

FEATURED FACILITY

St. Lukes' South – Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation facilities typically provide therapeutic care following a medical event such as surgery, hospitalization, stroke or cardiac event, etc. In most cases, patients who participate in a rehabilitation program are more likely to recover and return to their home than patients who enter skilled nursing facilities.

Pets for Life is pleased to support St. Luke's South – Rehabilitation facility in Overland Park, KS. In partnership with St. Luke's Health System, the St. Luke's South Rehabilitation (SLS), center houses 12 beds. Serving a range of age groups from 16 years to 100+, SLS patients experience a variety of diagnoses including stroke, spinal cord, Parkinson's Disease, limb amputations, among others. The goal at SLS is to help the patient achieve as much independence as possible with mobility and self care so that they can return to their homes. SLS has an interdisciplinary team with OT/PT/ST, nursing, social workers and physicians.

Pets for Life currently has four volunteer teams who visit this facility each month. They are: - Becky Waitkoss & RUFUS, Kathy McKenzie & KIKKA, Meda Bower & MOCHA, Nicki Dobson & QUINCY. Standing in the wings, getting ready to join the volunteer teams at St. Luke's South are Will Jones and HAWK.

Nicki plays a critical role in coordinating the scheduled visits for the Pets for Live volunteer teams, soliciting their availability and checking for scheduling conflicts. Visiting the facility on Sundays and Thursdays is sometimes challenging due to the size of the unit. While the visits are generally meet and greet in nature, at times, visits must be limited to only one or two per day to avoid confusing the patients. However, on Sundays, the teams are able to make up to twenty contacts per visit, including patients, staff, friends and family members.



WELCOME NEW VOLUNTEER TEAMS

Please join us in welcoming the following new volunteer teams:

- Julie Bergstrom and FREJA * Ashley Jackson and DUTCHESS
- Adam and Sara Dirks and KEELY * Katie Reese and DRU
- Chuck Williams and ZELDA * Brian Saunders and LOLA

Pets For Life, Inc., Executive Committee: Donna Amato, President; Joe Sanches Vice President
Sharon Rush Williams, Secretary; John McGee, Treasurer; Judy Thomasson
Pets For Life Staff: Mary Buford, Program Director; Kathy Watkins, Office Assistant;
Jane McDowell, Office Assistant

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Pets Helping People

ROETHELI LIL' RED FOUNDATION

Pets for Life, Inc. has received a grant of \$20,000 from the Roetheli Lil' Red Foundation to help provide general operating support for our programs and enable us to recruit, screen and train volunteer/pet teams as well as meet the need for animal assisted therapy services in the greater Kansas City community.

Joe Roetheli was a federal government employee and his wife Judy was a high school teacher in 1996. In response to their dog Ivan's bad breath, they invented "Greenies" the toothbrush-shaped chew treat that cleans dogs' teeth and freshens their breath. After having sold hundreds of millions of Greenies they sold the company to Mars Inc. in 2006 when they funded the Roetheli Lil' Red Foundation, a charitable organization to help those in need.

A recent project for the foundation, is to partner with "Food for the Poor" (an international nonprofit relief agency). The Foundation has funded and "Food for the Poor" has provided in-country management to build 2 villages in Guinea to shelter more than 600 very needy people. These efforts also provide the residents with sanitation facilities, safe drinking water and a school. The Foundation has also provided a community center that doubles as a worship center, at least one store, a water tower and an area for gardening.

The Lil' Red Foundation has six inspirational documentary films underway and has translated two inspirational books from French to English. The Foundation has funded animal assisted therapy research and extension at the University of Missouri-Columbia, so the work with Pets for Life is a natural extension.

The Roethelis teach at a number of local colleges and universities. As Judy Roetheli says, *"We have been richly blessed, and we want to help serve others. We have a soft spot in our hearts for pets and for people who can benefit from pet therapy."*

Pets for Life truly appreciates this generous grant from the Roetheli Lil' Red Foundation. It will help us with our mission to enhance the care and treatment of people in local hospitals, nursing homes, shelters for domestic violence, mental health programs, treatment centers for youth and corrections facilities through the use of certified teams of pets and volunteers.

