

Amanda Tarr and Rava



I met Rava at a rescue dog adoption event in 2018. I originally was interested in a dog who was removed due to behaviors, and when it became my turn to choose a dog, I decided to go with Rava because she had been laying in her crate quiet but alert during all of the commotion. Rava was found in the woods while raising 4 puppies for at least 3 months before being rescued. She was emaciated and did not seem like she had ever lived in a home at all. She liked people, but was scared of pretty much everything else, including doorways, balls, toys and the noise of a soda can opening.

After adjusting to her new home, it was very apparent that Rava was a smartie. She learned commands easily and wanted nothing else but to be around her human (me). During COVID, she helped me to keep my sanity and provided me with some comfort after working a long day at the hospital. Even though she kept some of her wild side with her strong prey drive and occasional distaste for other dogs, her demeanor was always sweet with people. I knew that she had the skills to pass the therapy dog test and that she needed a job to keep her busy and stimulated.

In 2022, we passed our evaluation and became a team for Denver Pet Partners. We started visiting weekly at Platte Valley Hospital as part of the Paws for Healing program. Many of the hospital patients would light up when we walked in the room, some even inviting her up on the bed (which is not allowed!). Family members visiting their loved ones also enjoyed a gentle distraction from an otherwise difficult time. Rava could always tell who was a pet owner by smelling their shoes!



DPP Team of the Month (December 2025)



Despite how much patients and families enjoyed her visits, the hospital staff adored them even more! When we arrived at the Emergency department, doctors, nurses, techs and all kinds of healthcare workers would perk up and run to get her some treats. Rava doesn't normally eat treats outside of the home (she's a bit picky), but she learned to eat them at the hospital and quickly became familiar with their location. She developed relationships with her "favorite" co-workers and would look forward to going to each unit to see her friends each week. Even as a healthcare worker myself, I was overwhelmed with the amount of joy a dog's visit could bring to the teams. We also volunteered at the Lakewood 911 call center, which we loved. She liked to work the night shift, where the workers would take a few seconds or

minutes to get some pets in before going back to the phones. And of course, she loved smelling everyone's shoes to familiarize herself with the scents of all the pet owners' fur buddies.

Rava and I have had to take a break from volunteering due to my work schedule, but that will be changing in 2026 and we hope to get back at it. I am amazed at the joy just a few minutes with a dog can bring and how a visit can change the course of a day for some people. I feel so lucky to have found Rava and know that she likes having a job to do. It is truly amazing how far she has come from those first days when she was scared of almost everything in the world. We are looking forward to getting back to it next year and thank Denver Pet Partners for the opportunity to spread the love.



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