



## SUMMER 2014

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

### Welcome New Members

Denise Angelino and Chase  
Linda Helms and Teton  
Kathleen Matthews and Piper

Adam Bindrum and Daisy  
Michele Hemenway and Aragon  
Lotta Rosen and Bear

Gina Christman and Moxie  
William Mahlmann and Winnie  
Elizabeth Smith and Regal

### Greetings From Big Dog

*by Steve Reiman, Founder & President*

I am so proud that TDV is making big strides with our Third Decade Initiative thanks to our new Hub Director and BOD member, Gordon Perkinson. He has worked with the VA to register a number of TDV teams to visit the VA Hospital in White River Jct. and two of the Clinics in Vermont. Both Gordon and I are ex-military and are very excited to bring smiles to our Veterans.

Quite some time back, I made a special visit to the VA Hospital in White River Jct. at the request of my step-son who was a patient there. We brought smiles to him and many others. They were fathers and grandfathers. They were young with family members present; they were elderly and alone. Two were women. All of the patients at the VA Hospital were military personnel. These men and women had served or were currently serving to protect our country.

I came in with my German Shepherds and the staff immediately accepted us as privileged members of their team and gave us orders to visit all patients whose rooms were not isolated. And, visit my Sheps did in real military style. They played ball and Frisbee with staff, visitors, and patients alike. They snuggled up to people who wanted to sink fingers into fur and brought smiles and laughter everywhere. The reactions were the same everywhere we went. It was a time for all of us to relax and watch the magic that came out of a mix of dogs and military pride.

We were there a long time that day. We left tired and happy after visiting so many wonderful people at the VA Hospital. It is the least we can do to honor these wonderful men and women. What a joy it is to know that TDV now has a Hub to support them.

With my sincere respect and gratitude,



# The Man in the Hall

by Gordon Perkinson and Christine Barnes

*There on the beaches of Normandy I began to reflect on the wonders of these ordinary people whose lives were laced with the markings of greatness. At a time in their lives when their days and nights should have been filled with innocent adventure, love, and the lessons of the workaday world, they were fighting in the most primitive conditions possible across the bloodied landscape of France, Belgium, Italy, Austria, and the coral islands of the Pacific. They faced great odds and a late start, but they did not protest. They succeeded on every front. They won the war; they saved the world.*

Tom Brokaw

## The Greatest Generation

We arrived on the beautiful, neatly groomed campus of White River Junction VA Hospital. There was the usual sense of anticipation: What will we accomplish today? What a wonderful opportunity it is to engage our veterans, staff and visitors! Often we have what I refer to as just 'regular' visits, greeting patients and staff and letting them meet Lizzie. But today would be different.

My Therapy Dog, Lizzie, and I got out of the car. After brushing her, attaching her collar, vest, bandanna and VA badge, we walked to the main building where I signed in, then proceeded to the hospital and began our rounds which usually take about 2 hours.

Lizzie and I entered one of the medical/surgical wings. Sitting in a wheelchair was an older Veteran, in his mid-nineties, an indication of the challenging time he served our country. As we walked closer, we could see the old soldier was somewhat compromised, silent, head down and not engaged in any way. I asked the staff if it was permissible to take the man's hand and put it on Lizzie. I was given the okay, and I placed his hand gently on her head.

At first, he seemed not to notice. Then slowly, he began to realize something was under his hand. Gently, softly, he started to smooth the hair on Lizzie's head, still with his own head bowed, and no further response. Lizzie sat still and patiently by his side.

After about a minute the aged Vet's chest started to shake, and he began to weep. While still slowly stroking her head, silent tears flowed slowly down his weathered cheeks. When he finally looked up, first at Lizzie, then at me, slowly, very slowly, he shared with us a peaceful, warm smile.

Now, in what must be his final years, this gentle man continues to touch us all with his story and his life.

A smile came to my face as well, then a tear, as I was moved by the privilege of sharing this peace with him.

.....and the reason for this remarkable change in the old soldier's perception at this time? A dog. A brief but compelling moment for him, from us, in gratitude for his journey all those many years ago.

***America, home of the free because of the brave.***



## TDV 's New Hub

### Good News! Seven New Teams to Serve Our Veterans!

by Gordon Perkinson, TDV BOD and VA Hub Director

Last week in White River Junction, seven new therapy dog teams joined our ranks. The handlers completed VA volunteer applications, received approval on background checks and completed a step toward obtaining a government badge. The culminating final moment arrived: a tour through the VA hospital with their canine partners – all seven dogs and handlers in a group! Heads turned!

