



# Info from Fairfax Pets On Wheels

March 2025



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It has truly been a privilege to serve as the president of the FPOW board over these past few years. Together, we navigated the challenges posed by the Covid shutdowns. Yet our resilience shone through as we found innovative ways to uplift our seniors, from engaging Zoom meetings to heartfelt card-sending initiatives. This year, we have focused on revitalizing our membership and expanding visitation hours, and our efforts are paying off. Through our participation in Speaker's Bureau events and targeted advertisements, we have successfully attracted new volunteers who are eager to join our mission. As our membership continues to grow, so does the joy we bring to our beloved senior citizens, with more people and their pets ready to spread smiles and companionship.

This year's picnic was a delightful celebration, bringing together our incredible volunteers who have poured their hearts into the mission of Fairfax Pets On Wheels. The event marked the culmination of months of dedicated planning by our enthusiastic picnic committee. I am grateful to Ruth Benker, Margy Hofsass, Dave Dexter, Joe Ammann, Patty Kwapniewski, Doreen Peters, Carol Aron, Diane Bente, Madelynn Arnold, and Cathy Perro for their invaluable contributions that made the day not only a success but a joyful experience for everyone involved. During this heartwarming gathering, we presented Cathy Perro with the prestigious Mary Latshaw Award for Excellence, recognizing her unwavering commitment and tireless service to our organization. Additionally, we recognized the affectionate and spirited Pippin, the beloved pet partner of Diane Bente, who received the Shauna Award. Pippin's excitement is palpable as she eagerly anticipates each visit to Burke Rehab, a testament to the profound bond between therapy animals and the residents they support. This picnic truly embodied the community spirit that FPOW fosters. We are honored by and enjoy the opportunity to recognize and thank our remarkable volunteers and their furry companions, as we continue our uplifting work together!

As I hand over the leadership reins to the incredibly capable Madelynn Arnold, I couldn't be more excited about our continued collaboration in my new role on the board as communications director. Together, we'll keep the momentum going in our mission to "lick loneliness" in Fairfax County, fostering connections that not only enhance the lives of our elderly residents but also strengthen our community. I encourage all our members to stay engaged as we embark on new initiatives that will surely bring warmth and companionship to those in nursing homes and assisted living facilities.



