



UNLEASH A SMILE

SPRING 2013

*Touching Hearts, Bringing Joy, Offering Comfort, and
Enriching Lives with Certified Therapy Dog Teams*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Warren & Denise Brooks and Cooper Hudson
Christine Legler and Hamlet
PeggyAnn Duckless and LucyGoose
Sue Henry and Honu
Joany Simonds and Mack
Mia Marinovich and Daisy
Aidan Powell & Wendy Bratt and Willie

Gary Forcier and Shayla
Edward Spaulding and Ella
Abigail Garrett and Aslan
Joan Greene and Maddie
Debra Sargent and Hillsdale Reuben Lee
Melody Magallanez and Nemo
Amanda & Mary Ellen Daniels and Maggie

GREETINGS FROM BIGDOG

-Steve Reiman, TDV Founder and President

I believe TDV to be a special organization, a group of members and friends proud of their past and excited about their future. Above all, it is a non-profit defined by the character and integrity of its members. As we volunteer to unleash smiles in our communities, we bring hope, laughter, and happiness that might not otherwise be there.

I believe that in gratitude for all the gifts we have been given in life, we should share those gifts with others. We give of ourselves when we give gifts of the heart: love, kindness, understanding, and the joy of our dog.

The growth of TDV has been phenomenal. More and more people are out there sharing the joy of their special pet. The number of clinics, testing sessions, and evaluations has surpassed our wildest predictions. Dogs have retired and passed, members have moved, yet our membership has grown larger than ever before. What I started more than 20 years ago has grown close to 300 active members throughout Vermont, neighboring states, and Canada. The stories of member visitations abound. There are stories about children and adults in hospitals and other health-related facilities. There are stories about residents in retirement communities and nursing homes. There are stories about patients in rehabilitation facilities, treatment centers, inmates in correctional facilities, and residents in shelters and crisis centers. There are stories about students, faculty, and staff in schools, libraries, and youth centers. Some stories are mentioned in passing, some are in the press, and others are on radio and TV. All are heart-warming and proof that what we do is a true blessing to our communities.

To all TDV members, I want to say that you continue to make me proud. To all members of the Board and support people, I am truly grateful to all of you because without you, none of this could be happening. I am deeply grateful to all of you.

With my sincere respect and gratitude,



UPCOMING EVENTS WHERE TDV WILL BE ACTIVELY RECRUITING

Here is the list of events where TDV will be attending to reach out to potential Certified Therapy Dog Teams:

May 18, 2013

Festival of Fidos at The Basin Harbor Club in Vergennes, VT

June 9, 2013

Paws for a Cause Run in Orleans, VT

August TBA

Derby Line Community Day

Sept 8, 2013

Shelburne Museum Goes to the Dogs

Dec TBA

The Arbors' Holiday Wreath Stroll in Shelburne, VT

Hope to see you there!

We will also be supplementing this list with library-based presentations titled, So You Want to Become a Certified Therapy Dog Team? Please checkout of website home page (www.therapydogs.org)

THANK YOU TDV MEMBERS FOR POSTING ON FRONT PORCH FORUM

This year in an effort to increase our membership in order to reach more folks with visits from Certified Therapy Dog Teams, we are stepping up our no cost marketing & promotion efforts to promote upcoming clinics and tests in our growth hubs.

Part of this effort is being carried out by TDV members themselves who are also members of Front Porch Forum (local online communities in regions of Vermont). Over twenty TDV members have kindly offered to post short announcements of upcoming clinics and tests on their local Front Porch Forums after I e-mail them the details for their post.

Thank you all for your help in getting the word out above the life-changing work of TDV and how folks can go about the process to become a Certified Therapy Dog Team.



HOW TDV CHANGED MY LIFE

-Katie Ziegler, Board of Directors and Editor

Sitting in a hospital bed surrounded by medical equipment and engulfed by the smell of "hospital", there seems to be no way of escaping your current surroundings for even a second. You read a book, but your machine starts to beep. You watch the TV, but have to adjust the volume really low so as not to wake your sleeping roommate. This foreign environment is unsettling for many people of all ages—but when a little nose pokes around the corner, your whole mood changes and the hospital seems to disappear around you. A Therapy Dog of Vermont has come to visit!

I have chronic medical conditions and often find myself sitting in that hospital room. No matter how good the book or funny the movie, nothing brightens your day and makes you feel at home like that visit from a four-legged friend. My first TDV visits were three years ago. I was in the hospital for over a month, and I treasured those moments with the TDV teams. I have always been a dog lover, but meeting the therapy dogs, personally experiencing the happiness they brought to my day, and seeing the happy faces of all the other patients and staff gave me a new-found appreciation for our canine companions.

