



# *Unexpected Connections*



INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

**2024**

## INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS ~ 2024



### INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS

We are a human service organization, a 501(c)(3) Utah nonprofit, that brings the gifts of animal companionship and interaction to people in need. Our mission is to **enhance quality of life through the human/animal bond**. Our volunteers (people and their own pets) make regular visits to those who are physically or developmentally disabled, emotionally or psychologically impaired, lonely or suffering from depression.

ITA therapy animals and their handlers are screened, trained, licensed and insured to participate in animal-assisted interactions (AAI), which range from casual and informal to rigorous, goal-driven aspects of formal therapies. Successful teams have completed both health and temperament screening and volunteer training.

Serving our communities since 1993, we are one of the largest groups of our kind in the United States, with more than 300 volunteer teams visiting at more than 170 hospitals, counseling centers, nursing facilities, detention homes, extended care centers, and schools. Chapters of ITA also thrive in Montana.

In addition, 18 of our colleague groups in 10 other states have now adopted ITA's training and testing protocols.

The value of our therapy animals' interventions has been proven and endorsed for more than 30 years.

**Therapy animals are catalysts and motivators. They offer love, hope, comfort, joy, normalcy—and fun, when all those qualities are in short supply.**

#### “Who benefits?”

Animal-assisted therapy can significantly reduce pain, anxiety, depression and fatigue in people with a range of health problems. Some examples:

- People receiving cancer treatment
- People in long-term care facilities
- People with cardiovascular diseases
- People with dementia
- Veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder
- People with anxiety
- Children having dental procedures

And it's not only people with health problems who reap the benefits.

Family members and friends who sit in on animal visits feel better, too.”

— The Mayo Clinic



**“Therapy animals open doors, so that healing may begin.”**

The increasing costs and prices throughout our economy have been especially harsh for non-profit organizations, including ITA.

We are pleased to be holding on and keeping up despite the many challenges. Some significant happenings during 2024 include:

- We reached almost 320,000 clients, with hours served by our ITA volunteer teams totaling about 22,560.
- We changed our longtime tagline, "Pets help people," to "*Healing Connections.*"
- Our major 2024 fundraiser, "Paws in Wonderland," held at the beautiful Zions Technology Center, earned us more than \$100,000 for the very first time.
- Our very popular airport teams were invited to

be filmed and included in a new production by National Geographic magazine called "Airport Lost & Finds." The decision to include therapy animals was spontaneous, as the film crew was so taken with the dogs and their stress-reducing capabilities.

- ITA and our teams were featured in *Slug* and *Utah Stories* magazines, and in several TV appearances throughout the year.
- Gifts to ITA on Giving Tuesday 2024 totaled \$10,340.
- While we held somewhat less training classes for new teams, in an attempt to control our growth, nevertheless we fulfilled a record number of requests for presentations and events throughout Utah. (See page 7.)



*The stresses of traveling are more intense than ever, and our dogs bring a lot of joy and stress relief at the airports where they visit.*

#### On the Cover:

Our dogs are a huge hit at SLC International airport. The encounters are often full of more meaning than we could have anticipated. This young woman, a veteran with PTSD who had recently lost her service dog, said Secret's hug pulled her out of the dark and meant the world to her. She made a donation in Secret's honor.

## FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

**I**t has been, and continues to be, an honor serving as Intermountain Therapy Animals' Board President. I am fully committed to facilitating the most remarkable 32-year journey of this exceptional organization.

My Australian Shepherd, Mickey, and I have enjoyed three years so far as an ITA volunteer team. It has been exciting, enlightening, humbling and, most of all, gratifying beyond words. It continually amazes me how brilliant, empathic and sensitive our animal partners are in whatever situation they are placed. Mickey takes his "job" very seriously, as do I.

If you knew all the effort our little staff of five puts into qualifying, training and placing just one therapy team, and then multiplying that by 320+, you would understand how much our donors' investment in ITA pays off. They accomplish more with less than any of their colleague groups.

