



# Lifeline Canines

136 Wildcat Pond Road Hubert, NC 28539 – (910) 326-1926 – info@lifelinecanines.org  
www.lifelinecanines.org

## Newsletter 2011

*“Improving Quality of Life in the Community through Therapy Dogs”*



As many of you know, this past year has been one of transition for Lifeline Canines. As a small community organization, it is difficult to be pulled in many directions and not have the resources to complete everything to the quality necessary. It has been said, “Do few things and do them well.” That being said, we completed our Service Dog program in January 2011 with Norman’s Graduation. We are very proud to say that we are now solely a Therapy Dog organization. Our Therapy Dog Program has always been an important part of Lifeline Canines’ work, and now we are able to grow and define these programs. There are several parts to the Therapy Dog programs that Lifeline Canines offers.

Lifeline Canines’ **Facility Dogs** are one major part of our program. Lifeline Canines will train and place a dog to work as a staff member in a medical or educational facility. Follow-up is then also provided for the lifetime of this placement. Many of you are familiar with the work that Colonel has done at Carteret General Hospital. Now, Hannah has also been on the job at Onslow Memorial Hospital. You can read more about her in this newsletter.

Lifeline Canines’ **Staff Dogs** have a very special role and assist in several areas. Staff Dogs are those dogs who are owned by Lifeline Canines to fulfill specialized Therapy and Demonstration or Educational Roles. These dogs live in permanent volunteer homes and can be called upon at any time to assist Lifeline Canines in the community. Some of the roles these dogs perform include:

- Educating new facilities who may be interested in starting a Therapy Dog Program.
- Demonstrations and Educational Presentations about the roles of various Assistance Dogs. For example, Santiago is asked to come to Pitt Community College every fall and bring some other staff dogs with him to educate the Occupational Therapy Assistant students about all types of Assistance Dogs with an emphasis on Therapy Dogs.
- Providing Therapy Dog Services in specialized environments where our volunteer pet teams are not able to meet a need or need supplementation. A couple of examples are when Dakota, Annie, and Hannah make monthly Therapy Dog visits to Carobell in Hubert where they provide service to severe/profound level individuals, and when Buddy, Dakota, Santiago, and Annie join two of our Pet Social Therapy Dogs, Oso and Maggie to conduct a weekly program at Brynn Marr Hospital in Jacksonville where they service Residential and Acute children, teenagers, and adults with Mental Health needs.

Lifeline Canines is proud to say that we have trained **35 Pet Social/Therapy Teams**. More teams are added with each new seminar class. These very special pet dogs and their owners must meet prerequisites, and then they attend a Social Therapy Team Training Seminar. Graduate Teams of this Seminar are qualified to provide Social and Therapeutic visits in various environments. Lifeline Canines provides support and follow-up for these teams. Some examples of Pet Social / Therapy Teams working are when Mike and Duffy assist in a PTSD class at Cherry Point, when Elizabeth and Honey read with children at school or the library, and when Nike paints her nails the same color as the ladies at the nursing home she goes to visit.

Lifeline Canines’ Therapy Dog Programs can touch almost every area of our communities. Lifeline Canines still operates as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and relies on the community to help support the programs that enable these special dogs to touch and change so many lives. You are part of the community, and you never know when one of these dogs may be able to make a difference in your life. God has been opening doors for our dogs to minister to so many needs and improve quality of life in our community through Therapy Dogs. Thank you for your continued support of these programs.



## Life with Service Dog Norman

By: Monika Jud, "Norman's mom"

It must have been the sun shining through the window that woke me up, or maybe it was the birds singing or most likely the crows squawking. It doesn't really matter. It was just another beautiful day in sunny California. All was well until I got out of bed and stood up. It was then that my knees buckled, and I stumbled and crashed right back into bed – courtesy of a condition called Multiple Sclerosis (MS). There is no better way to start your day than with a good dose of frustration! That is until a big head of an 80 pound black Labrador Retriever appears with my slipper in his mouth. Norman thinks it is a great day and joyfully shows off "his" slipper by shoving it in my face. When I try to grab it he starts circling right out of my reach all the while making a chirping noise like a little dinosaur from Jurassic Park. Of course I have to laugh and round #2 of getting out of bed has just gotten easier.



