



Info from Fairfax Pets On Wheels

September 2025



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State of the Program 2024-25

By Madelynn Arnold

Fairfax Pets on Wheels lost two of its strong supporters

this past year with the death of Rep. Gerry Connelly who was a Fairfax County Supervisor and later Chairman of the Board of Supervisors during FPOW's formative years in its relationship with the county. As a member of the House of Representatives, he submitted the program's accomplishments into the Congressional Record for two of our anniversary years – our 30th and 35th. We also lost Loretta Swit, who did a Public Service Announcement for FPOW, was interviewed by National Public Radio regarding pet therapy and our program in particular, attended our 15th and 20th anniversary galas, and also gave FPOW its "touch someone's life and change your own," slogan.

Following the past few years of challenges due to Covid, our program is again growing. We take great pride in being one of the programs that Fairfax County's Area Agency on Aging Volunteer Solutions provides to the senior population of the county. During the past year, FPOW welcomed 18 new volunteer teams and gave 3,222 hours to the facilities that we visit. Recruiting teams to the program is always one of the most daunting challenges for FPOW. We greatly appreciate the support of Dr. Kocen and The Veterinary Holistic Center for giving us the space to do our temperament testing.

The value our program brings to the community and residents of long-term care facilities is demonstrated by our waiting list of over 30 facilities wanting our volunteers. If you are aware of individuals who have friendly dogs, cats, and bunnies, please reach out to them and spread the word about our organization. FPOW will provide you with promotional materials to distribute to anyone who expresses interest. (Continued on page 2)



L-R Brian Bryson (with Highway), Madelynn Arnold, Karen Finkel, and Karen Beekman (with Max)

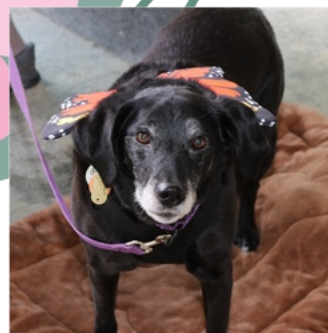
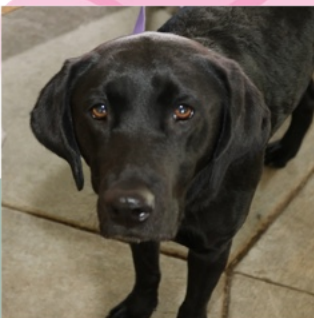
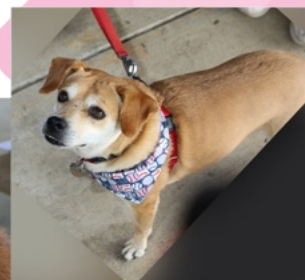
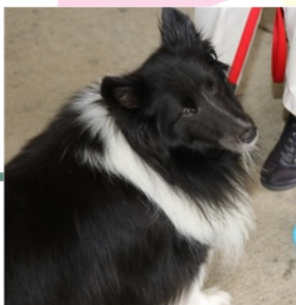
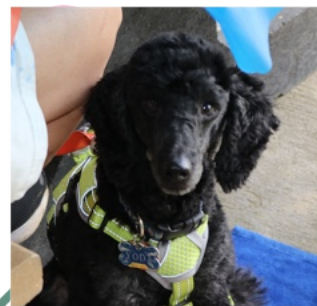
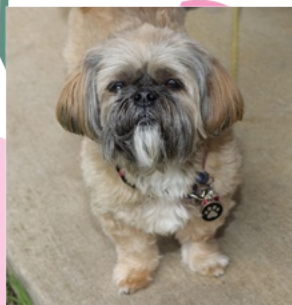
All-volunteer Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc.
connects pets with residents of long-term care facilities in Fairfax County.
Visit fpow.org or call (703) 324-5424



(State of the Program 2024-25 continued from page 1)

We are an all-volunteer organization – the management and administration of the organization depends on a lot of skills and expertise. FPOW is continuously seeking individuals who are enthusiastic in sharing their skills and expertise to enhance our organization. If you have ideas or talents that you believe could be beneficial to us, please do not hesitate to contact one of our board members or the FPOW hotline. Your unique skills are a valuable contribution to our program and serving on a committee is a good way to help the program, we are all volunteers here trying to promote the program and help lick loneliness.