No matter what crises are going on in the world around us, individual people of all ages and socio-economic circumstances receive devastating diagnoses and injuries every day. Our teams are there to help them re-ignite their hope and enthusiasm for life, inspiring them to move forward on the tough path to healing. Our therapists have told us over and over, year after year, that the animals inspire cooperation, participation and progress that they cannot otherwise get from their patients. 2024 was similarly impactful for us in seeing what good medicine our teams are for families and medical staff personnel, as well.

I have a passion for the work that all our teams have accomplished. And I am grateful beyond words for all of you who have continued to support us and our special medicine through these unpredictable times and singular circumstances. We cannot do it without you. We trust you know how hard we have worked to make every dollar count toward health and healing.

With sincere thanks and appreciation,

*Jane L. Fischer*  
Jane L. Fischer  
Chair, ITA Board of Directors



## ... AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**T**his past year, 2024, has found ITA up to our eyeballs in requests for our teams. We are serving more than 170 health care and educational facilities, with more than 40 still on our waiting list.

There is no longer any doubt, at any level, about the efficacy and healing benefits of animals. Staff personnel at all facilities are still pressuring us most of all for visits, and we are so happy to be able to lighten their burdens by offering the chance to interact with our animals.

In our chosen endeavor, ITA remains on the front lines, always seeking to learn more and do even better for all parties who participate in our animal-assisted interactions — client, staff, family, handler and animal. We currently have 18 colleague organizations in 10 other states who use ITA's training and testing protocols.

Jane Goodall has said that "If we can take an animal as a true partner and learn from the animal, who will then learn from us — a back and forth relationship — it can lead in the future to all kinds of amazing and innovative ways of helping the world become a better place." We humans have always expected our animals to learn from us, but it's a more recent bit of enlightenment that they have much to teach us, as well, and we are committed to staying open in that process of discovery.

We remain permanently committed to staying personal, too, despite the relentless advance of the technologies that are disconnecting our society. We will always choose personal interaction over automation, even when that choice may seem "inefficient." We are also committed to being open and direct when dealing with issues and solving problems. We never fail to be dazzled by how quickly disagreements melt away when people speak to one another directly instead of speculating sideways. We have observed that this is another simple but powerful way that animals are great role models.

I am personally so proud of our very small and committed staff. They are all dazzlingly competent, creative and hard-working, and they produce more good with less resources than any group or organization I know.

We continue to recommend lots of furry, four-paw love—it's a comfort and a constant in our always-challenging world.

Thank you for continuing to help our dreams come true as we change lives, one encounter at a time.

*Kathy Klotz*  
Kathy Klotz  
Executive Director



Kathy Klotz, Executive Director,  
with Skye and Tristan

## FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES 2023–2024

### 2023

#### Support

|                           |                   |             |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Grants and Donations      | \$ 334,827        | 59.9%       |
| Membership and Training   | 63,513            | 11.4%       |
| R.E.A.D. Revenue          | 12,841            | 2.3%        |
| Fundraising Events/Merch. | 146,682           | 26.3%       |
| Investment Income         | 888               | 0.2%        |
|                           | <b>\$ 558,751</b> | <b>100%</b> |

#### Expenses

|                               |                   |              |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| <b>Total Program Services</b> | <b>\$ 447,452</b> | <b>84.6%</b> |
| Fundraising                   | 45,188            | 8.5%         |
| Administration                | 36,511            | 6.9%         |
|                               | <b>\$ 529,151</b> | <b>100%</b>  |

#### TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

**\$ 283,366**

#### FUND BALANCES

**\$ 204,805**

#### OVERHEAD RATE

**15.4%**

### 2024

#### Support

|                           |                   |             |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Grants and Donations      | \$ 310,888        | 57.3%       |
| Membership and Training   | 78,576            | 14.5%       |
| R.E.A.D. Revenue*         | 0                 | 0.0%        |
| Fundraising Events/Merch. | 151,345           | 27.9%       |
| Investment Income         | 1,417             | 0.3%        |
|                           | <b>\$ 542,226</b> | <b>100%</b> |

