



Fairfax Pets On Wheels Spring Update

April 2010



Tim Miller shows off his dog's skills

March Full of Good Citizens

Eager dogs and their owners lined up to take the American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizen (AKC CGC) test at Powhatan Nursing Home on Saturday, March 20th. The test is comprised of basic commands that are useful when any dog is taken

into public places. Practicing to perfect the commands is fun, provides positive stimulation for the dog and increases the human canine bond. Twenty one teams were evaluated as they executed the ten steps that comprise the test.

The majority of the participating teams were Fairfax Pets On Wheels volunteers who proved their pets are not only warm friendly therapy dogs, they're Good Citizens too.

Special thanks goes to the Powhatan for allowing Fairfax Pets On Wheels to conduct the AKC CGC on their nice shady, grassy, rear lawn and parking area. BIG thanks to Marti Nottingham and Liz Breyer who donated their time to conduct the tests. Liz Breyer was also responsible for coordinating the event with Sabine Arndt – Kudos Ladies!

The following volunteers made the day a success through their participation, Sabine Arndt, with Tessa playing the neutral dog, Debbie Zelten, Brenda Pitts, Tracy Van Duston, David Falcomer, Tim Miller, Pat Wilson and Patty Kwapniewski.

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FPOW's Stars Shine at Volunteer Fairfax Tribute

After a winter that will live in the record books for the ages, we've had an amazing spring unfold allowing us to celebrate a new year. Volunteer Fairfax held their annual tribute to Fairfax County's best and brightest volunteer programs on Friday, April 23, 2010. As you can bet, Fairfax Pets On Wheels was front and center!

Ruth Benker and Kathi Brooks were honored for their remarkable commitment to FPOW. Ruth and Kathi donated more than 250 hours of service each over the past year. Both remarkable women were recognized for their unwavering service to Fairfax County. Cynne Simpson, anchor for ABC 7/WJLA-TV, was our Master of Ceremonies for this hallmark event. Attendance included the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors, the County Supervisor Sharon Bulova, Jeanne Sanders the Executive Director of Volunteer Fairfax, and long time FPOW supporter Congressman Gerry Connolly.

We were also most fortunate to have Congressman Gerry Connolly declare in the U.S. Congress April 23, 2010 as Volunteer Fairfax Day.

The event was punctuated by Earl Stafford's, of The Stafford Foundation, inspiring speech on volunteerism. As you will recall, Mr. Stafford was the organizing entity that brought together people from all demographics to celebrate President Obama's inaugural.

In further accolades, Fairfax Pets On Wheels won the photo contest with Robin Burkett of Paw Print's Photography's winning photo. Tracy Van Duston accepted the prize from Cynne Simpson.

[See Photo on Page 4](#)

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Most of the teams evaluated passed with flying colors.

The few pets who were not successful in all the test areas needed more work in the sit/down and stay, step 6.

For more details on the ten commands evaluated during the AKC CGC test, visit the AKC website at: http://www.akc.org/events/cgc/training_testing.cfm

If you are interested in participating in the AKC CGC in the future, send an email to Patty Kwapniewski at: pak@peakin.com.

FPOW is considering hosting a second CGC event and your feedback will be helpful in determining interest.



Buddy & Patty Kwapniewski work the CGC registration table

volunteers, led by FPOW founder Kim Wilkerson, approached AAA about working together. FPOW needed administrative assistance and a physical space in which to house the program, and AAA already had a volunteer program that served older adults. The two groups served the same age group and had similar goals and values, so it was a good match from the start.

The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging is a member of a national network of area agencies on aging that serve older adults. It is part of the county's Department

of Family Services, and was established in 1976 as directed by the Older Americans Act. AAA receives federal, state, and county funds. Agency programs include Meals on Wheels, Medicare insurance counseling, long-term care ombudsman, and a family caregiver support program. It also helps people access community resources for older adults and adults with disabilities.

The Area Agency on Aging's volunteer program began in 1985 and was then called the Volunteer Development Unit. In 1985, volunteers began delivering Meals on Wheels to about 100 clients. Meals on Wheels and the volunteer program, now called Volunteer Solutions, have certainly grown since then; today there are 1800 Meals on Wheels volunteers who deliver food to 900 clients! Volunteer Solutions volunteers also drive people to medical appointments, help with grocery shopping, do minor home repairs, and make friendly visits to isolated elders. Office volunteers do administrative work and assist with a wide range of projects. All of these volunteer services are intended to help people continue to live in the community and to improve their quality of life.

