

# Love On 4 Paws

Fall 2024 Newsletter

THIS ISSUE IS ALL ABOUT

Sharing the joy,  
comfort and  
healing power  
of our pets'  
unconditional  
love



# USC Verdugo Hills Hospital Adores Love On 4 Paws Furry Friends

by Bridget Berg, Director,  
Patient and Family Experience



*The* act of entering a hospital often brings fear and uncertainty. As a patient, you may be uncomfortable – both physically and emotionally. On the contrary, the staff members who come in and out of the hospital go freely and are accustomed to this environment. It's a place where staff are comfortable; they have friends, an environment they know, and a fairly expected routine. While the experiences of these two sets of people are different, the visit from a Love On 4 Paws handler and their furry friend brings the joy, energy, light, and reinvigoration to both patients and staff.

USC Verdugo Hills Hospital is fortunate to partner with Love On 4 Paws since early 2023. With a regularly scheduled set of handlers and dogs, staff look forward to these visits – maybe even more than patients. In fact, one of our Social Workers, Suzy, is known to collect photos of her visits from Mia, Kailee and Gracie. Suzy shared, "As a firm believer that dogs make (almost) everything better, getting to interact with our furry friends from Love On 4 Paws is always a highlight of my week. For so many of our patients, getting a visit from a sweet doggie is a comfort during a difficult time. And I love that the pups (and their wonderful handlers) always make time to brighten the days of hospital staff, myself included!"

Love On 4 Paws therapy dogs visit patients throughout the hospital. Kailee visited a patient who wanted to leave the hospital, but still needed to get better. Kailee's visits served as a focus for helping the patient stay and continue treatment. The Geropsychiatric unit at USC Verdugo Hills Hospital cares for patients age 50 years and over who may be experiencing acute mental illness episodes or severe dementia or alzheimers. The Love On 4 Paws handlers and dogs visit this unit each time they arrive. They serve as a respite and connection to the outside world for patients who can be in the hospital two weeks or more. On the unit, the therapy dogs are a special part of the programming that is provided to patients. According to Mieko Takemoto, Activity Therapist, "therapy dogs are truly angels without wings. They help bring back positive memories for many patients, spread pure happiness and help patients become motivated to enjoy the moment!"



**Another staff member summed it up well: "You forget for a moment that you're in the hospital."**



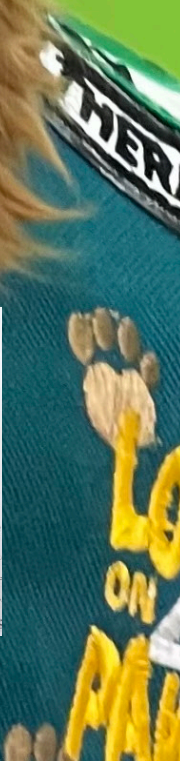
## Senior Resident Sketches Ginga During Therapy Visit

*At* Family Connect Memory Care in Torrance, Love On 4 Paws Therapy Dog Ginga is a regular comfort to the many residents who live there. This 80-lb., sweet furry bundle is happy to connect with hugs and tail wags, and is also content to lie still while one of the ladies draws in her sketch pad. During a recent visit, she drew Ginga on the spot! Ginga is the perfect model, and he seems to approve of his likeness. He must be thinking: "This is another cool day in the life of a therapy dog!"



# Charlie Goes to School

GRATITUDE FROM KINDERGARTENERS



# Apollo & Lily



*My* name is Lily and I am the President of Pi Beta Phi at the University of Southern California. I was hoping to submit a visit request for the week of finals. I have a personal connection to Love On 4 Paws. I received treatment for cancer in 2017 at Keck, and Apollo -- a beautiful chocolate lab from your organization -- significantly improved my time there, and no doubt sped up my healing process. I would love to share your organization's amazing work with the members of my sorority. Please let me know if this is

something you would be interested in -- it would be a one-time event (maybe 1-2 hours) in an enclosed space. I have attached a photo of me with Apollo at Keck :) Thanks again for all that you do for the Los Angeles Community.  
Best wishes,  
Lily

Love On 4 Paws was able to meet this request. Therapy Dogs Belle and Valentina did visit Lily and her sorority members, creating meaningful memories for all involved.