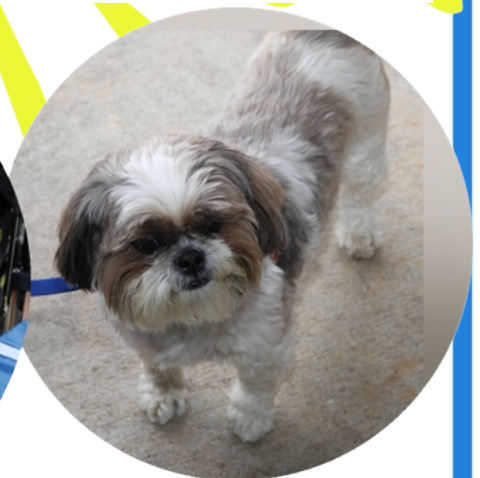
Our pets were the stars of our Volunteer Appreciation picnic last June!



Touch someone's life
and change your own.
Loreta Selt
Actor, Artist, Activist



This is how FPOW pets greet each other.



Touch someone's life
and change your own.

Loretta Salt
Actor, Artist, Activist

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Congratulations to all!

Service Award Winners

Hours of Service

Bronze (50–74 hours): Raphael Syah, Barbara Kuckenbecker, Mary Portelly, Terry Carroll, Melissa Allen, Annamary Sullivan (np), Jeanine Goldberg (np), George Thompson (np)

Silver (75–99 hours): Brian Bryson, Madelynn Arnold, Karen Finkel, Karen Beekman (for picture see page 1)

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Gold (100+ hours): Paula Singleton, Diane O'Brien, Kathi Baker, Bonnie Burnham, Joe Ammann, Susan Ledgerwood, Jack Ledgerwood, Ruth Benker, Diane Bente (np), Dave Dexter (np)

Years of Service

5

25 Years: Jill Davidson

1

20 Years: Patty Kwapniewski, Colleen Nassetta (np)

2

15 Years: Mary Portelly

3

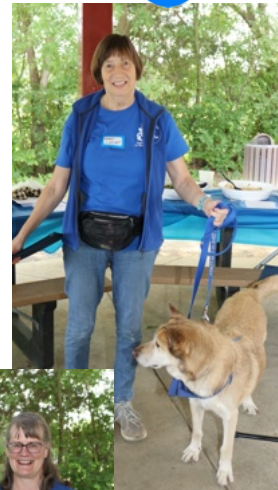
10 Years: Terry Carroll, Paula Singleton, Doreen Peters

5 Years: Stacey Berlin (np)

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Latshaw goes to Dave Dexter

For his exemplary service to Fairfax Pets on Wheels, Dave Dexter was recognized with the Mary Latshaw Award for Excellence. Dave began his FPOW career in May 2023, with his Cavalier, Rosie, at the Virginian. Together they became a consistent team logging over 120 hours visiting residents in calendar year 2023. When the call went out for volunteers for the Picnic Committee for 2024, Dave volunteered and assumed the task for finding a caterer for our annual Volunteer Appreciation Event. He interviewed several different vendors, vetted them and presented his findings to the Committee. Because of his demonstrated commitment to the missions of FPOW, in 2024, he was invited to become a member of the Speakers' Bureau, representing FPOW at a number of community and United Way events. Additionally, he served as one of the Directors-at-Large on the FPOW Board of Directors for the 2024-25 year where he once again took on the responsibility of obtaining the caterers for the Volunteer Appreciation Picnic in 2025. An all-volunteer organization cannot run without the dedicated commitment of volunteers like Dave.



Shauna Award goes to Lucy Consaul

The Shauna Award was given to Lucy Consaul. Lucy was involved with FPOW from 2014 until shortly before her death in March of this year. She obtained the AKC Distinguished Therapy Dog (400+ visits), the AKC Good Citizen, AKC Good Citizen Urban, and AKC Novice Trick Dog Awards. She brought joy and kindness to many of FPOW facility residents through her visits at Sunrise-Reston, Dulles Health and Rehab, and Herndon Harbor ADCC. Lucy also participated in the Red Cross visits at Walter Reed National Medical Center, was a member of People Animals Love (PAL), and was a crisis response dog serving with HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response. One of her last missions was serving at the American Airlines Flight 5342 crash recovery site near Reagan National Airport. Lucy was one of the best of the best.

Kim Wilkerson Founder's Award Scholarship

Congratulations to this year's \$500 scholarship recipient, Kathleen Fisher! A 28-year-old college graduate from the NOVA, Fisher holds an Associate's Degree in General Studies. In the fall of 2023, she was accepted into the Veterinary Technology program at NOVA's Loudoun campus. Currently, she is enrolled in part-time studies while simultaneously employed at Parkway Veterinary Clinic in Burke, Virginia. Throughout her employment and academic endeavors, she has been recognized for her hard work and honesty. Compassion and patience are additional traits that characterize her. The study and care of animals are the primary motivations behind Kathleen's interest in the Veterinary Technology field.



