

Billie Rollins and Jamie



Jamie (aka Felicity's Diamond Angel) and I have been pet partners since 2009. Jamie is a black-and white English Springer Spaniel who was 5 years old on May 5. I got her when she was just 8-weeks old from the breeder of her father, Felicity's Diamond Jim, who was the best in show winner of the 2007 Westminster and also a nationally recognized therapy dog. Although her father passed away last year, her mother, Felicity's on Angel's Wings, is currently a therapy dog.

For the last ten years of my work career, I was drawn to any and all articles concerning animal-assisted therapy one of which described a Denver Pet Partner team in the *Denver Post*. Living part-time in Arizona and in Colorado

after my retirement, I decided to explore how I and my pet partner could become a registered therapy team. First, I had to find Jamie and that was done by e-mail while watching her father become a triple-crown winner and learning more about his work with Angel's on a Leash and the Alzheimer's Association.

I traveled to Fairfax Station, VA to fly her back to Denver in June of 2007. We worked very hard from that time forward perfecting her good manners and earning her AKC Canine Good Citizen award. During this time, she also had many and varied socialization experiences including attending a Silverthorne city council meeting, "greeting and treating" with youngsters in area parks, meeting young teens and adults at the skate board center, learning to walk up open stairs at the Dillon Reservoir, and visiting with policemen and fireman.



We tested as a team in November 2009 and started visiting weekly at Pine Grove Elementary and two or three times a month at Sky Ridge Medical Center. We have continued our "reading" with students once a week during the school year and continue visiting Sky Ridge throughout the year.



What has and continues to impress me with our work is the way Jamie senses who needs more or less of her time each visit. Being a beautiful girl inside and out she is always very affectionate and gentle with all ages. People comment on her beauty first but when the visit is over it's all about her way of leaning closer, handing a paw, or looking in the person's eyes that they remember. The students always want a picture at the

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end of the year and she loves lying next to them while they read to her.

Jamie recently received her AKC Therapy Dog Title Certificate and, as Denver Pet Partners, we assist where we can in actual team evaluations as well as challenging the evaluators in the recent TE practicum.

When we retest in 2013, we'll be preparing for our fourth year as a registered therapy team and what will be in my mind will be the faces of all the children, staff and patient's she has brought a smile to and a moment of comfort. I say "she" because it is all about her...I just happen to be the one that drives the car!