Please join us in thanking the following organizations for their generous support of Pets for Life:

Roetheli Lil' Red Foundation	\$20,000
R.A. Long Foundation	\$ 5,000
Master Craftsmen Foundation	\$ 3,000

CERTIFIED PETS

I love my Pets for Life visits, especially on the weekend days when we are fortunate enough to interact with not only the patients and residents at our facility, but their family members too! Thankfully, Pets for Life is widely known by many of our contacts; either they have heard of us, or they knew someone who had a visit from us, or occasionally, a friend or neighbor may have been one of our Volunteers.

One of the questions I am frequently asked, is about the certification of our pets. Some people are surprised to learn that our canine companions are our very own pets! Many marvel at the fact that they are so "well behaved", "so beautifully groomed", and "so calm and relaxed" around the patients and residents. I've even been asked if I would consider training someone's pet for them based on the example we set when we visit!

I always carry a supply of our Pets for Life calling cards so that as we visit the patients/residents, we can spread the word about our organization to those who may not be familiar with our work. I also memorized the Pet Volunteer criteria so that I can easily respond to those questions about "can anyone volunteer"?

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VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Johnson County Community Support Services in Merriam, Ks., held a gathering for the out-patient community on the afternoon of December 16, 2009. Pets for Life volunteer teams, Julie Kittinger and HANNA, Jane McDowell with KIP, Julie Krogh, DVM with FIONA and ETHAN, Susan Kemp with VICTOR, and Tom Klingner with SUNNY, all participated in this festive event! Patients and staff enjoyed cookies and punch, while VICTOR provided “howling” holiday tunes. ETHAN, FIONA and HANNA appeared in their favorite holiday costumes, while KIP and SUNNY provided lots of love and holiday cheer! Patients were invited to have photographs taken with Julie and the dogs as a keepsake of the event.



KIP and Jane McDowell, VICTOR and Susan Kemp, SUNNY and Tom Klingner, “Elf” HANNA and Julie Kittinger (photographer).



Julie Krogh with “Santas” ETHAN and FIONA.

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Pet Volunteer Criteria:

- ❖ Dogs must be 1 year of age
- ❖ Cats must be at least 6 months old
- ❖ The pet must have been owned for at least 6 months
- ❖ Annual PFL Medical Evaluation is required
- ❖ Biennial Volunteer Team Evaluation must be successfully completed
- ❖ The pet can have no history of aggressive behavior
- ❖ The pet must be comfortable interacting with adults, children, other animals

As we make our rounds in our various facilities, remember that we are always Ambassadors for Pets for Life. Our example sets the tone and enhances the success of the visit! Happy Visiting!

R.E.A.D.®

Does your therapy dog enjoy spending time with children? Does your special dog enjoy listening to stories about animals? Is your dog still excited to hear about the adventures of Peter Rabbit and Mr. McGregor? Then, the R.E.A.D.® Program may be just that special spark added to your animal-assisted therapy work.



The R.E.A.D.® Program strives to improve the literacy and reading skills of children through the unique partnership of the young reader and the registered therapy dog and handler. If you are a registered Pets for Life team and wish to become involved as a R.E.A.D.® team through Intermountain Therapy Animals, please contact Fran Lancaster, Licensed R.E.A.D.® Instructor, at fransdogs@kc.rr.com. Fran would be delighted to guide you through the certification process. Pets for Life helps to provide volunteers for The R.E.A.D.® Program in schools, aftercare programs, treatment facilities, and libraries in The Greater Kansas City and the surrounding areas.

WELCOME NEW

BOARD MEMBERS FOR 2010!

At our November 10, 2009 meeting, the board of directors of Pets for Life Inc. voted in the following officers:

President:	Donna Amato
Vice President:	Joe Sanches
Treasurer:	John McGee
Secretary:	Sharon Rush Williams

Spotlight on Volunteers!

