



Winter 2021

Lend a Heart News

The Quarterly Publication of Lend a Heart Animal-Assisted Therapy, Inc.
Proud to be an American Kennel Club recognized Therapy Dog Organization



The World According to Rosie

by Jill Nieglos



Hi, my name's Rosie. I live with Mum, Pops, and my sisters, Miss Magoo and Cali, who I'm sure you've seen working LAH events. Cali, sassy, and regal as yellow labs get. Magoo, Maltipoo, born without eyes, or anything resembling inhibition. What a gas. They go everywhere for therapy work – schools, universities, libraries. So fancy. Mum and Pops have raised service dogs since, like, forever, they say. Two millennia in dog

years. And then I came around.

One of thousands of puppies born at Guide Dogs for the Blind, I was named 'Lifeguard'.

Lifeguard? Are you serious? Who the sam-hill's responsible for picking these names? *Lifeguard?! Really?* Ugh. Anyway, that year, a bonafide surplus of pups cropped up; puppies everywhere.

Despite the odds, and since I'm a certified genius, I aced *the test*.

Yeah, I know. *THE test*. I'm so dang smart they sent me right up to the big leagues before I even mustered a woof. Paws for Purple Hearts, they said. Off you go. *Eat your heart out, chumps*. Top of the world.

Here's another secret. It's lonely at the top, especially with a tag like *Lifeguard* stuck square on the collar. I couldn't very well show up to class named after a guy who suntans poolside.

Then, the word came down. Angels sang. Clouds parted. Brilliant beams of white light and my prayers were answered.

Name change! Rosie, they said. Came down from the brass in some stuffy office somewhere. Hellooo Hollywood.

Anyway, I'm just about as famous as they come these days. I put the *golden*, in Golden Retriever. But it wasn't easy.

Fifteen months old and what do the higher-ups do in all their infinite wisdom? Pulled the rug right out from under my pretty paws. Case in point. Car rides, awesome, right? Nose out the window, wind in your face... smelling a hundred bumms from miles away. Heaven.

I get in the car with Mum one day, go back to school and, *WHAM!* Off Mum goes. Wait... *where you going?* Mum? *MUMMY!*

Gone. She's gone. Gone furever, it seems. Furever? Her eyes were wet as she drove off without me. Why? Why'd she leave me?

Stoic, Rosie. You're a soldier. On a mission. A purpose.

This is your purpose, Rosie girl, a voice seemed to say from somewhere. *This is your destiny. You're home now*. And apparently, that soft, pretty voice, so like Mum's was right.

Bringing comfort to those who need it most.

A breeder dog. A **what dog**, you say? *Breeder!* That's my job? Oh, My Dog! Going home to Mum!

What is that, you might ask?

Drumroll, please... To get frisky! Yeah, you heard

right. My job is to get frisky with a handsome stud, who trots my way. And no wonder... I'm *gorgeous*. Let's not beat around the bush. They want me for my genes, straight up. And I don't blame them. I'm a keeper. Of course, they want a hundred more little keepers if they can get 'em. Smart, brave, friendly, focused puppies. That's what they want. So what did I say? "Where's the dotted line?"

Oh, well, *welcome aboard*

Miss Rosie, glad to have you, they say. Couple things first. About medicals - need straight A's: cardiology, ophthalmology, osteo, on and on. I thought I'd never see the end of it. But, hold it, stop here people. I do this I do that, but tell me, *who and where* is this dreamboat you got me all worked up over? I can see it now. Angels whip up the choir in a frenzy again.

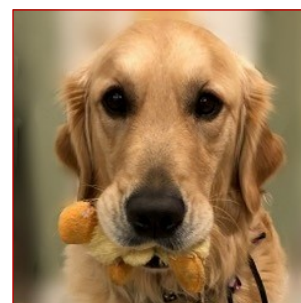
Slo-mo, he's literally running toward me in slo-mo, all gold.

"Let's Get It On," by Marvin Gaye streams by on a car stereo passing.

