



Spring 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



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 take this plunge, especially during this challenging time! BDOG provides an opportunity to not only fundraise (and learn from the best), but to explore new ways to collaborate with each other as well as with our clients. BDOG also provides an avenue for Lend A Heart to educate and recruit. We are now updating and maintaining our Facebook page.

As for fundraising with BDOG, 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.

Bringing comfort to those who need it most.

Specific items include professionally developed video clips (featuring orientation/evaluation activities and education), newsletter printing/ mailing expenses, custom pup trading cards, and miscellaneous outdoor event equipment. 🐾

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

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Requalification – Please don't Panic

by Lori Cicchini

During our most recent general meeting the topic of possibly having to requalify our dogs came up, and if you are like me, I bet your heart fluttered a bit. When something is important to me, I get nervous and Siena being a part of Lend A Heart is important to me. I thought about it for hours afterward but then I realized Siena is still Siena and she loves therapy work! She loves people and she loves other dogs. But then I remembered our probation period.

Do you all remember your probation period? I do I was sure we were going to get thrown out! This is our story.



Volunteer Lori Cicchini's Lend a Heart Partner Siena with Maui

Siena is a very small Landseer Newf – about 95 lbs. but she is a strong working dog breed. I adopted Siena at 18 months. I immediately knew, after picking her up from the couple that relinquished her, Siena's second litter had not survived so she was of no use to them, that she would be mine. I also knew she would make a great therapy

dog. So Siena joined our family which included 2 other female rescue Newfs and 3 rescue cats.

First thing I did was pull up the CGC requirements and worked with her on those. My other Newf Maui was only 4 months younger than Siena and so I trained them together. We worked 10 minutes a day beginning with the first exercise, once mastered we added the second exercise and then the third and so on. It took about a month, maybe 6 weeks but both Maui and Siena passed their CGC test on the first try. Many of these exercises remain a part of our daily life and have been since we began training.

I have always been a soft owner – its why I have Newfs – usually they are big easy dogs. My other Newfs went through manners training and obtained their CGC. That's about it. Then I adopted Maui at 6 weeks of age and I learned not all Newf's are easy. Especially Newfs taken away from their mother way too young. Maui had a mind of her own – and it was all about Maui! So I had to learn to train – and cry – and continue training.

What I learned in training Maui was that Maui needed a job. She is super smart, loves everyone and everything and wants to do what she wants to do. So I began training Maui in water rescue for a Water Dog title.

There are 6 exercises a Newfoundland must learn to obtain their title:

- Basic control off leash 10 feet from the water which includes a simple heel pattern and recall
- Retrieve a bumper and deliver to hand
- Retrieve a life jacket or cushion and deliver to hand
- Deliver a rope to a steward in the water – 50 feet from shore
- Tow a boat to shore
- Swim with handler

Why am I mentioning this? I learned to train a working dog. Every Saturday morning from May – Sept Maui & I were at Folsom Lake at 7 am practicing with 15 -20 other Newfs – all of whom were show dogs and trained from birth to work. It took Maui 3 years to be able to complete basic control, off leash, 10 feet from the shore and not run into the water! A miracle – yes but it was also consistent training. I am pleased to say that exercises 2-6 were learned within 2 summer seasons of weekly training. Maui loves water training - I learned not to get frustrated and to not cry. I learned to train in small steps, learned to read my dog and find out what works for her. I had a lot of help from those with more experience – who first found Maui to be out of control and then learned to envy her drive and enthusiasm – I just had to learn to direct her spirt and exuberance and work as a team. Had we been able to get a permit last year from Folsom Lake, I am confident Maui would have earned her title. Fingers crossed for this year!

Now back to our Lend A Heart dogs. They are all wonderful therapy dogs who enjoy their job. They may be a bit rusty and may be a bit exuberant when we are allowed to gather again but we know this. I am expecting it to be like our probation period. Siena had to learn that the team of dogs we were working with were not play mates – they were team mates. She understood her job inside the facility and made me proud each time. Those of you who were with me during that probation period witnessed her excitement at seeing the other dogs before we entered a facility – I was sure we would be fired! Your dogs were so calm. Each one of you advised it would get easier each time, that this was normal and Siena would soon learn her job. Each of you were right. By the time of our 5th visit, Siena understood she was working – even before we entered the facility. Your guidance and encouragement were so appreciated.

While each of us may be nervous about requalifying, especially with our younger dogs, there are some things we can do to prepare them. Here are some of the things I am working on and maybe they will help you.

