

#### Fairfax Pets On Wheels Fall Update

Fairfax Pets
On Wheels, Inc

November 2009



# Blessing of the Animals

Bill Moberly, FPOW volunteer who visits with his dog, Maggie, at Iliff Nursing and Rehabilitation Center, organized the Blessing of the Animals ceremony

for our 14th Annual Paws For A Cause 3K Walk.

This custom is conducted primarily at churches across the country each year in celebration of St. Francis of Assisi's feast day.

Bill is also the Chaplains Coordinator for a large government agency's Volunteer Chaplains Unit. He enlisted the help of his fellow volunteer chaplains, Greg Havrilak, Kevin Havens, and Jane Halpern, to provide individualized blessings to those who wished.

Bill's opening remarks spoke to the special relationship we have with our animals.

"Your animals are a blessing to you and the therapy pets of FPOW are a blessing to the residents of the area's many nursing homes and assisted living facilities.

All of the world's faith traditions honor the sanctity of life, the sacredness of God's creation and the active hand of the creator in that creation.

Many faiths speak about the Spirit of the creator which breathes life into every living creature. Those of us who love our animal companions know that an animal's eyes have the power to speak a great language and their spirits have the power to touch and transform us for the better.

Continued on page 3

## State of the FPOW Program 2008–2009

Fairfax Pets on Wheels, Inc. saw another successful year during Program Year 2008 – 2009. In addition to our usual efforts at recruiting and training new volunteers, the following are features of the past year:

More than 8,000 hours of tail wagging and unconditional love were provided by over 300 volunteer teams to 12 long term care facilities having over 1,500 beds.

In spite of the downturn in the economy, FPOW's donations have grown. Our application was accepted for inclusion in the United Way of the National Capital Area campaign (designate 8907). We were included in the Combined Federal Campaign (designate 51148) and we were included in the Harmon Family Foundation's Catalogue for Philanthropy for 2008-2009 as one of the finest small charities in the Capital Area. We spoke at numerous United Way fund raising events and had information booths at Reston Pet Fiesta, Caring Hands Animal Hospital,

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and National Capital Cat Show.

Lloyd Moore was the first recipient of FPOW's Founder's Award, a scholarship to be awarded annually to a vet tech or vet student pursuing education in honor of Kim Wilkerson. The second awardee of this scholarship is announced in this issue.

Earlier this year Kim Wilkerson was awarded WJLA's "Tribute to Working Women." This also came with a contribution which Kim donated to FPOW. In addition to Kim's award, WJLA produced a piece honoring her and FPOW which was featured by Alison Starling on WJLA's evening newscast. In April, three volunteers, Jill Davidson, Kathy Baker and Ruth Benker were recognized by Volunteer Fairfax for their outstanding contributions at a special breakfast at the Fairview Park Marriott.

In May, we had our Annual Volunteer Recognition Picnic at Lake Accotink for our volunteers – 110 humans, 65 pets – dogs and cats - in attendance. The weather this year cooperated and we awarded the Latshaw and Shauna Awards. The "Hours" pins were also given out.

We will be hosting Pat Miller to provide a seminar for our Temperament Evaluators. Thanks to Sabine Arndt and Patty Kwapniewski for their tireless work on launching this very exciting program. (See Dates to Remember)

We have begun, in conjunction with the FAAA Volunteer Solutions Unit, to review and evaluate the efficiency of current business processes. Ultimately, we want to be sure that our volunteers and potential volunteers are processed as quickly as possible through the combined efforts of FPOW volunteers and Volunteer Solutions staff.

FPOW was interviewed by Northern Virginian Magazine and was fea-

tured in their October issue.

Program year 2008-2009 has been my first year as the President of the Board of Directors of this amazing organization. I have some ideas to raise the visibility of the organization, which I would like to launch over the next program year. Our work in the community is important, our mission is to care for a population that is often given lip service but easily forgotten. I know I speak for many of us that we feel that we take more away from our visits as individuals. What could be more rewarding than sharing our beloved companions unconditional love with someone? This is the magic of what we do and what makes this organization thrive.

I wish to thank the following: Board Members, I'm honored to work with such a dedicated, diverse, talented team of professionals. You are the "heart" of this program.

To all the volunteers who serve on committees, (Merchandise, Office, Speakers' Bureau, Paws for a Cause, Picnic, Temperament Testing, Nominating, Annual Photo Fundraiser) we are blessed that you have stepped up to the plate and are grateful for all you do. Thank you.

