

SERVING A SPECIAL PURPOSE: CRISIS RESPONSE DOGS

By Mary O'KEEFE

There is something so comforting about coming home to a pet. Whether a dog, cat, bunny, bird or fish, coming home to a creature that is focused on you is something we all need from time to time. And yes, fish are in this category; they may not directly react to us but just watching them can have a calming effect. In an article published years ago in the journal Environment & Behavior, it said people who spend time watching aquariums and fish tanks could see improvements in their physical and mental well-being.

Studies indicate that spending time with domestic animals have shown to reduce symptoms in people of anxiety, depression, fatigue and pain.

“Therapy dogs are dogs [that] go with their owners to volunteer in settings such as schools, hospitals and nursing homes. From working with a child who is learning to read to visiting a senior in assisted living, therapy dogs and their owners work together as a team to improve the lives of other people. Therapy dogs are not service dogs. Service dogs are dogs [that] are specially trained to perform specific tasks to help a person who has a disability. An example of a service dog is a dog [that] guides an owner who is blind, or a dog who assists someone who has a physical disability. Service dogs stay with their person and have special access privileges in public places such as on planes and restaurants,” according to the American Kennel Club (AKC).



Maya is one of the comfort dogs at Crescenta Valley High School's WellNEST Center. Photo courtesy of CVHS WellNEST

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MOBILITY DOG: ALLOWING PEOPLE TO KEEP DREAMING THEIR DREAMS AND LIVING THEIR DREAMS

Janie Lynn Heinrich loves her service dog Beckett. Beckett is Janie's standard poodle who makes it possible for Janie to live the life she wants. Beckett is a part of MobilityDog, a nonprofit organization that Janie started in January 2018. MobilityDog advances FUNctional independence for people with disabilities through service dogs, education and empowerment. We train service dogs so their handlers can live their very best life. As soon as they're born, these standard poodle puppies – a breed that has excellent analytical skills, according to Janie – hang out with their littermates – their “buddies” – becoming acclimated to various sounds and learning basic directions. From 2 to 18 months, they work with “puppy raisers” who further introduce them to sounds and everyday life. They go “just about everywhere” with their puppy raiser, learning good manners, basic commands, advanced cues and tasking.

MobilityDog needs puppy raisers!

“The personality of the dog is learned at that point,” said Janie, who is MobilityDog's executive director. “We build on the skill-set that the dog already has as we teach tasking skills.” There are many different types of disabilities – some folks are wheelchair bound, others may be challenged by MS, CP or are stroke victims, for example – and it's essential that these handlers are paired with a dog that can help them accomplish their life goals. Around 18 months, the dog works and lives with a service dog trainer and when dogs complete all of their training – typically between the age of 19 and 22 months – they are paired with their handlers and placed in their forever homes. There is a four-month bonding period; however, “it usually just takes a couple of days for the pair to bond,” Janie

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Join our volunteer community and help support Mobility Dog's Mission to raise and train service dogs, educate the public, and advocate for the disabled.

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PET *CV Weekly's* SECTION

Your pets need a little attention too.



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CRISIS RESPONSE DOGS (continued)

But there are others dogs that are specifically trained to handle stressful crowded situations. These are crisis response dogs, and they can help keep people calm in disasters. These dogs begin their job after natural disasters occur, like earthquakes, floods and fires. The dogs, along with their handlers, also respond to man-made disasters like students who return to campus after a school shooting.

There are several certified crisis response dogs and handlers across the country that are called in after a disaster.

"John Hunt, co-founder of Crisis Response Canines, and Gunther, his 5-year-old Rottweiler, travel across the country in response to mass shootings and disasters," according to AKC.



"We can't change what happened," Hunt told AKC, "but we can certainly prompt a few smiles and conversations from those who have cried their hearts out and not wanted to interact with anyone until now."

In 2019, Hunt and his team responded to the mass shooting at an El Paso, Texas Walmart that took 22 lives and another shooting shortly after in Dayton, Ohio that took nine lives.

"The best thing about the dogs, I will tell you, is that they're not judgmental," Hunt told AKC at the time. "They don't ask questions."

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS – AND LOOKING TO THE FUTURE.

As the executive director of Pet Orphans of Southern California, I am constantly reminded of the profound impact that our many programs have had on the lives of dogs, cats and rabbits and their families. Pet Orphans provides, on a daily basis, life-saving access to affordable veterinary care to animals in need, including our daily services to the City and County of Los Angeles Shelter Pets, our non-profit 501c3 rescue partners who, like us, are also dedicated to rescuing pets and saving their lives. Unfortunately they do not have the facilities that we offer such as our affordable veterinary care, adoptions and fostering programs, grooming, overnight boarding program (for other 501c3 partners only) and professional pet photography. We are truly making such an important difference in our community.

