



# Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc.

MARCH 2021

## Meet the Board of Directors

The Fairfax Pets on Wheels board of directors began its new term October 1, 2020.

As many of you read in the last issue of the newsletter, Paula Singleton began her term as president, taking over the reins from outgoing president, Nikki DiPalma. There are other new members of the board, as well as long-time members you may not know.

In this issue, board members introduce themselves and provide some insight into what goes on behind the scenes to keep FPOW up and running as a vibrant organization. Even in this time of COVID-19, we are a busy group of volunteers.

### Executive Committee

**President** – Paula Singleton

**Treasurer** – Joe Ammann

**Secretary** – Madelynn Arnold

### Directors

**Facilities Relations** – Jeanine Goldberg

**Volunteer Development & Education** –  
Diane O'Brien

**Communications** – Wendy Mayer

**Volunteer Appreciation** – Matt Watson

**At Large** – Ruth Benker

**At Large** – Susan Dilles

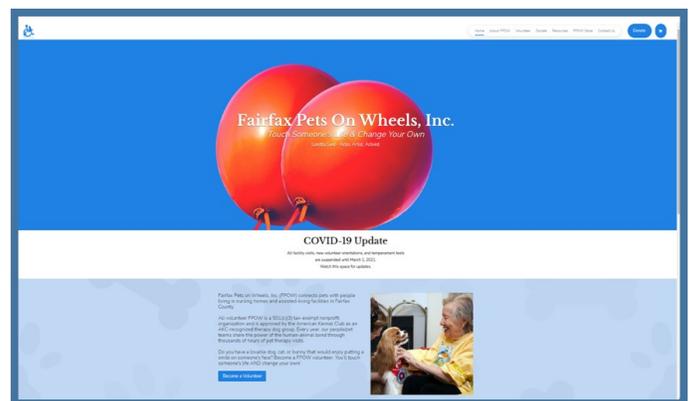
**At Large** – Karen Finkel

**At Large** – Barbara Kuckenbecker

**At Large** – Cathy Perro

## FPOW Has a New Website!

On February 1, we launched our new and (hopefully) improved website! We invite you to visit [fpow.org](http://fpow.org). Take a look around, try out the new features, maybe order something from the online store, or simply see what we've done. Then, let us know your thoughts so we can make it even better going forward.



Send your input to [communications@fpow.page](mailto:communications@fpow.page)

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

## President — Paula Singleton



I got involved with FPOW in 2014 when my previous dog, Sandy, was four years old. She was such a sweet, gentle soul, I just knew she was meant to be a therapy dog. She loved being around people and was content to stand next to someone as long as she was being scratched or petted. Sadly, she passed when she was only eight years old. Although not as perfectly loving as Sandy, my new partner Molly and I had been visiting Burke Healthcare Center and Heatherwood Assisted Living, as well as three adult day health care centers on a regular basis before the pandemic. We were also involved in the speakers bureau where we informed the public about FPOW and encouraged their support. In 2018 I agreed

to serve as vice president, and in October 2020 I became the president. While I humbly submit there are people who would be better at the job, I said yes. I will try my best to fulfill my duties and to honor this wonderful organization.

## Secretary — Madelynn Arnold



I have been with Fairfax Pets on Wheels since 1987, when I started visiting the psychiatric unit at Arlington Hospital with my beagle, Max. Since then, I have served in various positions on FPOW's board, including my current position as secretary. I am also the liaison at The Virginian and Arden Courts of Fair Oaks.

I love the program and would like to become a visiting volunteer again — but my past few dogs have been Jolly Jumpers! I am working with my “newish” dog, Kris, who is learning her pet manners since she is a former hunting dog. We hope to become FPOW volunteers once things open up after the pandemic.

## Treasurer — Joe Ammann



I joined FPOW in 2014 with Remington, our adopted 120-pound Newfoundland/Lab mix, who was a favorite at Burke Healthcare Center. Sadly, he passed away in October 2016. Our next rescue, 105-pound Dasher, is sweet and friendly but a bit too excitable for therapy work. In January 2019, my wife Mary and I added Koa to the family. Koa is a four-year-old brown Newfoundland who is a natural for therapy work, and he has the added advantage of being bed height! We began visiting Burke and added monthly visits to Heatherwood Assisted Living, Mount Vernon adult day health care, and Fairfax Nursing Center. As part of the speakers bureau, we represent FPOW at events. I've enjoyed my time with FPOW and decided I could contribute more, so I volunteered to be your new treasurer.

## Facilities Relations — Jeanine Goldberg

Hello! I am Jeanine, and I have been an FPOW volunteer since 2009. My Labrador retrievers Silver and Pyrite and I have been visiting Burke Healthcare Center. I am also FPOW's facility liaison. In this role, I coordinate closely with each facility where FPOW has a presence to ensure we are meeting the expectations of that facility and to be the point of contact for FPOW. I am also part of the temperament test team, evaluating new pet teams who are interested in volunteering. Silver and Pyrite, and golden retriever Beaker, also enjoy competing and training in obedience, agility, field, nosework and tracking.



## Communications — Wendy Mayer

When I rescued 14+-year-old Domino in 2018, I couldn't have imagined how he'd lead me back to my lifelong passion: the human-animal bond. I heard about FPOW and immediately knew this was something I wanted to be part of. Before anyone ever heard of pet therapy, I had started a nursing home visitation program in Toronto and was communications advisor to the world-renowned organization now known as Pet Partners. I offered to help with FPOW's communications and was asked to be on the communications committee. I was then invited to be a director at large, and in October of 2020 became director of communications. Although aging Domino's visiting days may be behind him, I hope to continue using my professional expertise to promote FPOW and our amazing volunteer teams who touch the lives of so many who need it so much.



