

Audie's Story



Audie is my very special 4-year-old Golden retriever. Audie wears "two hats" in that he is my Service Dog first, and then when he is off duty he enjoys visiting as a Delta Pet Partner. We have been members of Denver Pet Partners since April 2008 when DPP embraced the Colorado Springs Delta Pet Partners and formed a satellite group down here. Thank you DPP for being so willing to work with us and for letting us be a part of this wonderful group!

Audie was bred and trained at KSDS, Inc. (formerly known as Kansas Specialty Dog Service) in Washington, KS. He has been very specially trained to help mitigate my disability. I have rheumatoid arthritis and systemic lupus so depending on the activity of my diseases it can be a challenge, at times, to function each day. Not only is Audie my best friend, but he assists me with a number of tasks that improves the quality of my life one-hundred-fold.

For example, it can be difficult for me to pick up items that I drop. Audie will happily retrieve anything that I drop and bring it right to me, placing the item in my lap. When I am walking and not using my power wheelchair, Audie helps me balance so that I do not fall. He also helps me balance and brace when I am going up and down stairs. He braces me as I get up or down from a chair or transfer from one place to another. There are times when it is difficult or painful for me to get undressed and Audie assists me by tugging off a jacket or my shoes. This is one of his favorite tasks as it is just a big game of "tug" to him! When we go shopping or out to eat, Audie carries a special tote bag that contains my wallet and keys. One of the most important skills Audie has is the ability to retrieve my portable phone from anywhere in my two-story townhome in case of a medical emergency. Without Audie, my life would be much more difficult.

Audie is very gentle, kind, and loving, and it is these qualities that make him a gifted therapy dog as well. When visiting as a Pet Partner, Audie does not wear his working harness as he cannot interact with anyone other than me while working as my Service Dog. Instead, he wears a Pet Partner scarf, which helps to keep him from becoming confused as to which job he is doing.

Audie and I visit the Rocky Mountain Cancer Center in Colorado Springs and spend time with patients while they are receiving their chemotherapy infusions. Audie's presence is always welcomed by both the staff and the patients - they remember his name but rarely remember mine. I have been told by some of the patients that when Audie puts his Golden head on their lap, for a few moments they can forget that they have cancer and why they are there.



Audie is also a READ dog and participates in the Paws To Read program through the Pikes Peak Library District. Audie LOVES his kids at the library and never tires of listening to a story or looking at the pictures in a book. A few of the kids' parents have said that if they miss "Dog Day at the Library" there would be a very big price to pay! Along



with Piper, Tucker, and Misty (the other READ dogs), Audie has developed quite the following of kids that are learning to love books and reading.



Sterling House is a new facility that the Colorado Springs group has started to visit, and already the dogs have made a wonderfully positive impact on the residents. It is predominantly Alzheimer's patients at this facility. At our last visit to Sterling House one of the nurses had to run to get her camera to record the moment. One of the residents that rarely talks or smiles was hugging Audie



and was resting her head on Audie's head. The nurse said that she wanted to show the picture to the woman's family so that they could also be a part of this special moment.

Audie has touched many lives besides mine by loving everyone he meets unconditionally. He is always wearing his happy, Golden grin and I am often in awe of how he moves from person to person on our visits, making sure that everyone has had an opportunity to be loved by him. Audie truly is an extraordinary dog and I am grateful to be partnered with him and honored to share him with the people we visit.