Norman has been with me since January. MS has been with me for almost 10 years now. At first it was just some weakness in my left leg, but by now it has progressed to all of my left side and some on my right. Over the last year, walking has gotten more difficult, and my balance is off. I am even considering getting one of those "cool" scooters for longer distances (anything more than a city block that is). As for now, I use a cane pretty much everywhere I go, even in the house.



I have learned that there is just no good place to put a cane when it is not in use. It either falls over or it sticks out, endangering innocent bystanders. So the cane often ends up tucked in a corner somewhere too far away for me to safely reach it. Thank God (literally) Norman is happy to fetch it for me. In fact Norman is happy to pick up pretty much anything, at any time, anywhere. He loves to pick up items so much that he actually comes running just at the sound of me dropping something. Especially if I drop things in the kitchen; after all he is a Labrador Retriever, and one never knows what kind of food reward could be waiting for him there!

The number one fear people like me have is falling down, getting hurt, and not being able to get up. What a sense of security I have knowing that Norman can retrieve the phone and bring it to me. Just in case the phone is not available, he can bark on command to hopefully alert a roommate or a neighbor. Anyone that thinks his voice could not get ones attention has not heard Norman bark! His bark is loud, strong, and deep. If you stand right next to him it actually makes your ears ring. This is pretty amazing for a dog that did not want to bark for the first 3 years of his life!

Daily, Norman helps me out with countless little challenges. For instance, when my lack of energy makes a pile of dirty clothes feel like 30 pounds of potatoes, Norman is there to grab the rope attached to the laundry basket and drag it to the laundry room with gusto. Now if he would just fold the laundry for me too....

Due to my weakness and lack of balance, it is not uncommon for me to get 'stuck' on the floor when kneeling down, and I desperately try to find a dignified way to stand back up. I know some of you can relate even though you don't have MS. Norman comes and stands right next to me so I can use his (continued)

broad shoulders to brace myself on. His big body also is helpful to keep people from getting too close to me in a crowd and knock me off balance.

There is another way Norman keeps me balanced: he gives me courage to keep my head held high when I hobble into a crowded room and feel that everyone is staring at me (if true or not). He helps me walk with confidence even when the ladies from the retirement home move more rapidly down the side walk than I do. Life is just easier with Norman by my side.



I want to thank everyone who had a part in making Norman who he is. I appreciate each and every one of you that supported Lifeline Canines with your time, money, business, and prayers. No matter how big or small your contribution, it has all mattered.



To all of you who took Norman into your homes and spent countless hours familiarizing him to the many things of this world, I can say your time and love has not been in vain. Your boy has grown up and is doing an amazing job in his new home.

And last but not least, I want to thank Deborah Bell for being so courageous in following the call to start Lifeline Canines. I have no doubt that the same determination that made her push through the ups and downs of training service dogs, will move Lifeline Canines forward in its new and valuable therapy dog venture.

Greetings from sunny California – Monika Jud and Norman

“All things were created by Him and for Him” Colossian 1:16



## **Chocolate Chip has Found his Mission in Life**

**by: Sue Wilson, “Chip’s mom”**



Alex and I were first introduced to Chip and his sisters after we responded to a post in a home school blog stating that Lifeline Canines was in need of foster homes for their puppies. Since Alex had never been around dogs much, and we couldn’t afford a dog of our own, I thought it might be a good experience for “him” especially since it involved a community service activity in addition to caring for the dog. We usually miss out on opportunities such as this so, needless to say, I was thrilled when Deborah contacted me and agreed to meet with us. At that time, I had absolutely no idea of the blessing that the Lord was about to bring into my life.

