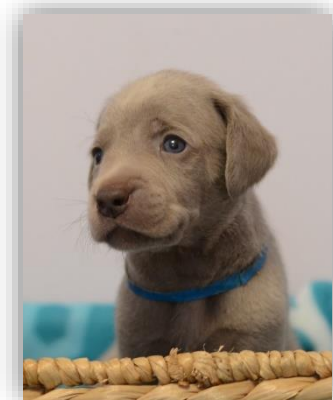


## Maggie McKenna and Bosco



The Weimaraner, also known as Germany’s “Gray Ghost”, is popular among pet owners and hunters alike for their obedience, friendliness, and unique beauty. The breed thrives on boundless exercise, providing a need for their owners to keep them active and engaged. Standing at about 25-27 inches at the shoulder, Weimaraner’s have a recognizable silver-gray short-haired coat with perhaps a small white dot on their chest. Their faces are framed by long velvety ears alongside unique blue-grey or amber colored eyes. These dogs have a look of being amicable, smart, and somewhat quirky. Overall, they desire to be part of the family. Weimaraner’s are easy to train and groom, and most of them sport a can-do attitude!

This “Gray Ghost” dog breed has captured my heart, my efforts, and my time. In fact, our dog Bosco is my fourth Weimaraner and he exhibits many of the traits of the three “Weims” before him. To keep Bosco engaged, we have participated in training classes since he was a young pup. He has been enrolled in classes such as obedience training, Canine Good Citizenship, agility training, rally, manners, and of course training for the Pet Partners evaluation. Because Bosco enjoys responding to training commands, I try to give him a few tasks to master every day. Training keeps Bosco mentally and physically active. A busy Weimaraner is a happy Weimaraner!



Dogs need jobs. I always wanted to try my hand at being a team partner with a therapy dog. Bosco likes to follow directions and he likes to interact with friendly people. He has the grace and balance to go into situations and help others feel happier. Our first independent volunteer activity as a team was at a local Castle Rock senior living center. We took on tasks assigned to us by the Activities Director. At this site, Bosco and I learned to work with housed seniors, assisted living residents, and memory care patients. Bosco was a natural! The residents enjoyed

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interacting with us as a team. Some of the tasks that we carried out at the Center included, visiting residents in their apartments, escorting seniors onto transportation, sitting with memory care patients, as well as attending concerts, craft classes, church services and much more. Bosco always served up a mood boost to anyone who met him. This opportunity was terrific training for our next adventure.

In March 2020, Bosco and I decided to learn more about Pet Partners and Denver Pet Partners. At this point, we had enough training and experience to take volunteering as a pet therapy team up a notch. I purchased the Pet Partners manual, signed up for online classes, passed the test, filled out paperwork and worked my way into preparing Bosco and me for evaluation in May 2021. Evaluations were mostly delayed due to COVID. This gave Bosco and me more time to train for a very comprehensive evaluation. We appreciate Denver Pet Partners. We passed!



In the summer of 2021, Bosco and I participated in smaller one day events with DPP. This is how we learned about a larger commitment with Rocky Vista University. That autumn, Rocky Vista became our home post, and we have volunteered there since joining. The students at RVU are embarking on a very comprehensive and sometimes stressful academic journey into the medical field. Many of them are far away from family and friends. This is where team Bosco and Maggie come in to balance the situation. The students that we interact with have positive canine exchanges, and they walk away feeling more relaxed and happier. Bosco especially likes the connectivity at RVU. It doesn't take long for the students and staff to know Bosco by name and call him from afar. It touches my heart to watch Bosco stand up and wag his "bread stick" tail as a student skips

toward him. This becomes joyous moments of sloppy kisses and silly coos. Everyone becomes more relaxed. Even short, friendly interactions with the therapy dog teams can be good for all our health. It works both ways.

Bosco enjoys his free time by just being a dog. His simple pleasures include naps in a sunny spot on the carpet and he also likes to jump on to our sofa and wait for us when we are not at home. After Bosco's meals he checks his dog food bag just in case I did not close it tightly. Bosco always wants to go outside to search for rabbits, squirrels or any other wildlife that moves! In



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addition, he likes to slobber on windows and he barks at the delivery people coming to the door. Just like a dog!



A special hobby for Bosco is travel and he has done a lot of it. Bosco has been to twenty states, and he has traveled over 18,000 miles! We have taken Bosco to great attractions, such as, the Grand Canyon, Canyon Lands, Lake Tahoe, the Puget Sound, St. Louis Archway, the Nation's Capital and many other wonderful places!

In closing, Bosco and I have recently taken a leave of absence from RVU for me to receive special medical treatment for cancer. Bosco has taken on the role of my personal therapy dog! My family members, Bosco included, have been by my side as much as possible. We look forward to returning to RVU, as soon as we are able.

