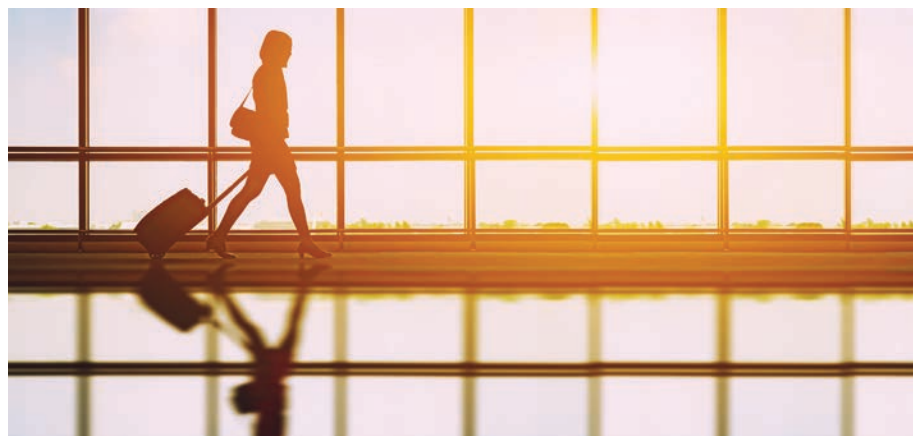


Bright Spot News

2018

The Annual Publication of Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, Inc.
Proud to be an American Kennel Club recognized Therapy Dog Organization



Bright Spot Brightens Bradley International Airport

by Lesléa Newman

My day did not start out well. Does anyone's day start out well when their alarm goes off at 4:00 a.m.? Actually my less-than-fabulous day started the night before when the driver I'd hired to bring me to the airport called to say he had pneumonia and couldn't take me. Which meant I had to ask my beloved, who had a terrible cold. Instead of flying halfway around the country to give a lecture, I should be staying home and taking care of her. But because she is who she is, she hacked out, "I'll do it." So now in addition to the stress I usually feel before getting on an airplane, I was wracked with guilt.

I jumped into the shower, jumped into my clothes, jumped into the car. Of course it was raining. Of course there was traffic. Off course there was construction. Of course there was no place to park. Of course there was a long line at check-in. Of course it took me forever to find my driver's license, inside my bottomless purse.

Finally, with bags checked and ticket in hand, I made my way to security, my beloved blowing her nose as she trailed behind me. She headed towards the Dunkin' Donuts kiosk in search of a honey-glazed treat, and I, thinking that some retail therapy might have a calming effect, stopped to consider a leopard-print neck pillow. But then something caught my eye that was more enticing than all the leopard print in the world.

A dog. At first I thought it was a life-sized stuffed animal. But then I saw the wag of a tail. The dog was wearing a vest which I assumed said something about it being on duty along with a warning not to approach it. I was used to the security dogs at Bradley Airport which had to be admired from afar.

But this dog's vest said, "Pet me." Seriously? I did not have to be asked twice. Before I could say, "Bless you," as my beloved sneezed yet again, I was down on my knees with my hands buried in soft, silky fur.

"Hello, puppy. What a good dog you are. Yes you are." My voice automatically rose an octave as I rubbed the dog's back.

"What's your dog's name?" I asked the woman holding the leash.

"This is James," she replied, and then pointed. "And that's Raven." Two for the price of one? This was just too good to be true. All of a sudden I didn't care that I'd left the book I was planning to read on the plane at home. I didn't care that I had a dreaded middle seat on my first flight. I didn't even care if I missed my plane. All I cared about



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MISSION STATEMENT

Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, Inc. is a registered 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to placing well-trained certified therapy dog teams in meaningful programs that provide comfort and caring through the human-canine bond. Our special volunteers serve in a wide variety of settings including hospitals, nursing homes, hospice, schools, libraries and other facilities where therapy dogs are needed.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Nancy Ronan, *Treasurer*
Nancy Friedman
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Bright Spot News is published annually.

