



Pet Pals is Proud to Present our Read to Rover Video!

We hope you have had a chance to view our professionally prepared promotional video showcasing our Read to Rover therapy dog program. But if not, we invite you to see it! Our goal for the video is to increase community awareness and to attract new volunteers who may be inspired by this unique way to serve our community. It is also a touching reminder of what your support for OMPP means to the community and a feel good way to share our gratitude.

“After Don and Sylvia White offered a generous donation to fund a new project for our therapy dog program, the decision was made to produce a video giving the general public an inside look at our amazing Read to Rover program,” explains board president Pam Kolacy. Erin and Casey Roberts of Inle Media Company were selected to produce the video. The video includes reading sessions with the kids, interviews with teachers, administrators, volunteers, and parents of Read to Rover alums.

The easiest way to access the video from an announcement in this printed newsletter is to go to the front page of our website: ompetpals.org where you can click on a photo (like the one below) that links to the video on YouTube. Otherwise, you can type in this URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqFfSQS6q7g>.

We hope you enjoy this taste of the Read to Rover experience!



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Ginny Messina
Kathleen Mitchell
Bob Podrat
Michelle Sandoval

Olympic Mountain Pet Pals is a 501(c)(3) (non-profit) organization whose mission is to prevent the birth of unwanted pets and community cats through our spay and neuter programs. We are funded by donations and grants.

For more information about Olympic Mountain Pet Pals, visit our website at www.ompetspals.org

From the President

Many of you have seen our Read to Rover video by now and I daresay you have shed a tear or two seeing the emotional connection between the dogs and kids in our school reading programs. Thanks again to Don and Sylvia White, for choosing to fund this groundbreaking film project. We could not be more proud of our therapy dog programs and know that these programs capture the attention and hearts of our supporters.

At the same time, OMPP remains dedicated to our primary mission of funding spay and neuter services for lower income families in Jefferson County. As the bulk of our funding goes to these programs, I want to emphasize again the extreme importance of a continuing spay and neuter program to animal welfare in our community.

OMPP has provided financial assistance for over 7,000 spay/neuter procedures but the need continues to be great. Our partners, Humane Society of Jefferson County and Center Valley Animal Rescue, are facing the same issues as the rest of the country in terms of staffing and economic challenges which affect their ability to provide these services. We are confident that with our established programs and positive history we can keep Jefferson County in the forefront of pet population control.

We understand the economy is shaky and there are many, many causes worthy of your support. Please remember that providing low cost spay/neuter services makes a great difference to many, many families and pets in our local community. Our donations have dropped more than 40% this year so please know that every donation helps no matter what size. Please consider supporting our all-volunteer organization as we continue working to make our corner of the world a better place for animals and their families.



Pam Kolacy and her cat, Ollie



Photo credit: Deja Webster of
Deja View Photography

Follow us on social media!

Olympic Mountain Pet Pals can be found at both Facebook and Instagram.

Facebook @ompetspals
<https://www.facebook.com/ompetspals>

Instagram ompetspals
<https://www.instagram.com/ompetspals/>

Pet Pals is Grateful for Community Support

Olympic Mountain Pet Pals Thanks These Local Businesses for Their Generous Contributions:

- **Lucky Dog Training Center**, owned by Georgia Towle, for therapy dog testing.
- **OlympusNet**, owned by Ned Schumann, for hosting our website.
- **Olympic Mailing Service**, owned by Caroline Stuckey, for handling the printing and mailing of our newsletter.
- **Helmsman Financial** for help with our accounts.
- **Deja View Photography**, owned by Deja Webster, for providing photos of shelter dogs and cats for the newsletter.
- **The Gathering Place** for providing dog treats for Read to Rover.
- **PT Shirt Company**, owned by Frank Iuro, for supplying our Read to Rover tee shirts.
- **Printery Communications/ Star Copy Center** for handling many of our printing needs

