



## ***GDF Suncoast Puppy Raisers December 2010 Meeting Announcement & Newsletter***



### ***Puppy Saturday Meeting***

***Date: December 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011***

***Where: Lion's Club Beach House***

***9300 W. Gulf Blvd***

***Sunset Beach,***

***Treasure Island, FL 33706***

***Time: 10:00am – 12:00pm***

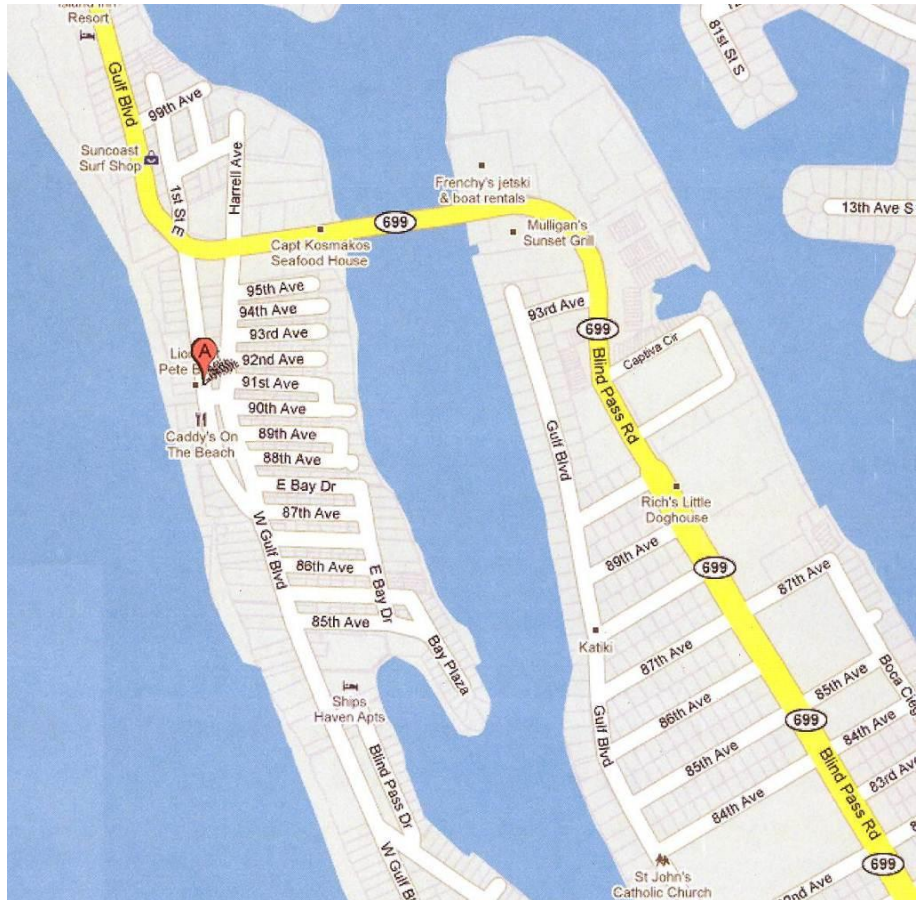
***Access: All well behaved dogs invited***

Hi everyone,

We would like to invite you to join us for “Breakfast with Santa” hosted by the St. Petersburg Lion’s Club. This is an annual event inviting the disabled kids from the Challenger and Miracle League softball teams to be served a pancake breakfast and have their picture taken with Santa. I also heard there was going to be a guest appearance by Elvis.

The tentative schedule is; for the children to arrive, get their “goodie” bags and breakfast about 9:00am Entertainment will start with singing songs, being entertained by Elvis, with the grand finally, of Santa’s arrival at about 10:00am. Each child and family will have the first opportunity to have their photo taken with Santa and then it is the puppy’s turn. This is truly a heart-warming event and truly exemplifies the meaning of Christmas. It is also a great exposure for your puppy. They will experience kids, singing, clapping, and meeting a Jolly Old Elf in a red suit! We hope you can join us.

A couple of notes about this event, first we need to remember this event is for and about the kids. We are there to enhance their experience not be the focus of attention. Also while this is a great exposure for our pups and older dogs as well, they will sense something is different with these kids, we need to be careful when interacting with them. It only takes a half a second of not paying attention to have a puppy jump up on, or knock a child down, so know what is happening at the other end of your leash. Also, be aware that not all kids like dogs and some may be afraid, so do not let puppies approach any kids uninvited, make sure the interaction is wanted and the kid’s guardian also approves. Watch the kids for inappropriate behavior towards the pups. Some of the kids are older and physically strong but do not have a mental capacity to match their physical one, so make sure to watch their behavior carefully, so they do not attempt to hit, bite or pull on a pups ears tail etcetera. For the most part, the kids totally love the dogs and for many of them, it might be the first time they have ever had the courage to pet one. “We just want to reinforce that this is a wonderful exposure for the pups and kids but one where we as handlers need to pay close attention to our puppies while we are socializing with one another as well as the kids. Doing this should make it a fun exposure for all.





**Randi & her Kong from Randi's Blog**

## *Last Month*

Although we still only have one puppy in our group, at least 15 people came to our first meeting. We opened by meeting Randi, Diane Anderson's adorable black Lab and having Diane explain some of the main points of GDF's puppy raiser program. Then we all enjoyed pizza, wings and cookies.

