

## *Carl Neer and Buffy*



Buffy is my 5 year old Golden Retriever and we have been visiting as a team since December 2008. I first met Buffy when she was 10 weeks old, and we bonded immediately. I had an older Golden who was slowing down and I thought a new puppy would re-energize her.

Many people had commented on my older Golden's sweet and gentle nature and what a good therapy dog she would make. However, my older Golden, "Suva", was raised in the mountains under a different set of rules and I didn't pursue retraining her for therapy work. But it sparked an idea in me. I had been looking for a volunteer

opportunity that I would enjoy and animal assisted therapy would combine my desire to help people with my love for animals. So I trained Buffy from the beginning to do therapy work.

I enjoyed exposing her to all kinds of people, situations, and noises. I took her for walks and encouraged the people we encountered to spend a few minutes petting her. We went to outdoor fairs and festivals, walked through pet friendly stores, and visited parks and playgrounds. In October 2008, even though she was only 18 months old and still exuberant at times, we passed the Pet Partners team evaluation.



Through Denver Pet Partners I learned that Platte Valley Medical Center, which is just 5 miles from where I live, was looking for additional therapy teams. We were welcomed to the team by team leader Anne Przybyla, volunteer coordinator Kathy Young and the rest of the awesome team there. The training and support they provided made it easy to become a part of the team.

We both enjoy our visits to Platte Valley Medical Center. The staff and patients there treat us very well and we enjoy seeing them each week. I believe that Buffy's willingness to engage people is one of her strongest traits as a therapy animal. She looks in every room we pass for someone to visit and will work a waiting room like a politician, greeting each person and accepting a few pets before moving to the next person. I think we both enjoy interacting with the kids. At 75 lbs, Buffy is bigger than many of the kids we meet. I ask her to sit a few feet away and let the kids approach her at their own comfort level.

## Denver Pet Partners – Team of the Month (August 2012)



Sometimes we encounter a whole group of kids and Buffy will go all the way down and let all those kids rub and love on her from every direction.

Whether it's a child whose tears were stopped, a daughter who just lost her father and needed a silent moment with a furry friend, a stressed staff member that needs to calm down, or an Alzheimer's patient reminded of better times, we've had many memorable visits where I know we have had a positive impact on the lives of the people we visited.



We also enjoy participating in other events, like the Autism Walk, 9 News Health Fair, Team Evaluations etc. as time permits. We are very grateful to all the passionate people at Denver Pet Partners that work so hard to make it easy to provide this service with confidence, knowledge, and professionalism.