When people need the specialized care of a nursing home or assisted living facility, FPOW volunteers and their pets are there to enhance their quality of life. In addition to visiting, FPOW volunteers conduct new volunteer orientation and pet temperament testing, and act as facility liaisons. A hard-working Board of Directors does an enormous amount of work behind the scenes. The Volunteer Solutions Director serves on the Board as a non-voting member.

The Volunteer Solutions staff has the most contact with



CGC participants Beth Jordan with Ralph (L) & Pat Wilson with Peerie

Common Clientele, Great Partnership

Did you know that FPOW is sponsored by Volunteer Solutions of the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging? Some volunteers may not know much about this agency or what the agency's relationship is with FPOW.

The Fairfax Area Agency on Aging (AAA) and FPOW began their partnership in 1987, when a small group of

Thanks for the Memory

■ In memory of Josie, a Beagle, who served for two years with FPOW at the Mount Vernon Nursing Home. She brought good cheer to many of the residents. She was a contagiously happy dog, and had to retire from FPOW when her health problems put her in decline. Josie succumbed to heart disease on December 22nd. We miss her terribly but we are at peace knowing that she got every happy moment that was possible for her, and she certainly earned it by making others happy. We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to FPOW's efforts to provide comfort

and smiles to those who need it as Josie did so well. From Gary and Kathy Sokola

■ In memory of Jasmine, who was the beloved Yellow Lab of David and Judy Rybak. Jasmine was a FPOW volunteer pet for many years. She and David were often called upon because they were superior ambassadors with their talent for being well spoken and classy representatives of the FPOW organization. Jasmine will be missed by her many friends, fans, and family. From Kim and Mark Wilkerson

the devoted group of FPOW office volunteers who work in the AAA office to make sure that volunteer applications and health certificates are processed. These volunteers also provide information about the program and answer the questions of new volunteers. The FPOW office volunteers are Jill Davidson, Ruth Benker, Carla Graham, John Byrum, and Diane Bente.

Both FPOW and Volunteer Solutions have grown and changed over the past 23 years. The commitment to help older adults and adults with disabilities remains strong, and the partnership continues to flourish. To learn more about AAA and Volunteer Solutions, visit the website at www.fairfaxcounty.gov/dfs/olderadultservices/volunteer-solutions. Please also visit the Volunteer Solutions Facebook page named Fairfax County Volunteer Solutions.

Submitted by: Ruth Reagan
Volunteer Solutions Director



President's Message

As I sit down to my computer to pen this President's Message, I have to be honest with you, I've struggled with this particular column. My thought process has been to write why FPOW has played such an important part in my life. Being a private person, this exercise has been rather difficult and painful because it was the event that I'm about to share with you that was the genesis of me moving to Fairfax County four years later, an event that still causes me pain and sorrow.



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Fifteen years ago my life changed profoundly with the bombing of the Murrah Building in Oklahoma City. I was supposed to be walking into federal court around the same time as the bomb was detonated, the federal court house was directly behind the Murrah building.

By the grace of God, I was at the court-

Lincoln Visits at Mount Vernon

FPOW Volunteer Joan Violante and her cocker spaniel, Lincoln, enjoy making a difference in the community with their visits to Mount Vernon Nursing Center. Joan believes that FPOW is a great volunteer opportunity for people who want to make a real connection with the people that the volunteer organization serves. She appreciates the friendships she makes with the residents and the good feelings that she receives from knowing that her visits brighten the day for these senior citizens. Lincoln is a model visitor, sitting quietly next to the bedside or chair of a resident and listening attentively to the conversation. The volunteers often hear “thanks for coming” shouted out from a grateful resident when they leave the facility.

