

PAWS FOR KIDS AAI PROGRAM - TEAM PROFILES

1. BRIDGEPORT AREA OFFICE:

Elizabeth Lynch and Daisy




Dr. Elizabeth Lynch is a veterinarian and has been an AAI volunteer for 19 years. She is an AAI team evaluator for Pet Partners and a national evaluator for those who want to become AAI evaluators. Elizabeth and Daisy are very excited to work with DCF children and have a lot of experience in a variety of settings including hospitals and schools. Daisy prefers calm interactions over very active ones and is looking forward to showing and learning new tricks with children. Elizabeth and Daisy are equally happy visiting boys and girls between 10-17 years old.

Harvey Kravetz and Scooter




Harvey and Scooter have been together for over 6 years and have been working as an AAI Team for over 5 years. Harvey is a retired financial adviser who enjoys volunteering. As a volunteer AAI team, Harvey and Scooter visit pre-k classrooms, elementary and high schools, local colleges and universities, nursing homes and hospice patients. Scooter is loving and compassionate and Harvey wants to share him with DCF children. Scooter loves to be with young people of all ages and wants to make them happy whether that be snuggling, playing a game of catch or just hanging out together. Anyone spending even a short time with Scooter will immediately recognize that he is a warm and giving soul.

2. DANBURY AREA OFFICE:

Dorie Kelly and Ben	
 A photograph of Dorie Kelly, a woman with short brown hair, wearing a white long-sleeved top and black polka-dot pants. She is sitting on a blue chair and holding a blue leash attached to a large white golden retriever named Ben. Dorie is smiling at the camera.	<p>Dorie and her golden retriever Ben have been together for 8 years. Dorie and Ben love volunteering at ACES with disabled children and at hospitals and WestConn, Yale, and Gateway H.S. campuses during “destress the students” days. Ben loves children and is a very low-key dog. He also loves to play but because he is so large, he is extra gentle with the little children. Ben loves boys and girls of all ages equally.</p>

3. HARTFORD AREA OFFICE:

Alexis Pariano and Murray	
 A photograph of Alexis Pariano, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue denim shirt. She is holding a small pug dog named Murray. Alexis has a neutral expression.	<p>Alexis has 3 dogs, Murray & Oscar who are both Pugs and Lilly, who is a Black Labrador Retriever. All 3 dogs are therapy dogs, registered with Pet Partners and perform a variety of volunteer visits at the School for the Deaf as well as other elementary, middle, and high schools. Alexis was a teacher for many years and now spends most of her time as an AAI team as well as evaluating and training other dogs/owners to become AAI teams. Alexis and her pack believe strongly in the human/animal bond that can bring comfort to all people, especially children, and they are looking forward to working with DCF children. Both Murray and Lilly love calm and active interactions with children while Oscar, who is a bit older, prefers calmer interactions.</p>

Alexis Pariano and Lilly



Alexis has 3 dogs, Murray & Oscar who are both Pugs and Lilly, who is a Black Labrador Retriever. All 3 dogs are therapy dogs, registered with Pet Partners and perform a variety of volunteer visits at the School for the Deaf as well as other elementary, middle, and high schools. Alexis was a teacher for many years and now spends most of her time as an AAI team as well as evaluating and training other dogs/owners to become AAI teams. Alexis and her pack believe strongly in the human/animal bond that can bring comfort to all people, especially children, and they are looking forward to working with DCF children. Both Murray and Lilly love calm and active interactions with children while Oscar, who is a bit older, prefers calmer interactions.



4. MERIDEN AREA OFFICE:

Debbie Purchia and Freya



Debbie and Freya have been a registered AAI team for 5 years. Freya is a Doberman Pincher who loves to visit adults and children at hospice and Alzheimer's centers, staff who work at Aetna, the Polish Home, and the New Britain senior center. Debbie is bi-lingual and shares that she is looking forward to making children happy through connections with dogs. Freya loves both calm and active interactions with children of any age; she is not so happy about thunderstorms or firecrackers and seek out her mom during these times.

5. MIDDLETOWN AREA OFFICE:

<p data-bbox="318 327 634 359">Mary Garretts and Coco</p>  A photograph of Mary Garretts, a woman with blonde curly hair, wearing a dark blue jacket, sitting outdoors and smiling. A golden retriever dog, Coco, is sitting in front of her, looking towards the camera.	<p data-bbox="773 369 1416 751">Mary and Coco have been together for 5 years and an AAI registered team with Pet Partners for over a year. Coco is a 5-year old Golden Retriever who loves visiting students in middle school and high school during their lunch periods and at Read Across America Day in East Lyme. Coco was the smallest pup of 14 in her litter and she loves playing with her friends at dog parks, walking on trails and going on hikes. Mary believes that Coco will love working with DCF kids and that she is up for calm and active children of any age (3-17).</p>
<p data-bbox="323 951 630 982">Tiffany Riggs and Daisy</p>  A photograph of Tiffany Riggs, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a blue denim jacket over a dark blue top and a patterned skirt, sitting on a grassy area. A black Labrador retriever dog, Daisy, is sitting next to her, looking towards the camera.	<p data-bbox="773 993 1416 1375">Tiffany and Daisy have been an AAI registered team for 6 1/2 years and are very busy with their volunteer work. Tiffany, who is also dog trainer with Fidelco Guide Dog Foundation, says that Daisy loves her work. Daisy, a Black Labrador Retriever, spreads her joy with children at elementary schools (some of which have down syndrome or autism); patients at Whiting Forensic Hospital, and with elders who live at the Saybrook/Haddam Assisted Living facility. Daisy is happy visit with children of any age, and she likes interactions that are both calm and active.</p>