Four years ago, I developed an autoimmune deficiency disease called psoriatic arthritis. It came on suddenly and forcefully, causing a great deal discomfort, severe weakness and fatigue among many other things. Everyday activities were extremely difficult to carry out, and even walking was excruciating and exhausting. At one point I couldn’t even lift my feet off the floor to get dressed. When it was time for things like socks I literally had to lift my foot with my hand. Any movement at all was painful, even simple things like turning over in bed or getting up out of a chair. Unfortunately, I spent the next couple of years being misdiagnosed

*(continued on next page)*

with a nail fungus and depression while my condition continued to rapidly worsen. My hair was falling out, my joints were becoming deformed and my nails literally became unrecognizable. There were additional symptoms, and as my condition worsened, life became more difficult and I thought I had reached the end. I didn't want to give up but I felt completely hopeless.



Fast forward to August 2009 ... Alex and I had completed the foster family training program at Lifeline Canines and were ready to take on our foster baby. We hadn't been assigned a pup yet. To our delight, Deborah decided that Chip would be the best match for us, so she and Becky brought Chip over for a visit, along with the seasoned pro, our dear Norman. I don't know how she knew but it couldn't have been a better match if the Lord had put it together Himself - actually, I think He did.

Chip had some ongoing social issues which proved to be a detriment to his service dog training. However, Deborah also saw that Chip was telling us that he had a job to do right where he was. Lifeline Canines decided to place Chip permanently in my home as a skilled companion dog to me. There was an instant bond between us, and it wasn't long before everyone knew without a doubt that Chip had picked me to care for and to be his new "mom."

Chip continues to enjoy being the center of attention in the Wilson household where playing keep away with his stuffed dog "Fatty," going to the bank and playing Frisbee are just a few of his favorite things to do. Always happy, very playful and always eager to please, Chip's loving personality has provided us with an unending supply of unconditional love and joy to our home.

Though he tends to the needs of the entire family, Chip's real mission in life is looking out for his "mom." The two of us have become inseparable. In fact, we've become so close that it's stressful for either of us to be away from the other for very long! Chip is always there when I need him, and he loves to use his training to help me out whenever he sees an opportunity. If I drop something, he will gladly pick it up and hand it back to me. He fetches the phone and the remote. When I sit down, he likes to help me take my shoes and socks off - probably because, in his mind, I can't leave him if I don't have my shoes on! When he's done with that, he'll often jump up on my lap to make sure I can't get away. I've waited my entire life for a man like that! The best thing he's learned since he's been with us is how to close the bathroom door behind him when he barges in on me!

I am happy to report that I seem to be in a remission at this time. I still have to take the chemo treatment but my symptoms, though not completely gone, have improved dramatically. My hair is growing back and my nails are starting to look like nails again!

There are no words to describe the many emotions involved in the relationship that's developed between Chip and I. I mean, what can be said of such a beautiful and wonderfully unique creature who loves me without regard? In fact, as I write this, he is laying faithfully by my side ... I couldn't ask for a better gift. Thank you God and thank you Lifeline Canines!





## Hannah Changes Lives.....One Patient at a Time

When little Hannah arrived at Lifeline Canines at 10 weeks old, we had high hopes for this adorable Golden Retriever, but only time, training, and patience would show us the gifts and talents she had to share with the world. Now, five years later, Hannah has been working - touching and changing so many lives that it is almost hard to believe all she has given to our community already. Hannah lives with Lisa Ridgeway and her family and continues to work at Lifeline Canines as a Public Relations,

Demonstration, and Therapy Dog. However, this is not her biggest job. Hannah is a Facility Dog on staff at Onslow Memorial Hospital to assist patients in their recovery and healing process and to boost staff morale. You may have even seen Hannah in the hospital's commercial, on their billboard, and in their annual report.

