

## Message to our Pets for Life Volunteer Teams

"Recently, I was looking at last year's pocket-calendar and saw on March 14th, that I had penciled "COVID Quarantine Begins". I remember how disconcerting it was and the uncertainty of what 2020 held. Everything taken for granted was not now...our family and health, our livelihoods and income were all part of the upheaval. When would my wife and I see our 1 1/2 year old granddaughter again...when again would we go out with friends to enjoy a movie or dinner together? Then I thought about those in nursing homes, who not only were more at risk, but how they would deal without being able to see family, friends.

I, too, thought about all the PFL volunteers' and their families' trials and tribulations this past year. When would they again be able to visit our facilities that so much appreciate them? PFL has come a long way since its 1984 beginnings; and, we are only as good as the volunteers who make our visits happen. As facilities get closer to re-opening, I wonder what will be the new "norm"... will PFL meet the challenge? As a member of the Board, I assure Pets for Life will prevail and continue to achieve its Motto, "PETS HELPING PEOPLE." - John McGee

### Pets for Life Volunteers: Have You Been Or Plan To Be COVID-VACCINATED?

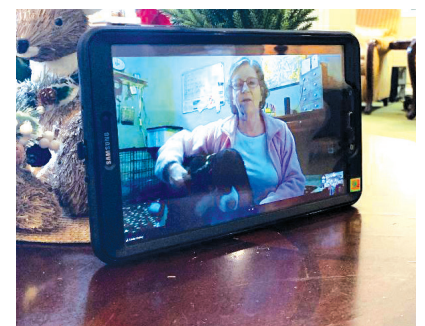
Pets for Life is still "on hold" in getting back to our routine facility visits; but, as expected, many of those facilities' staffs and residents have had their COVID vaccinations. It is expected that these facilities may require that visitors be vaccinated too once facilities re-open.

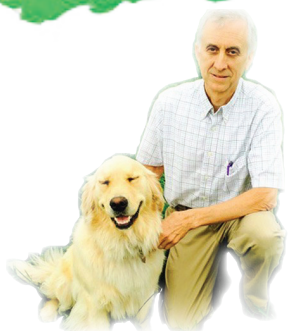
## To Facility Directors and Activity Coordinators

Pets for Life is ready to schedule virtual visits using ZOOM and excited to visit with a group of your residents or for an individual resident, as needed. We are here and have volunteers ready to continue our mission of "pets helping people." If this is something that you would like to try, give the Pets for Life Office a call at 816 363 3665 or email us at [petsforlife@kcpetsforlife.com](mailto:petsforlife@kcpetsforlife.com) and our staff will schedule volunteers to work with you and your needs.

## ZOOM Visits at Pets for Life Facilities

Pets for Life Volunteer, Linda Haney and her three canine volunteers visited Bickford of Mission Springs. This virtual visit, using ZOOM was a GREAT success. The residents loved seeing Linda and her three best canine friends.... Trixie, Elphie, and Frappe and learn how Pets for Life Volunteer Teams help others in all types of care facilities, hospitals, libraries, and schools. One of the highlights of this virtual visit was watching each dog perform tricks for the residents.





*March:*

## POISON PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH

*Dr. Bock and Lida Rose*

We are still in the throes of winter. Most of us have been shut in with our pets for what seems like an eternity. They have helped keep us sane, for the most part.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the elderly, who have missed our visits. The high amount of quality time indoors also can expose our pets to toxins that we do not often think about. A reminder about some of these never hurts. I will limit this to dogs and cats.

### DOGS:

**Ibuprofen:** There is a very narrow safety margin, and acute poisoning is common.

Exposure occurs when they chew open a medicine bottle, or if owners give it to them for pain control. Ingestion can cause anything from vomiting and diarrhea, to GI ulcers, to renal failure. Timely treatment will usually save the day, but it can involve hospitalization, iv fluids, and kidney monitoring.

**Chocolate:** Effects on dogs vary, depending on the type of chocolate (dark is more toxic), the amount ingested, the size of the dog, and individual variability. Effects on dogs range from GI upset, to cardiac toxicity, to tremors and seizures. The smaller the dog, the worse the outcome seems to be.

**Rodenticides:** With any suspected ingestion, it is important to get your pet to a veterinarian ASAP, and to take the suspected packaging with you. There are now multiple types of rat poisons. The older D-Con types block Vitamin K, and cause bleeding. Some of the newer bromethalin types cause brain damage, with signs that can include seizures, paralysis, and electrolyte imbalances. There is no specific antidote or treatment for this type of rodenticide, so early decontamination is extremely important.

**Grapes and raisins:** Ingestion can cause renal failure. The mechanism for this toxicity to the kidneys is unknown, or why some dogs are affected and others are not. The importance of avoiding ingestion is important.

**Acetaminophen (Tylenol):** Ingestion can result in liver toxicity, anemia, and even lack of tear production.

**Cold medication containing pseudoephedrine:**

Causes agitation, panting, rapid heartbeat, and hypertension. It doesn't take very much of the medication to cause signs.

**Antifreeze:** Lapping just a tablespoon off the garage floor can cause kidney failure and death in a dog. This is a true emergency.

**Jerky treats or other chews made in China:** It is best to avoid these, as labels may mean nothing. Numerous reports of severe toxicities have occurred over the past few years.

