

Pets for Life



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A word from Sharon Woodrum, our Program Director.....

It has been almost 6 months since I joined the Pets for Life organization. All I can say is – **Wow!**

Although I was familiar with the organization and had worked with some of the volunteers in the past, I had no idea the impact that your work had on the community and the people you visit with. I am in awe and humbled by your dedication to your pets and our mission. The recurring theme, every time I visit a facility or speak to an activities coordinator, is how much everyone looks forward to and enjoys that little break in the day when you and your pet lighten the mood. I am not sure we say it enough, “Thank you to all our volunteers. Thank you for all you do.”

As we move into 2019, our goals are clear.

1. Increase the number of volunteers
2. Expand the reach of our R.E.A.D. program
3. Update the Leash Pals program and increase the number of presenters

We have been tracking how new volunteers learn about our organization. The top two answers might surprise you. Most new volunteers are your friends and family or people that have observed you during your visits. That’s right, turns out that you – our dedicated volunteers – are also our #1 recruiting tool. With this in mind, we are changing our dress code policy. Going forward, volunteers will need to wear their Pets for Life shirts at every visit and event. You have worked hard to earn your Pet Therapy Certification, wearing your Pets for Life shirt is a great way to announce that accomplishment. Since we are talking about the dress code, don’t forget your pet. That’s right. Remember, all Pets for Life pets need to wear a leash during visits and events.

Although we want to expand our R.E.A.D. opportunities next year, we are still in the planning stage. Are you a R.E.A.D. volunteer? Do you have program or expansion ideas? Let us know. We would love to hear your feedback and ideas.

Our Leash Pals plan is a little more developed. There will be a meeting early in 2019 to confirm additional presenters. If you have ever thought about being a Leash Pals presenter, this will be your chance. We will also coordinate a meeting with all the current presenters. We need your feedback on the current presentation. Does the content need to be changed to make it more user-friendly? Are there things that you would like to see added or removed? Your feedback will be critical since you are the Leash Pals experts.

Don’t worry, 2019 won’t be all work and no play. We are already planning a spring mixer and Annual Volunteer Luncheon discussions are underway. Do you have any celebration ideas? We would love to hear them.

In closing, keep up the great work. Don’t underestimate the impact you have with each visit and remember to have fun.

Thanks,
Sharon Woodrum, Program Director

A few of our **NEW** **VOLUNTEERS**



LIFE SKILLS CLASS AT JOHNSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE.

The young man cautiously approached Goldie and me. His eyes never leaving the dog before him. His Life Skills instructor stood off to the right and asked him, "What's the first thing you have to do?"

He shifted hooded eyes to look at me, his round face serious, and struggled to form the words.

"May I pat your dog?"

"Sure!" I answered, "Goldie loves to meet people."

Goldie sat in front of him, her tail wagging, doggie smile on her face and ears sweetly back as she gazed up at him. He slowly reached his fist down toward her to smell as he had been taught. She gave his hand a sniff and looked at him for what else he might offer, tail wagging. He opened his fingers and gave her a tentative scratch under her chin, then turned his hand over to stroke the top of her head. To my right, I heard a sudden intake of breath.

"That's the first time he has been willing to touch a dog!" said his instructor in an excited whisper.

Goldie lay down then, sniffing at Steve's sneaker-clad feet, her attention focused on him. His hand followed her down, a smile on his face, and he continued gently stroking her head and then her paws.

"Goldie likes gentle pats just like you're doing, Steve. Good job!" I said.

"He's smiling, right?" asked his instructor quietly.

"He is," I said, feeling so glad to be there.

These are the moments that Goldie and I trained for. This is why we became a Therapy Team with Pets for Life. Goldie and I made a difference in someone's life today.

...submitted by Holly Hildreth and Goldie



OTHER STUDENTS IN THE LIFE SKILLS CLASS AT JOHNSON COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE MAKING NEW FRIENDS!!!



PETS FOR LIFE VOLUNTEER TEAMS VISIT FEMA WORKERS

To all the volunteers...I want to thank you for bringing in the comfort dogs to FEMA, Region VII. In the middle of being activated to support Hurricane Florence, having Pets for Life volunteers and their pets available to the staff could not have been more perfect. Two days later and the staff are still talking about how much they enjoyed having the dogs come to the office.

We greatly appreciate all the folks that took the time to come share their lovely pets. I hope we can

make this an ongoing event and have you come back in the near future.

Thank you again for the opportunity to experience the joy that comfort dogs bring first hand.

Joyce Wells
FEMA Region VII



BENTON ELEMENTARY

Wild About Reading

I can't begin to tell you how much our students loved reading to the dogs. We had 465 people sign in at our event. Every one of them fell in love with your volunteers and their precious pets.



Thank you!!!
Carol Patton, Title I Reading
Benton Elementary School

I hope that your group might consider our school for a weekly visit. I know it would make an impact on their reading and give them something to look forward to each week.

Pet Expo

Thanks, again, to all the volunteers that helped spread the Pets for Life mission at the Pet Expo. We estimate that you spoke to over 271 people in total. Your willingness to actively engage with so many interested people made this event a huge success. As usual, we couldn't have done it without you!



OUR AMAZING DISTRACTION TEAMS



A few of the Distraction Teams for the 2018 Volunteer Team Evaluations. That's right, without our volunteers volunteering, we wouldn't be able to evaluate new volunteers.



Thank you all!!!

Thank you for Your Support.....

McCullough Family Foundation	\$10,000
Roetheli Lil' Red Foundation	\$7,000
Missouri State Employees Charitable Campaign	\$469.34
Breidenthal-Snyder Foundation	\$5,000
Victor E. Speas Foundation	\$5,000
Greater KC Community Foundation (On behalf of an anonymous Donor)	\$2,500
Elaine Feld Stern Charitable Foundation	\$2,000

They will be missed.....

It is with much sadness that we share with our Pets for Life family the pets that have recently passed away. They all were amazing in so many ways and adored by so many residents, kids, staff, and families. We send our condolences and share in your grief. They will be missed....

Dane loved by Kathy Madsen
Bella loved by Judy Thomasson



ENJOY THE HOLIDAYS!!!

Judy Thomasson

As the holiday season approaches we become busy with travel, lists, cooking, shopping and special events that go with the holidays. As I have gotten older, I have realized that one of the constants for this time of year has been my dogs. There have been several--all a variety of colors and breeds and with distinct personalities. But with all of them the most important thing for each one is to be with me and get their regular pats and hugs and to hear my voice. They don't require presents, new toys (which they get anyway) and exotic treats. We all need to make room in our schedules and thoughts for these special members of our families. While we have taught our pets a thing or two (maybe) it is time to think about what they have taught us. Maybe the most important thing our pets give us is a great friendship that knows no limits. We can have the enjoyment of treasuring these friendships during the holidays with special petting, treats and hugs wedged in between special events that come with this time of year.



Looks like Marco is ready for a Holiday Party!



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

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>

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

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