of Pets for Life, float trips, hide and seek, hiking, romping in the snow, etc, etc, etc. Always happy, never dissuaded. He always enjoyed visiting grandma and grandpa's house, where he could jump off docks, chase squirrels, and survey the territory. His brothers and sister were the perfect age when he arrived. He walked them to and from school daily, ran with them, played with them, raised them. Everyone knew **Wally**. He lived the best life.

Wally and Laura became a certified team through Pets for Life in April of 2012. **Wally** was too special to not share. He had a sizable fan club at Aberdeen Senior Living Village in Olathe. He made new friends with every visit and extended friends through family, friends, and staff. **Wally's** mom, Laura, worked with one of his favorite fan's granddaughter. It is a small world. He always saved his bacon for **Wally**. Laura was told that **Wally** was the only person certain people would speak to, respond to, or be kind to. **Wally** had a calming and peaceful presence. He was always patient and attentive.

Wally was told many times that he was the highlight of the day or week and requested to "move in" quite frequently. He brought many smiles to many friends who have passed on. **Wally's** friendship card was buried with several friends. It is comforting to think he is now greeting them again and loving smiles are flowing once again around him.

As a team, we also met the father-in-law of a special teacher of **Wally's** brother, Henry. His memory was leaving him, but when Laura noticed photos on his bulletin board it all became clear. His eyes lit up as Laura told him how wonderful his son-in-law was and how pivotal and influencing he was for **Wally's** brother, Henry. The staff at Aberdeen had a special heartfelt love for **Wally** as well. There was a frequent startle and then a big smile around every corner when **Wally** visited.



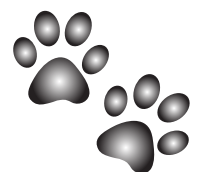
More than anything else, **Wally** loved his family. He was always there to greet us with heartfelt kisses, a wagging tail, and sometimes a firm grip to the arm. He was our constant attentive companion. There through heartache, grief, joy, and growth. He was good at a lot of things, but he was best at unconditional love.

Wally's bark became tired, his panting became more persistent, and laying down anywhere became a better option than walking or running. Old age arrived too quickly along with an undetected aggressive liver tumor. **Wally** spent his last days in one of his favorite places, grandma and grandpa's house....swimming in the pond, ceaselessly following us, and lounging on the deck. His last days were happy and will be cherished forever.

We will think of him every time Dad preps for BBQ, we chew ice, we take a pleasant walk, we throw a ball or when the snow falls. No matter his age, he became a frisky young pup when the temperature dropped or the snow fell. We will carry him with us everywhere.

He will be forever missed and forever remembered, but he left behind his fierce love, which never wavered. He was an exceptional dog.

Shared by Laura Zimmerman



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT!

First Name: Toby

Therapy Pets: Sammie, Rottweiler Mix, 4 1/2 yrs old

How long have you been volunteering?

We started in May, 1999

What types of facilities do you visit?

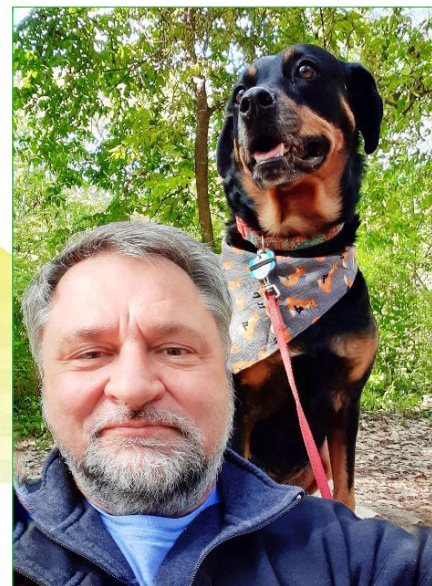
I started volunteering for a local hospice early in 1999 with Sammie. Then we found out about Pets For Life. We got certified as a team and volunteered to visit an assisted living facility in Lenexa. After a hospitalization in September, 1999, I decided to avoid geriatric facilities/health care settings and instead started visiting a residential drug treatment facility in Olathe, operated by Johnson County Dept of Corrections. We visit twice a month and usually encounter 6-10 teenagers.

What do you enjoy most about volunteering with Pets for Life?

Doing something meaningful with my dog that benefits others and meeting new people.

Share a random fact about you or your pet.

I was raised in Germany and met my wife during a college exchange and then moved to the United States at age 24. I did not grow up with dogs in Germany. Sammie is our second rescue dog. Life is much richer with a dog in the house!



Don't forget to like our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/pages/Pets-for-Life-Inc.

We post lots of fun PFL updates and trivia, and occasionally we have giveaways! Stay in the loop, join us on Facebook!



<https://www.instagram.com/petsforlifekc/>

<http://www.kcpetsforlife.com>

Remember our New email address is:
petsforlife@kcpetsforlife.com

<http://www.kcpetsforlife.com>

Pets For Life, Inc., Executive Committee: Donna Amato, President; Joni Roeseler, Vice President; Marty Letourneau, Secretary; John McGee, Treasurer; Jack Sladkey, . Pets For Life Staff: Mary Sellaro, Program Director; Mary Gorman Volunteer Coordinator.

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