Since that hospital stay, I switched my major in college to canine behavior and began to get involved with TDV. When I first started working with TDV, they asked me to complete a number of research projects, write articles, and then I started to become more involved in reaching out to those in community to promote TDV. I was fortunate enough to be invited to join the board of directors this year and was honored to take the position.



I now have a wonderful little blind Shih Tzu named Todd, and we are working on becoming a certified TDV team. I am looking forward to being able to give to others what those TDV teams gave me. A piece of normalcy, home, and wagging tail make all the difference in someone's day— and possibly life. Those visits not only brightened my day, but also changed my life. I now look forward to completing my degree and pursuing a career working with service and therapy dogs.

I would like to thank all of those involved with TDV. Thank you to the dedicated people I have come to know, and whose friendships I value, as well as all of the members and volunteers who “unleash smiles” every day.

ONLY ONE?

-Steve Reiman, TDV Founder and President

One would normally think that visiting only one patient while on Therapy Dog duty would be somewhat of a waste of time. After all, don't we try to see as many people as we can every time we go on any official TDV visit? For me, preparing for duty means bathing, drying, fluffing, and brushing Micro. Then there was the trimming of his toenails and brushing his teeth. Even for a six-pound Maltese, this can take hours. And, it takes time for me to get me ready too. So, with all that preparation, it makes sense to maximize each and every visit, spreading therapy dog magic to as many people as I can!

On this particular day, it also meant the 30 minute trip to Munroe Regional Health Center. After signing in, Micro and I went to the Emergency Department with plans to visit a variety of other floors thereafter. That never happened. What we saw in Room 7 changed everything.

A five-year old boy, who was beyond tears, lay in bed with two women nervously at his side. A nurse was introducing a volunteer to the boy. His visible pain was not from his condition but the realization that the two women, his grandmothers, had to leave him for a few hours to handle important business. The crying slowed considerably when the little fellow saw Micro in the pouch I often wear to bring him into hospitals. Riding in his pouch, Micro's feet never touch the floor after his bath and I feel fine about putting him up on beds.

As the boy's interest turned toward Micro, the ladies slipped out on their urgent business. The volunteer held his hand as Micro snuggled into his side. Soon, he was the happiest patient on the ward. He fed Micro treats and we played word games and sang songs together. Then, we flipped through the channels to find appropriate cartoons and helped him with his lunch when it arrived. Micro was right at home with the little guy who often gently stroked his fur.

I have no idea how long we were in that room, but the staff was delighted that the boy was cared for until his grandmothers returned. By that time, Micro seemed pleasantly tired, and it seemed like a good time to save his energy for another day.

Yes, we only saw one patient, and it made him so happy that we didn't feel the need to visit any others. Micro had brought smiles where there were tears. He had indeed improved the emotional health of a tiny hospital patient. He performed, perhaps, as no other staff member could do. Truly, I was proud of Micro and his accomplishment. We walked out of the hospital feeling quite satisfied with his achievement – even though we only made one visit.



MEET THE HUBS!

-Deb Helfrich, Volunteer Director of Certification and Training

What's a hub? Well, in TDV's world, a hub is an essential element of the certification program's new structure. This restructure allows our certification team to effectively meet one important charge of TDV's 2013 Action Plan: EXPAND THE GEOGRAPHIC REACH OF THERAPY DOGS OF VERMONT. In short, this structure puts people in leadership positions in various geographies across Vermont, allowing us to grow across Vermont in a way that's modular, easily replicated—and therefore much easier to scale up, manage, and sustain.

Thus, we've set up hubs in key areas across Vermont, and selected very talented, dedicated volunteers to manage each hub. These Hub Directors support me (and ultimately, TDV!) by organizing tests and clinics, supporting teams of testers and evaluators in their areas, and serving in an important leadership role while we develop interest, and certify new teams, across Vermont. So, without further ado, it's my pleasure to introduce our current hubs!

Randolph: This is actually one of our oldest hubs. It serves an area of Vermont that we've had a presence for nearly a decade and marks the birthplace of one of TDV's first (and still largest) reading-to-dogs programs. *Hub Director: Karen Odatto (also a tester/evaluator since 2003!)*

Manchester: This is one of our youngest hubs (and it served as a model for the current hub structure)! This hub also is the realization of a dream TDV leadership has had for many many years to offer therapy dog certification and visits in southern Vermont. *Hub Director: Kristin Comeau (also an evaluator since 2012 and a tester in training)*