Spay & Neuter Funding is as Important as Ever

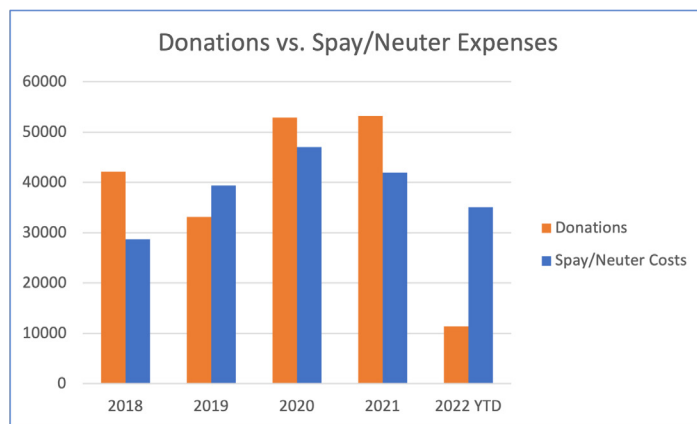
The high level of spay-neuter achieved over the past five decades is the single most important driver of reduced pet overpopulation and euthanasia in animal shelters. The rise in subsidized spay/neuter access helped drive the euthanasia of shelter pets in the United States from an estimated 13.5 million in 1973 to 1.5 million in 2019. (Simone Guerios, D.V.M., Ph.D.)

However, since the pandemic, the University of Florida Shelter Medicine Program reports almost 3 million missing neuter/spay surgeries in the U.S. and the progress made over decades to control overpopulation of dogs and cats through high volume s/n surgeries is now at risk.

What does this mean on a personal level? My own cat Ollie resided at our local shelter for over three months because she had a bad habit of giving “love bites” to prospective adopters. Draco, a senior dog with medical issues, was recently adopted after nearly six months at our shelter and according to his photos, he is the king of the world at his beautiful new home. Before the shelter became an open admission facility under the Humane Society, we adopted our dog Gus hours before he would have been euthanized. Every one of my pets has been a rescue dog or cat and every one has brought me great joy. Every one of them has been loving, loyal, funny, entertaining, and above all, a life worth saving.

Overcrowding leads to terrible choices. If a shelter is flooded with animals, there are usually two options – turn animals away or euthanize healthy residents to make room for new animals. This is a situation we never want to see and we are determined to keep up our efforts so that every deserving animal in the care of our local shelter has a chance for their own happy ending.

In East Jefferson County, OMPP’s funding of spay/neuter clinics has, so far, bucked the national trend of missing surgeries. We’ve increased the number of supported low-income operations over previous years while significantly reducing the average cost of each operation. But, we can only keep up this success as long as our donations keep up with the demand. Please help us to continue to save lives by supporting OMPP’s local spay/neuter programs.

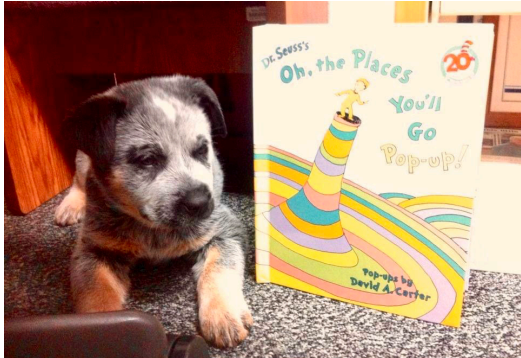


Unsustainable deficit between donation income and expenditures on S/N clinics may limit the number of S/N operations we can provide

Meet Library Read to Rover Dog, Gryfin

By Gryfin Weaver

Hi kids! My name is Gryfin, and I am a Blue Heeler a.k.a. an Australian Cattle Dog. Cattle Dogs were bred from dingoes, the wild dogs of Australia and a mix of British and American dogs like Dalmatians. Heelers were bred to herd cattle and are considered one of the smartest dog breeds. I am a young eight-year-old forever puppy. I was born on New Year's Eve 2013, right before the Seahawks won the Super Bowl. My whole litter was named after the team: my



As a Puppy

sister was called Coach Carroll and brothers were named Wilson, Baldwin, Sherman, and Chancellor. As for me I was Beast Mode. I came to my family when I was a wriggly bundle of chubby puppy energy when I was just eight weeks old. The nickname they gave me was “Panda Pooch” because I had black circles around my sweet brown eyes and kids thought I looked like a panda bear. They gave me the official name Gryfin after the mythological beast to connect with my first name of Beast Mode.

