

# CPAWS SCOOP

## NURTURING THE HUMAN-ANIMAL BOND



### In this Issue:

- Upcoming Testing
- 5 Fun Facts about AAI
- Our Read with Me Program
- What have we been up to recently?
- Canine Body Language
- Team Evaluation Renewal Tips
- Tips for the most common "problem areas" for renewing teams

## Upcoming Testing

On Saturday, May 28th, Compassionate Paws, Inc. will hold Pet Partner Team Evaluations in Rome at St. Peters Episcopal Church (104 East 4th Avenue). If you are interested in testing or renewing your registration please visit [petpartners.org](http://petpartners.org) to register and share this information with others.

### Successful Therapy Animals

- Are people-oriented, sociable, and friendly
- Have good basic obedience skills
- Remain calm and are comfortable being touched by others
- Are non-aggressive towards animals and people

### Successful Handlers

- Are friendly, professional and polite
- Can predict and redirect their animal's behavior
- Ensure their animal's well-being at all times
- Follows Pet Partners policies & procedures

### How to Become a Pet Partners Therapy Animal Team



**5 Fun Facts about Animal Assisted Intervention:**

1. Humans have had a long-standing relationship with animals! 12,000 years ago a human skeleton, holding a puppy, was found in northern Israel (Morrison, 2007). When looking at the impact of reading to an animal in a population of homeschooled students, it was found that reading to a dog significantly impacted student reading rates (Smith, 2010).
2. The simple act of petting an animal releases an automatic relaxation response, releasing hormones that can play a part in elevating one's mood (UCLA Health, 2020). Reading aloud to a therapy dog team tended to increase children's scores on a test of oral reading fluency much more than reading aloud to peers (Levinson et al., 2017).
3. Dogs are the most common type of animal used in AAIs, but the following animals have also been shown to have beneficial health effects: cats, guinea pigs, cockatoos, African gray parrots, fish, horses, goats, chickens, donkeys, dolphins, pot-bellied pigs, and llamas (Delta Society, 2005).
4. In times when the use of real animals is prohibited or not practical, virtual pet therapy has been shown to be helpful, even lowering individuals' heart rates and blood pressure (Wells, 2005).
5. Research has shown that AAIs have been beneficial in hospitals, nursing homes, hospice care, mental health facilities, schools, and correctional facilities (Morrison, 2007). These settings are non-exhaustive.

**Our Read With Me Program**

Read With Me brings together our Pet Partner Teams with schools or events to improve student/child engagement, literacy, and a love for reading. We are excited to be back in schools working with students and attending events where our teams read with children. On April 2nd we participated in the Summerville Spring Market and offered children an opportunity to read with our teams. We will also be participating in the ArtsFest on May 7th in Downtown Rome.



Pictured Teams: Louis and Misty, Zoe and Virginia, Cathy and Sparrow, and Belle and Sarah. Board Members: Vicky VanPelt and Linda Jennings.

*What have we been up to recently?*



**Advent Health Redmond  
Residents in the Graduate Medical Education Program**

Pictured Teams: Louis and Misty, Chester and Minako, Sparrow and Cathy, and Zoe and Virginia.



**Berry College Agriculture Week**

Pictured Teams: Sparrow and Cathy, Chester and Minako, and Louis and Misty.

### *What have we been up to recently? (Continued)*



#### **Darlington School Visit**

Pictured Teams: Louis and Misty, Sparrow and Cathy, Chester and Minako.



#### **Cathy and Sparrow participated in Read Across America at Anna K. Davie Elementary School**



Pictured Team:  
Fiona and Rany.

#### **Atrium Health Floyd**

## Canine Body Language - *Your Dog Is Trying To Tell You Something -by the American Kennel Club*

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With the possible exception of Dr. Doolittle, no one is having a conversation with a dog. You probably talk to your dog. But he doesn't reply.

Still, dogs communicate their wants and needs, their happiness and fear, and quite effectively, their aggression. Their messages are conveyed primarily through body language (though barks, growls and whimpers have distinct meanings). So it's important to recognize what these signals mean.



