

# P E T P A L S

Animal-Assisted Therapies and Activities throughout the Cedar Valley

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## Spring 2025 Newsletter

### Heroes Among Us Winner

Congratulations to Krisina Bravener and her dog, Lou, for winning the Heroes Among Us award sponsored by Mercy One. Lou, who joined Kristina's family in 2018 as an unassuming rescue dog, now bears the title of Executive of Cuddles & Kisses at New Aldaya Lifescapes Retirement Home. It is a job she is eminently qualified for. As a therapy dog, Lou comforts and supports residents, visits University of Northern Iowa students during finals week, and drops by other organizations where her talents are needed.



### Upcoming Events

#### Join Us May 6th for our Applebee's Fundraiser

Please join us for our Applebee's Fundraiser on Tuesday, May 6th. All day you are able to benefit our fundraiser by eating at the restaurant.

#### Farmer's Market

P.E.T. P.A.L.S. has been asked to participate in the Waterloo Farmers Market. We will have a table there (downtown Waterloo) on 5/10/25, 6/14/25, 9/13/25 and the Halloween Trick or Treat Saturday on 10/25/25. They want us to bring our pets and let them know ahead of time so they can let people know what animals to expect. We will be able to hand out information, answer questions and have our donation container there. They will provide a table and chairs and they will have people who can set up our tent awning for us. They are very happy to have us participate. If anyone wants to volunteer for one of the Saturdays, contact Diane Hensley at 329-231-9578 or [catlady50703@yahoo.com](mailto:catlady50703@yahoo.com).

#### Sturgis Falls Craft Sale

The Sturgis Falls Arts and Crafts Fair will be held from 9:00-4:00 on Sunday, June 29th. Our P.E.T. P.A.L.S. booth will again be located across from Overman Park on West Third Street. We will have many popular items for sale such as dog treats and snuffle mats for entertaining your pet with hidden treats. People are always interested in the catnip mice, collar scrunchies and bows, plus scarves. Of course, we want to have "people" items so we have included some wooden decor, cup holders, plastic bag holders, and hand-made sashay scarves. (All items have been made by volunteers as a requirement of the festival.) We look forward to seeing everyone stop by to say hello. Also, consider volunteering for a two- hour shift. It's fun and the time goes fast as you greet people. If you are willing to help, call Sue Lund at 319-233-3624.

#### Save the Date for our Volunteer Appreciation Dinner

It's time to mark your calendar for the next P.E.T. P.A.L.S. Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. It will take place at the Diamond Events Center of Western Home Communities on October 6th, 2025. We are excited for this new location with a meal catered by their staff. Everyone is looking forward to a big turnout as we celebrate! See you in October!

## A Warm Welcome to New Members:

- Randy Carlson with Jack
- Anne Denholm with Ralphie
- Abby Priebe with Grover
- Yvonne Warner with Luna
- Vicky Wehrle with Cooper
- Kim Abbas with Murphy
- Jay Neptune with Willow
- Julie Wehner with Rusty and Copper

## Donations

Thank you for your recent donations and gifts. In 2024, P.E.T.P.A.L.S accrued more than \$2,500 for the year from generous donors like you! Your donations assist us to pay for insurances, the newsletters, office supplies, and the annual banquet.

You can also send a check to our address: P.E.T. P.A.L.S. P.O. Box 373, Cedar Falls, IA 50613

We greatly appreciate your support of our mission and organization! Thank YOU again!

## Reading Pals

If you are looking for something different to try in P.E.T. P.A.L.S., give some thought to our program called Reading Pals. It is an opportunity for children to individually practice their reading fluency and expression. Parents have provided extremely positive feedback and children are always eager to sign-up for a turn.

Animals used for this must be willing to sit or lay beside a child for 15 minutes at a time. The animal is asked to spend time with three different children which includes breaks in-between each.

This summer, we will be at Cedar Valley Preschool and Child Care Center in Cedar Falls on Monday and Friday afternoons during the month of July. If you are interested in giving this a try, please contact Jan Thompsen (thompsenj@q.com)



## Interested in joining our board?

We have 4 open positions. If you're interested please reach out to a current board member (listed on the last page) to try out a meeting and ask any questions you may have.

## Memorials

*Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened.* - Anatole France

We extend our sympathy to Terese Evans in the loss of Pearl, Jon and Lori McNamee in loss of Shady Lady, and Rita Lynn in the loss of Otis.

