

## PAWS for Reading & More!

Peanut & Tina had a very special visit at Georgetown Elementary School with a 1st grade student who is blind and had never met a dog. The student sat on the carpet for the visit and Tina guided her hands over Peanut, explaining as she went where she was touching. The child commented on how soft Peanut was and how the fur on her back felt different from her ears. She felt Peanut's tail, nose, paws, and belly and exclaimed, "I love her!" and bounced up and down. Peanut settled in with her new friend who read a story from her braille book. What a great visit!



### *Celebrating Black History Month with PAWS*

The PAWS team of Pandora & Paula was happy to be invited to help celebrate Black History month during the reading program at Radnor Middle School. This 8th grade student enjoyed reading the books called "Words with Wings" and "Brown Girl Dreaming" to Pandora.



PAWS pet therapy teams are requested by summer camps, schools, and community groups to present our PAWS & Compassionate Kids program. This is an engaging opportunity for children to learn that both animals and humans have basic needs. The kids discover how they can make a difference in the world by practicing respect, compassion, and empathy for all living creatures.

We know PAWS Pet Therapy is life-changing and has a lasting impact on the people who receive visits from dedicated volunteers and their gentle & affectionate pets. Providing an individualized therapeutic experience for each visit is what sets PAWS apart and helps to make true connections that are remembered and cherished. We don't always



know the full impact of a visit, but reconnecting with past PAWS for Reading participants reminds us just how memorable and powerful our programs can be.

Tawanda & Mr. Gibbs recently had a surprising visit at Nemours. When they entered the room of a 16-year-old girl, she excitedly shouted, "***I read to that dog at Brader Elementary...Mr. Gibbs, right?***" The girl, only 7 years old when she read to our PAWS dogs, now celebrated that memory 9 years later & happily declared that, "***our visit made her serotonin go through the roof!***"

***Mr. Gibbs continues creating memories as he makes more life-changing visits!***

## PAWS Pet Therapy Supports HEALTHCARE

It's been over 2 years since Covid-19 changed the world as we knew it, and as new variants materialize, pandemic challenges seem never ending. Our healthcare workers have remained on the front lines throughout, risking their own safety and that of their families, all of which is taking its toll. According to the Mental Health Association, healthcare workers are feeling stressed and stretched too thin: 93% of healthcare workers are experiencing stress, 86% are anxious, 77% are frustrated, 76% are exhausted, and 75% are overwhelmed.

PAWS for People has been requested by many of our healthcare partners to help their staff with the burden of stress and anxiety from their daily battle against Covid. We are honored to be able to support those who have cared for our community and saved countless lives throughout these challenging times.

ChristianaCare held Rejuvenation Stations, hosted by their Center for WorkLife Wellbeing, for their caregivers at the Newark, Wilmington, and Elkton campuses. The stations had art therapy, reflective therapy, chair massages, coffee and chocolate, and of course, DeStress snuggle stations with PAWS therapy companions.

Nemours Hospital for Children requested PAWS pet therapy visits specifically for nurses, doctors and staff. On Russ & Gorman's first staff visit, a nurse she joyfully exclaimed, *"Oh, this is exactly what we need!"*



PAWS has also provided DeStress sessions for staff at Beebe Healthcare in Lewes, DE; Cooper University Hospital in Camden, NJ; Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia, PA; and Saint Francis Hospital in Wilmington, DE.

Hospital staff & PAWS pet therapy teams' response to these events has been overwhelmingly positive. PAWS volunteers are thrilled to be able to support these healthcare heroes. As for the staff, a few minutes of pet therapy is the "purrfect cure for a ruff day!"