As we celebrate 50 years in the pet rescue community, we take this time to reflect on the last 50 years of providing community outreach to pets all over Southern California. Our mission is simple: Rescue, Rehabilitate and Re-home orphan cats and dogs.

From 1973 to 2023, but particularly between 2020 and 2022, Pet Orphans of Southern California has faced many challenges, but we managed to squeak into 2023 with promises of a brighter future!

I am excited and looking forward to setting goals and sharing our accomplishments for 2023.

There is much work to do – and with your continued support we can ensure that our community pets never fall between the cracks and suffer needlessly due to lack of access to affordable veterinary care. Our vet clinic has become a pillar of our community because of the affordable services we are offering to all in our community.

As we navigate our way into 2023, with the celebration of 50 years in our community, I would like to say thank you so very much to our supporters: Our donors, volunteers, students, parents, local business, the City and County of Los Angeles, our non-profit partners, and community at large. Our work is only possible because of your continued support and advocacy.

You have truly enabled Pet Orphans of Southern California to make a positive impact on the pet community for 50 years and it is our sincere hope that you will continue to help us to grow. Your generosity and dedication have paved the road to improve the lives of so many pets and their families for over five (5) decades!

We are truly grateful and appreciative of your commitment to our cause!

With sincere gratitude,
LaTanya Montgomery, Executive Director

LaTanya Montgomery is executive director of Van Nuys-based Pet Orphans of Southern California. Photo courtesy of Pet Orphans of Southern California

EASTWOOD RANCH SEEKS DONATIONS TO FUND NEW FACILITY

Non-profit Southern California-based Eastwood Ranch Foundation Animal Welfare and Rescue is seeking donations to fund a new facility to house more pet rescues. The organization, founded by actress Alison Eastwood, rescues domestic animals from high-kill shelters around the community along with supporting other vetted local rescues and providing care until a forever home is found.

Besides local animal rescue, the Foundation works on behalf of any and all animal welfare causes by helping raise awareness, educating, campaigning/petitioning for animals throughout the U.S. and beyond. Visit eastwoodranch.org for more information or to make a donation.



Alison Eastwood said, "Our goal is to support abused, neglected and unwanted animals throughout the world." Photo courtesy of Eastwood Ranch Foundation

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PETS HAVING A FUN SUMMER

To me, nothing makes life as full or as fun as a four-legged friend. As a lifelong animal lover, I've made it my mission to ensure pets have a place to call home. Since I became Supervisor, I've been proud to partner with the Los Angeles County Department of Animal Care and Control to advocate for animal adoptions from our County Animal Care Centers.

At each of our Board of Supervisors meetings, we bring in adoptable pets in hopes of finding their forever families. The results have been astounding—every animal we've promoted has been adopted! It's because of the compassion and conviction of our residents across the County that so many pets have left our shelters to start a new life.

Don't forget that once you adopt your pet, there is a great dog park in the Crescenta Valley at 3901 Dunsmore Ave. for them to play and make friends.

With summer in full swing, there's a few tips I'd like to share to ensure your furry friend is safely having fun in the sun.

- Make sure they have access to shade or can stay in the air conditioning. If it's too hot for you, it's definitely too hot for them—especially with all their fur!
- Have fresh, clean water for them at all times. They need to be hydrated to have the energy to play.
- Be cautious as they exercise, limiting strenuous walks, avoiding hot sidewalks, and opting to go out in the morning or evening instead of the middle of the day.
- Never leave them in a parked car.
- Trim and brush their coats but refrain from shaving to avoid overheating and sunburn.
- Give extra care to at-risk pets, including those who are elderly, overweight, have lung or heart conditions, or have flat faces.

I hope you and your pets have a fun summer in store!
For resources and more information, visit animalcare.lacounty.gov, check out my website at kathrynbarger.lacounty.gov, or follow me on social media.

YOUR FAVORITE ANIMALS AT THE LA COUNTY FAIR



A young fairgoer admires some furry friends at the LA County Fair in Pomona happening now through May 29. Photo Courtesy of LA County Fair

SO-CAL PONDS, SERVING THE AREA FOR OVER 24 YEARS

So-Cal Ponds Inc. was created in 1999 when the owner, Dominic Carone, sparked an interest in ponds after having a conversation with an old friend about his brother's pond they had just built. Dominic had always loved water, fish, ponds and gardening. His initial interest resulted in him building several ponds and taking on work for clients. Soon after So-Cal Ponds was formed.

We love what we do and always strive to provide the best quality and service to every client and project. With over 24 years in the industry, we have learned what is best for our clients' landscapes and ponds. So-Cal Ponds Services are based around koi ponds and water gardens as well as the surrounding landscape. Being that ponds are often the focal point of any yard, we love to design and install the landscape surrounding the pond.