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### **AGGRESSION**

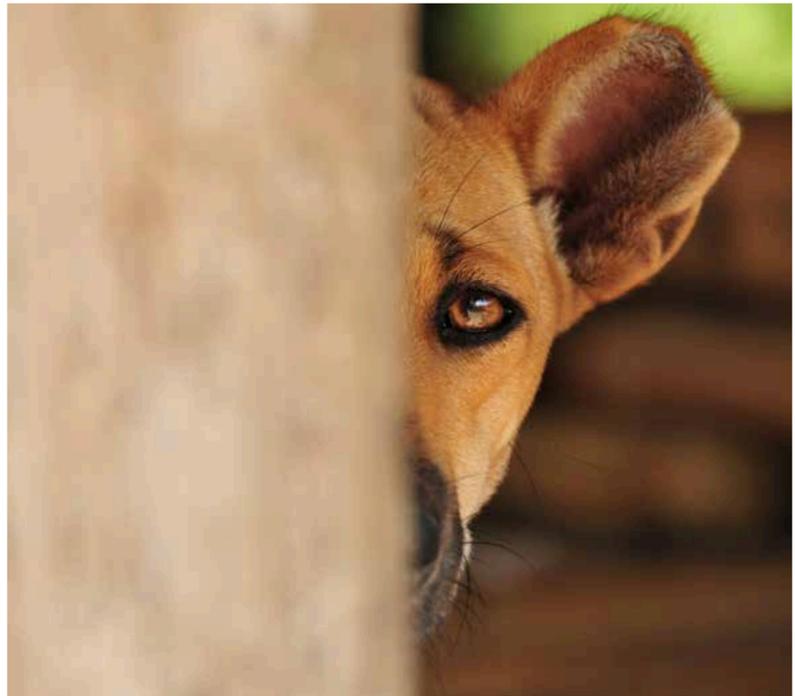
An aggressive dog will expose his teeth, narrow his eyes and tense his body. The dog is growling, snarling, aggressively barking and possibly snapping his jaw. A dog is preparing to attack when he freezes his position, standing with legs splayed and head low.



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**ANXIETY/FEAR**

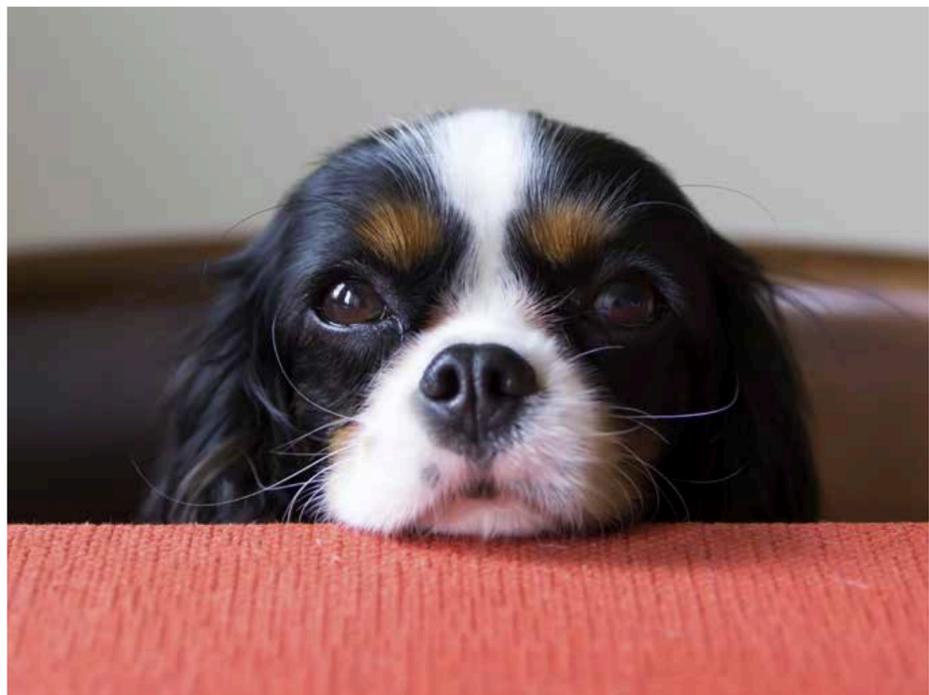
An anxious dog might exhibit such avoidance behaviors as turning head away, hiding behind a person or object, or rolling onto his back to be submissive. Fear prompts a dog to put his tail between his legs, to flatten and lay back his ears, to crouch and possibly tremble.