I loved going to school and graduated from classes beginning in puppy kindergarten all the way through my adult dog classes. I worked hard to earn my Canine Good Citizen certificates and my Olympic Mountain Pet Pals Certified Therapy Dog certificate. My humans James & Melody are so proud of me and even have my certificates framed on the wall.

Melody knew I would make a great Read to Rover dog because I am so happy and calm around everyone and I love when kids read to me. I passed my first test with flying colors and became certified as a Read to Rover dog in January 2020. I was so excited to be able to visit with people in libraries, schools, and hospitals.

Then the pandemic hit and I had to be a patient pup. Did I mention I love kids and meeting new people! I missed all the people so much during the pandemic. My very first Read to Rover sessions were over Zoom in Summer 2020. I got so excited seeing and hearing the kids read to me over Zoom that I wagged my tail so loudly I had to be put on mute. This summer, I finally got to have kids read in person with me at the Port Townsend Public Library.

I'm a cattle dog and cattle dogs love going to work. Melody is the library director and loves to bring me to work to have kids read to me. My other human James (Melody's husband) gets to have doggy days when he goes to work at a marina. Visiting them both at work is a lot of fun. When I'm at the library, I get to see kids and be read to, and when I visit the marina, I get to walk the docks and meet boaters.

This summer I helped a couple of little boys gain confidence in their reading. I am a patient listener and loved when the same boys would return to read books to me each week during summer reading and give me pets and hugs. Reading to a dog counted toward time spent reading during the library's annual Summer Reading Program. My favorite moment this summer was when a little six-year-old boy named Holden read all of Dr. Seuss' Horton Hears a Who to me. He did different voices and everything! It was the best!

My little puppy sister is named Rogue. She is a Red Heeler and named after the Rogue River. So, when little kids see us together, they excitedly shout “Bluey and Bingo.” Often people think my sister and I starred in the beloved Australian children's cartoon about a



Melody and Gryfin at the Library



Summer reading with kids



With sister Rogue

Heeler family. Although I'm not a movie star, I am a star in the Read to Rover program.

When I am not at the library as a Read to Rover dog, I love to swim and fetch sticks in the Puget Sound. I am an experienced whitewater rafter, international traveler, and backpacker. I have spent weeks in the wilderness whitewater rafting with my family and dog friends. My best friend is another Blue Heeler named Isaac Bailey; he has rafted thousands of miles of rivers. He and his little sister Outlaw Josey Wales go whitewater rafting with us a lot. When I hear rapids coming, I point my ears up and snuggle in the raft, so I don't fall out. I always wear my C.F.D. (canine flotation device- a lifejacket for dogs). Another favorite pastime is hiking and backpacking in the Olympics and Cascade Mountains. I love sleeping under the stars with my humans. In 2019, I got to participate in the Port Townsend Kinetic Sculpture race with my humans and was invited to be on stage with my handsome blue bandana.

Being a Read to Rover dog is my favorite job. My breed is considered a working breed, so I am proud to have a profession and make a difference in kids' lives.

Reading is one of the best things people of all ages can do to relieve stress, build empathy, and have fun. I hope other dogs and their humans will reach out to Olympic Mountain Pet Pals and learn how to become a licensed certified therapy dog. It's the best job ever!!!

You can find me in the Children's Room of the Port Townsend Library almost every Thursday from 3:30-4:30 pm. I love reading with kids after school! The library is located at 1220 Lawrence St.



On the water

Pets to People Visits To Begin Again

In the Pets to People Program, volunteers share their own therapy dogs with the residents of local assisted living homes including Life Care Center, Avamere, and Victoria Place. Unfortunately, Pets to People visits were on hold during the pandemic phase of COVID-19. We are thrilled to announce that we are now being welcomed back into these facilities! The directors from these homes commented on how great the need is for outside stimulation for the residents who have been forced to basically live in a vacuum since the beginning of Covid. The Pets to People visits had been a great source of joy for many as they interacted with our wonderful dogs and related stories about the dogs they had over their lifetimes.