## Volunteer Development — Diane O'Brien

In 2017, I began volunteering with FPOW with my shih tzu, Finn. We started regularly visiting Dulles Health & Rehab Center where I found it very gratifying to see the smiles of so many of the residents whenever they spotted little Finn trotting up to greet them. We both have also enjoyed working with other volunteer/pet teams for occasional group visits and during onsite orientations after I took on the role of facility liaison. In addition, we've participated in monthly group visits at Herndon Harbor adult day health care. In 2019, I joined the board of directors as a director at large and recently became director of volunteer development and education.



## Volunteer Appreciation — Matt Watson



While I currently serve as the director of volunteer appreciation, I joined FPOW in 2016 through a series of unexpected events. Our son was deployed and he sent his husky, Zeus, home to us to care for him. We were not really looking for a dog, and I was worried because when I researched how to care for a husky, I saw picture after picture of destroyed furniture, doors, and objects. When Zeus arrived and we saw how calm, intelligent and eager to please he is, a friend recommended we train him and join FPOW. I think his favorite visit was in 2018. We had not been to Arden Courts for about a month because of other commitments. We rounded a corner, and when he spotted his favorite resident in the common room, he leapt two feet in the air. I think it took every ounce of his discipline to walk that last 20 feet to visit Doris, and it was about this time that my wife informed our son he was not getting Zeus back.

## Directors at Large

Directors at large bring an added measure of support to FPOW with different talents and levels of experience.

### Ruth Benker



I have been an FPOW volunteer for 28+ years — starting with my Cavalier King Charles Spaniel Dusty, then KC and now Teddy. I have been the facility liaison at Iliff Nursing and Rehabilitation Center for 27 years. I have served in nearly all board positions and am currently a director at large and chair of the speakers bureau. Pet therapy is my avocation — the residents we visit are often the most neglected, the most vulnerable of populations. Sharing the love of our pets with them requires so little of us, but means so much to them.

### Susan Dilles



I have been around dogs my entire life and always loved the idea of therapy dogs. When I found myself without a dog for the first time in 22 years and retired, I committed to making sure my next dog would be a therapy dog. After a couple of years of volunteering at the humane society, the perfect pup came into the shelter. Darwin was matted, covered in ticks and very ill. However, I could see in his eyes a wonderful soul. I had Darwin in the FPOW program just three months after adopting him. We visited The Virginian each week and went once a month to an adult day health care center. He seemed to have a sense of what each person needed. Although Darwin has since passed, I am committed to the idea of FPOW and recently joined the board as a director at large. Through FPOW I have met the most amazing people that are committed to the FPOW mission and very generous with their time.

### **Karen Finkel**

Eight years ago I read a small mention in the local newspaper about a volunteer activity with Fairfax County's Pets on Wheels program. I enjoy and get such satisfaction from volunteering, and I'm a lifetime pet lover and owner. So this opportunity sounded interesting to me. I attended an orientation meeting and was hooked! My female black lab, Tessa, and I started volunteering at Burke Healthcare Center. Until the pandemic we enjoyed visiting the residents, families and staff, and they enjoyed seeing us. A perfect win-win. Tessa left me suddenly last May, so her time being a FPOW volunteer has ended with many wonderful memories. Tessa passed the volunteer responsibility to my new black lab puppy, Zara, who will take the temperament test when life reopens.



### **Barbara Kuckenbecker**

I began volunteering in 2017 with my dog Skip, a border collie. Having no experience with nursing homes, but lot of experience with dogs, I knew that dogs were a way to connect meaningfully with people of any age. When Skip passed away suddenly the following year, Aero, a working border collie, stepped in. Despite Aero's past with herding, his great passion was always people, and his best moments were visiting the residents of Annandale Healthcare Center. I have been honored to be his partner as part of a wonderful team of volunteers. Aero and I became a part of the temperament testing team as soon as we passed our own temperament test. As a result, we have met many enthusiastic new volunteer teams in the past two years. Now, as a director at large, I am part of the communications team helping with the newsletter.



### **Cathy Perro**

I started researching "pet therapy" opportunities at the end of 2015, shortly after retiring from the Air Force. I had no experience with such a thing, but FPOW sounded like such a heartwarming activity. In December 2014, Grayson my cat moved into my home, and by February we were certified to work at Burke Healthcare Center. I had to go back to work a few months later, which limited the amount of time we could visit, but it made our visits with a few "regulars" and the staff memorable! Sadly, Grayson had to retire in November 2020, but I wanted to continue to remain a part of the FPOW team as I love the mission and the dedication of everyone. I am now one of the directors at large and hope to assist wherever I can!





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

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**DEADLINE FOR THE NEXT FPOW NEWSLETTER: May 1, 2021**

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**COVID-19**

The board continues to evaluate the status of resuming regular visits and events. Visit [fpow.org](http://fpow.org) for updates.



Designate #8907



Designate #51148

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).

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

All correspondence should be directed to:

Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc.  
 c/o Fairfax Area Agency on Aging  
 12011 Government Center Parkway #708  
 Fairfax, VA 22035-1104  
 (703) 324-5424  
 Email: [dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:dfspetsonwheels@fairfaxcounty.gov)