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Graphic Design - Nancy Fields • Production - Dan Berger

Please submit stories, news bytes, and/or photos for consideration to cynthia@bright-spot.org

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Dear Friends,

We are pleased to announce that Bright Spot Therapy Dogs has a brand-new website! Our original website served us well for more than twelve years, but at the beginning of 2017, our Strategic Planning Committee unanimously agreed the time had come to create an up-to-date, state of the art website. Our new website features online forms to apply for therapy dog training and request our therapy

dog visiting services, a FAQ tab answering the common questions we have received throughout the years, and a much requested DONATE button. We wanted our new website to be informative, convenient, and user-friendly. Thanks to the volunteer efforts of our Board Chair, Kevin Russell, owner of Right Angle, Inc., our beautiful new website launched at the beginning of 2018, our fourteenth year of bringing comfort and caring through the human-canine bond. In a short period of time, we have seen an increase in applications submitted online. Please take a few minutes to check out our new look at www.bright-spot.org.

As we strive to strengthen and grow our existing programs in healthcare and education, we continue to work with new venues seeking to incorporate visiting therapy dogs in their offerings. Such a venue is Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut, where our new Bradley Buddies Therapy Dog Program launched at the end of 2017. Thanks to the efforts of Bright Spot volunteers, Sally King and Karyn Cordner with their wonderful dogs James and Raven, the program was piloted for several months, and given the thumbs up in August 2017. Eleven Bright Spot Therapy Dog Teams now visit Bradley on a regular basis helping travelers coming and going feel happy and relaxed. If you happen to fly through Bradley, be on the lookout for our dogs wearing the blue Bradley Buddies vests.

We are proud to say that we trained and certified 45 highly qualified new teams in 2017. In addition to attracting applicants from all over New England, we had two applicants from New York state. Our new teams have gone on to visit in facilities needing a visiting team, and several also make visits to the veterans in our very popular Third-Saturday-of-the-Month Visits at The Soldiers Home. The veterans and their families, many who visit their loved ones on Saturday afternoons, look forward to this special time of the month.

None of our continued success would be possible without our donors who support our mission with the funds needed to strengthen and grow our meaningful programs helping people of all ages.

In our annual issue of *Bright Spot News* we seek to offer you a glimpse into the amazing work this organization does and to highlight some of our special volunteers who make this all happen. I hope you enjoy reading this issue. Perhaps you, too, have a wonderful dog you would like to share with others, or you would like to make a donation to our work. We would love to hear from you.

Warm regards,

Cynthia Hinckley
Founder and Executive Director

Bright Spot Brightens Bradley International Airport continued

were these two ambassadors from canine nation who were wagging their tails, licking my face, and absorbing my stress like a sponge.

So who were these good Samaritans and their two-legged companions? Sally King and Karyn Cordner were from Bright Spot Therapy Dogs. I spoke to Sally first and asked her all about James.

"He's a 7-year-old Australian Shepard. We tried agility, but it just wasn't his thing. He's more interested in people than in running around," she said.

And how did the two of them start comforting people at the airport?

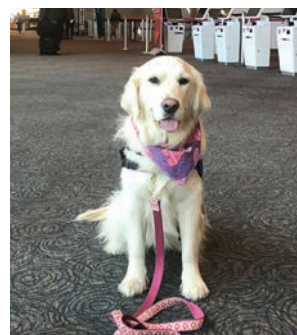
"It's all my husband's fault," Sally laughed. "He was in an airport on the way to visit his mother and saw a therapy dog there. When he came home, he said that James and I had to do it." Sally sent a note to the powers that be at Bradley, and the rest is history. "Every day is different," said Sally, who takes James to the airport on Tuesday and Thursday mornings (note to self: keep that in mind while booking flights). "People melt when they see the dogs. Many of them feel guilty that they are going on a trip and had to leave their dogs behind." (And their cats, I thought, since I'd left my feline at home.) "One day, a little girl who was very nervous about flying saw James, plunked herself down on the floor next to him and forgot about being afraid," Sally went on. "And another time, a vet came out of the bar. He had obviously had a few drinks. When he saw James, he grabbed him, hugged him, and held on for dear life. Most Aussies would have bitten him. But James remained calm."

And what about James' buddy, Raven?

"Raven is a five-year-old coated shepherd with a beautiful heart," said Karyn. "She was born and bred to be a seeing eye dog, but



Bradley Buddies Raven and James enjoy posing in the cart heading down to the gates.



Bradley Buddy Clementine waits by the kiosks to greet passengers as they check in.

she failed at that because she was too friendly to do her work. She loves meeting people."

And what does Karyn like about taking Raven to the airport?

"Oh, so many things," she replied. "People are always so happy to see Raven. She gets people who are total strangers talking to each other and showing each other photos of their pets. Everyone misses their dog when they have to leave home."