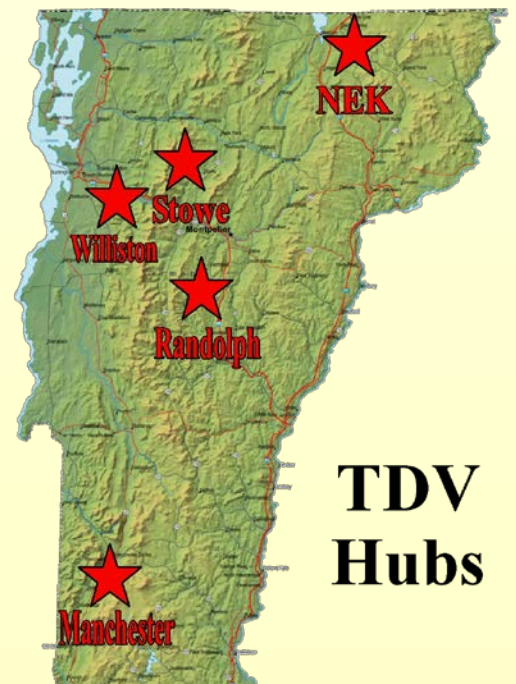
Williston: This hub is the largest, serving many nearby towns and offering testing and clinics every month. This hub has the largest certification team and highest number of candidates going through certification. *Hub Directors: Emily and Jason Reed (evaluators since 2011; Emily recently became a tester and Jason will be soon)*

Northeast Kingdom: This is one of our oldest hubs. It serves an area of Vermont that we've had a presence in since nearly the beginning of TDV, and consistently throughout TDV's two-decade history. *Hub Director: Steve Reiman (our founder, current president, and also a tester and evaluator since 1992!)*

Stowe: This is one of our youngest hubs. We've been offering testing and clinics for about a year in Stowe. Stowe serves a much-needed option for those not wishing/able to travel to other hubs such as Williston, Burlington or Randolph. *Hub Director: OPEN (though we thank board member Carey Laubenberg for launching this hub with us and getting us started).*

I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to all of our hub directors...they have not only been critical to our program, but they embody the passion, dedication, hard work, and professionalism that makes TDV such an amazing organization. My hat off to each of you!

I'd also like to acknowledge the most amazing team of volunteers we have who serve as testers, evaluators, and certification team volunteers (check out the box on page 5). Without these most amazing folks, we would NOT have new teams to go out and do the most wonderful work we do.





ASK ISA (CLASSIC FROM 2005)

Dear readers, this is my first of hopefully a regular column for any therapy dog questions doggies or their handlers may want to ask. If you have a question for me, please e-mail it to: admin@therapydogs.org. I can use your name or you can remain anonymous! Looking forward to getting your questions! --Isa

Q: Dear Isa, sometimes at the nursing home, the breathing machines and medical stuff the elders need scares me. When I get scared, I'm all mixed up—ready to run in case one of those beeping menaces decides to grab me and ready to defend myself if I can't get away. When my person sees this, she pats me all over and coos to me and tells me I'm being a good dog. I get so confused because my person is telling me "good boy" when I'm terrified and ready to run! Does this mean I should be scared of something? Does it mean being scared is the right thing to do?
Taffy, the Great Dane

Dear Taffy,

First off, I know there can be lots of weird machines when you go visiting—but they are all pretty nice (well, they're not very social, but they don't try to steal your attention either). So, even if they do seem like they are hissing at you (ah—sidenote, be careful with cats—they don't all like to be chased), there's nothing to be scared of.

This part is for your person--when your pup gets scared, be happy, calm, and ignore the scaredness! Show your dog it's no big deal by making it no big deal! If you are calm, cool beans and not freaked out by the funny machine, then your dog will take your lead. Even though you want comfort and reassure your pup, by patting and saying it's okay—you're telling your pup he has a REASON to be scared and rewarding him for being scared—confusing! When your pup is all calmed down and feeling pretty good about the machine, THEN give lots of pats. And, of course, giving your pup cookies is a GREAT idea—and ice cream, a couple hotdogs, a burger...

TDV HUB DIRECTORS

Deb Helfrich, *Director of Certification and Training*

Carey Laubenberg
Jason & Emily Reed
Kristin Comeau
Karen Odato
Steve Reiman

TDV TESTERS and/or EVALUATORS

Raymond Belanger	Tim Pollock	Deborah Schapiro
Brenda Carpenter	Emily Reed	Jenn Vaughan
Callie Field	Jason Reed	Beth Wadleigh
Deb Helfrich	Steve Reiman	

Our testers and evaluators are also supported by dedicated certification support team: Michelle Douglas, Nancy Kahn, Carey Laubenberg, John O'Connor, Patti Shaw, and Maryellen Sullivan.

TDV SUPPORT TEAM

Brenda Altman, *Liaison to UVM*
Dorothy Forsey & Janet Dooley, *FAHC Coordinators*
Elizabeth Hall, *Administration and Newsletter Design*
Kiana Donegan, *Liaison to Middlebury College*
Wendy Huntley, *Liaison to Camp Ta-Kum-Ta*

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