Many thanks to Lana O'Neill for shepherding the program up until the pandemic shutdowns. We are excited that Georgia Towle has offered to step forward to lead this project now that it can more safely return. She had been a regular participant in the past and is passionate about reviving the program.

If you and your dog would like to make visits to seniors as a therapy dog team, please contact Georgia, 360-752-0908, theluckydogtraining@gmail.com.

The Lucky Dog Training Center

"Train, Don't Complain!"



Georgia Towle
360.732.0908
www.theluckydogtraining.com

581 Ole Torkelson Rd
Chimacum, WA 98325



Georgia's Topaz at Victoria Place

READ to ROVER is Back in Session

By Donna Geer

Maybe it was the red shirt. Perhaps, but I've heard that red is the hardest color for a dog to see, so maybe it was the shirt's logo of a dog studiously perusing the pages of a bestseller on top of a pile of other extraordinary books. The book could have been a classic, I suppose. Maybe it was my own excitement popping to the surface, even though I was carefully trying to hide my eagerness. Dogs can read the cues, however, and my pup Cooper knew exactly what was going on. We were going to our first READ to ROVER session of the school year.

He followed me around the house like I had bacon in my pocket, doing the best imitation of a heel command I'd ever seen him perform. When it was finally time to head to school, he jumped in the car and patiently waited while I loaded the rest of the gear. He was ready to go to work, even before I put his bandana on!

On Oct 12, our READ to ROVER (R2R) volunteers headed to Salish Coast Elementary for our "first day of school". Volunteers and dogs were brimming with excitement when they walked through those library doors. Some of our volunteers hadn't seen each other since the summer started, so it was fun to catch up. The dogs did it too. Some pups, Cooper for sure, yipped when they saw their buddies. They too wanted to greet their long-lost friends. Our new volunteers became immersed in the program so quickly, it was hard to tell who was there for the first time.

After we settled into our reading spaces, the first group of children filed in and went to their places, focused on the dogs who would be their companions for twenty minutes. Dogs and children spent a few minutes getting acquainted, sharing names and sometimes ages, favorite things to do and pets waiting back at home. They each brought books with them, and one-by-one, second graders started reading stories out loud, sharing pictures with the dogs. Children were great at multi-tasking in this environment and many of them found ways to pet the dogs while still turning pages.

READ to ROVER's goal is to encourage a love of reading through the use of therapy dogs. Second graders are always eager to learn and having a dog by their side while they read can be infectious. In fact, children will often start reading to their own pets at home. Reading levels vary, so volunteers help children navigate words if they need a little help. Our dogs aren't concerned with reading skills, preferring to focus on the sound of a child's voice and the brush of their hand. At the end of each session, it's common for kids to say 'thank you' by giving the dogs a treat and some dogs even respond with a trick.

The READ to ROVER program is successful because of our volunteers and their dogs. It's really as simple as that. The bond between a volunteer and their therapy dog is quite special and once a week, those teams come to school to share their own love of reading with the children they visit. In the end, it's all about volunteers and their dogs creating the space for reading to flourish, each and every time a child reads to them.

There's also something else at play. Both Salish Coast Elementary and Chimacum Creek Primary have opened their doors to our volunteers and their dogs. Everyone from the principals, the teachers, the staff and the children, have been unwavering in their support of our endeavor. Without their assistance, there would be no READ to ROVER. Both schools have embraced our program, and they have been instrumental in giving us the space and the time to read with the children once a week. As you can imagine, we are a bit of a disruption when we enter the school grounds. Seriously, how many kids do you know that can stay away from friendly dogs walking down a school hallway? Not even my dog Cooper can resist that!

With a new school year comes changes, so we wanted to give a shout-out to Cameron Quinn, Salish Coast Elementary's new librarian. Our READ to ROVER program has doubled in size from last year, so in addition to starting a new role at the school, she was also instrumental in helping our first day back to school be a 'barking' success! Cooper and I can't wait to go to school next week. Bet you can't either!