Although our name is So-Cal Ponds, it does not mean that our services are limited to just ponds. We are a California licensed landscape contractor, able to offer everything for your landscape or pond including design and construction work for both ponds and landscaping – plus pond repair and maintenance. We also offer pond and water garden consulting, which is important when you're planning on building a pond or water garden.

All of our water features are designed to be low maintenance, environmentally friendly and a destination both you and the local wildlife desire.

Underlying principles of design that have long influenced our philosophy include designing with an environmental ethic, designing for longevity and creating regenerative landscapes. Using native and adapted plant material and durable materials for the framework of the place, we are able to create healthy, sustainable landscapes that provide the environment for the experiences we set out to achieve.

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 The type of dog you have will determine how long you need to walk them for and what type of exercise they need. **CCPH can help you with that.**

Meet Ranger, a 4-year-old lab who loves meeting new furry friends and their owners on his daily walks around La Crescenta.

CV Weekly Readers love to hear about your pets! Send a photo and small caption to steve@cvweekly.com

MOBILITY DOG (CONTINUED)

said with a laugh. Training continues the entire working life of a service dog: the service dog must be consistent in daily training.

There are weekly puppy meet ups and, monthly, the service dog teams, puppy raisers, trainers and the MobilityDog board of directors, volunteers and family members meet for picnic lunch and training in Pasadena and Huntington Beach.

"As a person ages, the disability also changes," Janie said. "It's really important that the service dog team continues monthly lessons with the service dog trainer(s)." Janie said that informing the public on how to be present with a service dog team is important in creating fewer distractions and more earnest work.

"Education is essential," she said. "We want people to understand what a service dog does."

So while it's tempting to approach a service dog, Janie advises to first ask the handler if it's okay to pet the dog. Most times, she said, the handler will explain that the dog is working and should not be approached – but she's grateful for the question being asked.

"So many people are isolated due to their disability," she said.

Which is why MobilityDog created PAWS and WAG workshops that can be taken to schools, civic clubs and other organizations that can offer a platform to educate the public about the importance of these dogs ... and the importance of empathy, tolerance, and integrity.

"We're not asking for special treatment, we are asking for equality," Janie said. "We want to live every moment."







<https://mobilitydog.org>



Fun & Facts for Four-Legged Friends



Summertime tips for animals to ensure they're safely having fun in the sun

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-  Have fresh, clean water for them at all times
-  Be cautious as they exercise, limiting strenuous walks, avoiding hot sidewalks, and opting to go out in the morning or evening
-  Never leave them in a parked car
-  Trim and brush their coats, but refrain from shaving to avoid overheating and sunburn
-  Give extra care to at-risk pets, including those who are elderly, overweight, have lung or heart conditions, or have flat faces

Lots of pets are looking for a loving home!

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**Veterans Corner May 2023
Aging and Muscle Loss**

By Blake HYFIELD

To those who know me, this article from the VA is near and dear to me.

Aging can come with some great benefits, like wisdom, experiences and memories. But one challenge can include muscle loss, also known as sarcopenia. Losing strength as you age can make daily tasks harder and cause you to become less independent. Can it be stopped?

By keeping your muscles strong and able, you can stay independent

longer and continue doing the things you love without needing much help from others.

Things that accelerate muscle loss

As you age, your body can change in ways that surprise you. One of the most noticeable changes is weakness and less ease of motion. Your lifestyle and overall health play a key role in how fast those changes occur. Factors that can increase muscle loss include:

- Inactive lifestyle
- An unbalanced diet, low in proteins
- Inflammation or swelling

• Medical conditions that cause muscle loss

You can control many of the factors linked to muscle loss. Managing your health conditions and making the right lifestyle changes can help you build and keep your strength.

We can't stop ourselves from aging, but we can slow down some of its effects. While increased physical activity is important to maintain your overall health and well-being, engaging in strengthening exercises at least two to three times each week

is your best defense against muscle loss. By continuing to use your muscles, you'll be working to keep them strong.

You don't need expensive exercise equipment, a personal trainer, or even a gym membership. Common forms of physical activity and exercise that can help build strength and keep you mobile include:

- Walking, stair climbing and biking
- Strength training with resistance tubes and bands
- Yard work (mowing, gardening and

planting)

If you're unsure about starting, try TeleMOVE! It's a virtual 90-day program that focuses on nutrition, physical activity and behavior changes. Consider one of the many varieties of yoga that may also help to maintain muscle strength as well as relaxation and meditation practices.

Blake Hyfield is the post service officer for the local VFW and American Legion posts. He can be reached at bhpegleg@yahoo.com.



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