**CATS:** The good news is that cats are not as likely to ingest toxins. The bad news is that they are much less tolerant to the toxin's effects. Their natural tendency is to hide illness, which can delay detection and treatment. I will list a few common substances that are poisonous to cats:

**Tylenol and NSAID human pain relievers:** Ingestion often can cause death unless early treatment is instituted. Liver and/or kidney failure is often the result.

**Lilies:** Cats seem to be drawn to lilies, and ingestion of leaves can cause fatal kidney failure.

**Permethrin toxicity:** Topical application of flea medication meant for dogs can cause tremors, seizures, or death. Early bathing with Dawn dishwashing soap and a quick trip to an emergency clinic is important.

**Potpourri ingestion:** Yes, cats will drink it, and it can cause GI or renal issues. Advances in veterinary pharmacy have created tasty, chewable medications in treat form. Unfortunately, dogs especially have a good nose for these, and if they can get to the bottle and chew it open, suddenly the medication has vanished. The results can be really bad.

In general, if in doubt about whether your pet has ingested or has been exposed to a potential toxin, call your veterinarian. There is a 24/7 Pet Poison Hotline that will answer the phone and consult with both you and your veterinarian about your situation. The \$65 fee could make a difference in saving a life.



## Pets Helping People



Bonnie and her new friend Max



Bonnie at Havencroft Elementary School

### Kathy Swift and Bonnie

Bonnie was rescued by Mo-Kan Border Collie from a Missouri puppy mill in 2007. In gratitude, she has participated in numerous adoption events. She has been a Pets for Life dog for 11 years. She has served as a distraction dog during Pets for Life training, certified as a READ dog, and visited nursing homes and schools.

Each spring she has gone to Havencroft Elementary encouraging students to listen, follow directions and be attentive as they take their upcoming assessment tests.

The students have spontaneously broken out in cheers as she showed how she had overcome many obstacles in her early life by passing tests for her Good Citizen, Pets for Life, and Read certificates. She then bows and gives high fives to her audience.

Bonnie knows when she is going to work when her green scarf or her jacket is placed on her. You can probably hear her coming because she will be barking with excitement as we near our job site.

The joy that I've seen in faces, stories of past pets, and the comment I have heard so many times, *"This has been the best part of my day,"* has made being a part of Pets for Life one of the best parts of Bonnie's and my years!

## Happy St. Patrick's Day!!!



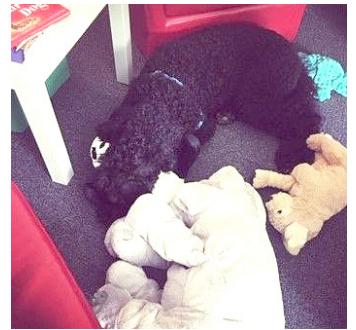
Calvin, with a little help from his favorite Pets for Life Volunteer, Karen Fitzgerald, is "wearing the green!" Thank you, Calvin for helping to remind everyone to wear their green on March 17!!!



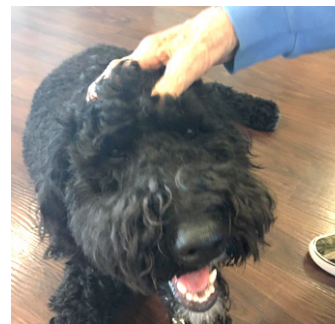
## Pets Helping People

### Jennifer Cullen and Baxter

A time Baxter made a huge impact on a young lady was a day he joined me at my job as an Elementary School Counselor. A student visited my office who was visibly upset. As she shared what had happened in her life that morning, Baxter quietly came and laid at her feet. As she cried and as we talked, Baxter kept retrieving sources of comfort from around my office and bringing them to her.



Some of them were his toys, some of them were stuffed animals scattered around. As she moved from her chair to the floor to hug Baxter and cry into his fur, I was awestruck at his impact. No words needed, just unconditional love for a girl that no longer felt alone.



I saw Baxter make such an impact in our visits to Kingswood Senior Living

Community. Every Sunday evening he would wait patiently at the door when I told him it was time to visit our "friends." So many residents told us that they looked forward to our visits, and multiple family members stopped me over the years to share that their loved ones talked about Baxter coming to visit and how much they enjoyed him. Baxter is so intuitive, and was able to tell which residents needed a little extra time and nuzzle and which residents just needed a quick pet as they went about their evening. His favorite friend was Jean. He would sit and listen to her tell stories about her dog and never once lost interest. Even after she was gone, Baxter continued to stop at her door weekly waiting to hear the excitement in her voice as she welcomed him in.

# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

**First name:** Deborah

**Therapy Pet:** Eugene

**How long have you been volunteering?** 6 years

**What types of facilities do you visit?** Up until the Covid shutdown last March, we had been visiting an assisted living facility, as well as, St Luke's Hospice House.

**What do you enjoy most about volunteering for Pets for Life?** Even though Eugene is quite friendly, he is blessed with a naturally grumpy expression, which always seems to make everybody laugh. I am grateful for the opportunity to bring laughter and joy to people and I love being part of a team with all the other incredible Pets for Life human and animal volunteers, knowing that we are all making a group effort to reach out and help however we can.

**Share a random fact about you and your pet.** Eugene is an accomplished traveler and has been to 16 states. I have been meaning to get him a decal from each state to decorate his carrying case, but I haven't gotten around to that yet – maybe for his birthday!



Don't forget to like our Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/pages/Pets-for-Life-Inc](https://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](mailto: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 Gorman Volunteer Coordinator.

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