



Winter 2015

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

Welcome New TDV Teams

Laura Davidson with Rue
Meredith Denko with Lola
Greg Anderson with Enzo
Ana Rodriguez with Libby
Lindsey Raymondjack with Shelby
Carol Weston with Beamish
Lise Duncan with Lily
Jennifer Probst with Yankee

Joseph Durachinsky with Larry
Michael Dommonge with Joslin
Steve & Lessie Reiman with Kristee
Viki Zulkoski with Blue
Nancy Clark with Shane
Carol Conard with Zola
Louise Sjobeck with Jasmine
Lori & Nick Hayer with Lucy & Milo

Joe & Maggie Grant with Saba
Rusty Myer with Samantha
Susan Miller with Ben
Carol Johnson with Clara
Michelle Tuli with Dobby
Lis DesLauriers with Mizzen
Gayle Smith with Scooter
Shane Oakes with Zola

Greetings From Big Dog

by Steve Reiman, Founder & President

I believe TDV to be a special organization, a group of people 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.

What I started nearly 23 years ago, has grown to nearly 300 active teams 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, others are on radio and TV. All are heart-warming and proof that what we do is a true blessing to our communities.

When new TDV teams are certified, they often look for places to visit. One feature that sets TDV apart from other therapy dog organizations is that we provide great support for our members in this way. We keep a long list of facilities looking for therapy dog visits on file and give our members access to it in several ways. We send all members a monthly newsletter identifying the latest opportunities and have information about them online. As for facilities, those looking for therapy dog visits go to our Web site and fill out the web page under **Request a Therapy Dog**. These requests are quickly made available to all of our members. So, I am happy to say that it is beneficial to everyone to have a support team to connect our members with facilities.

To all TDV members, let me again say that you make me proud. To the Board of Directors and support people, I am honored by your hard work because without you, none of this could be happening. I am deeply grateful to all of you.



Certification Team Interview

by Jason Reed

Name: **Emily McLean**

Dog's Name and Breed:
Autumn/Goldendoodle

Town where you live:
South Walden, VT

Location/s where TDV
volunteering is done:

I volunteer at Woodridge
Nursing Home, Rowan Court
Nursing Home and I work
with the Certification Team.

**What can you tell us about
yourself? What is your personal/professional
background?**

I've worked at the Cabot
Creamery in the Cut and Wrap
Plant for ten years. I am a full
time student at Johnson State
College's EDP program. I live
in South Walden with my husband,
TDV partner Autumn
and my other dog Basil, who
is my husband's TDV partner.
I love to run all kinds of races
and the best ones are when I
can run them with Autumn.



Who is your TDV partner? What breed is s/he? How did you come to be her/his owner?

My TDV partner is Autumn. She is a Goldendoodle. I got Autumn from a breeder in Island Pond, VT. We picked her out at four weeks and then brought her home at 12 weeks.

How long have you been with TDV? What is your role on the Certification Team?

I have been at TDV for two years and been part of the certification team for half a year. I am an Evaluator, and I help out at tests and clinics at the Williston Armory with the Williston Hub.

What is your favorite part about being a Certification Team member?

My favorite part about being a Certification Team member is to help pass people who will bring joy and love to the people they will visit. Also, being able to meet all kinds of different dogs and people. I love being a part certification team, because it's like a family.

What is the most challenging thing about being a member of the Certification Team?

The most challenging thing about being a member of the Certification team is not being able to pass every team and sometimes having people be upset with you when they don't pass.

If you had one wish for Therapy Dogs of Vermont as an organization, what would it be?

My one wish for Therapy Dogs of Vermont as an organization is that we are able to bring smiles to people for many more years and keep up all the great work. Thank you!



TDV Teams Bring Stress Relief to Norwich Students

Hi all,

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for agreeing to come visit us during this year's Library StressBusters event! We've gotten so much excellent feedback from everyone involved (dogs, handlers, and students) that we'd love to do this in the spring too.

I am so grateful for all of you who were able to brave the winter storm for our students.