It was the first visit to the VA hospital for most teams, and in all likelihood, the beginning of a rewarding experience for both the therapy dog teams and the veterans with whom they interact. There are five VA clinics in our beautiful state: ***please join us!***



Gordon & Lizzie at Burlington Lakeside Clinic



VA Hub Members at Hospital in WRJ

### Newsflash!

### TDV has Just Received Partial Funding for the WRJ Hub





## The Macgriff Reading Program At Cambridge Central School

by Donna M. Rooney

Dear Therapy Dogs of Vermont,

First, I want to say "Thank you!" and let you know how much Cambridge Elementary School appreciates Therapy Dogs of Vermont and the Macgriff Reading Program.

Macgriff and Matti Grigat, Barbara Scotty Grigat and Elizabeth Machia have been volunteering for the past 3 years at our school every Wednesday. This year 3 kindergarten classes, 3 first grade classes and 1 second grade class of students have been meeting with them and reading their "just right" reading books to Macgriff the lovable golden retriever. The students are so happy and relaxed to read to the dog in the school library reading room. I am sure it has contributed to each of them becoming a better reader which is the heart of the program. Everyone in the school community looks forward to their weekly visits and seeing them in the hallways.

Griff, Matti, Scotty and Elizabeth have volunteered well over 150 hours of time this year to over 140+ students at CES. Not to count the hours of bath time in preparation the day before coming each week!

The slideshow of pictures of students reading to Macgriff this year presented at the Year End Celebration of Learners all school assembly was the highlight culmination of the program. Everyone was "ooing and aahing" at the pictures of the dogs with students - it was wonderful to see and hear! Scotty and Elizabeth went above and beyond - giving each child a personalized card and picture of themselves reading to Macgriff - a terrific memento to keep and remember. They also encouraged students to continue reading over the summer.

Cambridge Elementary School has made a donation of \$100 to Therapy Dogs of Vermont in honor of The Macgriff Reading Program - just a token of our appreciation for all their efforts.

Thank you - we greatly appreciate Therapy Dogs of Vermont and the Macgriff Reading Program - we hope this is a partnership for many years to come.



Griff & Mason



## Williston Central School Students Support Therapy Dogs of Vermont



*Mr. Kellogg's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Class with Certified Therapy Dog Team of Nancy Khan and her pup, Sophie, along with TDV Executive Director Bob Uerz accept a donation check for \$1,012.50 on Thursday, June 12th*

The students from Michael Kellogg's class are supporting the work of Therapy Dogs of Vermont organization through the creation, production, and sales of Kellogg's Catchy Cards. This is the fourth year of this creative effort which, as part of its mission, also supports worthy causes.

This year, before selecting Therapy Dogs of Vermont to receive the funds, the class researched the organization and felt it was worthy to receive the funds generated from this effort.

Information about Kellogg's Catchy Cards and how to order copies of these beautiful works of art use the link below:

<https://sites.google.com/a/cssu.org/kellogg-s-catchy-cards/>

PS. Before knowing of their intended gift, I bought some of the wonderful cards Zachary had made at the Williston Farmer's Market. All of the cards I saw there were awesome. (Steve)





## Member Jessica Katz Raises Funds for TDV via her Facebook Page

*by Jessica Katz*

On July 14, the eve of my 28th birthday, I said to my mother "I want to do something different." Therapy Dogs of Vermont was kind enough to host my thesis writing endeavors in the summer of 2012. My focus was on fundraising and organizational development, so I figured - why not do something to benefit TDV? The entire experience of becoming involved with TDV, from writing my paper to becoming a Certified Therapy Dog Team with Libby, was positive and inspiring. Since relocating to Chicago, Libby and I are not able to participate in as many TDV events as we'd like, but we still maintain our certification so that we may volunteer in our area as TDV's Westernmost Ambassadors.

On the morning of my birthday, July 15, I posted a status to my page telling everyone that for every birthday post I received I would donate a dollar to TDV, up to \$100. By 10a.m. I had already received 60+ birthday wishes, and my friends and family who know of my passion for animals were starting to make donations on their own - something I wasn't expecting! I am truly blessed to have such generosity in my life.

By 4p.m. I had met my goal, and Steve was sending me name after name of individuals who had donated. A friend of a friend, someone I had never met, even agreed to match what I had pledged! In total we raised more than \$300 for TDV on my birthday - this impromptu campaign was thrice as successful as I had hoped, and it served as a new way of creating awareness of the organization. I encourage other members to take on this endeavor as well - it's for such a great cause, after all.

What a great way to celebrate!

