

THE HYDRANT

The Monthly Bulletin
for Members of
Intermountain Therapy Animals

Volume 24 / Number 10

October 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 Normal Office Hours:

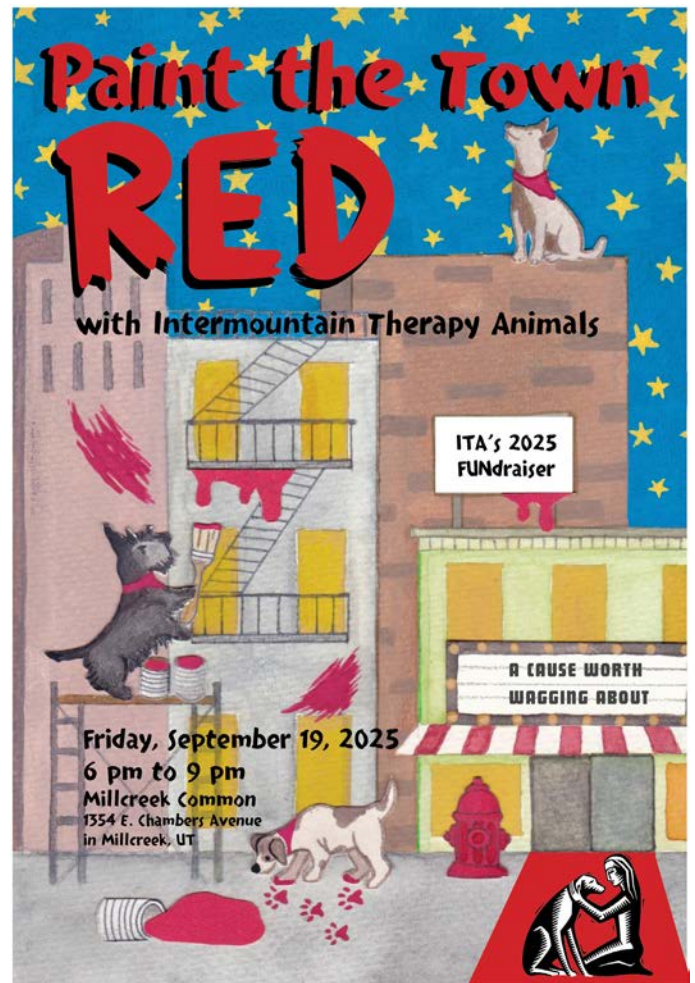
Monday ~ Thursday, 9 am to 5 pm (Fridays - CLOSED)



Gala Report!

Just a few words on paper are never enough to say thanks, but we have survived another of our annual gala fundraisers (the 21st!), and we truly couldn't have done it without all of you and your generosity in time and effort and \$\$\$.

- We **LOVED** how you responded to every category of our requests!
- *More than half of the guests at the party were ITA members!* That's very cool, considering how much you contribute to ITA all the time already with your incomparable animal partners.
- *We had all the volunteers we needed!* You helped as part of the all-evening crew, as greeter teams, as program speakers, as the dining room and silent auction display teams.
- *You gathered items for our silent auction!* This year **Sarah Haskin** and **Eileen Ambrose** get a pile of gold stars for going about 10 extra miles, and **Karin Kirchhoff** for offering a unique experience with her birding tour of Antelope Island.
- *15 of you donated gift cards* to our ever-popular "doggy bags."
- **Everyone on the ITA Staff and Board of Directors** was in it up to their eyeballs and was an essential element in our success! Special thanks to **Becky Butler** for the perfectly wonderful flowers, **Susan Daynes** for donating a week in Kaua'i, **Preston Chiaro** for being our keynote speaker, and **Peggy Chudd** for being chief silent auction arranger.



It's a bit dangerous to name names at all because everyone worked so hard and did so much; it was a monumental effort by so many of you, and we are beyond grateful. Our entire organization and mission and accomplishments could simply not exist without all your generous contributions of all kinds.

Thank You !!



RETIRING



Jeff Gwilliam & Blu

(South Jordan, UT)

Jeff says Blu is slowing down and she is ready for a break. Jeff & Blu have been a team since November of 2018.

LEAVING EARTH



Yuki, partner of Nancy Dodd

(Bozeman, MT) I had Yuki, my 13.75 year old Samoyed, euthanized on Monday, September 15. He had been struggling for a long time with weakness in his back legs and was in pain in spite of regular medication. I am hoping to remain in denial for as long as possible, so condolences are welcome but I might not reply. You have all been there so you know what it is like.

