



Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc.

Info from Fairfax Pets On Wheels

March 2022



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FPOW on the Road: Visiting Where We Can

FPOW participates each year in the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), the official workplace giving campaign for federal employees and retirees. In 2021, CFC celebrated 60 years of giving, raising more than \$8.5 billion for charities and people in need.



As a CFC approved charity, FPOW is invited to talk one on one with attendees about our mission at events hosted by various government agencies. Volunteer team Joe Amman and Koa represented FPOW at a December event hosted by the Office of Naval Intelligence (ONI) in Suitland, Maryland.



Because ONI is a secure facility, each participating organization was checked in and then escorted to the Hopper Information Service Center, a large auditorium with a lot of foot traffic. Joe estimates that 100-150 people stopped by to see the FPOW display, admitting that “they actually stopped to meet the dogs.”

As usual, Koa got a lot of attention, while Joe talked about FPOW’s impact.

Koa is a 4-year-old brown Newfoundland. Prior to the pandemic, Koa and Joe had been visiting the Burke Healthcare Center, Heatherwood Assisted Living, Mt. Vernon Adult Day Health Center and, most recently, Fairfax Nursing Center.

Joe not only volunteers with Koa at these facilities, he is a member of the FPOW Speakers Bureau and serves as FPOW’s treasurer.



**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**



At Virginia Tech, Therapy Has Gone to the Dogs!

Trent Davis, a Licensed Professional Counselor at Virginia Tech (VT), “accidentally” started the university’s Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) program in late 2011 after being approached by a veterinary resident who wanted to put his therapy dog to work within the VT community. That initial introduction of a dog led to having a dog on a regular part-time basis at the university’s Cook Counseling Center.

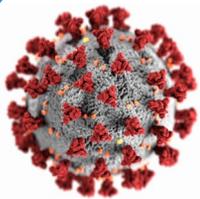


Then came Moose, and that changed everything.

In 2013, Trent welcomed the Labrador retriever whose minor medical issue kept him from being a guide dog, a job for which he had been raised at Guiding Eyes for the Blind. Moose found his destined career as a therapy dog and got right to work serving the university and communities surrounding Blacksburg. He started visiting the veterinary college multiple times a week, worked at the monthly “Paws to Read” program at the public



library and helped cultivate “Moose’s Group” for students who were hospitalized. “I think one of the really neat things about bringing in a dog is that people automatically make positive associations,” notes Trent, who coordinates the program. “Moose’s positive vibes made discuss-



COVID-19 Update

As 2021 came to a close, we thought we saw a light at the end of the visiting tunnel. Sadly for FPOW – but even more importantly, for the residents of our facilities – that light was the proverbial on-

coming train: the omicron variant of COVID-19.

Although a few of our facilities had been open for our visits, only Vierra (Powhatan), Sunrise-Reston, and Iliff are currently welcoming FPOW volunteer teams in person. We also continue to

visit the county’s adult day healthcare facilities via Zoom.

Be sure to check our [website homepage](#) for the latest updates about when we can get back to the work we love: licking loneliness.



ing hard topics easier and led to clients missing fewer appointments.”

As Moose became more and more well known, and even famous, the demand for AAT grew. New therapy dogs joined the VT program, each working as part of a team at the center with a full-time counselor. And the dogs do much more than help with individual and group therapy sessions. They’re part of the student experience from new student orientation to graduation. They attend sporting



events, parades and conferences, and are celebrity judges for various activities.

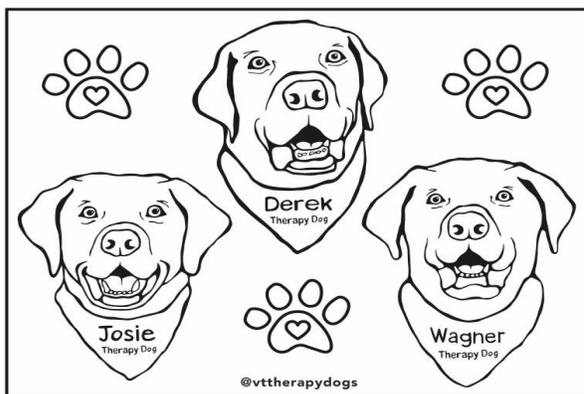
In March of 2019, Moose’s work was put in the spotlight when he was named the Virginia Veterinary Medical Association’s (VVMA) 2019 Animal Hero, an annual award for an animal that has performed a heroic act of service or pro-

vides daily outstanding service for humans. Moose not only embodied those qualities but also highlighted the

VVMA’s increased emphasis on mental wellness.

Sadly, Moose passed away in 2020. But he provided the impetus for Trent to expand the program, which now includes three full-time therapy dog staff members: Derek, Josie, and Wagner.

You can learn more about how Josie, Derek, and Wagner fit into the work at VT’s Cook Counseling Center on [Virginia Tech’s website](#), where you can also download coloring pages like the one shown here.



Travis Williams for VA Tech contributed to this content.



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