Joan adopted Lincoln from a shelter eight years ago. He is a lovely red cocker spaniel with white markings. Lincoln is “nine-ish” and has been visiting alongside Joan for the past four years. Lincoln always gets ex-



cited knowing that he is going for his visit. The rest of her family include her husband, Bob, whom she met while working for the Department of Defense in Pennsylvania, her daughter, Crystal, and her son Troy. Crystal is a school teacher in North Carolina. She was recently married, and Joan was involved in the planning for that event, which was held on a cruise ship. Crystal graduated from Hayfield High School and met her new husband at the elementary school in North Carolina where they both teach. Troy will graduate



Kathi Brooks, Tracy Van Duston and Ruth Benker accept awards at Volunteer Fairfax luncheon (See page 1)

house filing a motion and proposed order a day early, something that never happened in the practice I supported. I grappled for years with why things turned out that way. I finally came to the conclusion that my work here on this earth was not complete and I had better get busy leaving the world better than I found it. Someone clearly had something in mind for me to do down here.

I saw an ad one day for “Fairfax Pets on Wheels”. Volunteering with my beloved terrier “Princess” in a nursing home seemed to be the “God Wink” I was looking for. I could not believe it! Volunteering with my best friend and serving a need of an underserved community. What more could a girl ask for??? (God Wink is a reference to the book by Squire Rushnell, a great read I highly recommend)

My life has seen so many changes over the years that I have been involved with FPOW. Because of the strong friendships and the sense of “leaving the world better than you found it” that I have found here, I have been able to weather the trials and tribulations that life has handed me. FPOW was one of the few deciding factors in making Northern Virginia my home, a decision that was the right one and one I give thanks for each day.

I tell potential new volunteers that it has been my experience that this program gives more back to the volunteer; the friendships we form, the lives we touch and the ability to spend time doing good with our four legged furry friends. FPOW’s good friend Loretta Swit got it just right - “Touch someone’s life and change your own”.

Submitted by: Tracy Van Duston

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from high school in June and will be attending college in the fall. Troy ran cross country and track for 4 years also at Hayfield High.

Joan, a native Pennsylvanian, came to Northern Virginia from Texas after she and her husband left the military. She resumed her federal government career with US Department of Agriculture at that time. She works for the Food Safety Inspection Service, USDA, in the Information Technology area doing Human Resources work. Bob works at the Department of the Treasury. They ride the van to DC together everyday.

In addition to visiting at Mount Vernon, Joan is the facility liaison. She has a great core group of volunteer teams at the facility but is always looking for more to serve in this part of the county. When new volunteers come to visit, they often feel hesitant about how to make initial connections with residents. The Mount Vernon staff help to make it easy to identify welcoming resident rooms by placing FPOW Logo stickers on the residents' nameplates next to the doors to their rooms. The stickers let volunteers know which residents would love to have a visit from our four-legged (and two-legged) volunteers. Joan is a member at-large on FPOW's Board of Directors and serves on the Speakers Bureau. She participated in the Reston Pet Fiesta, the Cat Show recruitment table at the Expo Center, and the recent "12 Days of Giving" on Channel 4, where she manned the telephones as donors called in to the station. Joan is

currently handling the registrations for the Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon. She enjoys the many "behind-the-scenes roles" that FPOW allow volunteers to participate in, and meeting many other caring volunteers.

Submitted by Madelynn Arnold

FPOW Recruits on Earth Day

While we can never predict perfect weather for Fairfax County's annual Earth/Arbor Day celebration, we can always predict an event which is well-attended by local families looking to learn more about ways to help the environment. This year was no exception. Saturday April 24 was a cool day with a few raindrops, but that did not deter attendees.

FPOW volunteers Lamar Collier with Abby, Denali Ostebo, and Debby Weinstein with Max staffed an information table and talked with prospective volunteers about our program while children and adults alike enjoyed and petted Abby and Max.

This event was co-sponsored by The Clean Fairfax Council and the Northern Virginia Community College, Annandale Campus.

Submitted by Debby Weinstein



Debby Weinstein & Max; Denali Ostebo, Lamar Collier & Abby

2009 Scholarship Awardee Update

This year I will be turning 45. I have been working at an animal hospital for the past 10 years. Why would someone my age with my level of experience consider pursuing a degree and becoming a licensed veterinary technician? Because my goal is to match the technical skills I have acquired over the years with the knowledge a formal education provides in order to elevate the level of care my patients receive. It is such a privilege to be entrusted with the guardianship of these wonderful creatures. They deserve the very best I can give. I receive the benefits of the human-animal bond daily: the lessons of compassion, patience, and trust.