A plate of spaghetti, meatballs, candlelight, kiss in the middle.

It's happening. It's really happening. Then I wake up. A test tube, they tell me.

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Introducing Rosie
future Lend a Heart
Therapy Dog

MISSION STATEMENT

Lend A Heart is a volunteer organization comprised of certified handler and animal teams, and associated volunteers, dedicated to provide compassion and understanding for our clients through animal-assisted therapy.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jannette Phelps, Vice-President
Sandy McKaig, CFO (Treasurer)
Christine Hale, Secretary
Joanne Faist
Stephanie Plucker
Kristine Nymoen
Brett Glines (Interim Board Member)



The World According to Rosie continued

Your Prince Charming is in a test tube. What? What do you mean? No romance? No meatballs? Noooooo!!

But what can I say? I'll admit, I'm a bit jealous of my sisters now. Listen to 'em, yarn after yarn, libraries, constant petting – what a gig. I eat up those stories about those young kids and their first days reading in those cathedrals of knowledge. One day Magoo told me all about a little boy, read his very first chapter book with her.

Proud, she said. Magoo was so proud.

For now, I'm a breeder. My job: puppies. What can I say? Could be worse. But between you and me,



I'll let you in on one last secret, if you promise not to tell. I'll have a lot of time on my paws between litters, so I'm boning up to take the LAH exam. I know.

Sssshhhhhh!

I want to become part of that bright spot my sisters share. Want it more than anything in the world. A BARC dog.

That's my new dream when Prince Charming's not just round the corner for me. Tour the boarding areas, see all the shiny people off as they travel this crazy globe, be a comfort like Mum was for me. Remembering all those places I went with dear Mum as a pup? Still seeing the airports teeming with people who couldn't pet little Rosie with my working vest. I still see them all. Anyway, that's my dream. Pets all day. That's my heaven.

Everyone deserves a dream, don't they?



Volunteers Helping

The Reason

by April Mason

Why do you do it? I've heard that question many times from curious friends and family who wonder why I drive so far or spend so much time on Lend a Heart visits. While I have many heart-warming stories that would give a satisfactory answer, I feel this one sums it up the best.

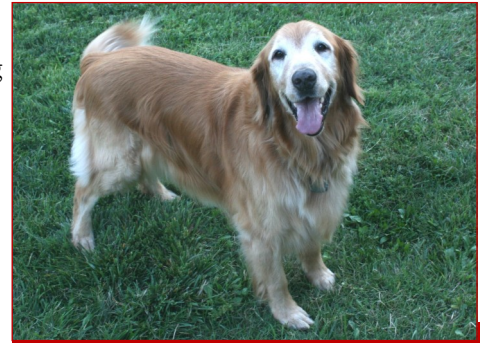
On our fourth anniversary of our time with Lend a Heart therapy dogs, my sweet old Golden Retriever Rusty (who has since passed away) and I got in the car and headed to Rocklin for yet another senior facility visit. We arrived at the memory care unit to spend the first part of our morning there. The residents were seated in a large circle in a beautifully furnished building. Everyone was excited for our visit. We

worked our way around, me chatting with the residents and Rusty just being himself and getting lots of love.

One sweet, elderly lady smiled so big at Rusty and petted him very gently and spoke to him. She also carried on a small, somewhat limited, conversa-

tion with me. I could tell she was suffering from Alzheimer's and some other psychiatric issues. But she had a lovely personality and we communicated as best we could. When we were done, the senior center coordinator told me our time with that particular resident brought tears to her eyes. This dear lady hadn't said a word in quite some time and was usually non interactive. But today, seeing Rusty changed that, and she smiled and spoke for the first time in ages.

So when someone asks me why I pack up my precious pooch and travel all over the place, spend the better part of my day driving, and volunteer my time...this is The Reason. 🐾



Volunteer April Mason's Lend a Heart Partner Rusty

Rescuing with a Purpose

by Janet Heston and April Mason



Volunteer Martha James and Introducing Baby Doll
Future Lend Heart Therapy Dog

With over 30 years of experience under her belt and having been a Lend a Heart handler to seven different rescue dogs, Martha James is the epitome of what LAH is all about. Martha has served on the Board of Directors, the Training Team, been a Team Leader and completed over 90 visits in 2019 alone!