#### Expenses

|                               |                   |              |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| <b>Total Program Services</b> | <b>\$ 464,610</b> | <b>84.6%</b> |
| Fundraising                   | 36,879            | 6.7%         |
| Administration                | 47,497            | 8.7%         |
|                               | <b>\$ 548,986</b> | <b>100%</b>  |

#### TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

**\$ 270,406**

#### FUND BALANCES

**\$ 197,787**

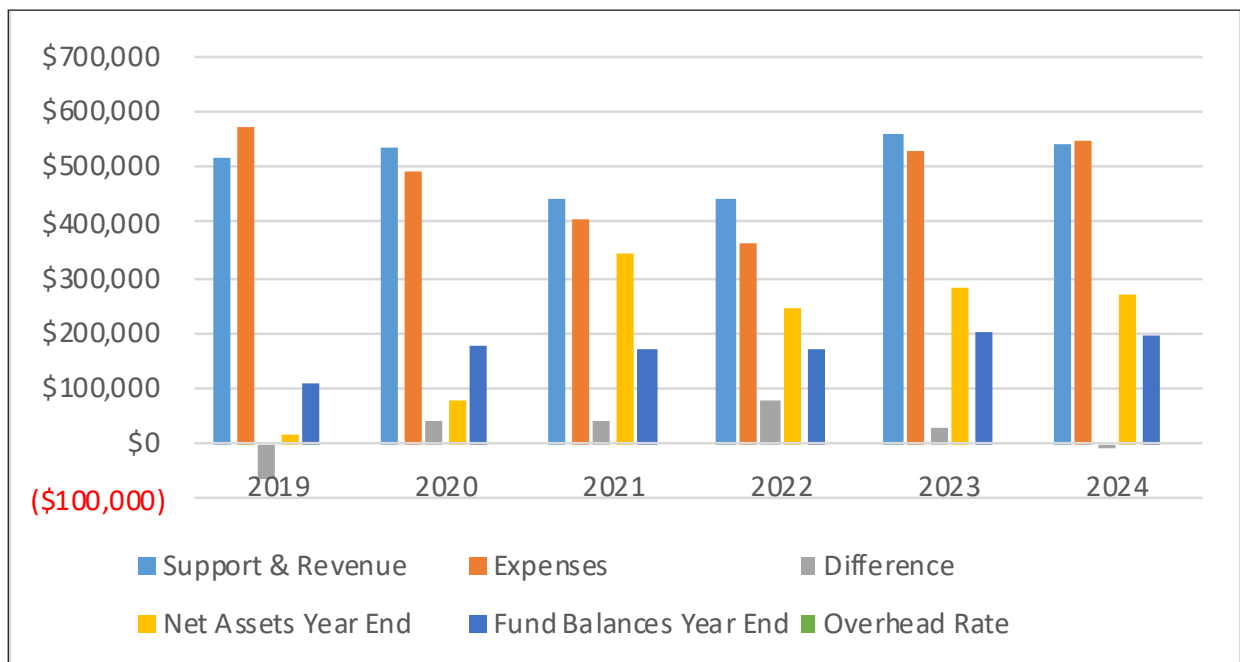
#### OVERHEAD RATE

**15.4%**

(As reported on our 2023 and 2024 IRS Form 990s.)

\*Not broken out on 990.

