

ROSIE: Rosie's Last Chance, truly was her last chance. After being rescued from an uncaring and unsafe home, she was turned over to Aussie Rescue where she remained in foster care for 10 months. When it appeared she might not be placed, Kay Marks approached Pete Campione, who runs Kindred Souls Canine Center, to take Rosie and see if he could help find her a permanent home. However, neither Pete nor Kay were made aware of Rosie's problems. She was very aggressive with strangers and had a territorial problem with other dogs. She even tried to bite Pete when he first met her. However after some training and a couple of weeks at a busy training facility, like most Aussies, she started to blossom.

It became clear to Pete that if she was to continue to improve, a special owner willing to make a special commitment was necessary. Pete's assistant, Chris Lehmann had been dealing with aggressive dogs for many years. When Rosie and Chris met.... it was love at first site. By placing Rosie with Chris, she had access to continued socialization and training. Plus Chris offered Rosie a home unconditional of whether Rosie continued to improve or not. Chris took Rosie through obedience, agility and Therapy Dog Classes. She even assists Chris in class now. Rosie has since grown to be an outgoing, friendly, reliable and above all, HAPPY dog.

Rosie's last chance found her a winner.



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The Bright & Beautiful Therapy Dogs, Inc.



RECOLLECTIONS II:

MORE TAILS FROM THE FRONT

Recollections... our stories.

Casey : I first heard about the Bright & Beautiful Therapy Dogs program through my Hebrew School teacher.

I was almost thirteen years old, and looking for a meaningful "mitzvah" project to fulfill my Bar Mitzvah requirements. Since my Beagle Casey had always been special to me, the idea of participating with him in a program that would also help others (the very definition of a mitzvah) was appealing. I also knew that Casey would be ideal for pet therapy. His gentle, loving nature, with his soulful eyes, would melt anyone's heart.

Little did I know that the process of getting Casey certified as a therapy dog was more difficult than I had anticipated. After Casey failed the initial skills test, we were referred to a special training course, which we attended for several months. We were required to demonstrate, among other things, that Casey would not be anxious around wheelchairs and crutches, or be too distracted by other dogs. Completing this rigorous course, we finally received our certifications -- Casey as a therapy dog, and me as a pet handler. Beagles are notoriously incorrigible, and since Casey is all Beagle, I am still amazed that he could be trained at all, let alone so well. I was told that I was the youngest pet handler ever to pass the test in our area.

Our first assignment was at the Kessler Institute for Rehabilitation in East Orange, New Jersey. Following the lead of more experienced pet handlers, our goal as we walked from room to room was to bring a little comfort, and try to elicit a bit of conversation, or maybe a smile, from each patient. I was very nervous about our first real visit. Although I had watched and helped Casey become trained, I still could not believe that the Casey I knew at home would ever display the type of behavior needed on therapy visits. He more than proved me wrong. When we walked into the first patient's room it was as though Casey had been doing this for years. He was perfectly behaved and quickly infected most patients with a big smile. What was at first a surprising transformation has become almost second nature for Casey.

After nearly a year at Kessler, I decided to look elsewhere to start my own team at a local nursing home that had never been involved in this program. With the assistance of hospice, I found the Waterview

Nursing Home in Cedar Grove, New Jersey. For the past several years, I have been leading a team of therapy dogs and their handlers on monthly visits to this home. Whenever Casey and I enter Waterview, the reaction of the residents never changes—excited smiles and welcoming pats. I particularly look forward to visiting Ginny, a long term resident who loves dogs, and has a particular fondness for Casey. As we approach, her face lights up and she can't wait to smother Casey with kisses. Each time I visit the home, I am struck by the comfort and joy our visits bring to most of the residents.

I have also taken my dog to camps for children with life-threatening diseases. I love to watch the way that Casey interacts with these kids. It's almost as though he understands the seriousness of their situation, as he brings a smile to their faces and becomes a magnet for their stroking hands.

My visits with Casey have enabled me to give a little to others, simply by sharing with them something I love (Casey). These visits have also helped me mature and become more outgoing. When I first started out, I was a little shy and anxious about having to introduce myself to so many people. Now, I am more at ease in social situations. An unexpected benefit from pet therapy has been my growth as a public speaker. As one of the youngest pet handlers, I have been a featured speaker at mitzvah fairs, giving information on certification, and encouraging other kids to pursue this volunteer work. Year after year, more and more students have followed my example. I hope they have found pet therapy as meaningful as I have.



Frenchie: Employee of the Month

Frenchie, a retired racing greyhound owned and handled by Annie Watson, who is also a teacher at Governor Livingston High School.



Frenchie earned the honor of Employee of the Month for April 2003 at Governor Livingston High School.

She received certificates, a wonderful letter of congratulations and her very own parking space for the month!

Beautiful Frenchie was one of our original therapy dogs and also a test dog. She and Annie were familiar sights at most of our events. She was a great comfort to the WTC 9/11 families.

Sadly, cancer took Frenchie from us in July 2003 — we all miss her terribly.

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SeiiChi: SeiiChi and I visit Colony Bend Elementary, in Sugarland, Texas. SeiiChi visits second graders every Wednesday. I usually read a book to the children and then it's "Storytime with SeiiChi".



We are encouraging reluctant readers to select a doggie book, practice reading orally and then they have their personal time with Mr. SeiiChi. He's a wonderful and loving listener and they are loving it. The little girl in the photo needed a "perk" and thinks she has no friends. She wrote SeiiChi a note after their time "I like to read to SeiiChi. It feels good and it makes me read."

SeiiChi also led a Fourth of July heroes parade at this same school including policemen, firefighters, etc. SeiiChi represented the Bright & Beautiful Therapy Dogs, Inc. and all the pet therapy dogs across our country who make weekly visits and touch the hearts of people of all ages.

SeiiChi is a 4 year old Standard Poodle who also has an obedience title and Canine Good Citizen Award. He is being trained for advanced obedience competition...but we are most proud of his weekly visits to Park Place Assisted Living facility and Colony Bend....he does his best work there giving kisses and unconditional love.