Karyn went on to tell me a very poignant story. "One day we met a young mother with her five-year old son, who were going to visit family after the boy's father passed away. The mom went to Raven right away and tried to get her son to pet her, but the boy was very hesitant.

Finally he came over, put his face up to Raven, and told him his daddy had died. He explained to Raven how he and his daddy used to collect coins. Raven just listened. When it was time to catch their flight, the boy and his mom said goodbye to Raven and walked away. Then the boy came running back and put a penny he had found on the floor in front



Bradley Buddies King and Comet get lots of attention from passengers as they stop to check out the travel signs.

of Raven. “That’s from my daddy,” the boy said. “He wants you to have it.” That just made me weep.”

I could have stayed with Raven and James and their devoted all day, but it was time to get to my gate. I kissed them both goodbye (“What am I, chopped liver?” asked my beloved, who is used to being the one I kiss before I disappear through security). I dug out my ticket



A couple from Florida emailed this photo to us. They were so excited to be greeted by Bradley Buddies James and Raven down by the gates after a long day of travel. They enjoyed sitting for a few minutes to unwind and pet the dogs.

and my ID and then turned to wave goodbye to the dogs. But they didn’t see me. They were too busy doing their jobs: making happy travelers even happier, and lifting the hearts of those who were sad. And though I hate to fly, I am looking forward to my next trip to the airport. Hopefully I will see James and Raven, or one of the other Bright Spot therapy dog teams wagging their tails in welcome.

Lesléa Newman’s children’s books about animals include *Dogs, Dogs, Dogs!*, *Hachiko Waits* (about the famous Japanese Akita), *Cats, Cats, Cats!*, *The Best Cat in the World*, and Ketzels, *The Cat Who Composed*. 🐾

Youth Community Service

by Michelle Karb, BSTD Therapy Dog Trainer

Annabel Ogden, a sixth grader at Crocker Farm Elementary School in South Amherst, Massachusetts, is our assistant trainer. Annabel hopes to one day pursue a career that involves working with animals or teaching.

In November of 2016, Annabel’s mother reached out to Bright Spot Therapy Dogs to see if there were any opportunities for Annabel to volunteer for the organization. I could tell Annabel was a perfect fit when I first met her.

Annabel explained that it can be challenging for kids her age to find volunteer opportunities, so she was excited for the chance to help train dogs for Bright Spot Therapy Dogs. Annabel is a natural with dogs and has terrific instincts. She understands how to interact with them and their handlers, helping both the dogs and the handlers feel comfortable in class, coaching the handlers in necessary skills, and consulting with me about class drills and exercises. Her positive energy and calm demeanor, along with her thoughtful reflection and sense of humor, make her an ideal partner for me.



Assistant trainer Annabel Ogden (right) demonstrates how to conduct a Reading Buddy Session to a team in training.

Annabel enjoys school, outdoor activities (including hiking), playing volleyball, crafts, dog walking, and caring for her animals. Along with her mother, father, and two younger sisters, Annabel lives with a rabbit and chickens. She does not have a dog of her own (though she would LOVE one), so she describes training dogs as her way to work and connect with them. Someday Annabel hopes to have a Golden Retriever or an Australian Shepherd.

Annabel has been a wonderful addition to our training course. When asked what she enjoys most about helping with class, she replied, “It’s a great experience. It’s not a job – it’s fun!” 🐾



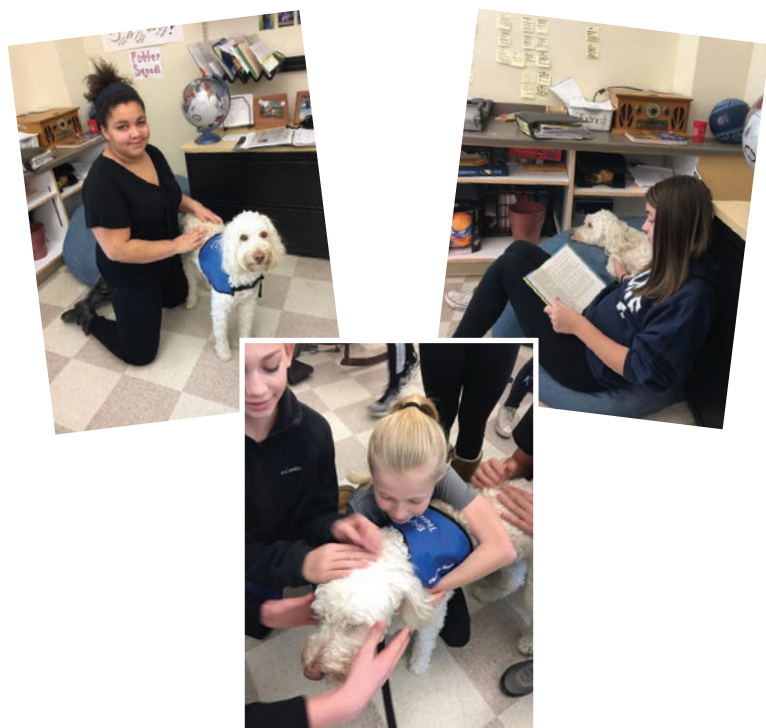
Pictured are teams that passed our required Therapy Dog Team Training Course. Michelle Karb, course trainer, is pictured in the center and Annabel Ogden on the right end.

