



Jane King and Cooper



After my husband, Steve, and I married, we decided we wanted to add a dog to our family. Steve previously had an Irish Wolfhound and I previously had a Doberman Pinscher. Since I wasn't fond of the dog breed he had and he wasn't fond of the dog breed I had, we researched and settled on getting a Golden Retriever in 1987. Little did we know that over the next 30+ years we would own five Golden Retrievers. My current Golden Retriever is Cooper.

Steve and I adopted Cooper when he was one year old in November 2013. Steve had quadruple bypass surgery at a hospital in Colorado Springs prior to

Cooper's adoption and volunteered in the heart care unit at the hospital. Steve talked about individuals bringing in their dogs for visits and brought home some of their business cards. The plan was that Steve and Cooper would get certified to be a therapy team and would visit the heart unit at the Colorado Springs hospital where Steve had surgery and was volunteering.

My journey with Cooper to Denver Pet Partners came from an unfortunate situation, as God had other plans. Steve was diagnosed with Stage IV cancer in September 2015 and passed away in July 2016. I went from full-time to part-time work about 8 months after Steve's passing and knew I wanted to find something to fill my time for when I fully retired. This is Cooper visiting Steve in the hospital - Cooper showed he was a natural at visiting patients.



I signed up for a therapy certification class through the City of Aurora. This class was cancelled, which ended up being a blessing as this led me to Denver Pet Partners. Cooper and I became registered as a therapy team in the Fall of 2018.

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Upon registration, we started volunteering at Rocky Mountain Cancer Center in Aurora. We spent time each week visiting staff and patients. We participated in a program for mentally and physically challenged children one Friday night each month and also completed training and visited hospice companions through Bristol Hospice.

In our visits at the Rocky Mountain Cancer Center, I realized how important Cooper's visits were to staff, as well as patients. Since we visited every Wednesday, Cooper got to know the staff and several patients. A couple of patients saved their crackers or snacks that they were given during treatment to share with Cooper. Cooper always remembered who shared their snacks with him! One day when visiting patients there were two men in the chairs on either side at the end of one aisle. The man on the left did not want a visit and the man on the right did. As Cooper and I visited with the man on the right, Cooper kept turning toward the other man and trying to go over to him. I kept refocusing Cooper on the person we were visiting. Cooper did this three times and we finally said our goodbyes and walked to the next aisle to visit other patients. As we turned down the next aisle, I heard commotion in the aisle we had been in and turned and saw that the man Cooper kept trying to get to had collapsed. I believe in my heart that Cooper knew something was going on and that is why he was trying to get over to that gentleman. The gentlemen had passed out and was fine after some medical attention by the staff.

Another visit that I remember as being very special and emotional was when Cooper and I started our visits with a hospice companion. The lady's daughter made arrangements for a DPP team visit - which ended up being Cooper and me. Our companion spoke Finnish and very little English. During our first visit a couple people involved with the hospice team joined us and took us in to introduce us. The lady was very small and fragile and the one word she almost instantly remembered after introductions was Cooper! I was kneeling on the floor beside her bed and Cooper was sitting beside the bed so she could pet him. All of a sudden, she started singing a song to Cooper in her language and it brought the rest of us to tears. Eventually, we put a blanket on her bed and Cooper got up on the bed with her and put his head on her chest and she petted him and talked to him.

I also remember when Cooper and I signed up for a big convention visit being held in Downtown Denver. The DPP Director at the event was Sandy. Sandy wanted to monitor Cooper because we didn't know how Cooper would react in a noisy, crowded environment. At one point, Sandy came from the other side of our DPP booth to check on us and started laughing because Cooper was on his back with multiple people around him rubbing his belly! Needless to say, we all knew at that moment that the noise and individuals around Cooper did not bother him. I also remember several people wanting to take Cooper home with them - to which they received a big NO from me!

Cooper has missed his visits in the last year due to COVID restrictions. In October 2020, we moved to a different building in the community we live in. As you can see from the picture of Cooper by the tree, he was adopted as the building's therapy/comfort dog and when they

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change the lobby tree from one holiday season to another, I was asked if he could come pose in front of the tree! He was more than happy to cooperate and visit the decorating committee.



Every Tuesday Cooper goes to a friend's home and has a play date with their golden, Holly. These two are so comical and playful together and it is always fun and entertaining when they share time with each other.



Cooper and I have been so fortunate and blessed to have become part of DPP and to be able to share ourselves with others and bring others joy and a smile.

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We are excited about being able to start doing our visits again in the near future (we hope).