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**PERSUASION**

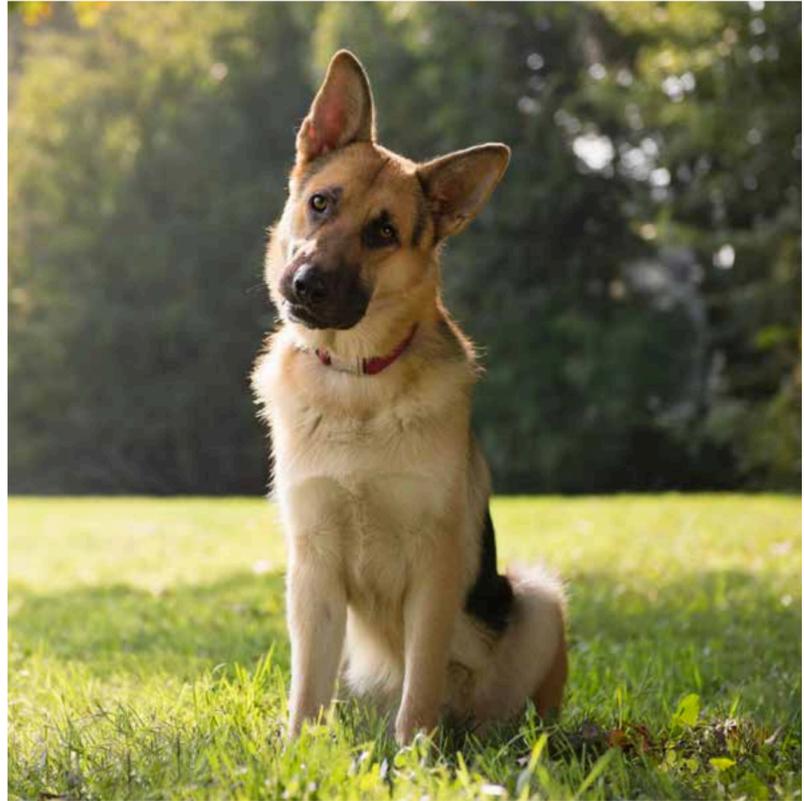
A dog might stamp its feet, alternating its left and right front legs, when he wants something, or wants its owner's attention. A long stare also could be a sign that a dog wants something.



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**INTEREST/CURIOSITY**

A dog tilting his head to either side indicates curiosity. Ears pointed forward, neck craned and eyes intense are signs that a dog's interest has been peaked. His body tenses, his tail is high or slowly wagging. A dog focused on a squirrel would exhibit this body language, for example.