Six OMH employees were trained by Lifeline Canines to become Hannah's Handlers. In September, 2010 Hannah joined the OMH staff on a regular basis. The program has grown and been so successful, that in July 2011, Lifeline Canines trained 5 additional staff members for the Hannah's Handlers team. Hannah arrives at the hospital on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays at 7:30am where she is greeted immediately when she gets out of the car by staff members and anyone else who is around. On the days she is left at home, you can almost see the tears in her eyes as she wants to go to work and loves her job. Paul.....or Uncle Paul as he is known by Hannah and her Handlers, comes down the hall when Hannah arrives to meet her. When Hannah sees Uncle Paul, she runs to him, and hopefully no one is in her way. Hannah is insistent that she must get to Paul and get started on her job for the day. She can be found making morning and afternoon rounds on the hospital floors, attending meetings, providing special request visits, and just doing her best to bring a smile to the patients and staff at Onslow Memorial Hospital. She often leaves her very own business card with the patients to remember her by. She has nap breaks in one of her handler's offices and play breaks in the courtyard in between making her rounds. Patients and staff have been heard throughout the hallways saying, "This is the best idea the hospital has had yet." Hannah has a special gift to sense people who are in need and wants to be with them. She knows who needs her and who doesn't on any given day. There have been documented cases of heart monitors showing improved numbers and facilitated communication with patients in the intensive care unit in response to Hannah being at their bedside.



Hannah continues to work out in the community when she is not at Onslow Memorial Hospital. Hannah's Pastor, Mike Wilkinson of First Baptist Church of Swansboro, who went home to be with Jesus in August, always said that Hannah blessed his heart. He would kneel down to pet Hannah or sit on the floor with her. He always said that he had a successful sermon if Hannah slept through the whole thing. In his last days, Hannah made a visit to Pastor Mike's home to see him. When his wife, MaryAnn, told him that Hannah was there to visit him, he said, "Ohhhh Hannah"... Not many words were spoken after that. Hannah went in to see her Pastor and put her two front paws up on his bed and spent a few short minutes with him as he stroked her head. She just lay there letting him stroke her. I couldn't help but think that I sure hoped that she was blessing his heart one more time.

Hannah is one of a kind. She is always there to lean on your leg, cuddle with you or whatever you need at the time. There is a wonder and a mystery to the work that Hannah is able to accomplish, but we like to say it is nothing short of a miracle. Hannah makes people forget their troubles and brings a sense of joy and peace.

## Brynn Marr Hospital's Furry Therapists



Lifeline Canines has been an important part of adjunctive therapy at Brynn Marr Hospital since the dogs and their handlers started visiting in December 2010. According to recreational therapists, they have seen the dogs make a positive impact on the clients. "We have adults or children who have little interaction with peers the whole time they are here, but when the dogs come around they become much more involved," says April, one of the Recreational Therapists at Brynn Marr

Hospital. Becky, from Lifeline Canines relates, "I had one adult resident who was new and sat separated from the others just staring out into the room. I took Buddy over and said, 'Buddy you haven't talked to her yet.' He put his head in her lap and she started petting him. She started to smile and then began to interact with the others in the room also."

If you are not familiar with Brynn Marr Hospital, it provides behavioral health services for children, adolescents, and adults who suffer from mental illness, chemical dependence, or developmental disabilities. Lifeline Canines provides a weekly Therapy Dog Program in both the inpatient acute care and residential treatment programs that are available. The teams who are part of the program include Pet Social Therapy Teams Marissa Martinez with Oso and Pete Rulon with Maggie. Staff dogs include teams of Linda Owenby with Dakota, Becky Viel with Buddy and Deborah Bell with either Santiago or Annie. On the residential side of the hospital, adolescents (whose average length of stay is about 5 months) look forward to seeing the dogs on a rotating weekly basis. They are able to bond with the dogs, and many have favorites. One client on Brynn Marr's residential unit says, "I have a picture of the dogs in my room. They help me out a lot. They make me

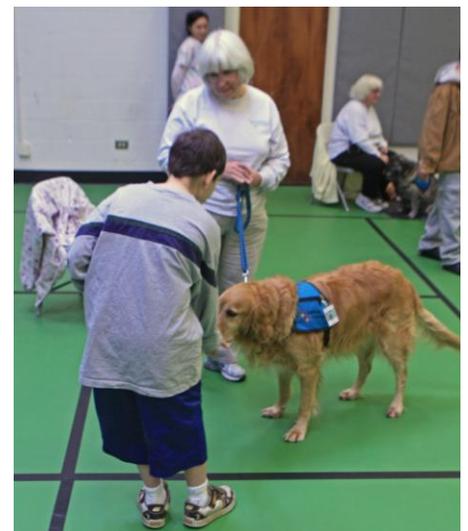
feel happy." Another client says, "I like the dogs because they remind me of my dogs at home." The clients also enjoy interacting with the handlers and telling them about their pets at home and asking questions about the dogs who are visiting. The Therapists also think that having interactions with the dogs is important for the clients' well-being. According to several of the therapists, going to pet therapy can change a client's perspective and open people up when



they are afraid to trust others. They have also seen clients who do not usually get along with each other or who don't share well sitting side by side sharing the dog's brush and talking appropriately with each other as they interact with the dogs.