- Siena and I practice a couple CGC exercises every day – in the house and even on walks.
- All my dogs must sit and wait to eat before they are released to eat.
- When given a treat, most times, they must earn it. Sit is natural position for a treat, so I may make them go into a down, circle, shake or touch. *Continued on page 3.....*

Requalification – Please don't Panic continued

- When we are on a walk and meet certain neighbors walking their dog, we put our dogs in a sit or down while we stand 10 feet apart chatting for a moment. Each dog must remain in the sit or down. Siena does great doing this.
- Siena and I visit Home Depot, Green Acres and Lowes weekly where we encounter people, other dogs and this provides a great environment to work in. I practiced at these stores with Siena before we took our test initially.
- While Siena is great on walks, Maui can be overly exuberant when seeing other dogs on our walks. I dreaded walking her as she is now 4 and I felt bad claiming she was still a puppy as she carried on to see the other dog. I put a backpack on her and told her we were going for a work walk. It worked! She was more focused and less distracted. I then added a bottle of water to each side of the back pack and we practiced our work walk. She now carries 3 bottles of water in each side of the backpack.
- When I take Siena out now into stores or unfamiliar public places, I have tied a scarf around her neck and told her it's her work scarf. She was used to wearing a vest with another group so she learned when she wore the vest that she was working. I need to find a way for her to understand she is working when we return to Lend A Heart. I am hoping this works for us.
- We practice – Look at me – I am hoping this will help me get her attention when she is around dogs again.
- Fun! I try to make obedience training fun! Maui & Siena both earned their Trick titles during Covid as the AKC was allowing video taped "tests. My Newf's are all food motivated so that makes it easy too.

If you have read this far, I want you to know I am still learning a lot about training. I have 3 large breed Newfoundland's, two are 4-year-old females, Maui & Siena and a 2-year-old 150 lb. male, Seger. They are young. Play at our house can look like 3 bears going at it in the woods. In the past, I have had 3 Newfs but with a bigger gap in ages. It was easier for some reason. I was younger. The older dogs taught the younger dogs. What I have learned is that each of my dogs is different in their training needs. What works for one may not work for the other. So I lean on those who know more than I do, ask questions and experiment to see what works with each dog.

So am I nervous about requalification? Yes, a little bit. But I know Siena is still Siena and she loves and misses her therapy work. She is awesome with people. Is she rusty? Of course she is – we have been prevented from gathering in large groups, she hasn't gotten the attention from strangers she craves and she hasn't been exposed to a team of dogs as she was during her visits. Will I have trouble controlling her excitement when we meet the team outside a facility again for the first couple times? Probably, but I know she will learn she is working again and adjust. And so will your dogs! Why? Because they are Lend A Heart dogs!!! 🐾

Volunteers Helping 🐾

The Reason

by Sharon Hearden

A few months ago Bentley and I were pleased as well as surprised to be given the award for most visits in 2019. Two visits a week, occasionally three, did not seem that much to us. We love the visits which are so rewarding to me when watching the positive effects the dogs have on people who need something to brighten their day. I also enjoy interacting with the people who I got to know over the three years we had been visiting and seeing how they were doing.

I adopted Bentley in 2015 from Homeward Bound Golden Retriever Rescue shortly after my husband passed away. He was a seizure dog with hip dysplasia. We took care of each other, me caring for his health issues and Bentley being sensitive and loving when I was grieving my husband, which made me realize that he would be a good therapy dog to comfort others. I heard about Lend A Heart Animal Therapy in training classes at Homeward Bound. However, he did not pass his first Lend A Heart evaluation due to jumping up and licking the face of someone involved in the evaluation. Just a bit too friendly; fortunately, he passed three months later.



Volunteer Sharon Hearden's
Lend a Heart Partner Bentley

Bentley loves people of all ages, so we attended a variety of visits: Memory care, senior facilities, the courthouse, Easter Seals brain injury unit, Valley Recovery, libraries and schools. But regardless of the age of those we visited or the type of facility or care they were receiving, everyone responded with smiles when the dogs visited. One memory care patient was thrilled with Bentley, thinking her golden retriever from many years ago had returned to her; those that were lonely or looked sad began smiling when petting a soft furry head with loving eyes; those in treatment facilities needed to be near a dog because they missed their own pet at home.

So why do we do so many visits? For the reasons above and more very touching moments that were so rewarding to me. When I saw so many people who needed the interaction and closeness of a dog, I could certainly give up time from my life for two visits a week. And Bentley loves the attention. Visits are a win for everyone—it brings joy to those we visit, and Bentley and I go home with a warm heart because the visit made our day. 🐾



Community Outreach Highlights

Orangevale Library Read to the Dogs Program



Volunteer Christine Byrum with her Lend a Heart Partner Lexi.

A funny thing happened at the Orangevale Library while “reading to the dogs” at Christmas time just before Covid restrictions were put in place. Lexi and I were sitting on the carpet along with the other LAH teams doing our monthly LAH visit at the Orangevale Library. There was this cute 5 year old girl that was there with her Aunt, the girl was talking about getting a released Labrador Retriever from Guide Dogs of the Blind. It was just before Christmas and I said to her “maybe you will get your dog for Christmas”. She looked at me and just started laughing, I looked around the room at the other team members as I couldn’t figure out what I had said that was so funny, then she looked at me and said “he wouldn’t fit down the chimney”. 🐾



The Science of Pet Therapy

by April Mason

As early as the 1850's, Florence Nightingale wrote about how animal companions helped wounded soldiers during the Crimean War. In the 1960's, child psychologist Boris Levinson used his dog Jingles to calm children during therapy sessions. However it wasn't until the 1970's that pet therapy really began in earnest with actual animal assisted therapy and activities.