Therapy Dog in School

Volunteer Kim Fotter from Gorham, Maine writes in...

Five years ago, I noticed an increase in the number of students coming into the middle school diagnosed with anxiety. I quickly began researching to learn more about anxiety, as well as programs that could help reduce anxiety in my classroom. I soon embarked upon creating a therapy dog program at the Gorham Middle School and my dog Hope and I began Therapy Dog Team Training with Bright Spot Therapy Dogs.

The process of setting up a School Policy around therapy dogs was long, but worthwhile. Once certified, Hope began attending middle school with me on a daily basis. She provides hugs, snuggles, and laughter to both students and staff members. She has completely transformed my classroom.



What better way to share the experience of Hope than through the students' voices:

"Hope knows when I am stressed and comes over to me to help." - AL

"Hope makes me laugh and smile when I am having a bad day. Then my day is always better." - SS

"Hope gives me hope. She lightens me up. I feel relaxed when she is here, and it just makes me happy." - CH

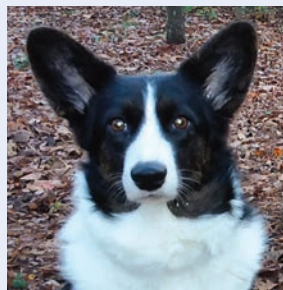
"Hope makes me feel calm. Hope is very friendly and nice. She makes me feel less overwhelmed. Hope makes me feel safe, too." - SF

"Whenever we have a test I get super stressed even though I study. When Hope comes up to me I feel relaxed and calm." - CS

"I love Hopey. She helps me boost my confidence and puts a smile on my face every time I walk in the door." - KL

Meet Our Bright Spots

from our popular Facebook segment by Nancy Ronan,
Bright Spot Social Media Coordinator



Meet Keeva

Keeva's teammate Pat Lalli shares her story: Keeva is a 3-year-old Cardigan Welsh Corgi who has been a Bright Spot Therapy Dog for 2 years. She loves her job! Keeva has visited day care centers, nursing homes, colleges, book shops, and libraries. Her cheerful disposition brings smiles to everyone she meets!

In her spare time, Keeva enjoys belly rubs, learning tricks, agility, obedience, Rally, herding, hiking, and couches! She shares her home with five fur-siblings (two dogs and three cats) with whom she loves to play. This smart, silly, and sweet girl is especially happy when the Bright Spot blue vest comes out and she knows that something special is about to happen! Keeva is always excited to see old friends and to meet new ones!



Meet Pablo

Pablo's teammate Esta Pekow shares his story: Pablo, a rescue dog, is 3 years old. He is a daschund-chihuahua mix. He became a Bright Spot in June 2017. He visits the Soldiers Home, Elaine's Rehab and Care Center, Harmony House Hospice, and participates in Bright Spot Therapy Dog Stress Relief Events

on college campuses. Pablo is super friendly, loves to walk a lot, and likes all people he encounters. His arch enemies are chipmunks (probably the doxie part of his background.) His name Pablo Picasso Pekow honors his Hispanic heritage.

