

## *Beth and Kona's Story*



My husband and I adopted Kona from the Golden Retriever Freedom Rescue when she was only 8 months old back in 2006. From the day we got her she brought such joy to our household, it was shocking to me that anyone could give up such a loving dog. Unlike most dogs, when Kona joined our family she didn't bark or jump up, she was one of the kindest dogs I have ever experienced despite that fact that she was abused prior to us adopting her. Kona took so well to her training that I decided to get certified with the Denver

Pet Partners. Kona and I then began at the Life Care Center in May of 2007 and the Easter Seals Stroke Day Program in November 2007.

Kona is famous for two things. Her trick that we call "hide." This is the trick where Kona will drop to the floor and put her paws over her eyes to hide. So next time you see Kona in the hallway feel free to ask her to hide for you ☺. Secondly, Kona is known for her ability to fetch. When you throw the ball for Kona she will not only retrieve the ball, but she will actually throw the ball back in your lap.

I have been volunteering my whole life. For the past 5 years I have been trying to find something that I am really passionate about as a way to serve the community. I joined American Humane Animal Assisted Therapy for three main reasons. First of all, I genuinely found a place that I whole heartedly support. American Humane's dedication to supporting the community and promoting the human animal bond is so inspiring. I know how much Kona has touched my heart and every time we volunteer Kona gets to share her unconditional love with the world. Secondly, I love to spend time with Kona and I don't think there is any better way to spend quality time with your dog then in serving the community. Lastly, I knew that Kona needed a job. Kona took so well to training that she kept proving to my husband and me over and over again that she needed a job to do. Now, when I ask Kona "Do you want to go to work"

her ears perk up and she will wait by the back door of my car until I let her in to go to work. Volunteering with Kona has been rewarding for so many reasons, but knowing that we get to leave a little bit of puppy love behind is the best part.

I first started volunteering with Kona in 2007. We started volunteering at a nursing home and then at The Easter Seals Stroke Day Program. Who would have thought the most impactful therapy dog moment would be at my sick grandfather's bedside with my pet partner Kona. My grandfather has always been a dog lover... and always a big fan of Kona. This February when my grandpa was at his worst he called my mom to ask if I could bring Kona up for a visit. All these years my grandparents house was a fun place to play but this time when we arrived I put Kona's vest on and she knew it was time to work. I walked back in my grandpa's room that was now filled with hospital equipment, not knowing what to expect, but Kona knew exactly what to do. She went right up to my grandpa's bed and just rested her head on his bed until he noticed her. My grandpa could not talk much but you could see the joy in his eyes just to be able to run his frail fingers through her soft hair. Kona wasn't there for just my grandpa, she knew I needed her too. Kona was the catalyst for what probably should have been a painful final goodbye between me and my grandpa but with Kona there it was peaceful, calming, and truly a miraculous experience. All the years of volunteering with AHA had prepared Kona for all the hospital equipment that was in my grandpa's room but I never expected for my volunteer work to enhance my last moments with my grandpa so much.

