



'My Dog' Rumor is a Lovable Companion at Wesley Palms Summer House

"Rumor" has it that a black and tan, floppy-eared, wet-nosed, very special resident is spreading holiday joy at Summer House, a memory care neighborhood for people with Alzheimer's and related dementia at Wesley Palms Retirement Community. Yes, her name is actually Rumor, a lovable Labrador-Rottweiler mix who has adopted the residents and staff at Summer House as her own.

"It's a two-way street," said Summer House Manager Noe Romero. "It was an instant love-love relationship. Rumor loves being here and our residents and staff adore her. Everyone here calls her 'my dog.'"

Rumor came to Summer House three months ago courtesy of Wesley Palms resident June Berner, who received Rumor six years ago as a certified service dog due to her blindness. But recently June's health care needs changed and she was faced with giving up her best friend and helper.

"She was heartbroken but then we came up with a solution," said Lani Thiel, assisted living director at Wesley Palms. "At the time, we were looking for a dog to live at Summer House and June and her family graciously decided to donate Rumor to Summer House, our protected neighborhood where pets are welcome. She could visit Rumor anytime she wanted and at the same time share Rumor's boundless love with our memory care residents."

"My family and I were so happy that Rumor could stay at Wesley Palms," June said. "She has given me so many years of happiness and now she is continuing her role at Summer House. She's so close by I can visit her as much as I want."

So far, the lovable hound has done just that -- spread joy and love among the Summer House residents and staff. She wanders the bright and open common spaces freely, enjoying residents' warm touches, smiles and laughs. She loves to play fetch with residents in the protected



courtyard or at the community's dog park with her favorite Frisbee. She pays close attention during resident activities, loves to take supervised walks with residents throughout the 35-plus acre campus or just enjoys quiet moments especially this time of year curled up under the Christmas tree with her new collective family.

"I think that everyone recognizes the therapeutic value of pets," says Lani. "Pets just make life better."

Pets are not only good companions, they have also shown to improve health, according to the American Animal Health Hospital Association.

Research has shown that pet therapy is more than having a cute friend to cuddle with. In fact, there are actually scientific results that the physical and mental benefits that come from a furry friend are undeniable. Over the long term, pet and human interactions can lower cholesterol levels, fight depression and may even help protect against heart disease and stroke.

No wonder more and more retirement communities like Wesley Palms offer pet therapy programs and are inviting residents to bring their companion animals into the community!

"If Rumor has it that everyone loves this dog,' says Noe, "that rumor is absolutely true!"

About Front Porch

Front Porch is one of the largest not-for-profit providers of retirement living communities in Southern California. Front Porch active adult and full-service retirement communities offer a full range of options from independent living to continuing care, along with specialized programs like memory support. With innovative communities and programs that meet the changing needs of people as they age, Front Porch communities represent a leading-edge approach to wellness in aging. Front Porch is comprised of 11 full-service retirement communities in California and two adult living communities: one in Louisiana and one in Florida. Of these, five are Continuing Care Retirement Communities (CCRC). Front Porch, based in Burbank, Calif. and founded in 1999, is a not-for-profit organization that gives back to its residents and the communities it serves.

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