Martha started her journey with her first dog, Sassafras, as a member of the Sacramento Kennel Club. The SKC would invite members to take their dogs on various visits. Ironically, Sassafras was more interested in turning over and going to sleep than socializing. As fate would have it, upon attending the Sacramento Kennel Club Dog Show at Cal Expo, Martha ran across our therapy dog booth. Eager to find out more about LAH, she came to a meeting and later a training session. Martha and Sassafras were among the very first to be evaluated and join LAH. Gradually our organization began to grow from a handful of teams to over 20 handlers and dogs in those early days.

“What’s kept me in this business is when you go to facilities like care homes or libraries or hospitals, and the peoples’ faces just light up. It’s a light that is pure joy. They are so happy to see us,” says Martha.

One of Martha’s strongest memories is of visiting a facility for abused children. Under her patient guidance, the children learned how to treat dogs with care and not hurt them. After LAH teams had been visiting for a while, there were no more incidents of harm to the children’s own pets. “The children were policing themselves,” she says. “We really felt that we were making a difference.”

While every dog and handler at Lend a Heart is special, it’s members like Martha and her dogs that make our organization thrive. Lend a Heart would like to thank her for all she’s given to our group these last three decades and we look forward to many more years with her valuable wisdom and kindness. 🐾

Through a Dog’s Eyes

by Logan The Big White Dog

as transcribed by Jennifer Baer-Riedhart (his Mom/LAH Handler)



First, I want to thank all the human LAH members for selecting me as the 2019 LAH Outstanding Therapy Dog.

My name is Logan and I am a Great Pyrenees purebred dog. I was born on May 30, 2013 and joined my new family on August 4, 2013 with my Mom Jennifer and Dad Bill. In August 2014 my Mom and I joined LAH and started our Therapy dog work as trainees and became full members in October 2014. It was a beginning of a wonderful adventure of meeting new people and seeing new places with other LAH teams.

When we’re out I am a calm, gentle, quiet big guy with lots of thick white fur that is just right for touching and petting (hugs are nice too).

Some people think that I’m a polar bear when we’re out walking then they see that I’m just a big lovable dog that likes humans and other animals (if they’re nice and polite like me). My Human Mom takes me with her whenever she can and our best times are when we go to visits with the other LAH dogs. When we are out on our visits, I try to be very polite and stay by her side until I hear “Logan, go visit” then I can go up to the person and stand still while the people pet me and give me hugs. I try not to pay attention to the other dogs during a visit since I know that we can visit each other after the visits when there is time.

We have gone on visits to assisted living & memory care facilities, county courthouse visits, Read-to-the-Dog Library visits, Schools & De-stress events, crisis shelter visits, presentations to companies & organizations on benefits of therapy animal. My favorite visits are to the Sacramento International Airport because there are so many people and places at the airport that love to see the LAH Teams. When we’re at the airport we go around in our group and “troll for pets & hugs”. Sometimes someone will tell my Mom that there is a person or a child at one of the gates that is sad or frightened and needs some hugs. She takes me over to them and I stand quietly while the person hugs on me and talks to me. I can even help babies that are crying or fussy just by letting them pet me. When I am lying down taking a break, small children and babies crawl up on me and fall asleep. Sometimes my Mom has me lay down when a young child comes up to see me so they aren’t as scared of a large dog.