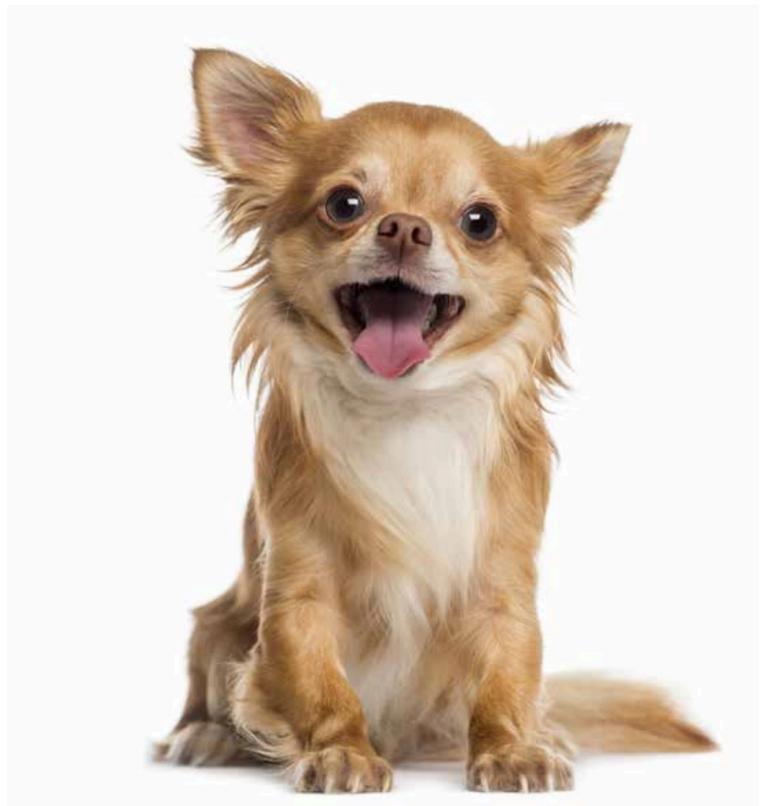


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**HAPPINESS**

A happy dog is relaxed in posture, perhaps lying with one paw tucked under his body. If he's in a playful mood, he's panting, enthusiastically wagging his tail and could crouch into a "play bow." His ears might be perked up and he could be bouncing or jumping with excitement.

A dog will lick another dog's face when they greet each other to indicate friendliness. A dog will lick a person's hand after sniffing it as a form of greeting.



**WHERE TO MASSAGE YOUR DOG**

• AND THE HEALTH BENEFITS FOR EACH •

- STRESS AND ANXIETY
- RESTLESSNESS
- DIGESTIVE ISSUES
- HEART HEALTH
- COMFORT AND TRUST
- FLEXIBILITY AND RANGE OF MOTION

#THESECRETLIFEPETS

if i was  
anything like  
**my dog**

i'd greet everyone i know  
with sheer **enthusiasm**

i'd consistently  
react with joy  
to a **smiling face**  
or a **simple treat**

and i'd ride through **life**  
with the window wide open

and **gleefully** welcome  
the breezes of  
experience in my face!

10vet99.com

**SUBMISSION**

A submissive dog bows his head and flattens his ears. His tail might be tucked between his legs or he might raise a front paw. Of course, a submissive dog will lie on his back, belly up. A form of teeth baring by some dogs is seen as a submissive grin.



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**A FINAL POINT**  
Keep in mind that your dog's body language is best understood in the context of the situation. If your dog feels the stranger you've encountered on the street is threatening, he just might bare his teeth and growl to protect you. If he bares his teeth when your cool brother visits, it's probably one of those rare submissive grins.

Eventually, you'll even learn the subtleties of your dog's body language. You'll know that when he sits and stares at you, he isn't mesmerized by your stunning good looks -- he's inviting you to take him outside.

## Team Evaluation Renewal Tips ~ Pet Partners, Inc.

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Pet Partners believes strongly in the re-evaluation of teams every two years to ensure animals and their handlers have maintained the necessary skills and aptitude for AAI work. Even though you are an experienced team, you must still fully participate in and successfully pass your evaluation in order to renew your Pet Partners registration. The following are some tips that can help you prepare for success.

**Practice Makes Perfect:** Even experienced teams benefit from practicing before their evaluation. Dog teams must have reliable response to the commands *Sit, Down, Stay, Come, and Leave It*, and should walk with a loose leash. Search for 'Evaluation Overview' in the Resource Library to see the skills required for other species. As a handler, you can work on being observant, anticipating your animal's responses, behavior, and positions, and then redirecting, as needed. You should be actively involved and engaged while you visit and evaluate. Don't let your animal do all the work.

**Don't Forget to Role play:** An evaluation is a simulated visit and evaluators are watching the human end of the leash as well as your animal. Fully participating in the evaluation includes roleplaying interactions with "clients" in the evaluation exercises. Your interactions may be in the form of questions, responses to the evaluator and evaluator's comments, eye contact, smiling, head nodding, directing the animal to interact, or other verbal and nonverbal methods of communicating.