The evening I received the news that I was the 2009 recipient of the FPOW Kim Wilkerson Founder's Award Scholarship, I had literally just come into the house after burying my beloved 8 year old Greater Swiss Mountain Dog, Eva. She had lost her battle against cancer. Eva died at home in my arms, I watched her take her last breath and felt her last heartbeat. The timing of the award makes me feel as if it was also a gift from Eva, motivating me to move forward during paralyzing grief. In tribute to Eva, I have applied for student membership in the Veterinary Technician Cancer Society. I am also a student member of NAVTA (National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America), VALVT (Virginia Association of Licensed

Dates to remember

Mary Latshaw Award nominations must be received by May 25, 2010 3:00 pm

Shauna Award nominations must be received by May 25, 2010 3:00 pm

Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon: Maggiano's Little Italy, Tyson's Galleria Mall, Mclean, VA June 26, 2010
Did you remember to RSVP?

BOD Meeting at Leewood: June 7, 7:00 pm

Newsletter Submission Deadline: June 30

BOD Meeting at Leewood: September 13, 7:00 pm

Annual Meeting All Members at Leewood: September 13, 2010 8:00 pm

Newsletter Submission Deadline: September 30

Paws for a Cause: October 3, Noon
Weber's Pet Supermarket

Veterinary Technicians), and AAHA (American Animal Hospital Association).

In 1999 my now 16 year old son was diagnosed with stage III neuroblastoma. He spent a year at St Jude Children's Hospital in Memphis, TN undergoing chemotherapy and stem cell rescue. During that time, our pets were left behind in the care of friends. My dream would be to one day help create a facility that could help house family pets either with or nearby the families whose children are hospitalized long-term. To be financially independent, the facility could also offer obedience classes, agility, grooming, CGC, and therapy



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dog training. A Rover McDonald House of sorts!

I feel so honored to have been recognized by FPOW as someone who helps foster the human-animal bond. Your organization provides a model of inspiration. We recently added a little terrier, King, into our home. His joy for life and comical escapades have been the best medicine in healing our broken hearts. King will be my little therapy-dog-in-training. He melts into your lap. His rag-a-muffin appearance makes you smile. And at only 12 pounds, King is a little more portable than a Mountain Dog.



I used the scholarship funds to purchase additional textbooks to supplement the materials provided by my school (Penn Foster College). The books will be a permanent reminder of the generosity of FPOW. Thank you so much. I will be sure to keep you updated on my studies. My husband teases that I will be ready for retirement by the time I graduate, but “the willingness to do creates the ability to do.”

Sincerely, Anne Bastian
Stevensville, VA

Don't Forget!!

Have you mailed in your Nomination forms yet?

Find the details for the Mary Latshaw Award for Excellence and the Shauna Award on our web site by visiting: www.fpow.org and clicking on Events.

Due Date May 25, 2010

Visit Newly Re-Launched WWW.FPOW.ORG

The FPOW website has been updated to include online donations, lots of great pics, slideshows, an events calendar, videos and everything anyone would need to know about how to become a FPOW volunteer.

We hope the newly relaunched website will persuade prospects to become involved with the program and to help them get all of the information they need to move through the orientation.



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Having the ability to accept donations online with a credit card will hopefully increase donations and allow those who wish to donate by credit card to do so.

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Please use the FPOW Hotline number for non-emergency calls if you are a FPOW volunteer or one who is currently in the pipeline. Someone will either act upon your message or return your call if more information is required.

DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT FPOW NEWSLETTER: June 30, 2010

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The Newsletter Committee Chairman: Kim Wilkerson

Editor: Denise Elliott

EDITORIAL POLICY

This is your newsletter. Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc. volunteers may contribute articles for publication. Articles will be reviewed by the editors. We reserve the right to edit any item submitted for publication. We cannot guarantee the return of documents or photos (if used). Because Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc., is under the sponsorship of the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, the FPOW Newsletter must be approved by the FAAA prior to publication. In addition, Letters to the Editor are welcome and encouraged. Letters must be signed but, if requested, your name will be withheld.

All correspondence should be directed to:

Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

ATTN: Fairfax Pets On Wheels Newsletter

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