

THE HYDRANT

The Monthly Bulletin
for Members of
Intermountain
Therapy Animals

Volume 25 / Number 1
January 2025



Are you current with ITA?

Membership Dues:

Individual \$99
Family \$150

How to Pay:

Pay online at therapyanimals.org/ita-members-only/
OR call the office with a credit card (801-272-3439),
request a PayPal invoice, or send a check to
PO Box 17201, SLC, UT 84117

Update your Contact Information:

If your contact info remains the same, you can simply make your payment. If any of your contact info has changed, please let us know by responding to this email or you can use the membership renewal application on our website (using the link above).

If you are not planning on renewing your membership, please let us know so that we don't send more notices.

ITA Office Hours:

Monday ~ Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm
CLOSED: Fridays



COMFORT, HOPE, HEALING AND LOVE - SINCE 1993
INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS





It's a Festival of Hearts!

Join us for our 28th Annual

Celebration of ITA Volunteers

Thursday, February 6th, 2025 ~ 6-9 pm

at ITA's The Family Dog

4048 South 2700 East, Holladay, UT

This is your **One Major Opportunity** each year to spend some casual time with your ITA colleagues, eating dinner, sharing experiences, getting better acquainted, and having some fun!

And you don't have to do a single **THING** but **COME!**

(and bring a human* companion if you choose)

Hope to see you there!!

*Sadly, for us, no animals at this gig, but you know in your ♥ they don't really enjoy our human parties!

We will be oh-so-sad if we don't see you!

Please **RSVP** to

Melissa@therapyanimals.org

or **801.272.3439**

by **Thursday, January 30th**



THE HYDRANT • January 2025



LEAVING EARTH



Willow, partner of Terri Davis

(Ogden, UT)

Willow passed away early in December, after a sudden diagnosis of kidney failure. Terri said it was a fast and distinct decline for her. Terri shared that this is the first time in her 25 years with ITA that she has been without a therapy cat. Willow started therapy work in February of 2013, and she and Terri visited at Heritage Park Care Center for all these years.

Misio, partner of Kathy McNulty

(Park City, UT)

We also mourn the loss this month of **Misio**, the big, beautiful Akita who was Kathy McNulty's fluffy and gentle R.E.A.D.ing companion for more than a decade. Misio left earth on January 1, 2025. He was a big part of the major revisions to our R.E.A.D. manual and training video in 2019, and of course followed in the pawsteps of his predecessors, Kiyoshi, who was there at the beginning of it all, and then Toshi.

For those of you who have joined our ranks more recently, Kathy is R.E.A.D. member #2, right after founder Sandi Martin, and Kathy has played a major role in the program's development).



It was a blinding lightbulb moment when we asked a smart 10-year-old boy (he was reading *Harry Potter*) what was his favorite thing about reading with a dog. His immediate answer was that he really liked it when Kiyoshi wanted to know about the things in his book. Thus was born our invaluable tool of speaking for our dogs and involving them in the interaction at all points.



Thanks to both Terri and Kathy and their many partners for making a world of difference for so many, for so long.

Changes

The only constant in life is *change*, right? Here are a couple of significant ones to report. (-KK)

Animal-Assisted Services

The folks who think about these things at the highest levels, such as in international organizations like IAHAIO and AAIL, professional practitioners, conference discussions, etc., have decided that we shall in the future gather all the things that we are engaged in under an umbrella called *animal-assisted services*.

This will *replace* the term we have been using for a long time now: *animal-assisted interactions*.

The motivation is that uniform terminology underpins effective communications, clarifying roles of both humans and animals, helps everyone be accurate and consistent, etc.

I have a detailed paper available on everything affecting this decision. Please contact me (kathy@therapyanimals.org) if you would like to read the considerable details of what went into these changes.

Other relevant changes include:

- Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) will now be called animal-assisted treatment (AATx)
- Animal-assisted activities (AAA) will now be called animal-assisted support programs (AASP)
- Animal-assisted education (AAE) will remain the same.

