



Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc.

Info from Fairfax Pets On Wheels

September 2021



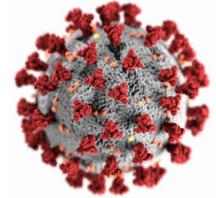
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FPOW's board of directors continues to closely monitor the COVID-19 situation and its impact on resuming regular facility visits with our pets.

As a program of Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, FPOW is working with the county to stay on top of evolving guidelines. We are also in contact with each of our facilities to understand their unique requirements for keeping everyone safe.

COVID-19 Update



There are several items that will be required before volunteer teams can return to visiting, whenever that may be:

- Each volunteer will be required to sign the county's COVID waiver. If you haven't already done so, please look for the August email from Karen Fuentes on behalf of Fairfax County and follow the directions for signing and submitting the waiver electronically.
- If you plan to return to visiting, please be sure your pet's health certificate is current.
- When things slowly open up, your facility liaison will be in touch about having a "refresher" site visit and discussing any other requirements your chosen facility may have.

As CDC, state and county guidance regarding COVID-19 is updated, volunteers will find the latest information on our website, fpow.org.



Getting Back to Business

A few veteran volunteers who are bringing new pets into the FPOW program had their pets temperament tested at the end of August.

We hope to welcome new volunteers and pets soon!

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



A Year of Goodbyes at Annandale Healthcare Center

By Pat Dutton

2020 was especially hard for Annandale Healthcare Center (AHC), formerly Sleepy Hollow, which lost three wonderful, dedicated FPOW therapy dogs: Sonny Matthews, Rain Chapin and Aero Kuckenbecker.



Rain, beloved Weimaraner of Carol and Jeff Chapin, died in October 2020. Rain and Carol visited AHC for 11 years, and everyone looked forward to their visits. One resident, originally from Germany, was convinced that Rain understood German, since Weimaraners are German dogs. She always called Rain "my dog" and would speak to her in German—and Rain seemed to under-

stand. Whenever the lady said "sit" in German, Rain would obediently sit, to the amazement and delight of all. Rain also helped with temperament testing and participated in many Speakers' Bureau opportunities, including volunteer fairs, stress-reducing events at Lake Braddock High School, time for grieving children, and children's summer camps. Beautiful and regal, Rain was much loved and admired by residents, staff and fellow FPOW volunteers and their dogs. We will miss her gentleness, friendliness and sweet disposition.

What is Animal Assisted Therapy?

Therapy animals are trained to provide comfort to those who are away from home and perhaps miss their own pets, or those who might need emotional support. Some live in or visit nursing homes, prisons or hospitals. Others assist physical, occupational or mental health therapists, help children improve their reading

skills by listening in a calm, nonjudgmental setting, support witnesses in court rooms, provide comfort to first responders, or ease the stress of travelers in airports.

Florence Nightingale pioneered the idea of Animal Assisted Therapy when she discovered that patients in a psychiatric institution were relieved from anxiety when they

were able to spend time with small animals.

Sigmund Freud believed that dogs could sense certain levels of tension in his patients. He felt as if his patients were more comfortable talking to his dog at first, and this opened up doors for them to later feel more comfortable talking to him. The demand for therapy animals has continued to grow. (Wikipedia)



Sonny, a big and handsome black lab mix, was rescued as a puppy by Shelley Matthews after he was found abandoned in South Carolina. He was such a gentle, sweet and good-natured therapy dog, loved and enjoyed by residents, staff,

FPOW volunteers and their dogs. In fact, another part-lab FPOW volunteer, Lily Dutton, was his special friend, and everyone was amazed that Sonny greeted her with a special bark every time they met on their Friday mornings visits. Sonny visited AHC regu-



larly for almost 10 years. He also shared his love and tail wags with veterans and patients at Fort Belvoir. Sonny passed away on October 2, 2020. He is missed by many, including his canine friend Sadie at home.



Sonny's special friend, Lily Dutton, was also a regular at AHC for many years. Pat reports that all she had to say was "Let's go visit," and Lily was heading toward the car. Pre-COVID, Lily represented FPOW at volunteer fairs and events. Lily and Pat also helped students reduce stress before exams at Lake Braddock High School and participated in neighborhood reading programs for children.

Aero, a wonderful, friendly border collie who was owned and loved by Barbara Kuckenbecker and Don Desrosiers, originally had a career in sheep herding trials. After retiring from competition, Aero began a new career as a therapy dog, always happy to see people and make their day special. He loved people and was loved by fellow FPOW volunteers and their dogs, residents, staff and visitors. One of

Aero's many special admirers was the friendly young priest who regularly visited AHC, and who often said he wanted to get a border collie



just like Aero. Aero assisted with temperament testing for aspiring new FPOW therapy teams, was a border collie crowd ambassador at sheep herding events, and regularly visited Don's aging parents. Sadly, Aero passed away suddenly on New Year's Eve, 2020. Even though he spent only 2 1/2 years with FPOW, he touched a lot of lives with love and joy, and he will be missed by all who knew him.



Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc.
 Fairfax Area Agency on Aging
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Letters to the editor are welcomed and encouraged. Letters must be signed, but if requested, your name will be withheld.

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