



July 2022

PVAA PRAIRIE TAILS

Welcome to the July 2022 edition of our Prairieland Visiting Animals Association newsletter: a collection of information, stories, news, events and all other things having to do with our favorite subject - therapy animals!

TTouch Workshop

Now is the time for PVAA members to sign up for the workshop that Prairieland is sponsoring on Sat. Sep, 17, 2022 from 1-4pm.

Pat Hennessy, a certified advanced Tellington TTouch Practitioner, is coming in to teach a small class of 20 PVAA members. TTouch is a gentle method of bodywork & movement exercises that positively influence behavior, well-being and performance. It honors the body, mind & spirit of the animal and their people and creates a special bond & trust between humans and animals. The workshop will cover the history of TTouch, how it works and includes a hands on demonstration with explanation and practice sessions with 4 demo dogs. Although this workshop will focus on dogs, the touch can be used on any domestic animal. It is used worldwide by vets, trainers, breeders, shelters, etc.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn these techniques and bring them home to your pets. They will love you for it. We had one of these workshops over 10 years ago and I learned so much from it. I would encourage you to sign up on our website

and pay the fee by paypal or check to: Diana Zimmerman, 3807 SE 32 St 66605 to reserve your seat. Deadline for PVAA members to sign up & pay is Aug. 15th.

If you're not a PVAA member, join now, or ask Karen to be on the wait list in case there is space available after the member sign-up deadline. You will have a better chance of securing a seat if you respond quickly. The cost for a non-member will be \$50 for the 3 hr workshop. If you have any questions, please email Karen Simecka (ksimekcal@gmail.com).



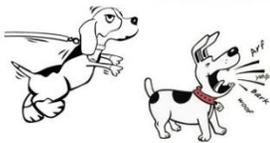
TRAINING WORKSHOP

Sat, Sept 17th, 2022 1-4pm

PVAA member cost: \$30

Reserve your seat today! Sign up:

www.prairielandvisitinganimals.com

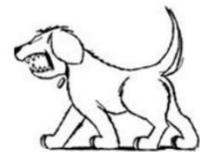


Does your dog bark too much, pull on the leash, fears loud noises or thunderstorms?



Does your senior dog suffer from arthritis or is recovering from an injury or illness?

Do they have car sickness?



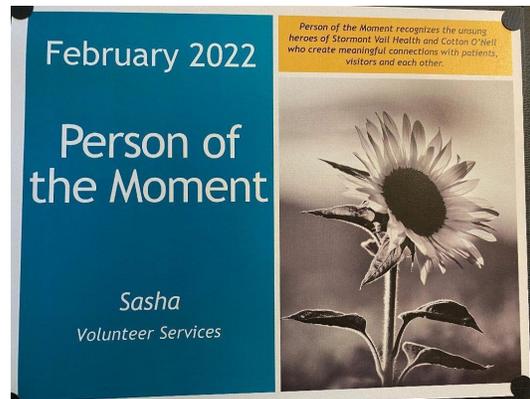
Are you concerned about behaviors such as shyness, anxiety, fear or aggressiveness?

Help your dog focus & improve their performance & self control.

Join us at Prince of Peace Church (west door-lower level), 3635 SW Wanamaker Rd, Topeka, KS. Class is limited to 20 attendees. If the class is not filled by Aug. 15th, we will open the remaining seats to the public and use a waiting list to fill the vacancies.

Member Spotlight - Brian & Sasha

Each newsletter will feature a dedicated Prairieland Team. It is not our intent to place any one team's accomplishments over that of another. The goal here is to provide a back story on how the team came together and some highlights from their career.



Sasha is living large at Stormont Vail Hospital. Literally. When you tip the scales at 140 pounds and sport a stunning reverse brindle coat, you simply cannot be ignored.

Sasha and Brian Coover have been working as a therapy team at the hospital for the past year. They visit the Emergency Room, the Critical Care Unit, and Pediatrics on a regular basis. Because Brian is also a hospital employee, Sasha has visited every unit in the hospital and spends Mondays greeting new hires.

"Sasha has been able to bring calmness to staff and patients that have had some of the hardest years of their lives and just be there to listen and be petted, Brian said. "The trauma our medical staff has endured over the past two years may not be fixed, but thanks to one lovable mutt, we can at least smile a little more even with a mask."