New president, Madelynn Arnold with out-going president, Paula Singleton

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





# MEET THE BOARD

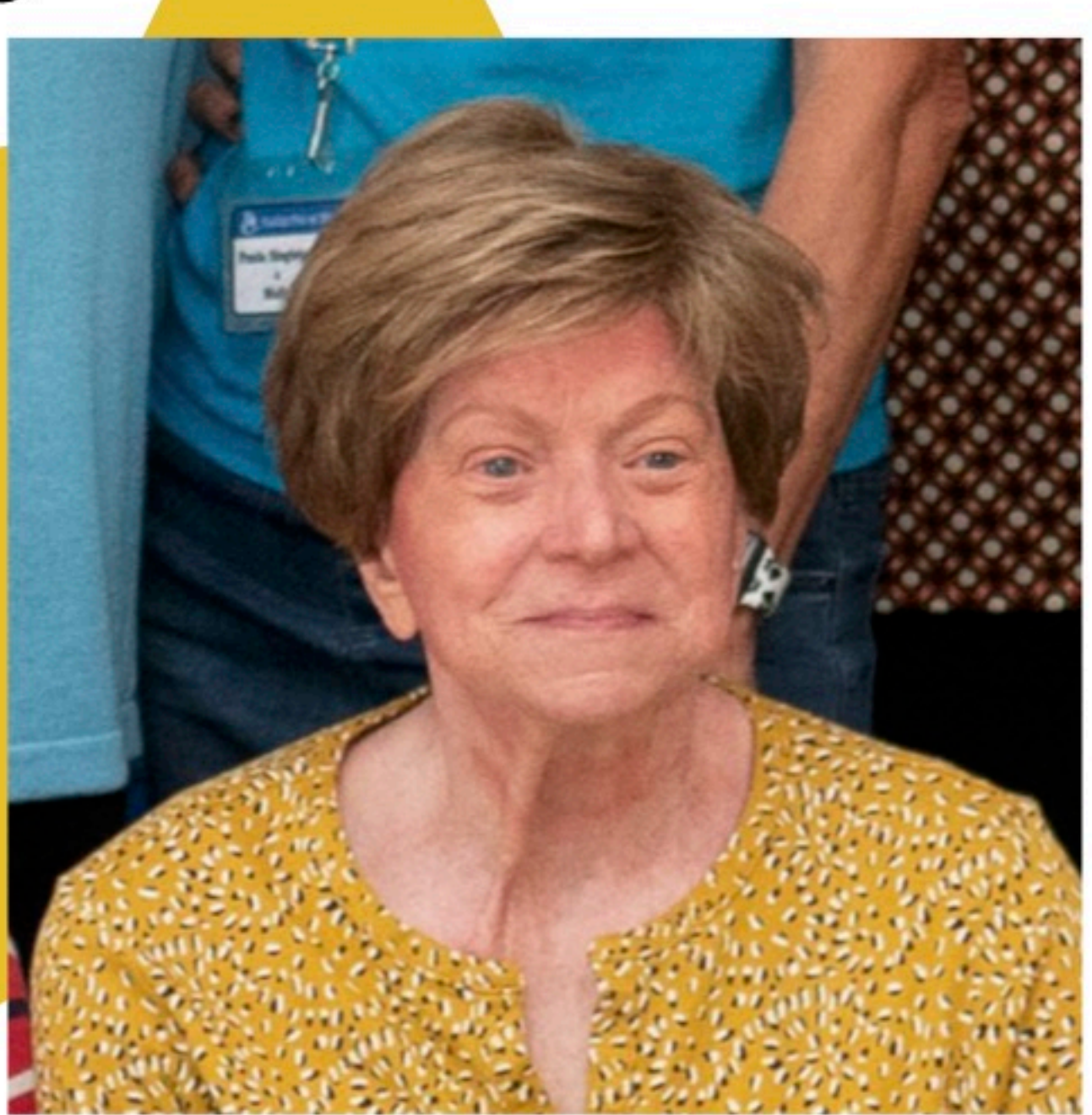
President



**Madelynn Arnold**

Since 1987, I have been actively involved in Fairfax Pets on Wheels, initially serving as a volunteer for Northern Virginia Visiting Pets. During my visits, I accompanied my beagle, Max, to the Psychiatric Unit at Arlington Hospital (now Virginia Hospital Center). As a native of Northern Virginia, born at Arlington Hospital, I have a deep connection to the program and the county. While I have not been actively visiting for several years, I continue to support it with hope I will one day have a pet that will pass the temperament test. I have, however, taken on various roles within the program, including serving as Chairman of the Walk committee for many years and mainly roles on the FPOW Board. I strongly encourage volunteers to contribute to the administration of the program, emphasizing the collective power of teamwork — "Many Hands Make Light Work."

Secretary



**Patty Kwapniewski**

I have been a member of the FPOW organization since 2005. During my tenure, I held various leadership positions, including Director-at-Large from 2007 to 2008, Director of Volunteer Development from 2008 to 2012, Treasurer from 2015 to 2020, Chair of the Temperament Test Committee from 2008 to 2022, I am also currently a member of the Temperament Test Committee and Speakers Bureau.

Treasurer



**Jeanine Goldberg**

In the past 17 years, I have had 6 retrievers involved in FPOW program. Beaker, my Golden Retriever, and I enjoy meeting all of the residents and new teams at Burke Nursing home. I also am a member of Temperament Committee and test new teams to the program.

Facilities Relations



**Diane O'Brien**

It's been a real pleasure being part of the Fairfax Pets on Wheels community. Since first becoming involved with FPOW in 2017 as a visitor at Dulles Health & Rehab with my little Shih Tzu Finn, I've truly enjoyed connecting with the wonderful, caring people participating in the program. As a member of the FPOW board in the positions of a Director-at-Large, Director of Volunteer Education & Development and now as Director of Facilities Relations, I continue to appreciate working with such special, talented and dedicated folks. I look forward to visiting our various facilities in my new role and learning more about them and the ways I can best offer support.





# MEET THE BOARD

Communications



**Paula Singleton**

Serving on the FPOW board has been a rewarding experience. I started as a Director-at-Large in 2017, then moved up to Vice President, President, and finally, Communications Director. Each role and the amazing people I've worked with have made this experience truly special and enjoyable. Wendy Mayer, our previous Communications Director, was an absolute legend! She set up our website, promoted our organization like crazy, and did so much more. I've been catching up by learning to use the fantastic applications she set up.

Fund Development



**Joe Ammann**

I've been a member since 2014. I currently visit Fairfax Rehabilitation Center, Burke Healthcare, Mt Vernon Daycare, Lincolnia, and Heatherwood with my Newfoundland dog, Koa. I'm also a Temperament Test Photographer and a member of the Speakers Bureau. I was the Treasurer from 2020 to 2024.

Director at Large



**Ruth Benker**

I have been involved with FPOW for 30+ years with Dusty, KC and Teddy, all Cavalier King Charles Spaniels. I am awaiting our new Cavalier pup who will be trained to follow in the paws of our previous Cavaliers. I have served in almost all positions of the FPOW Board -- in other words, I find the mission of FPOW to be important enough to spend a significant portion of my life in its fulfillment. We serve a most vulnerable population -- years ago, a family member of one of the residents told me, "We look to you FPOW volunteers as the extra sets of eyes and ears to look out for our family members."

Director at Large



**Dave Dexter**

As a retired chef and specialty food salesman, I enjoy my FPOW weekly volunteer opportunities. My dog Rosie, a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel, looks forward to these special visits too!

Director at Large



**Cathy Perro**

My cat Grayson and I joined FPOW in 2016 and visited Burke Rehab and Healthcare for a few years until his passing. I've been a part of the Speakers Bureau since 2019 and the Director-at-Large since 2020. I've supported the Annual Picnic Planning Committee and currently run FPOW's merchandise program.





Fairfax Pets On Wheels, Inc.  
Fairfax Area Agency on Aging  
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Fairfax, VA 22035-1104



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#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President - Madelynn Arnold  
Treasurer - Jeanine Goldberg  
Secretary - Patty Kwapniewski

Facilities Relations - Diane Obrien  
Communications - Paula Singleton  
Fund Development - Joe Ammann  
At Large - Ruth Benker  
Cathy Perro  
Dave Dexter

**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.

Send all correspondence to:

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