If you are like most people, when you dream of retirement days, your mind conjures images of white sandy beaches, luxurious resorts, world travel, spending time with family, friends and loved ones; maybe a project around the house or garden. Right!? Not so for Pets for Life Volunteer, Marie Patchin. After a long, successful career at Government Employees Health Association (GEHA), Marie decided that when she retired, she was going to get a dog, do therapy work and spend her free time visiting, volunteering and bringing a smile to those less fortunate who needed a bright spot in their day. And she did just that! At 88 years young, Marie and her sheltie, MICKEY, make visits to Truman Medical Center – Lakewood Care Center (Lakewood Care Center), two or three times each month.

Lakewood Care Center is a large facility providing health care services for residents, ranging in age from 30-100+, who require assistance, skilled nursing or residential care. Pets for Life has been affiliated with the Lakewood Care Center for many years and has hosted many volunteer teams. Karen White, who has been employed at Lakewood Care Center for over 24 years confirms that the Pets for Life teams have been faithful in their visitation. She also stated that the residents “...love the dogs”. Karen spoke of many “miracles” she has witnessed as a result of volunteer team visits to stroke victims, patients with mental disabilities and other medical conditions. Karen speaks of Marie and MICKEY as well as Shelly Hinkle and MONTANA, with great affection. Calling the relationship with Pets for Life a “huge success”, Karen would love to see more volunteer teams serving this large, supportive and appreciative facility.

Thank you Marie, for your many years of service as a volunteer. We thank you for your commitment over the years and for setting the example of how volunteering keeps you young indeed!

RECRUITING OPPORTUNITIES!

Pets for Life will be actively involved in the following events. If you and your pet would be interested in representing PFL at one or both of these events, please email Pam Graves ASAP at madisonsgranny@aol.com. Thank you!

The Kansas City Pet Expo

April 17-18, 2010

Saturday, 4/17 10 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

Sunday, 4/18 10:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

American Royal Center, 1800 Genessee, Kansas City, Mo.

Admission to the event will be provided by PFL.

Pets for Life - Recruitment Party

April 25 – 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Tails R Waggin Doggy Daycare, 6976 W 152nd Terrace
Overland Park, Ks

VOLUNTEER NEWS YOU CAN USE!

- ❖ Did you know that the Pets for Life office will make a photo ID for both our human and pet volunteers? These will identify you as a member of Pets for Life when you make your volunteer visits. Just email a headshot of yourself and your pet to the PFL office.
- ❖ Therapy Dog vests are not required for our canine volunteers, but if you are interested, they can be purchased from www.puppaparel.com. Contact Lisa, the owner. Vests are embroidered with “Pets for Life” and also the dog’s name if desired.
- ❖ Pets for Life volunteer teams are in great demand! If you have availability on your calendar and can make more frequent visits or visits to additional facilities, please contact the Pets for Life office. We have a number of facilities in need!
- ❖ Truman Medical Center – Lakewood Care Center is looking for additional volunteer teams. If you are interested and available, please contact the Pets for Life office for more information.

Benefits of Animal Assisted Activity

As we go from room to room week to week, we often encounter relatives, friends, and neighbors of those residents that we visit. I don’t know about you, but I sometimes get questions about the value of animal therapy and “what good does it do?” So, I keep a list of responses in my back pocket, just in case someone needs some help understanding our “mission”.

- Agitated clients become calmer, more sociable
- Withdrawn clients who don’t typically “participate”, come out of their rooms to join the group
- Quiet, non-verbal clients speak; carry on a conversation
- Confused & disoriented clients find a focus
- Alzheimer’s clients who speak unintelligibly start using coherent sentences
- Over-excited children learn to take turns and follow directions
- Children in intensive care units with terminal illnesses, find something to smile about
- Injured or arthritic hands reach out beyond their usual range of motion to pet the animal(s)

And sometimes, just because... “you and your dog made my day”!