Best,

Nikki Krysak, MLS
Head of Instructional Services
Assistant Professor
Kreitzberg Library, Norwich University

When Tiger Lily and I walked into the Norwich University "Dogs in the Library StressBusters Event" we saw why the TDV test includes the surround and crowd drill. There must have been thirty or more students excitedly waiting to greet Tiger Lily. Fortunately, they were all polite and patient and Tiger Lily just loves to work a room. What could be better than three or four or five simultaneous "petters" giving her their undivided attention?! We stayed for an hour and can't wait to go back for the spring event!

Tiger Lily also sends along a big THANK YOU for all the pats this morning! I'm sure it was a "personal best" for her in terms of number of greetings in an hour. It was a great idea, very well received by the students and the library setting worked well.

Cheryl & Bill Cecil with Tiger Lily

Clara is the GoldenDoodle in the Norwich pictures. She and I had so many positive interactions that it's hard to pick one. We're a new team and this was our first time going to Norwich. One student told me that he had been waiting for two days to see the dogs. Another said that this was just what she needed. In general, it was amazing to see so many smiling faces. The kids, many in full military fatigues, sat on the floor with Clara, petting her and asking for kisses while chatting with one another and with me. She got more attention than I could give her in a week, and the students were appreciative and sweet. As much as I think Clara gave to the kids, I feel that the two of us got lots more than we gave. It was FUN!

Carol Johnson with Clara

Banjo & I just returned from Norwich it seems like its nap time for him. It seems like the young men and women really appreciated getting their mind off from exams, and maybe a little reminder of home of and their own pets, plenty of pats and a few tears, this was well worth it for Banjo and me.

Jim Megrath with Banjo



TDV Board Establishes New Advisory Committee on Certification and Training

By Bob Uerz, Executive Director

After a special meeting on Wednesday evening, November 19th at Central Vermont Medical Center with members of TDV's Certification Team, the TDV Board considered their proposal and at the December 3rd TDV Board Meeting the board members unanimously agreed to establish a Board Advisory Committee on Certification and Training to increase and improve communication especially on matters of training and testing around the state and beyond.

The Board wishes to acknowledge the tremendous efforts carried out by these dedicated TDV volunteers.

TDV Dogs in Correctional Facilities

(This note came from a former prison inmate)

For a long time now I have wanted to see my old pal, Jubal, and his owner Tim Pollack. Jubal and Tim were dedicated volunteer visitors at the Northwest State Correctional Facility in Swanton when I was incarcerated there several years ago. Twice each month I would wait, on the edge of my seat for their arrival. I think I speak for many when I say the joy these visits brought to what was a very difficult time in my life. I have always wanted to say thank you to Jubal and Tim. My gratitude to both is beyond measure. I love u Jubal.

Katie

Katie Ziegler steps down from the Board of Directors

Our thanks go out to Katie Ziegler, Therapy Dogs of Vermont's Secretary and youngest TDV board member, as she steps down from the TDV Board of Directors. Katie joined the BOD in 2012, became editor of the TDV Newsletter, and took on the position of Secretary.

Katie has been a leader in TDV's fundraising efforts by spearheading our inaugural Stowe restaurants fundraising effort (in securing most all the participating restaurants herself) in 2013 as well as, along with her entire family, hosting a 2013 Holiday Craft Show at Stowe High School with all proceeds going to support the work of TDV.

Most recently it was her suggestion to launch a TDV photo calendar to supplement ongoing fundraising efforts which became a reality with the extraordinary efforts by two Essex High School student interns this past fall.

All of us board members will miss her upbeat attitude and infectious smile. Thank you, Katie, for all that you have done for TDV and we will look for you as you continue to volunteer with Todd and will certainly give you a well-deserved hug.



Big & Lola Unleashes Smiles

TDV member, Meredith Denko, writes "There are a couple of wonderful things I have going on with my Therapy Dogs". Big is a Goldendoodle, and Lola is a Golden Retriever. She takes them to a Rehab Facility where she says that the residents "are amazing with the dogs. They are so happy with are visits and it has become like a family thing." She writes that one resident is "so in love with either dog I bring and she wanted pictures to hang in her room of them together".

She also brings them to Wallingford Elementary (kindergarten, first, and forth grades) and Mt Holly Elementary 2nd Grade, where students read to them. They enjoy it so much that Meredith gives the students bookmarks which she created.

Thank you, Meredith, for volunteering your time and energy to spread joy with your wonderful therapy dogs.



