

Suffield Veterinary Hospital February 2016 Patient of the Month

Meet Joie, a 14-½ year old Labrador retriever, shown here with her best friend, Annelle D'Addeo. How these two got together is the story.

Many of you may recognize Annelle because she worked as practice manager at Suffield Veterinary Hospital for many years and was one of our most highly regarded staff members. In May 2014, with her arms full of cat food, Annelle fell down some stairs in her home and suffered a traumatic brain injury. Many months of pain, dizziness and confusion followed, along with intensive physical therapy. Over the next year her progress was very good, in that she became able to walk around and have close-to-normal conversations. But of concern to many of us who love her, she withdrew, avoided social situations and was content to live life in front of the television.



Joie, meanwhile, was a favored pet of Dr. Huntington, one of the sweetest gentle souls to walk the earth. A member of the Huntington household since she was 5 years old, she was now the matriarch among the dogs, holding her own inside, but definitely outrun and slower out in the fields. This past summer two "granddogs" came to stay for a couple of months, challenging her stamina further.

One day Dr. Huntington offered Annelle and her husband Ray a loan of Joie. She would give Annelle motivation to get moving, and Joie would get a break from the more boisterous dogs at home. When the visitors left, Joie would come home to Dr. Huntington. After some thought, they welcomed her into their home.

The idea of "Therapy Dog" must have originated in something like what happened next. Annelle blossomed, laughing more, taking long leisurely walks with Joie at the other end of the leash and doting on her every need. Joie followed Annelle's every footstep and was rewarded with more massages, brushing and hugs than ever in her life. They were meant for each other.

Finally a couple of months ago we decided to make the arrangement permanent. While Dr. Huntington and the rest of her family really miss her, both Joie and Annelle are so much happier now that separating them would be unthinkable.

For showing how important loving pets can be in our lives, and for also showing that Labrador retrievers are wonderfully adaptable even at an advanced age, we are proud to name Joie our February 2016 Patient of the Month.

Suffield Veterinary Hospital

Dr. Ann Huntington ❖ Dr. Anita Sabellico ❖ Dr. Dawn Burke

❖ Dr. Griffin O'Connor ❖ Dr. Daniel Rothbart

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