Welcome to our new board members

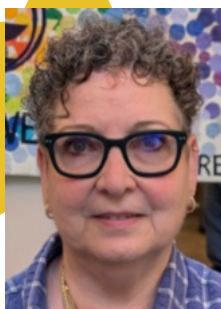
Director at Large



Doreen Peters

I joined FPOW in 2001 with my adopted shepherd/hound mix, Cobb. We visited at Cameron Glen until Cobb retired in 2009. In 2007, I was a Director-at-Large and managed a special project to create a poster "The Pets of Fairfax Pets on Wheels" for an FPOW anniversary celebration. After taking a few years off, I returned to visits with my adopted golden retriever mix, Harley, in 2015 and visited at Sunrise in Reston until Harley retired in 2022. During this time I joined the Speakers Bureau and helped manage and staff FPOW booths at special events such as the Reston Pet Fiesta. I am currently training my next partner, Auggie, an adopted golden retriever mix to visit at Sunrise in Reston. I have been a member of the FPOW Volunteer Appreciation Picnic Committee since 2023.

Director at Large



Nikki Dipalma

I have been a member of Fairfax Pets on Wheels for over 15 years holding various positions during that time, including President. I recently retired from the federal government after 34 years of service. In addition to rejoining the FPOW board, I am halfway through my studies in becoming a Chaplain and I'm currently volunteering as a Hospital Chaplain at Inova Alexandria and Inova Mount Vernon hospitals. In addition, I am a standby volunteer for Meals on Wheels. I am excited to be back on the FPOW board to assist in any way that I can!

Director at Large



Ray Syah

I retired from a 41 and a half year career with the federal government in March 2022 and spent my days working out, walking my two-year-old Labradoodle, Henry, and completing radiation treatment for prostate cancer. After successful treatment and travel to Europe, South Africa, and Costa Rica, Henry and I applied to the Fairfax Pets on Wheels Program to give back to others. We chose to visit Arden Courts Memory Care facility since no one else from FPOW was visiting there. We began visiting once every couple of weeks and were asked to visit more often. We now visit residents on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 2 to 3 PM. The residents and staff are very welcoming to us and it's rewarding to see people light up when they see Henry and sometimes me.

Friendly Reminder Regarding Non-Program Pets at Facilities

By Diane O'Brien

FPOW maintains a strict policy regarding avoiding interactions with non-program pets during volunteer/pet visits at facilities. While visiting residents at a nursing home or assisted living facility, FPOW volunteers and their pets may encounter a non-program pet in the building. This could be a resident's pet that has been brought in by a friend or family member for a visit. In some assisted living facilities, residents may even have their own pet living at the facility with them. There may also be a facility-owned or staff-owned pet in a nursing facility.
(Continued on page 7)

(Friendly Reminder Regarding Non-Program Pets at Facilities continued from page 6)

In all of these situations, these pets are not part of the FPOW program and have not been through our temperament testing and health screening. The unknown temperament and vaccine status of these non-program pets significantly increases the risks of potential problems when interacting with them. Therefore, for safety and liability reasons, our FPOW volunteer pet teams are asked to avoid all interactions with any non-program pets while visiting at a facility. Facilities are also asked to ensure that any facility-owned or resident pet is secured and not wandering freely during FPOW visits.

Concerns Regarding Funding for FPOW

Immediately prior to the 2025 Annual Meeting, FPOW was informed that the Combined Federal Campaign had been placed on “Pause” for the 2025-26 campaign year. FPOW signed on to a letter of concern regarding funding that it receives from CFC. The campaign was “Unpaused,” but there is concern that it will not be held going forward due to the costs associated with running the campaign, donation levels, etc. FPOW receives much of its funding from CFC and the United Way but when donating to these fundraising drives, a percentage is taken off the top for United Way, and there are fees that are charged when FPOW submits its application to be included in the campaign. The Board has reviewed the 2025-26 budget and has cut many non-essential programs. If you have any ideas regarding fundraising for the program, please contact the hotline. If you would like to make a donation to the program, there is a link on our website (www.fpow.org) to do so through PayPal or you can send a check to FPOW c/o FAAA, 12011 Government Center Parkway, Suite 708, Fairfax, VA 22035.



Venture into Volunteering Fair

EXPLORE A WIDE VARIETY OF OPPORTUNITIES!

For more information:
bit.ly/VOLFAIR

**Sunday, October 5
12PM – 4PM**



Springfield Town Center



Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc.
Fairfax Area Agency on Aging
12011 Government Center Parkway #708
Fairfax, VA 22035-1104

All-volunteer Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc.

connects pets with residents of long-term care facilities in Fairfax County.

Visit fpow.org or call (703) 324-5424

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Letters to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. Letters must be signed, but if requested, your name will be withheld.

Send all correspondence to:

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12011 Government Center Parkway #708
Fairfax, VA 22035-1104

Email: dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov



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