Sasha was recognized by Stormont Vail as a "Person of the Moment" for the love she shows both staff and patients. Despite working at the hospital since 2017, Brian said he is often ignored as the person on the other end of the leash.

"I love the fact that in one year most of the staff call her by name and smile as soon as they hear her collar jingle as she walks down the halls."

That's what happens when you stand in the shadow of an English Mastiff. Which is the only place you can really stand when you're with Sasha.

Cheyenne's Waggin' Tales

This column is dedicated to therapy dogs past and present that have enriched the lives of countless souls throughout the history of Prairieland Visiting Animals Association. May this perspective provide you with unique insights into the power of animal assisted interventions.



Autumn is a season. Maybe my favorite one. Come to think of it, any season where the sun's heat doesn't melt my paw pads into the sidewalk is a favorite season.

But Autumn is also the name of a girl. I met her at a Kansas City high school a few weeks ago. Tim and I used to visit there before everyone got sick and the world shut down for a while. I guess things are better now because they invited us back.

The kids we visit here aren't quite like most younger humans I meet. Some make strange noises. Others flap their arms about like birds except that they never leave the ground. Others don't talk at all. Humans that don't talk are about as rare as a dog that doesn't bark. You tend to notice.

Humans make more sense to dogs when they don't talk so much. Autumn spoke in whispers. A word or two here and there. But she loved animals. A dog can tell these things. Don't ask me how. We just do.

She carried with her a toy. A stuffed lion, slightly smaller than ones Chance and I play with at home. It was special to her, so I decided not to chew on it. Autumn didn't look at the other kids much and only occasionally acknowledged the teacher. But she looked at me. And I her.

Connection. It was instant and it was profound. We would be forever friends.

I laid on the floor beside her as the other children gathered around. I love these moments when love envelopes me like a blanket. But soon the other children moved on and there was just Autumn. And her lion.

"She carries that lion everywhere," the teacher told Tim. "I don't think I've ever seen her put it down."

Almost on cue, my new friend placed her lion on my head as I lay beside her. Gently. Like a feather floating in the breeze. In Autumn.

Which dog breed lives in the Big Apple? A New Yorkie....

Tips from Tim the Trainer (Yes, I love alliteration, don't you?)

"Look at the way she looks at you."

I get that a lot. Whenever Cheyenne comes to one of my training classes to demonstrate a particular behavior. Her emerald eyes meet mine as if to say, "now what?" It's one of the most beautiful moments of any day I spend on Mother Earth.

Direct eye contact is intimidating and even threatening to some dogs. It comes more naturally to humans. Cheyenne and I spent months forging a relationship that has seen us through nearly 600 hours as a therapy team. And it all began with teaching and rewarding eye contact.

Cheyenne was resistant at first. She has the nose of a bloodhound. New scents, familiar scents, heck, ANY scent takes her to that nirvana that only dogs know. I was about as interesting as a wet barrel of hair.

On walks I would wait at an intersection. Some days more patiently than others. Through the cycle of green traffic light to red and back to green again. Until she would finally look up at me, thus allowing the journey to continue.

In training classes, it's referred to as "watch" or "focus." It's what parents say to their children - "look at me when I'm speaking to you." Teachers stand before their fidgety first graders - "I need your eyes." The hope being that they will never have to repeat themselves (but hey, we know how that turns out!).

Successful interactions in pet therapy begins with eye contact. Dogs with aptitude for this work think everyone is their friend. The reality is that not everyone likes dogs. Hard to fathom, I know. Teach your dog to check in with you first and then be released to say hello.

It's also noteworthy that your dog may not want to interact with every human they meet. The same can be said for us. We can make that choice and so too should our dogs. Look for any indications of stress in your dog before releasing them to greet. Eye contact allows you to assess and act upon your dog's emotional state.

Eye contact is the switch that lights up a room. It is the power-up button on your device or your TV. When it comes to creating a human/animal bond, the eyes have it.

GONE BUT NOT FORGOTTEN...

Each newsletter will pay tribute to a dog that brought joy and comfort to hundreds if not thousands of people before crossing the Rainbow Bridge. Here is their story...