**"Captain" Cameron Quinn
with dogs, Finn and Toula**

The list of 2022 donors will appear in the Spring 2023 issue.
The list of "In honor of" and "In memory of" gifts is current as of October 15, 2022.

IN HONOR OF...

Finn and Buster, our beloved pets

Diane and Clinton Hurd

Kate Schumann

Janet and Mike Mortenson

Steve, for 34 years and counting

Jan Schroeder

IN MEMORY OF...

Bella, my beloved kitty

Maria Holtgrave

Boji, beloved Read to Rover and Pets to People dog of Georgia Towle and Patty Greeny

Carla Ellis and Rick Floyd

Pat Swain

Bonnie Masi's beloved cat Sparky

Kathy and Steve Minta

Briana, beloved Read to Rover dog of Ginny Partridge

Carla Ellis and Rick Floyd

Pat Swain

Carmen, my beloved kitty

Carol Baker

Cooper, beloved dog of Chris Hankins

Maggie Smith

Darby, beloved Read to Rover and Pets to People dog of Lana and Tim O'Neill

Carla Ellis and Rick Floyd

Pat Swain

Dottie, beloved Read to Rover dog of Michael Everitt

Pat Swain

Ginger, our beloved companion

Maureen Huff and Karen

Crouse

Handley, Wimsey, Joey and Peetie, my beloved cats

Sandy Guinup

Louise Hartford, beloved sister of Linnea Patrick

Pam Kolacy

Hennessy, beloved dog of Brooke Heraty

Will and Patricia Barrett

Johanna Goering

Sheryl and Kenneth Klock

Lily, my beloved Read to Rover dog

Pat Swain

Pat Swain's beloved dog Lily

Alberdina de Boer

Liza, beloved dog of Pete Cannon

Pam Kolacy

Lizzie, beloved feline of 15 years of John Erickson and Lauren McConnell

Janet and Mike Mortenson

Maddie McColgan Pastore, who was loved every day of her extraordinary life

Barbara McColgan

Max, beloved dog of Mary O'Shaughnessy and Charlie Van Gilder

Will and Patricia Barrett

Remembering Our Pets

Losing a beloved pet can be devastating but it helps to know that others care about your loss. Contributing a memorial gift to Olympic Mountain Pet Pals in honor of a friend's dear companion both expresses your sympathy and helps local animals. When we receive a gift in memory or in honor of a pet or person, we acknowledge that gift to the family with a personalized Olympic Mountain Pet Pals card. Please include the name of the pet or person to be remembered and the name and address of the person who should be notified of your donation when you make your contribution. Your kindness will be greatly appreciated.

Nora Mitchell's noble doggie,

Sir Reginald Mitchell

Melody Sky and James Weaver

Pam and Keith Kolacy

Sandy, Oliver, Patches and Happy, my beloved dogs

Marcia Jones Hartshorn

Scott Landis and Arlo

Bill Curtsinger

Scott Landis and all the animals whose lives he made better

Carrie Andrews

Scott Landis, beloved husband of Kathleen Mitchell

Liz Tobin and Tyler Thomas

Shasta, beloved dog of Linda and Rick York

Will and Patricia Barrett

Shorty, beloved dog of Judy Edwards

Nancy Wyatt

Sidney, beloved Read to Rover dog of Christina Pivarnik

Carla Ellis and Rick Floyd

Pat Swain

Our beloved Read to Rover dog Sidney

Christina Pivarnik

Sonnich Brinch

Jennifer Brinch

Therapy Dog Molly

Elaine and Bill Eppick

Whiskey, beloved and beautiful mare of Eric and Claudia

Monroe

Nancy Wyatt

Olympic Mountain Pet Pals lost a good friend with the passing of **Scott Landis**, beloved husband of Kathleen Mitchell, in 2020. We were honored to be included as one of the non-profits Scott supported which were represented at his Celebration of Life. He will always be remembered as a compassionate and generous force for good and a champion of animals in need.



**Chimacum Creek Primary School
Read to Rover teams, 2021-2022**



**Salish Coast Elementary School
Read to Rover teams, 2021-2022**

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