

CARING CANINES

LVPAC MEMBER PAT WHEELER has been a therapy dog handler since 2002. Her dogs Maddie and Wylie regularly visit senior assisted-living homes, treatment centers and local schools. Last May, she and Maddie played a special role in making sure “the show must go on!”

When Singer Storm Large arrived at the Bankhead for her show on May 19th she requested to have a dog backstage. Pat was the first person we called and she was happy to bring her black Labrador, Maddie. The two stayed backstage from the moment Storm and her band arrived in the green room to the end of the performance.

Storm said, “I was down with severe food poisoning that night and Maddie was very loving and a great comfort to me before and after the show. I credit her with giving me the strength to get through the two hour show.” It was a special occasion for both of them. According to Pat, “Maddie stayed for seven hours that day—waiting for the band while they did their sound check and changed clothes, and listening to Storm do her voice exercises before going on stage.”



Singer Storm Large found a friend in Maddie.

Pat has authored and published a book, *Successful Tails: The Wonders of Therapy Dogs*, and happily recounts stories of the amazing things therapy dogs do every day. “I see it all the time,” she says. “I just stand there and hold the leash. The dogs just turn people’s day around.”

This season Pat is generously sponsoring the Olate Dogs’ *Santa Paws Holiday Show* performance on Saturday, December 23rd and has arranged for the Alliance of Therapy Dogs and Tri-Valley Animal Rescue to bring a few dogs to pet and play with inside the Bankhead lobby prior to the performance.



Pat Wheeler, with Maddie and Wylie.

If you are interested in sponsoring a performance, contact development@lvpac.org or call (925) 583-2305.