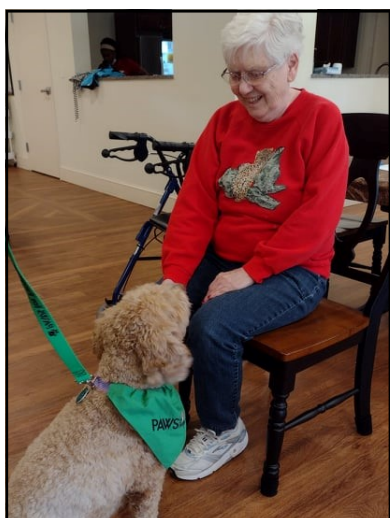




## PAWS Pet Therapy Supports Well-being for Seniors

PAWS therapy animals help to promote health and healing for seniors of any age range or health condition, whether they are depressed, suffer from dementia, are chronically ill or have ongoing disabilities. Studies show that just fifteen minutes spent bonding with an animal promotes hormonal changes in the brain. Pet therapy's "magic" truly makes a difference in the quality of life of our seniors.

Eldercare facilities are slowly, but surely, welcoming back PAWS teams, with a definite increase in the number of requests for visits Memory Care and Dementia Units. The benefits of pet therapy for folks with Alzheimer's is beginning to get a lot of attention: it improves mood & social interaction, has a calming effect, and decreases behavioral problems. Not only do PAWS therapy teams visit seniors in Memory Care Units and Assisted Living Facilities, but also Hospice Care and PAWS by Special Request Visits. All these offer unique opportunities for loving pet therapy teams to interact with elders.



**PAWS pet therapy  
team companions  
bring smiles & im-  
prove seniors' quality  
of life with each visit!**



*"PAWS for People pet therapy has been incredibly beneficial for Ivy Gables residents, especially in our Memory Care Unit. Often residents suffering from dementia experience "sundowning" every evening beginning around 3:00-4:00. This period of increased anxiety often causes behaviors that make it difficult for the residents to focus on activities.*

*However, since having pet therapy visits during sundowning, staff members have noticed a significant decrease in anxiety, depression, and aggressive behaviors with our residents. The pets have a very calming effect and always leave our residents smiling. PAWS pet therapy during "sundowning" has truly been a gift to our residents and to our entire Memory Care Unit at Ivy Gables. We are extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with such a caring and passionate team of people."* Elizabeth Cascarelli, Dir. of Arts & Entertainment, Ivy Gables – "Seniors Living Well"



## PAWS Pet Therapy Supports Mental Wellness: Helping people of all ages, wherever they are

With numerous studies supporting how the pandemic has exacerbated mental health conditions for people of all ages, PAWS continues training teams and making Well-Being a critical priority focus by intensifying our pet therapy programs and visits. PAWS pet therapy definitely helps improve people's physical, mental, social, and emotional health. We are reaching out to inform medical, educational, and other professionals to share the effectiveness of PAWS pet therapy and the positive impact of our amazing therapy pets!



PAWS pet therapy teams are always welcome at Sean's House in Newark, DE. This non-profit site is a valuable resource for young people, ages 14—24, to receive mental wellness support.

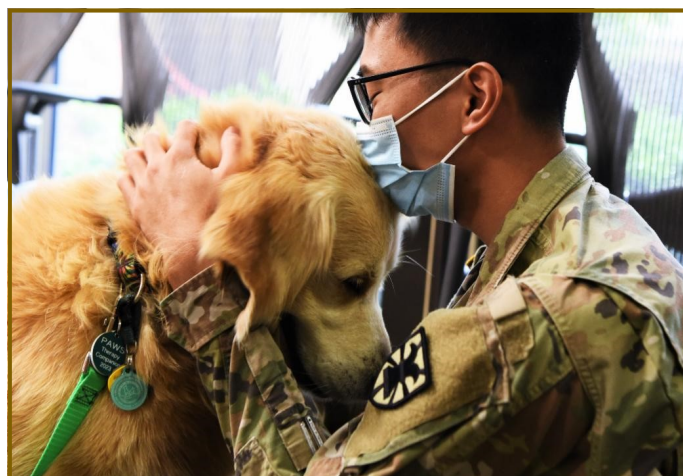
Robbie loves being a lap dog as he gives some extra love and hugs at a recent DeStress session at Sean's House.

Saphira enjoys giving a relaxing DeStress session to students, bringing big smiles to all!



PAWS therapy companions visited with the staff of the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, May 25, 2022. The resiliency event provided an opportunity for the AFMES team to DeStress with gentle, affectionate pets.