In Honor of Abby
Born: August 1, 2008
Died: March 28, 2022
Partner: Bitsey Patton



Abby and Bitsey Patton became a therapy team in 2010. She visited the Juvenile Detention Center and was a fixture at Lawrence Memorial Hospital.

Abby also participated in the READ program at the Topeka-Shawnee County Public Library, and participated in student de-stress events at KU, offering comfort to KU students during finals. But Abby's talents extended well beyond pet therapy. Abby was also a competition dog with many awards in agility, tracking, obedience, and scent work. In addition, she was a Trick Dog, completing 25 tricks for an AKC title.

Bitsey recalled a favorite therapy dog memory while volunteering at Lawrence Memorial Hospital.

"I had tiny biscuits that I would give to patients," Bitsey said. "They so loved feeding her, and she had the softest mouth. One patient, to my surprise, put the tiny biscuit in his mouth and leaned toward Abby. She slowly and gently took the treat without touching him."

Abby's greatest gift, according to Bitsey, was that of friendship.

"She would do anything I asked, as long as we could be together," Bitsey said. "Jesse (Bitsey's current partner) and I miss her terribly."

Although she was born in the summer and passed in the Spring, Abby was truly a dog for all seasons.

In Honor of Jasmine
Born: July 26, 2010
Died: May 9, 2022
Partner: Carolyn Buono



Jasmine, featured in the last PVAA newsletter, passed away suddenly on May 9. She was 3 years of age when her partner, Carolyn Buono, first brought her home. When it came to Jasmine, it was love at first sight. "We hit it off right away" Carolyn said. "We began eight months of dog training almost immediately."

Carolyn and Jasmine attended many conferences, including local and regional events for the church, as well as national and regional conferences for Parents of Murdered Children and the military's Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors (TAPS) and for Extra Mile K9 Ministry. Our TAPS work focused on helping families grieving for the loss of their family member to suicide.

Carolyn had previously been certified with Animal Assisted Crisis Response with her first therapy pet, Riley and also Abbey. In 2017, she decided to do the preliminary training and evaluation with Jasmine and obtained that certification shortly before Hurricane Harvey hit Texas. Jasmine and Carolyn were deployed with three other teams. They spent two weeks traveling throughout Texas providing comfort and support to hurricane victims. In 2018, Carolyn and Jasmine, along with PVAA member Sheri Jones, responded after Hurricane Michael.

Jasmine and Carolyn visited regularly at Plaza West and Aldersgate Village for Great Lakes Caring Hospice patients, family members and staff. They also made weekly trips to the VA in Topeka in the Stress Disorder Treatment Unit.

Carolyn and Jasmine responded to calls from the DA's office at the Shawnee County Courthouse to help young people with testimony preparation. Just prior to Jasmine's death, this tireless team became volunteers at Stormont Vail and visited the Cancer Center as well as the Pediatric Unit.

During the last year Carolyn used Jasmine to mentor her young dog Joy so she could start a visiting career as well.

The torch was passed, but the light that was Jasmine will never be extinguished.

What did one flea say to the other? Should we walk, or just take the dog?....

DOG TREATS FROM KAREN'S KITCHEN!

Personally, I like the recipes for the silicone molds that you find online. Le Dogue has FDA approved, BPA free silicone molds that come in a variety of shapes and sizes for baking or freezing doggie treats. Most come with a free recipe book to start out. These are super easy to use and clean. On the other hand, if you're into rolling out dough and using cookie cutters - there are lots of great recipes for those, too.

The Basics: 1 C. flour + 1 C. wet ingredients + 1 heaping teaspoon of herbs or spices (optional). Use water, broth or yogurt to moisten the dough.

- ★ Flours: Coconut, Almond, Barley, Chickpea, Oat, Quinoa or Barley - never use whole wheat or regular flour for these.
- ★ Wet ingredients: pumpkin puree, mashed sweet potato, unsweetened apple sauce, fresh or frozen berries, grated carrots, broccoli, ripe bananas, grated zucchini, pureed butternut squash, cooked beets and canned/cooked fish - your options are endless.
- ★ Herbs and spices (doggy safe): parsley, thyme, fennel, dill, turmeric, basil, cinnamon, ginger, marjoram, oregano, sage, rosemary and tarragon.
- ★ Directions: Preheat oven to 375 degrees - place molds on a baking sheet - combine ingredients and fill molds $\frac{3}{4}$ full - bake for 30 minutes - turn off oven and let biscuits cool inside - this will make them crunchy.