To our Temperament Testing committee; I wish to single you out this year for particular praise. Your dedication to our cause, your impeccable professionalism and your unwavering commitment to constant improvement has made our organization stronger.

To all the facility liaisons and alternate facility liaisons, as the crucial link to the program, our facilities, our volunteers, the Board of Directors and the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, without you we would not be in 12 facilities. Complementing the Temperament Testers, you are expected to ensure

that potential volunteers are suitable in our facility settings. We expect you to wear many hats with a bag of tricks to handle every kind of situation and volunteer, human and four-legged. You do so, ultimately doing us proud.

To all the FPOW visiting teams, human and most especially our furry friends, whether you give one hour or 10 hours a month, never underestimate the impact of your presence in the lives of the residents of the long-term care facilities. You have made someone's day brighter, have been the highlight of their week, and made them realize they are not forgotten. The good our furry friends do can not be measured in dollars and cents. Your caring presence is the reason we have a waiting list of facilities wanting our wonderful program.

To the staff in the Area Agency on Aging Volunteer Solutions Unit and the Ombudsman program, our 21 year partnership with you as you provide services to the residents of Fairfax County serves as a tremendous point of pride -- that, as citizens of this community, we can share in the responsibility of helping those who are less fortunate than we, who find themselves without the comfort and love that a wagging tail can produce. Your professionalism and dedication to public service and volunteers are vital to our success.

A special thank you to Kelly Collins for heading up our United Way application efforts.

And so, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for the honor of serving you –

Tracy Van Duston, President



#### Thanks for the Memory

- In memory of Chip, who visited with Owen Resweber. Chip visited The Virginian faithfully his entire life—he first joined FPOW when only a few months old. Chip is missed. From Penny Pickett
- In memory of Chip who won the Shauna Award in 2007 for his exceptional service as a pet visitor with the Pets on Wheels program for many years with Owen Resweber. He will be missed by all the residents of The Virginian as well as his fellow visitors. From Susie and Bob Duvall
- In memory of Kayo who was quite the world traveler and was living in Germany and preparing to move to Uganda with Catherine and Jerry Kannenberg when he suddenly passed away. He will be sorely missed as one of the important links to home for Catherine and Jerry. From Allison Stover
- In loving memory of "Chip", a black Cocker Spaniel, devoted companion of Owen and Mim Resweber, and FPOW volunteer for almost 13 years.

Chip was 4 months old when he became a volunteer in August 1996. He and his older sister Sadie, who passed away in 2006, were the "dynamic duo" on Wednesday evenings at The Virginian. Chip's outstanding ability to connect with The Virginian's residents won him the Shauna Award in 2007. He retired in April 2009 because of health problems. We miss him very much. From Debby, Ralph, PDQ, Max, and Diego Weinstein.

- In loving memory of "Sallie" the long-haired black and white kitty who was a devoted companion of Anne Sumser and playful sister of "Patti" and "Violet". Sallie was one exceptional kitty and lived a charmed life for 17 years and 4 months. We're sure she's romping with her brother "Charlie" now. From Debby, Ralph, PDQ, Max, and Diego Weinstein.
- In memory of Libby Warner a beloved member of the Warner Family. She was an adorable, fun loving Wheaton Terrier who will be greatly missed. From Cheri Belkowitz.

Continued from page 1 Blessing of the Animals

Our pets reflect the very best traits that our creator desires for us — Unconditional love, forgiveness, loyalty, affection, devotion, patience, balance, harmony, comforting, gratitude and peace. They show us how to explore our world with Joy!

It has been said that 'If having a soul means being able to feel love and loyalty and gratitude, then our animal friends are better off than a lot of humans.

Our companion animals are such agreeable friends. They ask no questions and pass no criticisms.

We have been blessed by many pets in our lives – some who are no longer with us. At the end of the blessings, you may light a candle in their memory if you desire. I would like to say a prayer of blessing for all the participants in today's walk and for all of the animal/human teams who participate in the FPOW organization.

And now, please join me in the spirit of your faith tradition as we pray, O God, source of all life and energy, you created the animals because your universe was incomplete without them. Bless these loving creatures that we bring before you today. To make a tax deductible donation to the FPOW Memory Book in someone's memory or honor, please send your check with brief letter to the FPOW address listed on the back of this newsletter (including pet/person's name, to whom you wish acknowledgement mailed, and a brief detail of the occasion). Your memorial will be permanently entered into the FPOW Memory Book, an acknowledgement will be sent, and the announcement will appear in a future edition of our newsletter.