Good News is all around us and young people are our future!

by Bob Uerz, Executive Director

With help from TDV Board Member Colleen McLaughlin and her sister, Louise Strong, the Assistant Principal at Essex High School (EHS), a new project has been launched and nearing completion.

With less than 50 copies left to sell, TDV's 2015 Photo & Story Calendar is nearly sold out in its first year due to the outstanding dedication and passion of EHS students Nate Ertle and Tyler Goss who traveled across Vermont to take photos of TDV certified therapy dog teams, urged TDV members in the calendar to share their own inspiring stories, created the calendar design & layout, worked with the printer to prepare the file for production of the calendars, and had a key role in selling calendars to fellow students and encouraging surrounding retailers to sell in their stores.

Since September, these great young men have spent weekends and weekdays above and beyond the amount of time required by their EHS internship program to build, promote and sell our 2015 calendar and I look forward to attend their evening presentation at EHS in January.

Through this project, they took the concept of a photo calendar and built that and then added their own touches. They learned about project management especially about the importance of keeping a project on time and budget, they learned about sales, and most importantly they helped us communicate to others the impact that certified therapy dog teams make.

Please help Nate and Tyler reach their goal and buy one of the remaining calendars today by sending an email to ED@Therapydogs.org.



Essex High School students Nate Ertle (center) and Tyler Goss (right) take a brief break to accept the first two calendars they created for TDV and accept TDV travel mugs from Bob Uerz.



Surprise at a Vermont Juvenile Rehabilitation Center

by Steve Reiman, Founder & President

A Vermont rehabilitation center for juveniles has been asking for TDV members to bring their therapy dogs to cheer the young residents. This is a fantastic opportunity and I hope certified TDV teams will check this out. It is posted on our Website under Member Resources.

Many years ago, I was invited to bring the founding TDV dogs to this facility and speak to the students as one might to a high school class. I remember that there were 20 to 30 boys there at the time, aged 12 to 17. We had lunch with them and then headed to the classroom. They looked like pretty tough kids who had gone through some hard times and probably had caused a few problems.

I set up my video presentation and spoke for nearly an hour about the benefits of therapy dogs in the many settings they visit. I also spoke to them about what they might do after they get out. "Shovel the driveway of the little old lady down the street and never tell her that it was you who did it. You'll remember that for the rest of your life" I told them.

While I was rambling on, my two German Shepherds were working the class. Lily brought her small Frisbee to every kid to throw for her. Jordan had a tennis ball which she would bring to people to toss to her. But, she did more than that. Jordan always sought out the one in the room who least wanted to play with her and found a way to overcome that. Sure enough, there was a large older boy sitting in the back of the room with his arms crossed and a deep frown on his face.

As I was talking about slide after slide, I saw Jordan slowly go up to this boy and put her wet tennis ball on his knee. "Go away" he said, and she did – for a few moments. She returned and again gently placed the ball on his knee. This time he looked around to see that no one was watching him, and he took the ball and tossed it aside. The game was on! Jordan brought it back to him again and again.

Then I noticed the boy sliding down in his chair which seemed strange. The next time I looked, Jordan had put a paw on his knee. Oh oh, I thought; therapy dogs should always have 4 on the floor. But, I thought that the boy weighed about 300 lbs. and Jordan only 61. I'll wait and see what happens I said to myself. The next time I looked at the back of the room, there was Jordan fully in the boy's lap and he, with a big smile, was gently hugging her. It almost brought tears to my eyes thinking that it had probably been a long time since anyone or anything had shown affection to that young man.

Times have changed and TDV dogs must always be on leash while on duty and there is the 4 on the floor rule too. In this case, I broke that rule . . . but it was a long time ago.

Therapy Dogs of Vermont unleash smiles in many venues. This is certainly one of them.



Lily & Jordan



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Jason Reed, *Asst. Director of Hub Growth*
Craig Deslauriers, *Asst. Director of Hub Growth*
Karen Odato, *Asst. Director of Education & Training*
Meredith Denko Manchester Hub
Beth Wadleigh Northeast Kingdom Hub
Karen Odato Randolph Hub
Emily Reed Williston Hub
Gordon Perkinson Woodstock Hub

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Brenda Carpenter	Emily Reed
Jenn Vaughan	Callie Field
Jason Reed	Beth Wadleigh
Deb Helfrich	Steve Reiman
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