Slammin' Salmon Dog Treats - one of our favorites

$\frac{2}{3}$ C. canned or cooked salmon, 1 egg, 1 C. almond flour & 3 T. olive oil (add herbs if desired) - use directions above

Squashicken

$\frac{3}{4}$ C. mashed butternut squash, $1\frac{1}{4}$ C. almond flour, 1+ T. herb or flax seed meal, one half chopped chicken breast, $\frac{1}{2}$ C. water and 2 T. olive oil - use directions above

Reagan's Favorite Bacon Treats

$2\frac{1}{2}$ C. almond flour, 1 C. skim milk powder, $\frac{1}{3}$ C. bacon drippings, 1 egg and 1 C. cold water. Combine dry, add bacon drippings, then egg and water. Fill molds $\frac{3}{4}$ full and bake at 330 degrees for 30 minutes. Store in container.

Bone Broth Frozen Treats

1-2.5 oz chicken baby food jar, 1 C. chicken broth, 1/3 C. grated carrot and 1/8 t. herb. Place small amount of grated carrot in the bottom of each mold, pour mixture into molds and freeze for at least 2 hours.

Banana & Almond Frozen Treats

1/4 C. creamy almond butter, 1 mashed banana & 1 C. unsweetened almond milk. Add milk (a little at a time) to the 2 other ingredients and pour into molds. Freeze for 2 hours. Pop out and store in bags.

Murphy's Weiner Treats by Rick & Perrin Riggs

Slice hotdogs into 1/4" slices, then quarter each slice and place on several paper towels on a microwave safe plate. Sprinkle liberally with garlic powder (NOT garlic salt) and microwave until the hot dog pieces are partially dehydrated and have a jerky-like texture. Watch them carefully and don't overdo it. Cool and store in a ziplock bag in the fridge.

Happy treat making! Karen Simecka

Your turn! Post your favorite treat recipe on the PVAA Facebook page!

Welcome to the Family

Welcome new member Rachel Pantos.

Congrats to Erin Corbin and Kiah, who successfully completed their evaluation with Alliance of Therapy Dogs and are new PVAA members as well!



Erin & Kiah

SUMMER READING, HAD US A BLAST!

Reading With Prairieland Dogs at the Topeka/Shawnee County Public Library has finished their summer program. Another one will be held in September. Contact Karen Simecka (ksimecka@gmail.com) to become involved.

National Therapy Animal Organizations

- Pet Partners, <https://petpartners.org/>
- Love On a Leash, <https://www.loveonaleash.org/>
- Alliance of Therapy Dogs <https://www.therapydogs.com/>

Good to Know...

Stormont Vail Health reimburses all expenses related to preparing your animal for therapy work through Pet Partners. Special thanks to Stormont Vail Auxiliary, who set up this fund in recognition of former Volunteer Director Beverly Rice.

The next therapy dog class at PetSmart starts Wednesday, September 7th and meets for 6 weeks with each session lasting one hour. Contact Tim McHenry (timthetrainer@yahoo.com) for more information.

Training classes are also offered at:

Camo Cross Dog Training - 3526 SE 21st St, Topeka, KS 66607
<https://www.camocrossdogtraining.com/group-classes.html>

Helping Hands Humane Society -5720 SW 21st St, Topeka, KS 66604
<https://www.hhhstopeka.org/training-classes/>

The next Pet Partners Evaluation is being held July 30 at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 3625 SW Wanamaker. The schedule has been set, please contact Sharon Fricke at slintonf@gmail.com for more information.

LOVE ON A LEASH & ALLIANCE OF THERAPY DOGS evaluations can be scheduled. For more information contact Karen Simecka at ksimecka1@gmail.com.

A Little Bit About Us

Prairieland is a friendly group of folks from the heartland who are interested in promoting the human/animal bond. Our group provides human/animal visitation teams to healthcare facilities, schools, and other facilities that can benefit from interactions with animals.

Officers:

Chair: Karen Simecka

Vice-Chair: Tim McHenry

Secretary: Judy Knoll

Treasurer: Diana Zimmerman

Contact us:

prairielandvisitinganimal@gmail.com

Website:

<https://www.prairielandvisitinganimals.com/>

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