Bless these cats and dogs and mammals who amble through your grasses; Bless these birds that wing the rich air that you breathe forth; Bless these fish that dart through the living waters that you provide; And Bless these reptiles that slither with a kind agenda.

Protect all of them from harm and their own curiosities.

Bless the caretakers of these animal companions; keep us worthy of their trust. Nourish us so that we may reflect the simplicity, honesty, and unconditional love of these pets, mindful of your desire for harmony and wholeness within all your creation.

For our animals and ourselves we ask for health and



wellness, joy and comfort, Blessings and peace. In thanks and adoration we pray, Amen!"

Participants then lined up to get their individualized blessings. It was quite a sight to see so many pets, so well behaved.

Bill, Greg, Kevin and Jane, thank you so very much for making our 14th Annual Paws For A Cause so special!

Submitted by Ruth Benker

14th Annual Paws for a Cause 3K Walk a Big Success

Gorgeous blue skies and warm sunshine greeted the over 200 folks who gathered at Weber's Pet Supermarket on Sunday, October 4, for FPOW's 14th Annual Paws For A Cause and our first Blessing of the Animals.

With DJ, Michael Gavin setting the mood with his tunes, the crowd celebrated being out in the glorious weather and seeing 2 legged and 4 legged friends. Long-time friend of FPOW, Congressman Gerry Connolly - 11th District of Virginia, dropped by to wish the walkers well.

Winners of the 4th Annual Photo Contest

were announced and their pictures displayed for all to enjoy!

The walk route winds itself through one of the friendliest neighborhoods! One resident set out water bowls and treats for the dogs, other residents came out to wave at the walkers and drivers stopped to let walkers pass and to thank them for their volunteer efforts!

Pit stops were staffed by students needing service hours and volunteers recruited by Volunteer Fairfax helped with setting up, staffing and tearing down the registration table. Kathi and Dan Baker, with Abby supervising them, showed up early and contributed much needed assistance.

Ruth Reagan, our go-to person at the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging – our sponsor—pitched in not only in set up and tear down, but walking

the route and directing walkers around some congested areas. Brenda Pitts, our merchandising guru, along with Judy Mitnick had our FPOW logo items available for sale. How fortunate we are to have such great folks willing to help us!

Our annual Paws for a Cause could not happen without the organization and hard work of Paws For A Cause Chairman Madelynn Arnold; and the efforts of Denise Elliott, Ruth Benker, Kim Wilkerson, Jill Davidson, and Debby Weinstein.

Year after year, they make this event appear to be an easy project to pull off – getting volunteers to set up and staff pit stops and registration tables, soliciting



Group of walkers from The Virginian

sponsors and raffle prize donors, ordering & designing t-shirts, publicizing the event, purchasing food – kudos to you and thank you for all you do.

See page 9 for many more pictures from the walk.

Submitted by Ruth Benker

#### A Friend Indeed

Fairfax Pets on Wheels lost a huge supporter and friend in June when Kathie Schleede lost her battle with cancer. Kathie worked at the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging for 20 years and upon retirement volunteered in the office for FPOW.

Kathie was the "energizer bunny" in everything she loved or felt was her responsibility. The elderly were the population she chose to advocate for and she went above and beyond what her job required. Kathie was aware of the forgotten segments of this population one of those being the people who reside in nursing homes.

She was also concerned about another segment of the elderly and that was the deaf and hard of hearing. She learned sign language so she could converse with deaf and hard of hearing clients she had in the Volunteer Home Services program which she coordinated. And she took that further when she got involved with the Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing (NVRC).

Kathie set up programs for them and arranged transportation which opened up many opportunities and

resources for this population. In 2003 NVRC recognized Kathie for her advocacy and education efforts.

When the volunteer unit was between coordinators, Kathie took over the responsibility of the FPOW office work,



When I came onboard she was invaluable in getting me up to speed on how things worked.

Her favorite FPOW activity was the annual picnic. She made it to most of them but when she had a conflict she would say, "Do you think they would change the date so I can come?"

After graduating from the University of Akron with a B.S. in Geology, she taught science for a short time then took a job as administrative volunteer coordinator with the Girl Scouts.

After her daughters were born she became a full time mother but volunteered at the girls' schools. She also

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Thank you to all the wonderful volunteers that visit INOVA Commonwealth Care Center!