**Dear Jessica,**

**From all of us at TDV**

# Thank You and Happy Birthday



## The Loss of Gypsy Rose

*by Cheryl Chittick & Bill Cecil*

We said goodbye to our beloved Gypsy Rose this morning. Needless to say we are devastated but managing. She was 13 on May 9, 2014 and just started acting her age this spring. Gypsy Rose recently retired from therapy dog work due to declining energy. She was losing her appetite so last Monday, Bill and I took her for an evaluation with blood work, X-Ray, and ultimately an ultrasound. The diagnosis was quick-moving intestinal hemangiosarcoma...not painful, but not treatable either.

We are grateful to have had so many golden years with Gypsy Rose and have countless precious memories of her. We appreciate all those who provided expert care and love along the way. As a pup, she visited Mayo Healthcare and as a senior dog she and Tiger Lily visited with folks at Second Spring in Williamstown, VT bringing weekly smiles to the residents. She was a Therapy Dog of Vermont from fall 2005 until June 2014 and listened to students read in the PAWS For Reading Program at Braintree Elementary School. She was considered a "rock-star" there and students believed she understood everything they read to her. Gypsy Rose and Tiger Lily received a Governor's Service Award in 2012 for their work at Braintree School!

Gypsy Rose had a rich life! Although she was not a gypsy at heart, she really got around the United States and Canada! Tiger Lily (age 6) and Calypso (barely 1) learned valuable lessons from Gypsy Rose, loved her deeply and miss her greatly. They helped bury her in the backyard next to Duffy, Tanner, and Showdown. This afternoon, we took Tiger Lily and Calypso canoeing and celebrated Gypsy Rose's devotion to helping people, her love of the water and all the good times.



## The Passing of Jake

*by Kevin and Kristen Shea*

Jake was the most special dog we've ever had, and we've had black labs for decades! When he tested to be a therapy dog, he was a little defensive of me, his mom, while he knew Kevin, his dad didn't need to be defended!

We took him to St Joseph's senior living home frequently, and his "claim to fame" was that he was very vocal. He would groan and whine when people would pet or scratch him, because he so loved it! The residents looked forward to the "talking dog" and were always so delighted to see him!

We miss him, and I'm sure they do as well...but our next pup will be trained to be a therapy dog as soon as possible!



## TDV on Facebook

Check out TDV's Facebook page:



<https://www.facebook.com/TherapyDogsofVermont>

Don't forget to LIKE us!

Thank you, Katie McDonald, for all of your work to make this happen

## Announcing Our Inaugural

### TDV Certified Therapy Dog Team Photo Calendar for 2015

In an effort to raise funds to support TDV as well as a tribute to our Certified Therapy Dog Teams, TDV volunteers are, as you read this, working on the details of this effort. We hope that each team will submit a photo and purchase a calendar. It is envisioned that Team pictures will be part of a collage for each month of the 2015 and list the names of both handler and dog at the bottom of the page.

### The photo submission date and pre-order price will be forthcoming.

In the meantime have someone take a picture of you and your pup ready for a visit with TDV bandana and ID in place!

<Photos must include only the TDV Certified Therapy Dog Team. No other persons or other dogs can be included>

More details to follow in [The Woof](#), on TDV's Facebook Page, on TDV's Website Homepage and at our 2015 Annual Meeting on September 27<sup>th</sup> in Williston.

### TDV HUB DIRECTORS

**Deb Helfrich**, *Director of Certification and Training*

Kristin Comeau

Karen Odato

Jason & Emily Reed

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

Emily McLean

Helyn Herr

Karen Odato

Kristin Comeau

Deb Helfrich

Our testers and evaluators are also supported by dedicated certification support team: Craig Deslauriers, Nancy Kahn, John O'Connor, and Maryellen Sullivan.

### TDV SUPPORT TEAM

**Katie McDonald**, *Social Media*

**Janet Dooley**, *Fanny Allen Coordinator*

**Kathleen Boyce**, *FAHC Orientation*

**Wendy Huntley**, *Liaison to Camp Ta-Kum-Ta*

### TDV BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Steve Reiman**, *Founder & President*

**Deb Helfrich**, *Director, Certification & Training*

**Connie Barrett**, *Treasurer*

**Katie Ziegler**, *Secretary*

**Julia Page**, '15

**Colleen McLaughlin** '16

**Gordon Perkinson**, '16



### STAFF

**Bob Uerz**, *Executive Director*

**Allison Ross**, *Operations Coordinator*

**Muffy Deslaurier**, *Administrative Assistant*

### VOLUNTEER ADVISORS

**Nikki Kellaway, CT**, *Veterinary Advisor*

**Jamie Dayton**, *Business Advisor*

**Chad Bonanni of Bergeron Paradis & Fitzpatrick, LLP**, *Legal Advisor*

