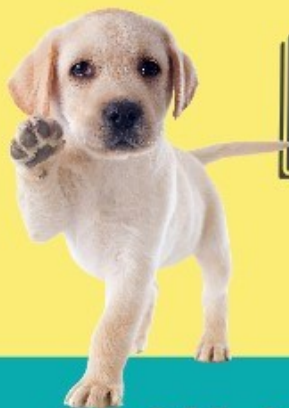


FALL 2023

NEWSLETTER

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**FROM NEWBORNS
TO CENTENARIANS...**

**LOVE ON 4 PAWS
SHARES**

**UNCONDITIONAL LOVE
WITH ALL AGES**

READ NOW

FEATURE STORIES

**THERAPY DOGS LOVE
TRANSITIONAL CARE**

**MADISON WARMS
TEENS' HEARTS**

**TESSA TAKES A CHAIR
AT CEREBRAL PALSY
HOUSE**



From Newborns to Centenarians, Love On 4 Paws Helps All Ages

by Mercedes Legaspi, Love On 4 Paws Administrative Coordinator

At Providence Little Company of Mary Hospital, Torrance, Calif., Love On 4 Paws therapy dogs bring smiles and joy to people of all ages. Our littlest patient was a newborn baby just out of the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. Her mom and



dad were delighted to have a visit from a therapy dog friend named Tessa. They took lots of pictures to mark the happy occasion. In fact, over 23 days in the hospital, the couple enjoyed visits from several Love On 4 Paws therapy pets.

In the same month, Therapy Dog Maya and her handler visited with a 102-year-old patient, marking the first centenarian visit of the year. Both Tessa and Maya

were comfortable relaxing on the patients' beds, giving cuddles and unconditional love to the ones who need it most.

Our littlest patient was a newborn baby just out of the NICU. Our oldest was 102.

And along the way, in the hallways and nurses stations, in waiting rooms and staff lounges, animal-assisted therapy also provides joy and stress-relief to medical staff and visitors. This is what Love On 4 Paws does best!



Facility Paves the Way for Successful Therapy Pet Visits

by Jannett Frias, Activities Coordinator, Little Co. of Mary Transitional Care Center

Love On 4 Paws brings so much joy, not just to our patients and their family members, but also to our staff.



After not being able to have pet therapy visits for so long because of Covid, when we were finally able to start them again, everyone was really happy.

Every Wednesday, people look forward to their visit with the therapy dogs. They ask me who is coming and to make sure they get a visit. Our regular dogs include Maya (pictured above), Ginga, Hazel, Tessa, Valentina, and Charlee (pictured in order, below).

In advance, I go around and ask each patient in our building if they would like a visit. For the ones that do, I make a list and try to make sure the therapy dog

stops by to visit them. I really enjoy accompanying the volunteer and therapy dog as they make their visits.



The best part is walking into a room and seeing the patient's or even the staff's face light up when they see the dog. They share their stories, talking about their own dogs and how much they miss them, and how the visit makes them so happy.

At the end of each visit, patients are very thankful for the unconditional love given to them by these special dogs.

A dog will teach you, unconditional love. If you can have that in your life, things won't be too bad.
- Robert Wagner



Therapy Dogs Reunite With Friends at Transitional Care Center

by Jim Kelly, Love On 4 Paws Volunteer

Our Love On 4 Paws Therapy Dogs have a special relationship with the staff and patients at Providence Little Company of Mary Transitional Care Center in Torrance, Calif. This began before Covid. I see this in my dog Maya. There was chemistry from the beginning. She discovered the Break Room, while walking the corridor to a patient's room. When she walked in, she was greeted with surprise and cheers. She has never forgotten that. Every time we walk by, she insists on entering the room, looking for her friends.



One nurse, Madeleine, bonded with Maya from the beginning. She also has a Golden Retriever. When Covid arrived, we did not visit for almost two years. When we finally returned, Maya couldn't wait to see her

friends again. As we walked onto the floor, she heard "Maya is back!"

Then, at the end of the corridor, she saw Madeleine. I let Maya go and she bounded into her arms. It was a touching moment.



Maya never forgets her friends. Everyone saw the relationship, and it only added to the special feelings of happiness and Therapy that Maya brings to every visit.