Our friends we would like to recognize are:

John & Maya

Charlie & Sandy

Al & Mia

Susan & Jordan

Colleen & Molly

Martha & Ginger

Jill & Lolly

Laurie & C)

Diane & Chloe & Dickins

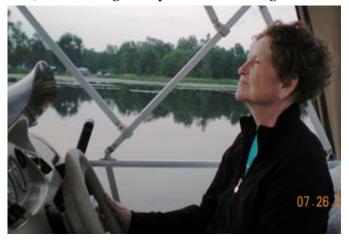
Jenny & Buddy

Each of you warm our hearts with your visits, Thank You Fairfax Pets On Wheels!

-Resident Council of INOVA Commonwealth
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was a docent at the Smithsonian for over 11 years.

Kathie was the quintessential grandmother! She baked cookies, played games, went to ballgames and dance recitals, went fishing and spent hours talking and reading



books to her four grandchildren.

Family gatherings were frequent and most important to Kathie. One of her favorites was the trips to their fishing cabin in Canada. Several years ago Kathie bought a pontoon boat and she loved being out on the lake with the family.

Another favorite family outing was the Disney cruises. When Kathie was diagnosed with cancer she began planning their third Disney cruise which they took last January.

Ron and Kathie lived and traveled the world and gathered friends wherever they went and Kathie stayed in touch with all of them! You never knew to what corner of the world they were off to next.

Kathie had a most appealing laugh and it made you feel good whenever you heard it. At the office people would say, "I know Kathie is here because I heard her laugh." What a wonderful legacy to leave – loving family, friends, a career of advocacy, and a laugh that would warm the hearts of everyone who heard it.

Submitted by Pam Graff

#### Alvin and His Sheepdog

His name is Al Doehring and his Old English Sheepdog is Mia Amica. If you speak or understand Italian, you know Al's beloved pet means "My Friend." Al's wife, Linda, has an Italian background, and Linda gave



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Mia her unusual name. Al & Mia visit residents at Commonwealth Care Center on a regular weekly basis, and what a team they are.

They joined the Fairfax Pets on Wheels program in July 2008 and during their one year of voluntary service have given over 84 hours of time to the delight of the Commonwealth residents and staff.

The Old English Sheepdog is a shaggy working breed developed in early 18th century England and used primarily in driving sheep and cattle to market. Mia Amica lives up to her breed's reputation as a working dog via her therapeutic visits with Al. She is a compact but large dog with a shuffling bearlike gait. Her unique, dense coat is weather resistant (meaning she is always ready for what Mother Nature delivers whether rain, snow or sleet) and long enough to cover her eyes.

However, don't be fooled – Mia Amica sees as well as any other of our canine friends and the hair over her eyes does not obscure her vision. When Al or his wife, Linda grooms her, her fur yields hair that can be made into a type of wool. The breed is frequently called "bobtail" because its tail is removed soon after birth.

After Al retired, he was looking for interesting things to

do since he now had time to devote to personal interests. One day he browsed the Fairfax County website and came across the Fairfax Pets On Wheels webpage.

Al knew Mia Amica had the right temperament since she was friendly with all the neighbors on Norman



Street in Vienna, and especially all the kids in the neighborhood, who were drawn to Mia like bees to honey. And what a honey Mia has turned out to be. Al wanted to give something back to the community and voila --- he and Mia became volunteers in the program.

Al enjoys sharing Mia with everyone they meet. Al tells us "If one has a big ego and one is looking for 'a big take away,' then the FPOW program is not for you. Two-thirds of the people visited, do not know my name, but they never forget Mia Amica. All the residents know Mia." Our pets are the attraction for most of the elderly residents ---not us.

Al shares that at Commonwealth, news of their arrival appears to spread rapidly through the building. The residents all seem to know that Mia has arrived even before they enter the rooms. Mia has a special friend that always worries that Mia and Al would forget to visit her. No way! Mia Amica is too big to miss and of course their special friend always receives her visit with Mia and Al which never fails to make her day.

Al adds "FPOW is a neat program that gives you a chance to give back to the community. Remember, it 'ain't' about you. If you expect people to know you, forget it, but they sure know who Mia is."

Submitted by David Rybak



#### Dates to remember

Pat Miller Educational Seminar: Dec. 5

**BOD Meeting at Leewood**: Dec. 7, 7:00 pm

**Newsletter Submission Deadline:** Dec. 30

BOD Meeting at Leewood: March 1, 2010, 7:00 pm

**Newsletter Submission Deadline: March 30** 

#### 2009 FPOW Kim Wilkerson Founder's Scholarship Winner: Anne Bastian

This years recipient, Anne Bastian, lives in Stevensville, VA and writes:

Most of us enter the veterinary field with a sincere desire to help both animals and people. As a veterinary technician, knowledge elevates the level of care the patients receive.