Mandy Weber and Marnie



Mandy and Marnie have been together for 9 years and as a registered AAI team for 5 years. This team currently works with DCF children who are residing at Solnit and also loves to visit nursing homes and staff who work at Aetna. Marnie is very excited to visit DCF children and is happy to snuggle with boys and girls of any age (3-17)

6. NEW BRITAIN AREA OFFICE

Rob Casey and Aspen



Rob and Aspen have been a team for 11 years. Aspen is an Australian Shepherd and loves her volunteer work. Rob and Aspen are a registered team with Pet Partners and have been volunteering as an AAI team for 3 years. Rob is also a dog trainer and helps dog owners to train their dogs in a humane, positive way. Rob and Aspen spend their time volunteering at libraries in Bristol and Plainville where kids take turns reading to Aspen. Aspen says when she is around children, she makes them feel calm; she also prefers calm interactions with children and can't wait to snuggle and listen to children read to her. Aspen is interested in meeting children of any age.

Alexis Pariano and Oscar



Alexis has 3 dogs, Murray & Oscar who are both Pugs and Lilly, who is a Black Labrador Retriever. All 3 dogs are therapy dogs, registered with Pet Partners and perform a variety of volunteer visits at the School for the Deaf as well as other elementary, middle, and high schools. Alexis was a teacher for many years and now spends most of her time as an AAI team as well as evaluating and training other dogs/owners to become AAI teams. Alexis and her pack believe strongly in the human/animal bond that can bring comfort to all people, especially children, and they are looking forward to working with DCF children. Both Murray and Lilly love calm and active interactions with children while Oscar, who is a bit older, prefers calmer interactions.

7. NEW HAVEN AREA OFFICE

Robin Blasow and Charlie



Robin was a school social worker in Waterford with both middle and high school students before retiring. Robin has been working as a Pet Partners registered AAI Team with Charlie for four years. They work with adolescents at Solnit Center as well as students at Morgan High School in Clinton, Haddam Killingworth High School, Beecher Magnet School in New Haven, and Clark Lane Middle School in Waterford. Charlie and Robin are proud of their nurturing presence with children of all ages. Robin, who has experience working with DCF children, feels that the Paws for Kids program will bring a lot of positivity to kids who don't always experience a lot of joy. Robin and Charlie are interested in working with boys and girls of any age (3-17).

Susan Smith and Charlie



Susan is the former Director of Social Work at the Bridgeport Public Schools and has been working as a Pet Partners registered AAI Team with Charlie for four years. Susan and Charlie visit adolescents at Solnit South and well as Clinton High School, and at various health fairs. Susan, who has experience working with DCF children, feel that the Paws for Kids program will bring positivity to kids who don't always experience a lot of joy. Susan and Charlie are interested in working with boys and girls of any age (3-17).

8. NORWICH AREA OFFICE

Leigh Pappas and Oliver



Leigh and Oliver and been a team for 3 yrs. and a registered AAI team for 1.5 yrs. They currently visit three Natchaug locations, local schools, a church, a library and at community events. Leigh and Oliver live on their farm with other animals in the eastern part of the state. Leigh over 15 years of volunteer experience with children in foster care, and children, adolescents, and adults with mental health/substance abuse disorders. Oliver is a very gentle donkey who kind, curious, and very attentive to children, especially children who have had past difficulties. Oliver is looking forward to visiting boys and girls involved with DCF of all ages.

9. WATERBURY AREA OFFICE

Lisa Fimbers and Lola



Lisa and Lola have been together for 6 years and a registered AAI team for over a year. Lisa worked with DCF kids in her job with Children in Placement program and has many years of experience volunteering with Lola. Lisa and Lola are very excited to meet and work with DCF children feels that the work will be very rewarding. Lola loves children of any age (3-17) and boys and girls alike.

10. WILLIMANTIC AREA OFFICE:

Kate Bars and Sadie



Kate and Sadie have been together for 3 years and as an AAI team through Pet Partners for over a year. Kate is a teacher in Pomfret, CT where she has taught 1st graders for 33 years! Kate and Sadie are very excited for the opportunity to visit with DCF children and are equally happy to visit with both boys and girls, 5-17 years old. She is a super gentle yellow lab with beautiful expressive eyes. She likes to play tug and hide and seek and to give "puppy hugs." She very social and considers everyone her friend.