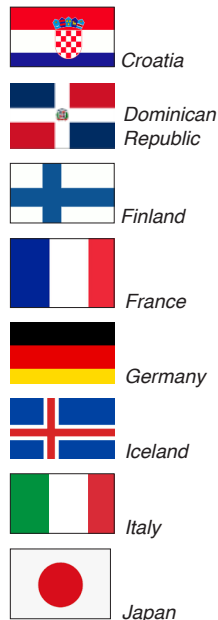
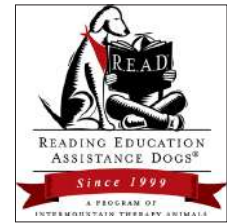
## SIX-YEAR FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2019–2024



## The R.E.A.D.® Program ~ Growing for 25 Years



ITA's R.E.A.D.® is changing the world! There are now 29 countries, beyond the U.S., where our inspired program is helping kids to love reading:



**I**ntermountain Therapy Animals' **animal-assisted education program, R.E.A.D.® (Reading Education Assistance Dogs®)**, introduced in December of 1999, celebrated 25 years in 2024, as it continues to inspire children and gratify their parents and school and library personnel, across the U.S. and beyond.

The impact on children's education at all levels, due to the pandemic, has been huge and debilitating. We now know that the U.S. ranks 125th among the countries of the world for children's literacy. Our R.E.A.D. programs were among the last to be reinstated because schools faced such difficulties.

The reading scores continue to be discouraging and below previous norms, but our R.E.A.D. teams have not given up. We have sold the R.E.A.D. training package to people all over the world, and registered more than 7,500 therapy teams to offer the program. Beyond the United States, there are 29 other countries (see flags above) where the program is flourishing. The R.E.A.D. manual has already been translated

into Russian, Kazakh, Spanish and Portuguese, and Japanese.

Our trained, licensed network of R.E.A.D. program instructors currently numbers 62, and we have 79 official R.E.A.D. affiliate groups in 35 states.

Competing theories about the optimal way to educate our children will no doubt continue to be discussed, because each individual's learning style is different. But one thing we know for sure, after 25+ years, is that no matter what methods are used, having a dog by one's side makes the experience more motivating, more beneficial, more fun, and ultimately more successful.

We learned very early that the R.E.A.D. experience is about so much more than acquiring reading skills like fluency and comprehension. R.E.A.D. dogs help in many other significant ways, by relieving chronic stress, building confidence, improving class participation, and letting children fall in love with books and reading.

## Organizational Reach/Impact in 2024

*The greatest healing power of our animal-assisted interventions occurs during one-on-one encounters with each patient/client. Taken together, they are a mighty force for improvement in physical, mental and emotional health. With 340 teams at 170+ healthcare and educational facilities, here is the recent sum total of our visits:*

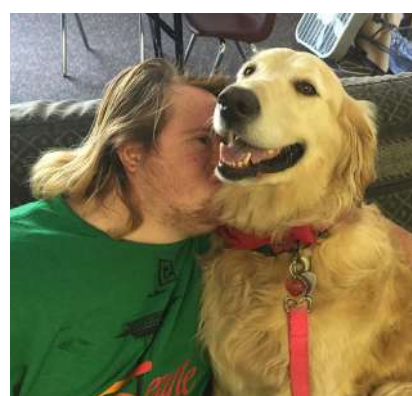
|      | <i>Total Hours</i> | <i>Total Clients</i> |
|------|--------------------|----------------------|
| 2023 | 19,666             | 246,236              |
| 2024 | 22,560             | 319,796              |

*In 2024, ITA also held:*

- 7 team training class series
- interviewed 56 individual prospective teams
- 15 team assessment sessions
- 6 R.E.A.D. training workshops
- 17 sessions of new team volunteer orientation
- 3 crisis response team training sessions
- 3 dog language classes
- 2 additional continuing education events
- assorted meetings for ITA team evaluators and program coordinators

*Throughout our communities, we:*

- started and/or expanded programs at 48 facilities
- responded to 7 requests for crisis response intervention
- held 7 special R.E.A.D. events
- held 12 individual special client visits
- provided stress relief for students, employees, first responders and others on 31 occasions
- made 15 educational presentations to community groups and students
- Our teams participated in 92 other events
- And, we held 10 fundraising events



# BOARD AND STAFF 2024

Members of ITA's Board of Trustees serve minimum terms of at least two years, which may be extended by mutual agreement. In 2024 nine (8) board meetings were held on January 9, February 13, March 12, April 9, May 14, June 11, October 8, and November 12. In-person meetings were held at Intermountain Therapy Animals' offices at 4050 South 2700 East, in Holladay, Utah.