*"My favorite
animals are dogs."*

– Dr. Jane Goodall

April 3, 1934 - October 1, 2025



Why Your Dog Helps You Relax More Than Your Friends Do

Psychologists explain the reason why dogs, even though they can't talk, can lower your anxiety and improve your mood better than a human can.

By Stacey Colino • January 19, 2024

If you've ever noticed that you feel more relaxed around your beloved pooch when you're under pressure than you do with your partner or a friend, you're in good company.

A mounting body of research has found that when dog-owners are faced with stressful situations, their bodies tend to be less physiologically reactive when their pets are present. The unconditional support people get from their pups has a psychological impact and a physiological basis. In recent years, multiple studies have illustrated the many ways people's dogs can provide comfort, calm their frazzled nerves, be good listeners, and provide other forms of valuable support, proving that sometimes words are simply not necessary.

"Our dog companions are very predictable and reliable—the unconditional love we get

from our dogs gives us a sense of security," says Evangeline Wheeler, a professor of psychology at Towson University in Maryland. "Dogs don't judge you or criticize. They just sit there and look at you with loving eyes."

(But do all pets really make people happier and healthier?)

This silent form of canine encouragement can have a calming effect when you're anxious or under pressure, sometimes more than the presence of a human friend or partner does.



Mounting evidence shows that dogs are better at helping you through stressful times than other humans are. Credit Joel Sartore, Nat Geo Image Collection

Canine vs. human support

When people were placed in situations where they were asked to perform mental arithmetic or endure a "cold pressor" test in which their hand is submerged in ice water, those who had their dog present had smaller increases in their blood pressure and heart rate than those who

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Why Your Dog Helps You More . . . (cont.)

had a spouse or friend present, according to research in Psychosomatic Medicine.

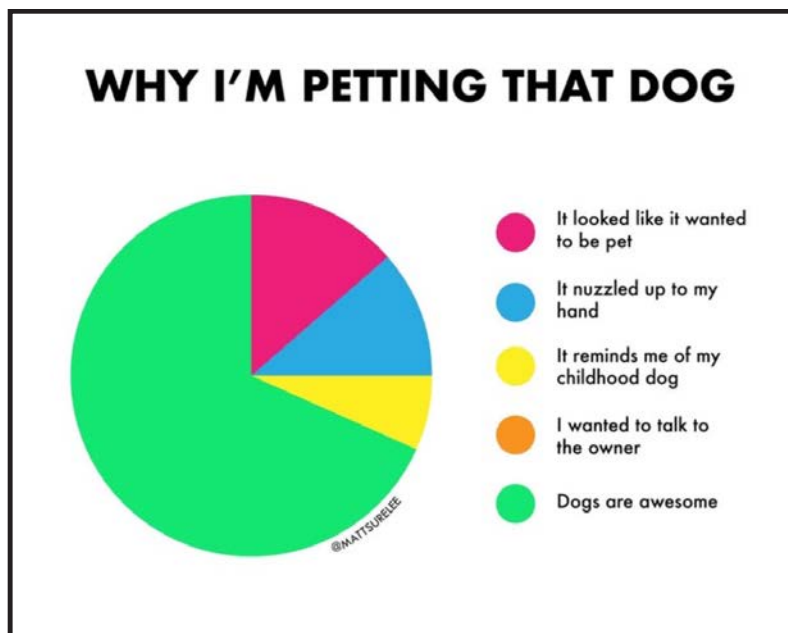
More recently, a study in a 2023 issue of the journal *Emotion* had people engage in a stress-inducing task—involving adding numbers that flashed on a computer screen—then interact with their pet dog, color in a coloring book, or wait quietly for 10 minutes. Those who interacted with their pooches experienced a greater boost in mood and a greater reduction in anxiety than those who waited or tried to destress by coloring.

“Your dog is providing nonjudgmental social support—you know your dog isn’t judging you for stressing out or being a wimp,” says study coauthor Hannah Raila, a psychologist and assistant teaching professor of psychology at UC Santa Cruz. “If your dog is sitting there wag-

ging its tail, you could catch positive emotions from the dog.”