Pearl was a sweet little red bunny who was caught in Waterloo, Iowa as a stray a few years ago. I had been hearing about two bunnies in that neighborhood off and on for several months. She was finally caught by hand with carrots as she would not go in a live trap baited with apples and carrots. Domestic bunnies don't do well in the wild. Please don't dump them. I was looking for a big and small bunny to do pet therapy with and she fit the description. She was under 5 pounds and just fit in my lap and enjoyed being held and pet. It's hard to tell how old a bunny is once they are adults so we don't know her age. Thank you, Pearl, for your sweet disposition and soft as silk fur. You were loved. - By Terese Evans

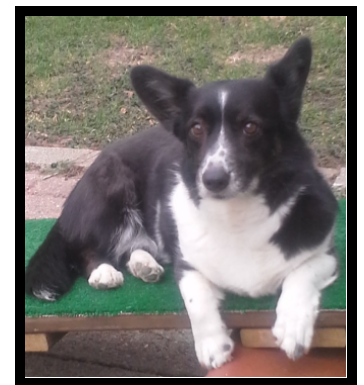


Hello P.E.T. P.A.L.S. friends! After being a P.E.T. P.A.L.S. member for many years, I moved to my new home in Minneapolis three years ago. Many of you might remember my special little guy, Otis - the friendliest, toothy-grinned, bug-eyed pup that ever lived. He was a senior even when I adopted him, and it was immediately obvious that he was a P.E.T. P.A.L.S. natural. He loved everyone, and he made sure everyone loved him. I remember so clearly the cries of, "OTIS!" when we walked into Cedar Valley Preschool and Childcare Center. I think, too, of the several children he taught how to love dogs instead of being afraid of them, and how he gave college students respite from their final's stresses. Even library clerks, behind their desks when we were there for reading programs, enjoyed his trotting up to greet them. Well sadly, a few months ago, at fifteen years of age, Otis' health began to decline. After time at home on "hospice care," he went peacefully to his final sleep in March. I am among the many who were blessed with his happy presence, and I am so grateful for the years we had together.

- From Rita Lynn



We made our first Pet Pals visit at the River Hills School for their Saturday morning Respite program in October of 2000. Our 2 Corgis (Luke and Yoda) loved the kids and all of the attention. Soon after, we pressed their Mom, Broni, into service. Sunny joined the family and became a star at the North Cedar Daycare and we always enjoyed our library times with the UNI kids. Shady Lady came to us in 2014 and she was a natural Pet Pal volunteer. Covid ended our regular visits at North Cedar but we continued to do one time visits and, of course, the library where Shady relished all of the attention. She also served as a test dog at a number of temperament tests. Shady Lady was an amazing little girl who always aimed to please. Yes, she would bark but only if there was cause like a knock on the door. Yes, she had a weak spot for used Kleenex and the kitchen garbage can. She enjoyed watching squirrels and stalking rabbits even though she never got one. In summer she got to go to some of her favorite places including Saturday morning trips to the farmers market and hikes around Big Woods and Prairie Lakes. She would also lose herself in all of the wonderful smells at the pet store. Over the past weeks, we could tell that her health was deteriorating. Dr. Smith did everything he could to get her better but it was clear from her last blood tests that it was time to say goodbye. She would have turned 14 this June. "Having a dog will bless you with many of the happiest days of your life, and one of the worst." - Anonymous



- From Jon McNamee

### **P.E.T. P.A.L.S. Visiting Sites – For information, call 319-236-3564**

- Active Minds Early Learning Center
- Bickford Cottage
- Cedar Falls Health Care Center
- C.V. Preschool & Child Care
- Denver Sunset Home
- Friendship Village
- Harmony House
- LaPorte City Nursing & Rehab
- MercyOne Rehab
- NewAldaya Lifescapes
- Newel Post
- Northstar Community Services
- Northstar Head Injury
- Northcrest Specialty Care
- Peer Support Recovery-UnityPoint
- Pillar of the Cedar Valley
- Pinnacle Specialty Care
- Harmony Waterloo
- Ravenwood Health Care
- Reading Pals
- The Rose
- UnityPoint- Mental Health/Rehab
- Waverly Health Center
- Western Home Communities

**P.E.T. P.A.L.S.**  
P.O. Box 373  
Cedar Falls, IA 50613

**P.E.T. P.A.L.S Board of Directors Executive Committee**

<b>Chairperson</b>	Jan Thompsen	thompsen@q.com
<b>Education/Resource</b>	Linda Nebbe	dlnebbe@me.com
<b>Treasurer</b>	Arlene Prather-O'Kane	arlene.pokane@gmail.com
<b>Records and One-time Visits</b>	Diane Hensley	catlady50703@yahoo.com
<b>Membership Coordinator</b>	Rachelle Yousefi	ryousefi1515@gmail.com
<b>Temperament Evaluation</b>	Sue Lund	(319) 233-3624
<b>Newsletter Editor and Secretary</b>	Christine Hess	cne854@gmail.com
<b>Communication Coordinator</b>	Terry Page	tmpage@webtv.net
<b>Webmaster</b>	Ryan Holzapfel	webmaster@petpalscedarvalley.org
<b>Additional Board Members</b>	Terry Hertges Linda Klarman Sue Schoon Jill Fisher Kristina Bravener	beno08@aol.com lkfixit48@gmail.com sschoon715@gmail.com jfisher203@gmail.com fuller555@yahoo.com