It was a glorious event and PAWS' first visit back at the Medical Examiners Unit since Covid. There was a squeal of joy when the teams arrived! Even through masks, our teams could feel the smiles and see the tears in the staff member's eyes.





## PAWS Pet Therapy Supports Workplace Well-being

This year PAWS has been invited to make visits to the **Blood Bank of Delmarva, CSC, Barclays, Amazon, WSFS, AstraZeneca, Discover, First Citizens Community Bank, and more!**

With heightened levels of stress during the pandemic and upon the transition from working at home to on site, employers thought that a little pet therapy from some furry friends was just what they needed to put smiles on the faces of their employees. They were right! The special PAWS to DeStress sessions bring rave reviews from everyone – employees, administration, and the PAWS teams.

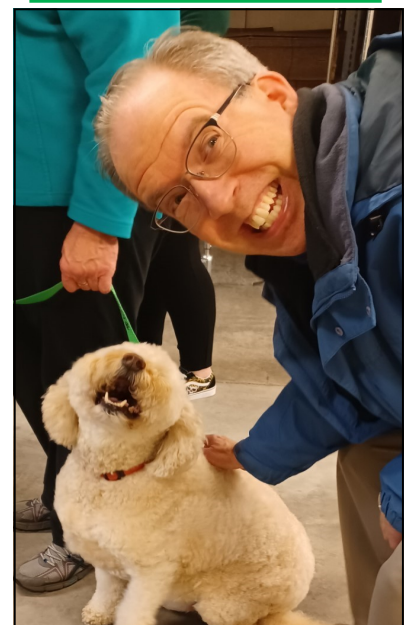
Many studies have found that when people take even just a few moments to pet an animal, their stress and anxiety levels decline. Research supports that the presence of therapy animals in the workplace often leads to more productive coworker interaction, increased trust levels, and more effective collaboration. This is a WIN-WIN-WIN for employers, employees, and PAWS pet therapy!



PAWS DeStress visits  
bring BIG Smiles to all...  
humans and pets!



PAWS teams were excited to be back at Legislative Hall in Dover, DE on June 16, for the first time since COVID. They provided much needed DeStress and some fun puppy love for Delaware legislators, government staffers, and guests during the very hectic end of the general assembly session.



## PAWS Pet Therapy Supports Our Community

In March, PAWS for People's pet therapy teams participated in our first event in support of the work of the 1 in 7B Foundation. This local organization's mission is to demonstrate unconditional love and bring hope, joy, and dignity with humble compassion to those experiencing homelessness. During the event near the Sunday Breakfast Mission in Wilmington, PAWS teams added the comfort and joy of puppy kisses & snuggles to the food, clothing and toys being distributed to families in need.

1 in 7B founder, Mark Puican, shared, *"Wow, what an impact our furry volunteers had on our guests! Seeing the smiles out there under a chilly Front St. train bridge warmed hearts in an instant. Obi, Sami, & Abby were so sweet to everyone! We're so excited for this new partnership with PAWS for People! **Thanks to the owners of these pups and to the rest of our volunteers for providing a caring and nonjudgmental atmosphere full of unconditional love.**"* To date, PAWS has participated in five 1 in 7B events. We are honored to be part of events that truly demonstrate genuine care for people experiencing homelessness.



### BRINGING COMFORT TO THOSE WHO ARE GRIEVEING

Our newly created PAWS to Comfort program has been requested to provide bereavement support to our community in a variety of ways: in funeral services, in workplaces and in schools. Our furry visitors don't need words to console those who have experienced loss. They know the value of soft, warm snuggles and gentle kisses.

*"From the minute we walked up to students ,it was as if my dog was saying 'I got this!' She brought such joy and comfort to those kids. For 2 hours I watched in awe as she solely did her job and a great job at that. It was as if I wasn't even in the room. I usually have some interaction with those we are with but early on it became clear that no words were needed. Yes, there are times especially in the hospital where no words are exchanged, but yesterday it felt different as I watched my dog, Soleil, work her magic."*

*From Beverly, PAWS Team member & retired Social Worker*

