



## *Julie Schwarz and Ollie*



Ollie Jingles came into our lives in July of 2013. We made the decision to take on a third dog after our daughter Tara decreed that her life was missing only one thing—a dog—and that dog needed to be a Brussels Griffon. She found her little Abbey who was born to a litter of pups in Southern California, while she and her husband were still living abroad for work. Once she knew they would be transitioning for the summer with Eric’s parents in La Canada she committed to her new furry friend. For several months

she “tormented” us by posting pictures of little Ollie on Facebook. Ollie is a smooth-coated Brussels. These adorable dogs look like miniature pugs but in reality, are simply purebred Brussels born with a recessive gene. The smooth coats are not in great demand like their rough coated brothers and sisters and Ollie was also the runt of the litter, so he had not yet found his forever family. Finally, we gave in and said yes, and we have never regretted our decision.



Our two other dogs, George and Jerry were born to a Samoyed mix rescue who had just given birth to a litter of 8. When we agreed to take two, a boy and a girl, I hoped at least one of them might be suited to therapy work but alas, neither of them had the proper temperament for animal therapy even though we loved them dearly. George’s psychic ability is wonderful but his phobia of skateboards and Jerry’s phobia of thunder and other loud noises disqualified them. They both took to little Ollie right away and smothered him with love and affection. My husband Saul was still working in a stressful medical job at that time and it quickly became apparent that Ollie was his new “destress pet.” As a matter of fact, Tara referred to him at the time as “prozac in a puppy!”

After Ollie had turned two years old I decided to get serious about pursuing Pet Therapy for us as a team. I knew that it was be an excellent way to

give back to the community. I was thrilled to find DPP was offering a handler's course which I took in July, 2015. I thought the all-day training was excellent in that it not only gave me the tools I needed for this kind of volunteer work, but also helped me to determine if and when Ollie would be ready for his evaluation. Ollie passed on his first try in August, 2015. We took a bit of time to get started with volunteer service as Tara was having her first child back in NY shortly



thereafter and I spent a full month helping her after the baby was born.

Ultimately Ollie and I started visiting at Kavod, a senior residence near our home. We also participated in Destress events at a number of local colleges and we still continue at several schools including Metro State, D.U., Johnson and Wales and Red Rocks Community College. We love seeing the smiles on the faces of students and staff when our DPP teams show up for the events and we are able to serve quite a large number of diverse clients which is very rewarding.

In May of 2017 I took an intensive 3-1/2 day volunteer training with Denver Hospice and followed up with additional trainings, including "11th Hour" so that I could serve as a volunteer at the Lowry Inpatient Care Center. Ollie and I visit as a team on average about once per week at the center. We have received an incredibly positive response to Ollie's presence not only by patients and their family/friends, but also by various staff members at the center. Ollie seems to have an uncanny knack of identifying who needs to "pet the puppy." We work closely with Nursing and other staff to identify where and when visits are appropriate. Sometimes we just visit family and friends when they are taking a break in the lounge area. Ollie becomes a vehicle to allow conversation and some time away from the sorrows of end-of-life care. Ollie enjoys this work so much. As soon as his vest goes on and we walk into the building, he goes right into his helping mode. In the two years we have been volunteering at Hospice, we have seen more therapy teams participating and





today we were delighted to find special doggie water bowls placed at the front desk and in the Volunteer engagement office. We will be attending a special team meeting for Pet Therapy volunteers in a few weeks and this will be another positive addition to their program.

Just a side note about Ollie-he is a bit of a “reality tv star!” His litter of pups appeared on ANIMAL PLANET’S TOO CUTE PUPPIES AND KITTENS HOLIDAY SPECIAL. Here is the link:

<https://www.animalplanet.com/tv-shows/too-cute/videos/grumpy-humphrey-the-puppy-loves-kittens> Ollie is the littlest one.

Thank you to Denver Pet Partners for supporting this wonderful work in our community and for helping our teams feel supported. You all do an amazing job!

