

Licking Loneliness

Well, there are many heart-touching stories that come from Traveler's visits but I thought I would tell of the time he took the elevator all by himself at Sharp Grossmont Hospital.

I had Traveler on a short show leash that day as we finished rounds. We were standing in the hall on the 5th floor near the elevators when I got a phone call from the CEO of Sharp Coronado Hospital. I quickly answered the phone since they were filming Traveler and I on our visits for TV ads. I dropped his leash for a second to better position the cell phone. That's when the elevator doors opened and off trotted Traveler. I looked up in time to see his tail going through the doors as they closed. All I could do was wait for the next elevator and head to the main lobby to warn the front desk there might be a loose dog in the hospital.

My elevator of course had to make stops on each floor! So by the time I got to the main floor he had already beat me there. He simply got off by himself and headed for his favorite person in the hospital, Jim, the head of patient relations who gives him wonderful big cookies when he's finished his visit.

Upon not finding Jim in his office, Traveler headed to the front desk where they always keep a supply of Milk-Bones® or other dog treats. That's when I walked up and found him.

One of the ladies had seen him come out of the elevator and trot down the hall. She wondered what had happened to me!

I think everyone in the hospital knows the story by now and still get a big laugh out of it. Traveler certainly knows his way around the hospital without any problem!



2010 Andrew Award Winner



At Sharp Grossmont Hospital's 50th anniversary celebration, Traveler received a big hug from the CEO and promptly planted a kiss right smack on her lips to the delight of the rest of the staff.



"Traveler"

A woman attending the celebration came up to me and asked if she could give Traveler a hug. Her husband had been a patient a few years before and had his photo taken with him. She said he loved our visit so much during his stay. He had recently passed away and she wanted to come to the celebration and personally thank Traveler for the joy he gave to her husband. She still keeps the photo of Traveler and her husband on the refrigerator.

— Suzanne Easley Buck

Suzanne was awarded the 2010 Andrew Award and received a standing ovation for over 200 therapy service hours in 2009.

Traveler's registered name is Gemstone My Winsome Traveler.

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A chat group is available for those interested in sharing pet therapy stories, learning about how to get started in pet therapy, action photos, and more. Once you get involved in pet therapy, your life will be enriched with the heart-bursting memories of sharing your special dog with those desperately in need of a friend.