

## *Maggie's and Sophie's Story*

### **Little Pet Partners with BIG Hearts**



Maggie and Sophie (aka "The Girls") are red toy poodles; they are six and five years old respectively.

Peggy says, "I never, ever wanted a poodle because I believed they were neurotic, barky, and shook all the time." That was 25 years ago, and since her first one, she has had nothing but poodles since.

Dinah is more of a cat person, so having dogs is a bit new; however, she has become a very dear "aunt" to "the girls" in the pack structure. Peggy is the "alpha" who does all the medicine, brushing, washing faces, and all that other stuff. Therefore, Peggy is the "mother" and Dinah is the "other mother." You can tell who the "other mother" is because she does not do poop patrol! In any case, the girls are very special to both of us.

Maggie came to Denver via airplane from Wisconsin six years ago when she was three months old. That makes her a "Cheese Head," but she assures us she is not a Packers fan - Broncos all the way! She was very frightened when she arrived but has long ago taken charge of everything and everybody in her own diplomatic fashion. Her disposition is so pleasant and so eager to please that she was given the full name of "Sweet Maggie of Clermont." She weighs in at eight pounds and will do almost anything you ask of her.

Maggie loves to play. When she brings you a toy and you do not play with her, she figures you do not like that toy so she brings you another one. When we have company (the more the merrier for her), she becomes an "equal opportunity ball player." She takes it to a different person each time!

Sophie came into our lives because Maggie wanted a dog of her own. Really! Maggie would take her toys to that doggie in the mirror, get into the play position, and wait for that "mirror dog" to play. She would be so disappointed when that doggie would not play it broke our hearts. So, we found a litter of three red poodle puppies with a Fort Collins family. We drove Maggie there for a visit, and she and Sophie chose each other. They kissed and played together from the very beginning.

Sophie was the favorite of the family who raised her and they called her "Little Bit," so her full name is "Josey's Little Bit Sophie." Sophie's idea of exercise is jumping up on a lap for a doggie massage. We call her "The Princess" because of her laid-back; wait on me; I will be the object of your affection - just pet me, pet me, pet me attitude. Many of Sophie's mannerisms are very cat-like, so in a way, Dinah has a cat. Sophie weighs in at a whopping five pounds!

Peggy was first interested in becoming a Pet Partner when she read about the Delta Society in a publication called *Your Dog*. She got the home study packet, but was not sure where to get a dog evaluated. She spoke with Sophie Engelhard Craighead (chairperson of the Delta Board of Directors) in Wyoming but that was about it. Then, someone from the Delta Society called and said Linda Hines, president and CEO, would be in Denver and would like to meet us. It was over dinner at

our home that we learned more about the Delta Society and about Diana McQuarrie starting the Denver Pet Partners team. In December of 2001, we enrolled in, and successfully completed, the first Denver Pet Partners training course and evaluation.

We have been Pet Partners since February 2002. All four of us just love it! On visiting days, we ask the girls if they want to be "Delta Dogs" and they get very excited. When we turn the last corner on the way to Swedish Medical Center on Saturday afternoons or Berkley Manor on Sunday mornings they can hardly contain themselves!



It has been such a rewarding experience. It is a way for us to share the wonderful gift of animals: unconditional love. The neat part for the patients is being able to have the girls on the bed with them. Sophie either curls up or stretches out on her side as if to say, "Bring on the massage therapist." We tell patients she has it figured out; humans pay for massages and she gets hers free. Often she looks like she is drugged because she has gone to "doggie nirvana." She becomes a total Gumby dog. Maggie is much more alert and aware. She sits on (yes, on) the patients and loves to be petted and show off her tricks - for food, of course.



We not only visit patients but also family members, friends, visitors, volunteers, and the staff. Many people just must hold one of them. One time we were leaving Swedish when over the intercom we heard, "Will Maggie's and Sophie's moms please call extension \_\_\_\_." A patient who had been busy and had really looked forward to a visit was back in her room now. That was a wonderful visit. She was so happy to be able to hold the girls and talk about her dog. Another time, a nurse summoned Maggie and Dinah because a patient was having heart arrhythmia. On that occasion, Maggie did not sit on the patient, but instead lay right beside her and within minutes, the patient's heart rate returned to normal! That memory still brings "goose bumps."

On the way home, they are very tired. We usually let them rest a bit and then go for a leisurely walk.

There are a couple of things the girls wanted us to tell you. First, poodles originated in Germany and were water retrievers; the word *poodle* comes from the German word *pudelin*, which means "to splash." Poodles are the original retrievers. The show trim that you see on a poodle was very functional for retrieving birds from cold lakes. All the untrimmed areas (the fluffed-up parts) served as protection for vital organs, joints, and tips that are vulnerable to frostbite. Maggie and Sophie prefer the puppy cut - clean face and feet - because it is more practical and, of course, according to them, more attractive. Interestingly, the AKC today will not allow poodles to compete in retrieving trials because "they are not retrievers." The AKC has not met Maggie!



The other thing the girls want you to know is that most poodles are not neurotic; they are very smart

and just need lots of love in a good home. They make great pets and they do not shed; often, people with allergies can have a poodle.