

Geneva day care dogs bring Valentine's Day joy to seniors at Bria

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The community room at Bria of Geneva nursing home was decorated for Valentine's Day, with paper hearts suspended from the ceiling, cupcakes and chocolate roses at the ready for their party on Friday.

And then it all went to the dogs – literally.

DePAW Pet Resort of Geneva general manager Michelle Harris brought Peter and Clover to deliver their valentines – made with their own paw and nose prints – and to mingle and enjoy all kinds of attention.

Another employee, Danielle Woods, helped circulate the four-footed pair.

Resident Josie Krecicki embraced Clover, a long-haired dachshund decked out in a red sweater, while Ruffolo herself gave a treat to Peter, a boggle – that is, a boxer-beagle mix.

“How wonderful it is to have

the doggies come and visit my residents and give love and share in their Valentine's Day,” said Alice Ruffolo, activity director for Bria. “Nothing is better than doggie kisses on Valentine's Day.”

But how did the dogs make valentines?

Well, with human assistance and some paint on construction paper, cut into heart shapes. Each card converts to a magnet and Christmas ornament.

“It was such a neat project,” said Kimberly Tanquary of Batavia, whose white lab, Tucker, goes to the day care at 100 S. Glengarry Drive, Geneva. “They made a snowman in winter with paw prints on it. It just makes us laugh so hard – it's still on the fridge.”

Tanquary was all for the dogs visiting Bria residents.

“It really touched me,” Tanquary said. “Now this is going to go to someone and put a smile on their face and make them laugh.”

For Melissa Burnett of North Aurora, these art projects are a stimulating enrichment activity for Nova, a white and tan pit bull.

“It spreads joy to both the dogs and the seniors,” Burnett said. “DePAW does a lot of wonderful art projects. They do Christmas crafts and Mother's Day crafts. It uses a different part of their brains.”

St. Charles resident Robin Metzger's shepherd-pit bull mix Remi also goes to DePAW.

“They do the funnest things at this day care,” Metzger said. “There is something for every holiday. They even have a prom for these dogs.”

To facilitate tie-dyeing their own tote bags and bandanas, the staff puts the object in a plastic bag with the paint, Metzger said. They smear peanut butter outside the bag, and the dogs' licking ultimately results in an exquisitely tie-dyed art project.

“It's like I have a toddler going to preschool,” Metzger said.



Brenda Schory

Bria of Geneva resident Josie Krecicki pets Clover, a long-haired dachshund brought to the nursing home on Friday, Feb. 13, for their Valentine's Day party. Michelle Harris, general manager for DePAW Pet Resort in Geneva, brought two dogs to visit residents.