Even though we can’t go on actual visits right now my Mom still takes me out so we can continue to practice our therapy dog training. In March of 2020 I received the American Kennel Club (AKC) Canine Good Citizen Title and the AKC Therapy Dog Excellent title for completing over 200 visits. My Mom was so proud of me she cried when she got the papers and medal from the AKC organization. 🐾



Volunteer Jennifer Baer-Riedhart ‘s
Lend a Heart Partner Logan



Volunteer Stephanie Plucker's Lend a Heart Partner Willow

Hi there, I'm Stephanie Plucker and my therapy dog is Willow, who is an 11 year old Doberman. She and I have been doing visits with Lend A Heart For 9 1/2 years. She does library visits, senior programs, and stress relief visits at colleges.

For the last 5 years one of our therapy visits has been out at the Sacramento International Airport. Willow loves this visit and we typically spend 2 hours there visiting with people. We visit with people who haven't flown for a while, children who are bored with waiting, people who had Dobermans when they were young and people who can't believe they are petting a Doberman because of their reputation.

One of our most rewarding and challenging airport visits was on December 22, 2019. I believe we did a lot of stress relief that day. We were scheduled to be at the airport from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. On the way to the airport, I heard on the news there was a power outage which was affecting Southwest Airlines. Being that they are the biggest carrier at the Sacramento airport and this was the Sunday before Christmas, Willow and I were happy to "Lend a Hand". We started upstairs in the boarding area like we usually do. About 45 minutes into it, we got a visit from an Airport representative asking us if we could come down to the ticketing area because it was very busy. Everybody was having to be checked in manually. To say it was busy was an understatement, in fact, there were 4 lines of people completely wrapped around the entire ticketing area. If I had to guess, there were probably 500 people in line, so Willow and I just dove in and started visiting. We ended up being there for almost 4 hours. The kids stuck in line appreciated visiting with Willow the most. We had one little girl who just wanted to hang out with Willow instead of the crazy line. She wouldn't go forward with her parents when they moved forward; She just wanted to stay visiting with Willow. I finally had to walk forward to her parents to get her to go with them. Her parents were happy to get a little relief that day. We look forward to getting back to our Sacramento Airport visits in the near future. 🐾

COMMUNITY OUTREACH HIGHLIGHTS

Girl Scout Troop Learns About Therapy Dogs



Volunteers and Board Members Joanne Faist and Kristine Nymoen with Lend a Heart therapy dogs Talullah and Gus surrounded by members of Girl Scout Troop 2277

Joanne Faist and her therapy dog Talullah and Kristine Nymoen and her therapy dog Gus were invited to speak to Girl Scout Troop 2277 last spring in Natomas, CA. This troop of young ladies has been together since kindergarten. The troop was working on their Animal Helper Badge. On this afternoon, they learned the difference between service dogs, emotional support dogs and therapy dogs. We reviewed how service dogs are trained to perform specific tasks for a person who has a disability and that service dogs are allowed, by law, to enter into all business with their owner. We discussed that an emotional support dog's role is to provide emotional support and comfort to their owner. They do not have access to all public areas, but they are allowed to fly with their owner, and they can qualify for no-pet housing.

The main focus of the afternoon talks were about therapy dogs and how their role is to provide comfort and affection to a wide variety of people. Therapy dogs are not trained to perform specific tasks but rather they spend time interacting with people to help reduce stress or anxiety or to help lift their spirits. We discussed that any type of dog can be a therapy dog but the dog must have a calm and affectionate demeanor and must pass the Lend a Heart evaluation and therapy certification process. We concluded the presentation with the girls interacting with Gus and Talullah. 🐾

Housekeeping

Keeping Your Dog Active During Covid

by April Mason

If your dog is anything like mine, he or she is missing volunteer work as much as you are. What can you do during this uncertain time to keep your best buddy active? How can you do it safely? Read on for information and tips on keeping your fur-ever friend on track.

The Centers for Disease Control website tells us that although humans can transmit the Covid 19 virus to our pets, they cannot transmit it to us. There is no evidence to date that the virus lingers on pet hair, fur, or skin (although you should wash your hands after playing with your pooch or kitty simply because many people are allergic to pet dander). If you become ill, wear a mask and gloves when interacting with your pet so you don't transmit the virus to him or her. Never place a mask on your furry friends or wipe them down with any kind of disinfectant as both of these actions are highly dangerous to your pet. If your pet does show signs of illness, see your veterinarian. Of the small number of dogs and cats who have contracted Covid, most had only mild symptoms and made a full recovery. There have been no reported deaths of pets from the virus.

