



Pamela Lindal-Hansum with Duke and Posey



Pamela with Duke



Pamela with Posey

Sharing Duke and Posey with others has been a real joy and passion for me. I've been an animal lover all my life and having the opportunity to watch them bring happiness and healing to others is a blessing to me. I am so very grateful to Denver Pet Partners for their support and encouragement with registration, training and community. I wouldn't be able to do Animal Assisted Work without DPP in Denver! Thank you so much!!

Both Duke and Posey were rehomed to our family. Duke (Mini horse) joined us in 2010 from a family that could no longer afford the cost of feeding horses. We adopted Posey (Border Collie/Australian Cattle dog) after she was brought from the Ute Indian Reservation near Durango to the Humane Society of the South Platte Valley in 2013.

After a lifetime of having dogs in my life, loving and riding horses, I circled around to my original dream/ goal of learning to train animals to serve others. I've been a teacher all my life but in 2000, I graduated with a Counseling degree and started getting specialized training and experience in Equine Assisted Growth and Learning.



Duke was my first horse training experience. I had learned basic horsemanship and care at Whinnian's Equine Therapy where I worked as a therapist with at-risk youth. The director encouraged me to adopt Duke. He was untrained, and it took about 2 years to desensitize him to the many obstacles/stimuli in the city/neighborhoods and boarding facilities where he lived. Trainers who worked with us commented that he had a fast brain and learned quickly. Others said he was a circus pony because he



loved to learn tricks and would offer behaviors in hopes of getting a treat. He always showed an eagerness to leave the barn and appeared curious when exploring trails, facilities, meeting people and other animals. His eagerness to learn seemed to help him learn the skills for the Pet Partners Evaluation. He passed the evaluation the first time in 2011, just 1 and ½ years after we started training. I was ecstatic that we could now start visiting! We just had 1 big obstacle in our way! Duke was extremely hesitant to load in his horse trailer. After hours and hours of practice, it became obvious from his physical reactions that Duke had experienced trauma while in a small space like a horse trailer when doors closed, and he was unable to escape. When I would close the doors of the horse trailer, he would panic. After support and practice with many friends and trainers, Duke now loads much easier with less stress.

Duke has visited nursing homes, hospitals, day treatment centers, correctional facilities and schools. Girls correctional facilities and schools seem to be where Duke is most engaged with the people he visits. He most often is a Reading Assistance Animal and listens to reluctant readers at the school where I teach.



Posey came to us at age 1 1/2 years old from a life of running free on the reservation. She was an eager learner and always wanted to please. She was quick to learn the basic dog commands along with the Pet Partners Evaluation expectations. The task that was difficult for her was walking past a neutral dog. I decided to sign up for a DPP evaluation after less than a year of training. I was thinking this would be good practice for her, not expecting her to pass the first time. She actually did very well and passed! She started listening to students read soon after. She was a bit nervous in the school setting the first couple months but has now become very comfortable and skilled and looks at the pages while

kids are reading. (She waits patiently for a treat at the end of the book.) Posey did need some additional training before her second evaluation. Walking past a neutral dog was still challenging for her, but the 6-week class at Humane Society of the S. Platte Valley helped her practice that skill and successfully passed her second evaluation. Posey has visited Nursing Homes, Memory Care units, churches and schools. She spends most of her time visiting schools because her skills with Reading Assistance are strong and my students are in love with her. She motivates them to practice their reading and she also works with students who need empathy building and emotional regulation support.

My biggest hope is that my students, acquaintances, friends and family will experience the joy/healing that animals can bring and share this knowledge of animal assisted work to the world

