



Lisa Kellogg and Oliver



Oliver arrived in Colorado in July of 2017 aboard a “freedom ride van” being rescued from terrible conditions in a Midwest puppy mill. As a volunteer for the local rescue sponsoring these rescues, I helped the many rescue pups off the van and transported them to their new foster homes. In my car in one of the crates were 5 terrified 12-week-old goldendoodle puppies; Oliver was the most fearful huddling at the back of his crate with his nose pressed to the corner. When we arrived at his foster home, I had to climb into the crate to get him out. He was shaking and looked so scared. It was then that he stole my heart! The next day I returned to the foster home and brought Oliver to his forever home with me. He joined his furry brother and sister, Snowball and Misha. Despite his being

initially shy and sick with a respiratory infection, love and medication quickly healed him and he became the most loving puppy who feels everyone, human and animal, is his friend.

Training was a challenge!! Oliver was a puppy kindergarten drop out and later graduated at the bottom of the class at another training class. Making friends with the other puppies and owners was more important to him and kept him from focusing on obedience. Finally, a patient and loving personal trainer helped him graduate from Canine Good Citizen class and later with the help of a “gentle leader” Oliver became a certified therapy dog with Denver Pet Partners. He recently passed his second evaluation without the “gentle leader”. He still feels everyone is his friend, but he has learned some boundaries-usually!



DPP Team of the Month (October 2022)

DENVER PET PARTNERS



Our first “gig” was at Rocky Vista University where we arrived at noon in time for the medical students to get some puppy love before returning to their challenging afternoon classes. Oliver gets an hour-long massage and belly rub at RVU. Many students have told me Oliver has made their day giving them some stress release from their rigorous schedule. Of course, the students make Oliver’s day! George, who works security at RVU, is Oliver’s special friend providing him with a treat

when he arrives and leaves the school each week. Oliver loves George!



Next Oliver and I joined the PawPals program at Parker Adventist Hospital providing stress relief not only to patients, but also the many staff members at the hospital. We volunteer once a week at the hospital. During the beginning of the pandemic, we were restricted to the lobby and offices, but recently we have been able to visit patients in their rooms. Recently Oliver gave one of the nurses some puppy love the day after she lost her beloved dog; she sat on the floor and hugged Oliver sobbing with grief at the loss of her pet. This is why we do this!

Another memorable time was when a mother saw us in the hall of the hospital and asked us to visit her son and try to bring him some joy. The young man was severely injured with both his hands bandaged. Initially the young man wouldn’t look at Oliver, but when I got Oliver close enough for him to see him, his expression changed, and he began to smile. He moved his feet to the side of the bed so he could pet Oliver with his feet. Although the young man never said a word to us, his changed expression was a sign that maybe Oliver brought him some relief. I think I also saw some tears in his mother’s eyes.

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Being a retired educator, I became interested in joining a therapy dog reading program at a local school. At the time, I was volunteering in a classroom at Cherry Valley Elementary in Douglas County. The principal of the school was a friend and fellow dog lover. She invited Oliver to work with the beginning readers in the kindergarten/first grade classroom at Cherry Valley. Currently we visit the school twice a month and the students individually read their books to Oliver. Our goal at the school is to encourage the love of reading as well as provide therapy to these budding young readers. It's such a joy to watch these young readers interact with Oliver as well as share their reading skills with him.



After 40 plus years as a teacher and elementary principal, retirement was difficult for me, because I felt I was no longer making a difference with others. Denver Pet Partners has provided the purpose in life that I was searching for after retiring. Being a therapy dog also provides Oliver with the attention and love he craves. Denver Pet Partners touches so many people throughout the metro area and I am honored to be a member of this organization. Not only do Oliver and I provide therapy for others at the schools and hospital, but also some therapy is returned to us during each visit.