## Board of Directors

Jane Lee Fischer  
*Board President*  
*Owner, Pampered Pets of Utah*

Becky Butler  
*Business Owner*  
*ITA Team Volunteer*

Susan Daynes  
*Business Owner*  
*ITA Team Volunteer*

Trina Eyring  
*Executive Vice president, Zions*  
*Bancorporation*

Laura Joesten, TRS, CTRS  
*Recreational Therapist*

Jane Peterson, LCSW  
*Therapist, Solstice Residential Treatment*  
*Center*

Steven Sellers, CPA  
*Chief Financial Officer, Prime Alliance*  
*Bank*

Linda Wright, csw  
*Chief of Staff/Tech Industry*

## Volunteer (non-voting) Board Representatives

Eileen Ambrose  
Carol Prince  
Beth Wolfer

## Co-Executive Directors

Kathy Klotz  
Karen Burns

## Staff

Melissa Byrd  
*Office Manager*

Tera Nicolo-Smith  
*Volunteer Coordinator*

Beth Ott  
*International R.E.A.D. and*  
*Affiliate Organizations*

Laurel Romero  
*Bookkeeping and Special Projects*

## Advisory Board

Chris Beck-McKay  
*Business Woman/Restauranteer*

Katie Domann, DVM  
*Veterinarian*  
*Animal Health and Nutrition*

Karen F. Duncan, MSN, RN  
*Former Board Member; Community*  
*Volunteer*

Mary Renck Jalongo, PhD  
*Professor of Early Childhood Education*  
*Indiana University of Pennsylvania*

James J. Lynch, PhD  
*LifeCareHealth Associates*  
*Baltimore, Maryland*

Stephanie Magid  
*Vice President, Goldman Sachs*

Sandi Martin, RN, BSN, NCBF  
*ITA Member*

Jeffrey N. Porter, DVM  
*Cottonwood Animal Hospital*



*The University of Utah Burn ICU lets everyone know  
that therapy dogs are welcome!*



ITA teams support first responders, especially after they have been through a particularly difficult situation, or returned from extended service during wildfire season.

## ITA'S SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

|                                                                                     | 2023                                 | 2024      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Facebook:</b>                                                                    |                                      |           |
|  | <b>Intermountain Therapy Animals</b> |           |
| "Likes"                                                                             | 5,500                                | 5,600     |
| Followers                                                                           | 5,516                                | 5,600     |
| <b>R.E.A.D.</b>                                                                     |                                      |           |
| "Likes"                                                                             | 6,445                                | 6,700     |
| Followers                                                                           | 6,912                                | 7,300     |
| <b>YouTube:</b>                                                                     |                                      |           |
|  | <b>Subscribers</b>                   |           |
|                                                                                     | 3,710                                | 3,993     |
| <b>Views (just of "Caleb's Story")</b>                                              |                                      |           |
|                                                                                     | 9,600,000                            | 9,719,284 |
| <b>Instagram:</b>                                                                   |                                      |           |
|  | <b>ITA Followers</b>                 |           |
|                                                                                     | 2,319                                | 2,600     |
| <b>R.E.A.D. Followers</b>                                                           |                                      |           |
|                                                                                     | 481                                  | 718       |



### INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS

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SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84124  
(OR)

PO BOX 17201  
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH 84117

•  
TEL 801.272.3439

[www.therapyanimals.org](http://www.therapyanimals.org)

**Our donors and team volunteers made it possible for ITA to participate in essential therapies ...**



**... to be there when no one else could be ... making it feel like home ... eliciting smiles ...**



**... motivating participation ... being good listeners ... inspiring movement ...**



**... Being there for hope, for healing ... for comfort and joy.**

INTERMOUNTAIN THERAPY ANIMALS  
4050 South 2700 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84124  
801.272.3439 • [therapyanimals.org](http://therapyanimals.org)