Understandably, it takes awhile for us to wrap our minds around big adjustments when our brains and tongues are so used to particular terms, but we can do it!

One caution: a group leader I spoke with—someone far away and not a part of our ITA network—said off-handedly, “Yeah, well, they’ve been talking about these kinds of things forever, and everyone still knows that what we’re talking about is pet therapy.” I disagree, and my caution to you is to please try to erase this term from your thoughts and conversations. There are so many reasons! The term “pet therapy” is sometimes taken to mean that we are giving therapy *to* our pets; the word “pet” itself is being over-ridden by the term *companion animal*; and in our work, “pet therapy” does not, in all honesty, sound like the serious and powerful subject that it really is.

ITA Tagline Change

Also, in the past year, we at ITA have made an adjustment to our logo and motto that have been in place since our founding in 1993. Here is how it has always been:



Turn the page to see new version:



Changes (continued from page 5)



All those “p’s” in *Pets Helping People* rolled rhythmically off the tongue quite nicely, so why did we make this change? For reasons already

mentioned, chiefly to be taken more seriously, and also to express what our animals do so beautifully.

This first 2025 issue of *The Hydrant* is very densely packed with important and useful information, and we hope you’ll take time to read it thoroughly, even if you can’t do it in one sitting!

Thanks for ALL you and your partners do to help ITA continue to get better all the time!

(-KK)

Appreciation!

I emailed you once before on how great your program is.

I fly in and out of the Salt Lake City Airport about twice a month. Got to meet Potato and Kingsley this week!

You have such a wonderful program. I look forward to seeing the dogs and speaking with their handlers each time I fly through.

Just made another small donation. Keep up the great work! I have been lucky enough to interact with the six babies at right!

- Mitchell Isert



OUT & ABOUT



Holiday fun on December 16th at the St. George, Utah, hospital!
FROM LEFT: Alisha Benson & Duke, Debbie Hull & Emme, Candice Rogers & Arlo and Anita Sjoblom & Jack.

Getting their portraits taken with an ITA dog is always a holiday highlight for the boys at Benchmark Hospital. Participating this year from ITA were: **FROM LEFT:** Allison Bedont & Noche, Sarah Haskin & Dottie, Jenna Hill & Georgia, Aimee Merritt & Ambrose, and Keith Pasker and Theo.



Poor minds talk about people,
Average minds talk about events,
Great minds talk about ideas.
But **EXTRAORDINARY** minds
talk about **DOGS!**

- contributed by Keith Pasker, SLC



NEW TEAMS



Kathia Bair & Luna
(Taylorsville, UT)



**Karin Liimatta
& Murphy**
(Salt Lake City, UT)



Kira Barney & Memphis
(Kalispell, MT)



**Steven Liimatta
& Murphy**
(Salt Lake City, UT)



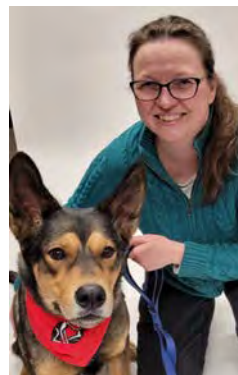
Tami Brown & Troy
(Midway & St. George, UT)



**Deb Malcolm-Kenyon
& Dublin**
(Flathead Valley, MT)



**Jenna Hill
& Georgia**
(West Point, UT)



**Jenna Nichols-Pagel
& River**
(Flathead Valley, MT)





**Regan Peschel
& Millie**
(Flathead Valley, MT)



**Pam Saunders
& Rusty**
(Flathead Valley, MT)



**Regan Peschel &
Piper**
(Flathead Valley, MT)



**Anna Simonson &
Kaija**
(Flathead Valley, MT)



**Hailey Richards
& Honey**
(Bountiful, UT)



**Lori Williamson
& Waffles**
(Flathead Valley, MT)



Julie Robertson & Soli
(Flathead Valley, MT)