One nurse, Madeleine, bonded with Maya from the beginning.

Today, the visits to TTC are very productive because Jannett is our guide and she checks with the patients before we arrive, learning which ones would like to see a Therapy Dog. We work as a team and usually see about 25 patients.

Throughout the visits, our dogs are stopped by various staff. Most just want to hug and pet them. They take pictures with their cell phones and continuously thank us for taking the stress out of their day.

Madison Makes a Breakthrough with a Teen Boy

by Lisa Hsu,

Love On 4 Paws Volunteer

My dog, Madison, and I have been volunteering at Del Amo Hospital, Torrance, Calif., for several years. During each visit, we typically see three or four groups of patients, ranging from children to adults, who are being treated for mental health challenges. Each group of either Teen Girls, Boys, Pre-Teens or Adults sits in a big circle outside, surrounding Madison. This sweet Love On 4 Paws therapy dog loves to work the circle by greeting each patient, who gives her a treat, a pet, or a hug for dropping by. Madison usually gets comments like, "she is sooo cute, I love her," or "she is so soft"--many of the participants miss their pets at home and share their names and breeds.

Recently, we had a very unique, heartfelt visit with one Teen Boy. He petted and fed Madison as the others have done, but then he started tearing up and shared that he once had a cat. He continued to



cry and pet Madison; then asked if he could hold her in his lap. The other boys left, and the two bonded as Madison lay in his lap without moving, and he hugged her for well over five minutes. Madison had made a breakthrough with this boy, and he was comfortable letting her go after

this experience. I have only seen this heartfelt moment a few times with adults at hospitals in our prior dog therapy visits. Madison has been a dog therapist for Love On 4 Paws for more than eight years. She is a senior dog who is still doing very well.

The two bonded as Madison lay in his lap without moving, and he hugged her...

We love the impact Madison is making, and I think this important work helps her to feel younger.



Tessa Takes a Chair at Cerebral Palsy Group Home

by Lynn Attig, Love On 4 Paws volunteer

The very first time Tessa walked on four paws into the United Cerebral Palsy Group Home in Lomita, Calif., she started wagging her tail endlessly and looked excited to meet so many new human friends at once.

I quickly realized why: they were all driving around in motorized wheelchairs! As a herding dog, Tessa felt right at home with the movement! Also, because I had worked with special needs adults in the past, Tessa sensed my comfort level with the fun-loving people in this group home.

As a herding dog, Tessa felt right at home with the movement of the motorized wheelchairs.

While they gathered in the community room and began to vocalize their exuberance about our visit, I realized I wanted to get Tessa at their eye level so they could interact with her one-on-one. I asked the occupational therapist if he had a spare chair, and YES, he did! So Tessa jumped up in the chair and spent quality time next to each adult. Many were able relax their hands to pet her and ask abundant questions. Then we took several small-group polaroid photos to leave as a memento of our visit. Most of the pictures went up on the walls in their bedrooms.

Before we left the facility, Tessa jumped out of the chair and entertained them with tricks: spinning around, “sitting pretty,” raising her left and right paw, catching treats in the air, and lying on her side at the “relax” command. As the residents were called by the dinner bell, they expressed their goodbyes and gratitude to both of us on their way to eat.

I was so happy that Tessa was able to bring them such joy and unconditional love. The Cerebral Palsy Group Home is one of our favorite places to visit, and it is always wonderful to reunite with our new-found friends.



A Note From a Patient At Keck USC

by Aaron, long-term patient visited by a Love On 4 Paws Therapy Dog



Testimonial: “I could always tell when Kailee was coming cuz the nurses’ voices got all excited...after my visits with Kailee I’ve been inspired to get a dog and do therapy/comfort work in my own way...I’ve wanted to do this since my first visit with Kailee. I still have the 2 Polaroid pics with her from the hospital. I have them on the table next to the chair I sit in in my living room. I see them every day. Thanks again. I’m here and doing great in a big part because of Kailee.” — *Aaron*

Until Next Time!



**From
Therapy
Dog River
and all of her
friends at
Love On 4 Paws
(both cats, dogs
and humans),
Thank you
so much for your
continued
support!**