While dogs are the most common form of therapy animal, cats, horses, rabbits, and guinea pigs are also popular. According to a 2017 Healthline article, pet therapy lowers blood pressure, improves cardiovascular health, releases endorphines creating a calming effect, lessens depression and loneliness, reduces boredom and anxiety, and teaches children empathy and nurturing skills. Petting an animal also produces a feeling of relaxation. AAT (animal assisted therapy) is recommended for seniors suffering from dementia or recovering from strokes, autistic children, and hospital patients. For example, the Mayo Clinic has more than a dozen teams of dogs and their handlers who make regular visits to departments throughout the hospital. Really anyone can benefit from pet therapy, even if it's just hanging out with your own loyal fur baby.

In a 2005 joint study between the American Heart Association and the University of California Los Angeles health center, promising results of pet therapy have been found. The study included three groups; one group received AAT, one group received human interaction, and the third group was simply left alone. The AAT group showed that in as little as 12 minutes with an animal that the patients had a 12% reduction in anxiety and a 17% reduction in stress.

Rebecca Johnson, head nurse of the University of Missouri College of Veterinary Medicine, had this to say in a 2012 National Public Radio interview about the effects petting an animal, which causes the body to produce oxytocin. “Oxytocin helps us feel happy and trusting. Oxytocin has some powerful effects for us in the body's ability to be in a state of readiness to heal, and also to grow new cells.”

While more research needs to be done in this emerging field, there's no denying the fact that animal assisted therapy has a place in the health and well being of people. What an honor it is for all of us to be a part of it through the journey of Lend a Heart. 🐾

Please submit stories, news articles, and/or photos for publication to: knym2018@yahoo.com

Housekeeping

Heartworm and Flea / Tick Prevention

by Stephanie Plucker, DVM

It's that time of year again; Spring time which is also the flea, tick, and heartworm prevention visit to the vet time. Because there are so many flea, tick and heartworm solutions to choose from and the cost varies from one manufacturer to another, I wanted to share what I know about the choices available for treating this and what I have used for my dogs over the years. First, all of these products are prescription only products: Heartgard, Trifexis, Revolution, Sentinel, and Simparica; I have used all these solutions with no issues.

Some of the larger corporations such as VCA and Banfield market products under their umbrella

Certainly I would discuss this with your veterinarian. But I do recommend heartworm prevention. While we don't see a lot of positives in the Sacramento Valley, the cost of treatment (\$2,000) and the risk associated with it makes it a much better solution to prevent than to treat the illness.



Currently there are at least 15 products out there for heartworm prevention (HWP). Most are given by mouth, some are topical and there is one injectable. Except for the injectable, these products are often multipurpose. Most can provide intestinal deworming and a few can also cover fleas and ticks.

Oral Prevention: Ivermectin based

- Heartgard, Iverheart, Triheart Plus and Max are. HWP and intestinal parasites
- Simparica Trio HWP, intestinal, flea and tick

If you have a herding breed, these are not always the best choice unless you have your dog tested for the MDRI gene. Dogs that carry this gene mutation do not tolerate Ivermectin products.

Oral Prevention: Milbemycin based

- Sentinel, Interceptor Plus HWP and intestinal
- Sentinel Spectrum, Trifexis HWP, intestinal, and fleas

Topical Prevention

- Revolution HWP, fleas, tick
- Senegy - Same as Revolution
- Advantage Multi Moxidectin and Imidacloprid HWP, intestinal, fleas and ticks

Injectable Prevention

- Proheart 12 HWP only. Lasts 12 months

Better Impact is HERE!



LEND A HEART ♥ LEND A HAND
ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY

HOME OPPORTUNITIES SCHEDULE HOURS REPORTS CONTACT MY PROFILE

Home ? Help Log Out

Welcome **Proctor - Sandy McKaig** [Edit My Profile](#)

VOLUNTEER HOURS
This Week: 2 This Year: 9 Lifetime: 11

* Lend A Heart Animal-Assisted Therapy

Badges
AIRPORT CURRENT FECAL CURRENT RABIES CURRENT

Get Social
Lend A Heart Anim... 744 likes
Like Page Share

News
VOLUNTEER DIRECTORY 2020
Now available a limited time: **Lend A Heart Gear - STOREFRONT**
(Click on link to access/order LAH caps, shirts, jackets, backpacks)
Dancing with Your Pup Instructions w/Password & Links
[Click here to view Public Page for Recruitment](#)

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.

NEW! Badges for Covid Vaccine, Fecal, Rabies, and visible Volunteer Hours are easy to create and to keep updated. And, don't like your profile picture? Better Impact makes it easy to update your team picture (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. So let's get you into Better Impact sooner versus later. For additional information or to request a webinar / tutorial, please reach out to Sandy via email, text or phone.



Check out our new Facebook cover picture. Can you identify the pup? We are also posting recently emailed pictures with comments in an effort to update our content. Our goal is to use Facebook to help us be more visible in our community. (<https://www.facebook.com/LendAHeartAAT/>)

***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
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