Similarly, in a study in the journal *Society & Animals*, researchers had 223 people undergo the Trier Social Stress Test (TSST), which requires participants to make a presentation

and subsequently take an unanticipated mental arithmetic test in front of a panel of people who don’t provide feedback or encouragement. When people performed the TSST in the presence of a companion dog, they had lower stress levels, as measured by blood pressure and heart rate, and less anxiety.



A student drew this image of Miso, partner of Becky Butler, during our visit to the American Academy of Innovation on September 25th.



How Therapy Dogs Support Mental Health and Healing



This article is currently on the website of healthcare.utah.edu.

August 22, 2025

Humans and dogs have had a special bond for centuries. Coming home from a long day to a wagging tail is bound to cheer anyone up. But dogs have proven to be so much more than just pets.

Research shows significant benefits to spending time with a dog in a clinical setting, which is why Huntsman Mental Health Institute (HMHI) at the University of Utah brings certified therapy dogs into their facilities to help brighten patients' days.

"When someone is struggling with a mental health disorder, often they feel judgment from friends, family, or society," explains Emily Washburn, a recreational therapist at the Institute. "Having a dog that offers empathy and comfort can make a meaningful difference."

How Dogs Help Your Health

Spending time with a therapy dog allows someone dealing with a health issue to have judgment-free interactions and experience unconditional support. Petting or playing with a dog releases oxytocin, sometimes called the "love hormone," in both your brain and the dog's brain. The release of oxytocin is associated with:

These feelings can help patients feel more grounded and reduce anxiety and depression.

At Huntsman Mental Health Institute's Crisis Care Center, [ITA Team] Emily Callahan regularly brings her therapy dog, Callie, to spend time with patients in crisis. Callie's presence offers guests a calm and welcoming influence.

"The kids on the units who we see say Callie's one of the best therapies they receive," Callahan says. "They don't think about anything else but Callie's smile and how soft she is. Callie loves every one of them unconditionally and never judges them. She seems to know when they are sad and gives them a gentle kiss to help them feel better."

A Unique Approach to Therapy

For non-verbal patients or those with severe anxiety or depression, pet therapy can be used as an avenue to help them open up. Spending time with a therapy dog doesn't require a person to feel like they have to say or do the right thing. They can simply show up and receive comfort without worrying about being judged.

"Sometimes we can't reach patients in talk therapy, but we'll see them come into pet therapy and their face will just light up," Washburn says. "We had a patient who didn't come to many group therapies but came to pet therapy, and it was the most I had ever heard them speak."

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How Therapy Dogs Support Mental Health and Healing (cont.)

The benefits of therapy dog visits extend beyond mental health care. It's not uncommon to see wagging tails in oncology units, acting as a distraction for patients receiving tough treatments, or in children's hospitals to help kids facing scary medical procedures. No matter what a patient is going through, spending time with a dog can bring joy to otherwise difficult situations.

Beyond the Clinic Doors

Therapy dogs are trained and certified for their roles, but just having a dog in your home has health benefits too. Besides reduced anx-

xiety and lowered blood pressure, being a dog owner also promotes physical activity and reduces loneliness. You're more likely to get outdoors and exercise with your dog, which also increases your chances of social interactions in the neighborhood or at the park. Your dog depends on you, which gives you a sense of purpose. All of these things contribute to maintaining a healthy mind and body.

Whether you're experiencing a mental health crisis, recovering from an illness, or just enjoying unconditional companionship, dogs are quite literally good for our health. No wonder they've earned the title of "man's best friend."

APPRECIATION

A huge thank you to Intermountain Therapy Animals and your amazing volunteers for joining us at the recent ACEP25 Scientific Assembly at the Salt Palace Convention Center. The attendees absolutely loved meeting the dogs and learning about the role of therapy dogs.

Please be sure to thank Jan, Bee, Cheryl, Patti, Bruce, Preston, Leslie, Keith and Michele for taking the time to visit with our Emergency Department Physicians, Residents and Medical Students. I'm so glad I got to meet them all along with their sweet dogs. On the ACEP social media feeds (Facebook and Instagram), the dogs got lots of press! I took tons of pictures and will send you some after I go through them all.

Thanks again and I hope we have the opportunity to work together again in the future.

Liz

Liz Cardello, R.Ph.

Director, Business Development

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Paintings with Dogs



The Lighter Side

off the mark .com

by Mark Parisi



OVERBOARD

by Chip Dunham