**Actively Support Your Animal:** During your skills and aptitude test, your evaluator will be looking for how you support and interact with your animal. Remember, you are your animal's best advocate, or *YAYABA*. This means you are putting the health, safety, and well-being of your animal first through your actions. You'll also want to be actively practicing *PETS* (presence/eye contact/touch/speech) throughout your evaluation and on visits. This means reassuring and supporting your animal through your physical and mental presence, an encouraging word, a gentle touch, or simply making eye contact.

**Arrive Prepared:** Do you have everything you need with you? This includes items such as your [Handler's Questionnaire](#) and your animal's visiting brush and proof of rabies vaccination. Review the [evaluation checklist](#) for renewing teams closely to make sure you are prepared. If you are requesting an [accommodation for the evaluation](#), this must be discussed with Pet Partners **at least two weeks in advance** of your evaluation date. You can use the [Contact Us](#) form to get this process started. Review the Policies and Procedures.

**Put Your Best Foot/Paw Forward:** You'll be treating this like a visit, so remember to dress appropriately with closed-toe shoes and to bathe and groom your animal as though you were going on a visit. If you're considering changing your equipment, be sure to review the [equipment standards](#) before arriving at your evaluation. The equipment you use for evaluation will be the same equipment you use when visiting. Some evaluators may require that your animal does not wear a vest or scarf during the evaluation, so ask ahead of time.

**You're On!:** Your team evaluation session starts as soon as get out of your car, and does not finish until you leave the testing premises. Observed behaviors that happen outside of the skills and aptitude test, such as intentionally dropping your animal's leash or an animal having an aggressive interaction with another animal, will impact the evaluation outcome.

## Tips for the most common “problem areas” for renewing teams ~ Pet Partners, Inc.

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### **Review Handler’s Questionnaire**

Evaluators are looking to see how you identify and manage stress in your animal. You should be able to describe your animal’s body language cues that indicate stress. Remember that every animal experiences stress sometimes. These body language cues are a form of communication and are normal.

### **Accepting a Friendly Stranger**

At the beginning of the evaluation nerves can come into play. Relax, smile, breathe, and support your animal. We want you and your animal to be successful.

### **Come when Called Exercise**

For practicing, use a 10-foot leash or rope to practice the “stay” command. Consider using a timer to set a limited ‘wait’ time during practice.

### **Neutral Dog Exercise**

Practice on-leash approaches toward other dogs. Invite a co-worker and their dog to meet you in a quiet parking lot. Dog parks are generally not a good place to practice as the dog park is your dog’s ultimate “meet and greet” venue. Consider what you can do proactively to manage your animal’s response. How will you get and keep their focus on you?

### **Exuberant and Clumsy Petting / Restraining Hug**

Desensitize your animal, as needed, to noise, as well as touching feet and other sensitive areas such as under the tail, teeth, and ears. No mouthing, excessive licking or vocalization, or jumping is allowed. The most successful handlers are proactive and redirect their animal’s behavior before they can interact inappropriately.

### **Leave It**

Consider visiting places like pet stores to get your animal used to slippery floor surfaces, strange noises, and tempting toys. The goal is not to tempt your animal, but rather to set them up for success. It is acceptable for you to walk briskly by the toy, proactively asking your dog to “leave it” as you approach the toy.

### **Offer Treat**

Handlers can either accept or decline the offer of a treat. If you are going to decline the offer of a treat, have an explanation for why you are declining ready for the client, such as “Thank you, but my animal is on a special diet.” If you are going to allow treats on visits, a proactive handler will instruct how the treat should be offered, such as on an open palm at nose height. Animals must take the treat gently, with no jumping up on people or mouthing. Keep in mind, if you choose to decline a treat at your evaluation, this means you do not plan to use treats while visiting either and may not include treats in future visits.

**UPCOMING TESTING DATE: MAY 28, 2022**

**MAKE SURE TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE OFTEN FOR UPDATES AND  
FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM AND FACEBOOK!**

[www.romepaws.org](http://www.romepaws.org)