Why We Give

Community Foundation of Collier County



Gary and Nancy Maynard, Elizabeth Odell (center), with puppy Milo

My husband and I, and our extended families, are all dog lovers. Several years ago, I made a recommendation to my mom to consider a donation to support and promote the need for ther-

Meet Ace

Ace's Teammate Becky Walton shares his story: Ace is a three-legged black lab/mix. He turned two in July. He came to us in January of 2016 at about six months old. When he was two months old, he and his five siblings were abandoned in rural Tennessee. They were alone for weeks, Ace was found with his siblings all passed away around him, his leg all tangled in a black plastic mesh. Dehydrated and starving, he was stuck there for quite some time. It caused infection in his leg. By the time he was found, it was too late. It needed amputation. He recovered nicely and gets around very well! His favorite game is chasing his 8-year-old dachshund twin sisters all around the yard, he is fast and can usually catch them! Ace loves EVERYBODY. He attended many obedience classes with Animal Alliances and passed his Bright Spot evaluation in April 2017. He visits the VA apartments on the Leeds campus, the Holyoke Soldiers home, two group homes in Belchertown, and cancer patients at Baystate Medical. He is a Canine Good Citizen, and he also LOVES to do tricks, so he went and got his AKC Trick Dog Titles, both Novice and Intermediate. He is now working on his Advanced. I never imagined he would be so successful. He is a special dog. He never gave up and is truly an inspiration to me. I can only hope to share that inspiration with others who need a little pick-me-up, or just a smile! 🐾



apy dogs in our local community. We are pleased that as a family we have been donating monies to support Bright Spot Therapy Dogs through the Community Foundation of Collier County for over six years.

In December, 2016, we had to put down our Lhasa Apso who was nearly 16 years old. Over the spring of 2017, we came to realize that there was to be another dog in our future. In October, Milo, an Australian Labradoodle was born, and he came to us on December 26th. We are enjoying this bundle of joy, his puppy energy, and are hopeful that as he grows up that he will be a good fit to complete the training and become a therapy dog.

Having a dog means the world to us and we know that dogs mean a lot to others, too. Thank you to everyone involved with Bright Spot and your commitment to sharing the love of your dogs with others. 🐾

Third Annual Fun Day With Dogs

by Cynthia Hinckley

Twenty-eight Bright Spot volunteers worked together to hold our third annual Fun Day With Dogs at the Barnes & Noble Bookstore in Hadley, Massachusetts. The purpose of our event is to educate the public on the many enjoyable activities they can do with their dogs. When shoppers entered the bookstore, they were greeted by volunteers handing out a program of dog events happening at the store throughout the day.



The agility course, set up by Kelley Bollen, owner of Animal Alliances, was a very popular offering.

Each year, we present something new, along with our ever-popular offerings. This year we added Geocaching with Your Dog. Nancy Ronan, geocaching expert, shared her adventures with her dogs, Clementine and Comet, as they traverse the countryside of Massachusetts in search of documented geocaches. Sally King and Karyn Corder, with their dogs James and Raven, talked to people about our new therapy dog program, Bradley Buddies, held at Bradley International Airport in Windsor Locks, Connecticut. Kelley Bollen, owner of Animal Alliances in Northampton, joined us this year demonstrating obedience and agility training. With us again this year were Ned Polan and his dog Brinkley talking about the amazing work they do with HOPE Animal-Assisted Crisis Response.

Every year, people love our Meet-the-Breeds/Mixed Breeds segment where they have the chance to talk with our volunteers about their breed of dog. For young children, we always have our Reading Buddy dogs on hand in the children's area who are eager to have a story read to them. And, for those interested in getting their dogs certified with Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, our information booth, stationed at the front of the store was staffed with volunteers eager to talk about the certification process and the meaningful work our therapy dog teams do helping people of all ages.

We had record attendance at our 2017 Fun Day With Dogs. Many people told us they come every year - coming because they love all the different dog events we have going on throughout the day.

In addition to being a fun and informational event for the public, Barnes and Noble Bookstore donated a percentage of all sales at the store that day to Bright Spot. Each year, as attendance increases, so does our donation. Mark your calendar! Our 2018 Fun Day With Dogs will be held on Saturday, November 3rd. 🐾



Bright Spot volunteer Kathy Osborne chats with a shopper about her dog Kaezli, a Bernese Mountain Dog.



Bright Spot volunteer and board member Nancy Ronan set up a fascinating display about Geocaching. She and her Bright Spot therapy dogs Comet and Clementine were on hand to discuss their adventures.

Thank You to Our Donors

2018 Annual Report of Giving

Thanks to the growing support we receive from donors, foundations, and sponsors, in its thirteenth year, Bright Spot has been able to build on its legacy of providing comfort and caring to people of all ages through visits from our highly trained therapy dog teams. We extend our deep

appreciation for your support. You make it possible to continue the meaningful work provided by Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, Inc. Your gift has made a difference in the lives of many. From all of us at Bright Spot, Thank you!