After lunch, we introduced our special guest, Collie expert, Alleen McKewen, and her daughter Katie. Since our particular group is looking to specialize in raising Collies, many perspective raisers wanted to have more information about the differences between raising a Collie and the more familiar Labrador and Golden Retriever breeds. Alleen opened with a history of the Collie breed and how they have been used as guide dogs since the late 1950's. They are a very adaptable and highly trainable breed. The Collie is a "thinking" breed and take in their surroundings to reason out their next step or action. Everyone remembers how many times Lassie had to save Timmy by alerting help to get him out of the well or whatever danger he was in. In order to do that, she had to assess the situation and decided what to do without anyone telling her to do it.

Alleen mentioned other personality traits of the Collie which makes them perfect for guide dog work. They are a team player. They want to please and want to feel part of the team. They do not have a hard pull, so an older or smaller person can handle them. They are a sensitive breed. You will not be successful trying to force them to obey a command or give them too harsh of a correction, it will crush their desire or spirit to comply.

After hearing everything Alleen had to say about the breed, I'm very interested in getting one for my next guide dog. I loved my Maggie, but the Labradors tend to be strong pullers and very hard headed. I love Maddox, but people are afraid of German Shepherds and he tends to be a little over protective of me. That is what attracted us to GDF to begin with was the variety of breeds they use. No single breed can fit all guide dog users' needs.

Even though many of us have not had first hand experience with raising a Collie, Alleen and Katie are committed to working with us along the way. Thanks, and we're looking forward to getting started!

Exciting new news on this front we just got word the ultra sounds on the female Collie Deana bred came back positive, she is pregnant with pups so in a few months we should have some Collies pups coming our way.

## *Obedience and Dog Sitting Services*

Through our 20 years of working with puppy raiser families we like to network amongst ourselves to cover other areas related to puppy raising. For example, our very own Diane Anderson, long time puppy raiser also offers professional obedience classes to personal pets as well as guide dog puppies. Her web site gives a schedule of her up coming classes and offers a variety of training tips and information. Many of our former raisers have taken advantage her classes in which she offers a special discount for us. I've heard many comments from raisers how much they learned and enjoyed her class. For more information visit [www.haveahappydog.com](http://www.haveahappydog.com)

We would like to highlight a new business just getting off the ground by one of our other former puppy raisers, Melissa Longo, and her new business, Longo Pet Concierge.

Here are a few words from Melissa describing her new business: "Longo Pet Concierge offers a variety of services from in-home pet sitting to dog walking. They sound simple, but when it comes to your pet we know

they're anything but. And all of our services come with something extra: a genuine love and knowledge of animals that lets us shower your pets with the love and care they deserve. When you can't be there, we will! Our goal is provide premium pet care services so that you can relax and be worry free while away from your home. You can contact us for your free in-home consultation at 727-542-6640 or email us [melissa@longopetconcierge.com](mailto:melissa@longopetconcierge.com).”

The main reason I wanted to advertise this service to our puppy raisers is that many of you are multiple pet families. When you go out of town, it is no problem getting arrangements for your guide dog puppy, but what do you do with the rest of your pets?

We recently found our selves in that very situation. We had planned to go camping over the weekend, and our neighbor with whom we swap dog sitting favors, was also going our of town. Besides our cat and poodle, we own a “special needs” Labrador named Travers.

Travers is a retired guide dog that we inherited when his person died. He is over 14 years old. He has trouble getting up, has daily medication requirements and frequently has trouble making it outdoors to relieve. We called Melissa and she came over for our free consultation.

Her description of her services is overly modest. For our consultation, she spent almost an hour writing down all my instructions and asked many of her own questions. She even offered to water our plants, bring in the mail and newspapers, open or close windows for fresh air etc. I was hoping she would offer to clean my house too, but that's not in her job description! She left me with a welcome package that included a small pet “goodie” bag and her reassurance she wouldn't call unless necessary. Upon returning home, she left a log of when she was there and what she had done, and one request, for us to call her when we got home.

I was very pleased with her services and you know how hard it is to get a new business off the ground. So visit her web site and see how she can put your mind at ease when it comes to taking care of your pets while you're not home. Thanks Melissa!

### *New Arrival*

Our long lost 2<sup>nd</sup> pup is due to arrive Friday afternoon. It is a month later than we had hoped but we are very excited and I know Francis Lucas is also excited. We cannot wait to finally meet her!

### *Decembers 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting*

Since we have only 2 pups and everyone is busy during the Holidays we are not going to do a formal meeting on Wednesday December 28<sup>th</sup>. We will meet with Diane and Francis individually for this month. We will Start off the new year with our regular meeting schedule, Saturday January 14<sup>th</sup> time, 10AM to 12PM, location to be announced and our 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting Wednesday January 25<sup>th</sup> 7PM location to be announced. We should stay on this schedule in the upcoming months of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday so mark your calendars.

### *Holiday Greetings to all!*

Debbie and Chuck Hietala would like to wish everyone a happy and safe holiday season. Regardless of one's faith this is a special time of year so Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah, Happy Kwanzaa and to all others may the Winter Solstice bring you all peace happiness and Joy throughout this Holiday Season.

**Chuck Maddox & Debbie with Santa Wishing everyone a Happy Holidays at last year's Breakfast with Santa.**