You can follow the CDC guidelines of wearing a mask, staying six feet apart from people not in your household, and avoiding crowds while still training your pet to return to therapy work. There are some great public places to take your dog for interaction with both humans and other dogs such as PetSmart, Petco, Home Depot, Lowe's, and your local dog park. Many restaurants that offer outdoor dining will happily serve you and your well behaved pet on their patio. Lazy Dog eatery even has a menu for your precious pooch. Starbucks and Dutch Brothers both offer a complimentary "puppicino" treat if your pampered one would enjoy some whipped cream and dog biscuits. Frequent walks, visits to the dog park, basic obedience training with treats for positive reinforcement, and seeing friends and family are all great ways to keep your dog at the top of his or her "therapy" game.

Keep taking your caring canines for car rides and field trips when you can. Every positive interaction they have as they continue their training will prepare them for a smooth transition back to work when we eventually get the go ahead to return. These outings will also build a stronger bond between you and your dog and what could be better than that? 🐾



Out with the Old, In with the New Better Impact is HERE!

Volunteer Matters will be GONE end of February. If you would like to take one last look for memory-sake or download all of your visits for potential tax deduction or therapy dog hours, now's your chance.

Why are we getting rid of VM? VM no longer supports its older version. The new version has no calendar view option and its cost is on the more expensive side of volunteer management systems at \$1682/year. We have been paying \$2,280/year, including this last year for the older version.

How did we choose Better Impact? The Board reviewed 4 different volunteer management systems (including new version of VM). Better Impact was chosen based on ratings/references, its volunteer interface, and greater ease of generating reports. BI includes both calendar and listing options for our visits/events, easier navigation of site, unlimited number of admins and visible record keeping available to each volunteer. **Better Impact is \$744.00/year and it is definitely better!** It provides everything that the new VM will not provide.

Better Impact is waiting for you to review, update, and practice signing-up for pretend visits – both active and associate volunteers. **What's new and different?** If currently active with a LAH pup, your first name will be your pup's name, since this is now your pup's profile. Badges and visible Volunteer Hours are based on your pup. You'll also need a profile picture of your team (you and pup). **Any perks?** You'll have member access to LAH StoreFront (sales not currently active), password/links to various media (i.e. Dancing with Pup), and more to come. Let's get you into Better Impact sooner versus later. If you have any questions or issues regarding Better Impact, please contact Sandy McKaig



Big Day of Giving (BDOG) – began in 2013) is a program of the Sacramento Region Community Foundation's initiative to grow local philanthropy. Big Day of Giving is an annual 24-hour community-wide movement that unites the region's non-profit sector to help raise unrestricted funds for the organizations that strengthen the capital area. Lend A Heart's Board

has decided to participate in BDOG especially during this challenging time! Due to our growing need to recruit new teams and provide continual education/support to our current teams, we will seek additional funding for Volunteers and Programs.

Lend a Heart is currently working on updating its Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/LendAHeartAAT/>) – check out our new cover picture. Our goal is to use Facebook to help us be more visible in fundraising opportunities.

**Lend a Heart Animal Assisted
Therapy Dogs, Inc.**
11230 Gold Express Dr. Ste 310
Gold River, CA 95670



*For Information on how to
become a Lend a Heart Therapy
Dog Team
visit www.lendaheart.org*

*Lend A Heart is a non-profit
501(c)(3) charitable organization.*

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YES— I would like to make a donation to support the
programs provided by **Lend a Heart Animal-Assisted
Therapy Dogs, Inc.** Enclosed is my check for:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100

*Please make checks payable to: **Lend a Heart Animal-
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Special Instructions for gift (in honor of, in memory of, other)

If any: name and mailing address of the person we should notify
regarding the gift: _____