Leadership Donors (Gifts of \$1,000+)

Mark O. Farber, MD, and Shereen D. Farber, PH.D

In honor of Eileen Hackett

Elizabeth Odell

Elizabeth & Frank Odell Family Fund
of the Community Foundation of Collier County

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In Honor of Special People

Holyoke Kennel Club
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In honor of Cynthia Hinckley
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In Honor of Special Pets

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In honor of Betty, Jackson, and Sophie
Pamela Kinn
In honor of Eliza Jane Doodle
Susan Lak
In honor of GEM
Paulette Levchuk
In honor of Hachiko and Bucky
Alan Maclaren
In honor of John Maclaren's dogs
Megan and JA Marshall
In honor of Cadence
Suzanne Strempek Shea and Tommy Shea and Tiny
In honor of King
Dorothy Surgeon
In honor of Eva
Fay Zipkowitz
In honor of Rowan and Jordan

In Memory of Special People

Suzanne Arnopolin and Ronnie Williams
In memory of Bart Champoux
Martha and Stephen Balazs
In memory of Stacia Potyrala
Mr. & Mrs. James R. Bowers
In memory of Tom Houston
Janice Brigham
In memory of Margaret Johnson and Blue
Pierre and Susan Brisson
In memory of Tom Houston
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In memory of Tom Houston
Barbara Cummings, Gail Connelly, and Robert Ericson
In memory of Tom Houston
Marjorie Ebbeling
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Kenyon Fairey and Judith Smith
In memory of Tom Houston
Nancy Fields
In memory of Tom Houston
Nancy Friedman
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Diane and Tom Graham
In memory of our Parents
Joan and Allen Hanson
In memory of Tom Houston

Leslie Harris and Allison Bell
In memory of Tom Houston
John and Kate Hersey
In memory of Tom Houston
Al and Cynthia Hinckley
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Gary and Sandra Worden
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In memory of Trevor
Gay Hapgood
In memory of Nickleby
Al and Cynthia Hinckley
In memory of Bisquick and Tiny

Become a Bright Spot Donor

YES – I would like to make a donation to support the programs provided by **Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, Inc.** Enclosed is my check for:

☐ \$25 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$75 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$250 ☐ \$500 ☐ \$750

☐ **Leadership \$1000+**

Please make checks payable to **Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, Inc.** and mail to:
Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, Inc., PO Box 132, Leeds, MA 01053-0132

Donor's Name: _____

Address: _____

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Special instructions for gift (in honor of, in memory of, other):

If any: name and mailing address of the person we should notify regarding your gift:



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In memory of Sunny's Mabel
Peter and Anita Hinckley
In memory of Buddy
Michelle Karb
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Alan Maclaren
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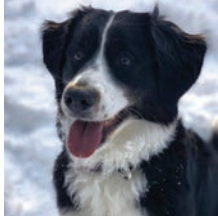
Donations reported here run from January 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017. All donations received after December 31, 2017, will be reported in the 2019 issue of Bright Spot News.

Bright Spot Therapy Dogs

P.O. Box 132
Leeds, MA 01053-0132



Reese



Mojito

Meet Reese and Mojito, and all of our Bright Spots at www.bright-spot.com

For information on how to become a
Bright Spot Therapy Dog Team
visit www.bright-spot.org

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Daisy Scout Troop Learns About Therapy Dogs

by Nancy Friedman



Volunteers Megan Marshall and Nancy Friedman, along with their dogs Cadence and Cassie, had the opportunity to meet and speak to Daisy Scout Troop 64660 in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts. Daisies are the youngest group of Girl Scouts, being either in Kindergarten or First Grade. This troop was led by Amy Goldman and her assistant Meg Witwer. The girls learned about therapy dogs - their training, places where they

visit, and how they provide comfort to others. In addition, the "Reading Buddy" program was emphasized as many of these girls are beginner readers themselves. They also learned the difference between a service dog and therapy dog, which included not touching a service dog who is working because you might interrupt their focus and ability to concentrate on their job. In contrast, the girls were very excited to spend their time with Cadence and Cassie who reciprocated by accepting their hugs and pats with enthusiasm and a few kisses that indicated their pleasure with being there. At the conclusion of our visit, this wonderful group of girls presented us with a big surprise - a jar of money they collected to donate to Bright Spot Therapy Dogs, which totaled \$50.00. 🐾

Certify Your Dog with Bright Spot



And Experience the Joy of Bringing Comfort
and Caring To Those Who Need It Most.

www.bright-spot.org