Becky and Buddy share this experience they had with one of the boys on the residential unit: On his first visit with the dogs, one young boy tried to pull a dog's tail. He had to sit out most of the visit and was then allowed to go back and see the dog and show that he could visit correctly before the dogs left. Over the next several months, this boy and Lifeline Canines' Staff Dog, a Golden Retriever named Buddy, became fast friends. He learned how to pet and love on Buddy, and both enjoyed their growing friendship. He enjoyed giving commands to Buddy and rewarding him with treats. We could often see him leaning forward toward Buddy's face saying "give me some sugar". This was always rewarded with a kiss from Buddy. In the last few visits before he was discharged, he began to help new residents learn how to enjoy Buddy. He could be heard saying, "be careful when you pet him, don't hurt him, and he will love you," and "sit down and he will sit on your lap," and "if you do this he will give you sugar". He told Buddy that he loved him and would always remember him.

*(continued)*



I don't think this captures the full growth that we saw in this young boy as he worked with Buddy as it is hard to put it all in words, but the gentleness and confidence that grew in this boy, and the love that developed between him and Buddy was priceless.

This is just one of the weekly examples that the 6 dogs who eagerly await each Friday visit encounter. Having comforting contact with another living being can really help people emotionally. They can be comforted, show love, and be shown love in return, feelings that may be missing in many of their lives. This is an integral part of the healing process, and according to the Recreational Therapist, "it has been a joy to work with Lifeline Canines for the past year."



### **Annie Ministers to Special Needs**

Sweet Annie has been charming all of us as one of Lifeline Canines' Staff Dogs. She has found her home with Ken and Sue Stone who I think are wrapped right around her little paw. Annie is enjoying helping Lifeline Canines with visits to Carobell and Brynn Marr Hospital. At Carobell, she has made friends with one of the individuals in particular who will reach out her hand to Annie for a "Hi 5" and will pet Annie, but will rarely pet any of the other dogs. She brightens the day for the patients at Brynn Marr hospital and enjoys showing off for them with all of the tricks she knows how to do. A patient one time commented that while Lifeline Canines' dogs were there visiting, it was the first real smile she had on her face in a very long time.





## ***Lifeline Canines***

136 Wildcat Pond Road  
Hubert, NC 28539



Your faithful support ensures that **Lifeline Canines** will be able to improve quality of life in the community through Therapy Dogs!!

You may send your donation to:  
**Lifeline Canines**  
136 Wildcat Pond Road  
Hubert, NC 28539

You may also donate online through  
Paypal by visiting our website:  
**[www.lifelinecanines.org](http://www.lifelinecanines.org)**

**Thank you for your support.  
You are changing lives in your  
community!  
All donations are tax deductible!**

## ***Lifeline Canines***

*Improving quality of life in the community through Therapy Dogs.*

### **Do you and your dog want to share love with people in need?**

Does your dog love to meet new people?

Lifeline Canines Social Therapy Team Training Seminar  
might be just what you have been looking for!

Pet dogs with basic obedience skills, good manners, and a friendly temperament for new people can be qualified to attend this 15 hour seminar class.



Upon completion of this class, you and your dog will be able to make a difference in the lives of other people by bringing them joy and smiles as a volunteer

Social/Therapy Dog Team.

Please contact **Lifeline Canines** if you are interested in finding out more about how you and your dog can be part of our next Social Therapy Team Training Seminar!

info@lifelinecanines.org      (910)326-1926

**Lifeline Canines** is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization so all donations are tax deductible!!  
Combined Federal Campaign # 57789