In today's struggling economy, it was hard to rationalize taking on the debt load of tuition while knowing full well that a degree will make very little impact on my salary. I worried about burdening my family financially.

Would I be able to meet their physical and emotional needs and still find time to study?

My favorite quote is "the willingness to do creates the ability to do". I made the leap of faith and enrolled in the Penn Foster Veterinary Technology pro-



gram, somehow trusting that things would all work out.

The Founder's Award Scholarship is an honor and heaven-sent. It came at the exact moment that I needed it most. It renewed and reinforced my belief that I am following the right path.

I only wish I could convey half the gratitude I feel. Thank you very much.

Sincerely, Anne Bastian

### A History of PAWS FOR A CAUSE

FPOW's first dog walk was held in 1996. It was a 5K walk and the event was held in October. The Board of Directors (BOD) liked Kim Wilkerson's suggestion that FPOW try a pet walk since the idea was so successful for the Baltimore Pets On Wheels program. The title Paws For a Cause was borrowed, with permission from the Montgomery County Pets On Wheels program.

The 1996 event was very successful and well attended. It's been known as the Paws For A Cause (P4C) ever since and has become "the" annual major fund-raising event.

The walk has been shortened to 3K to accommodate our many senior pets and volunteers.

Before the first walk in 1996, FPOW raised funds by conducting bake sales at local fairs and parades.

The BOD felt strongly that FPOW did not want to pester our volunteers with multiple fund raising events, nor spend too much of our time away from the residents and facilities that are the heart of our program mission.

Many factors have blended to make this event such a success. The primary key is that Madelynn Arnold has served as Chairman of the P4C committee every year, and what a wonderful job she has done. Madelynn is a master at organizing this day.

Another factor was the decision to seek

facility and business sponsors for the event and inviting their participation. Many of our dedicated sponsors continue to support P4C annually. It is a real joy to see our many facilities show their appreciation.

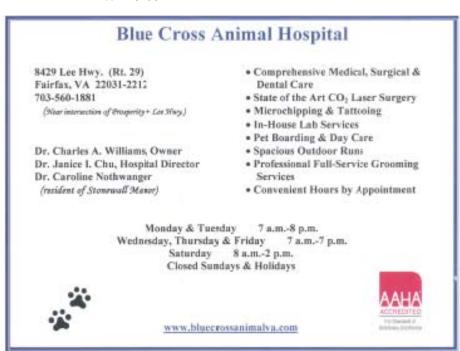
The long standing support and sponsorship of Weber's Pet Supermarket is yet another reason for P4C success. We owe a debt of gratitude to Weber's Pet Supermarket for serving as the primary sponsor for all our P4C events. Weber's has allowed us to use their Fairfax store location for the event, and also provides water bowls, doggie treats and biscuits for participating pets in the walks. Owners Deb and Roger Clark are long standing fans of FPOW, and their support and encouragement continues to inspire our program volunteers.

Special thanks to Weber's staff member Pam Koblitz, who deserves special recognition for her untiring efforts. She contributes her time on these special Sundays to arrange the logistical requirements that make our walks so successful.

The final key to success has been scheduling the event in early fall; the first Sunday in October continues to serve us well. The weather is beautiful at this time of the year --- not too cold and not too hot – making it just right to get out for a walk with our pets.

Today the P4C event is 2nd only in total fund raising to the United Way and CFC campaigns.

Submitted by David Rybak, Ruth Benker, & Kim Wilkerson







#### Are A Breed Apart

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

Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc

Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc. is a volunteer program working with the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, 12011 Government Center Parkway, #708, Fairfax, VA 22035-1104. FPOW Volunteer Hotline: (703) 324-5424. Visit: www.fpow.org 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: December 30, 2009

#### FAIRFAX PETS ON WHEELS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Executive Committee:

President - Tracy Van Duston

Vice President - Sabine Arndt

Secretary - Deborah Zelten

Treasurer - Kim Wilkerson

#### DIRECTORS

Director of Facilities Relations - Madelynn Arnold

Director of Volunteer Development – Patty Kwapniewski

 $Director\ of\ Communications-Kim\ Wilkerson$ 

Director of Volunteer Relations - vacant

Director of Fund Development - vacant

Director At Large - Liz Beyer

Director At Large - Joan Violante

Director At Large - Cara Schantz

The Newsletter Committe 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:
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Fairfax, VA 22035-1104

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