



11900 Taylor Drive
Palm Beach Gardens, FL 33410
561-514-5114
<http://www.mylaposada.com>

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Lauren Witt/Amy Jones, The Point Group
Phone: 214-378-7970 ext. 306/302
Mobile: 817-721-5576 / 469-261-7544
lwitt@thepointgroup.com / ajones@thepointgroup.com

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LA POSADA ASSOCIATES BRING ANIMALS TO WORK TO BRIGHTEN RESIDENTS' DAYS

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. July 11, 2018 – Fate brought a German Yorkshire terrier named Keagan into the hands of Lorie Merlino, assistant wellness director of La Posada, the premier continuing care retirement community of Palm Beach Gardens. When her previous dog, Oscar, passed away after living with several expensive medical conditions, she swore she wouldn't adopt another dog. Despite her apprehension, when she learned that one of the residents was no longer in the position to provide appropriate care for his beloved pet anymore, she relented and assumed responsibility for the dog. She knew it would bring the resident a lot of joy to continue seeing his dog from time to time when she brought her to La Posada for visits. Though Keagan's previous owner has since passed, she still visits the community every Friday to brighten the lives of other residents living in the health care center of La Posada.

"We have residents who still live independently and have pets, but there are others who cannot take on pet ownership for various reasons," said Merlino. "That's the reason I bring Keagan to La Posada, to visit residents who cannot care for pets anymore but still enjoy the companionship. When they see Keagan, they 'ooh' and 'ah' with big smiles on their faces, reaching out to pet her and comment on her cute appearance. Such a simple joy comes from interacting with animals because they elevate our mood, give us comfort and warm a tender place in our hearts."

Merlino has taken care of Keagan for a little over a year and half now. She says Keagan is a little wacky but sweet and playful. When she first adopted Keagan, the dog had a medical condition which caused her to have seizures. However, Merlino put her on some new medication and the seizures stopped. Now, Keagan enjoys playing with Merlino's daughters' dogs, helping tend to the garden and visiting La Posada residents every week.

"The day her former owner passed, I had a quiet moment with him vowing I would continue to take care of his little Keagan, and when I went home it's like she knew he was gone," said Merlino. "I know she must miss him, but it is wonderful that his legacy lives on through this little dog that brings happiness to other residents living in our community. Some of the residents just want her to sit with them and



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others want to take her outside to play. She reminds them of animals they had. It's no secret that animals and children bring happiness to people, so we aim to provide opportunities for our residents to engage with animals, as well as intergenerational activities and programs."

Keagan is not the only pup to visit La Posada. Linda Williams, receptionist for La Posada, brings her toy poodle Sydney to act as a greeter to those who return to or visit the community. Williams came to own her dog through unusual circumstances. Sydney was previously a show dog, and after his owners found success in breeding him, they wanted to find him a new home while still retaining breeding rights. Williams' granddaughter shows dogs, and after learning of her grandmother's desire for a new pet she spoke with Sydney's breeders to work out an arrangement. Two weeks after Thanksgiving in 2011, Williams had a new dog. Williams started bringing Sydney to La Posada five years ago when an administrator started taking his small dog to work. Surprisingly, the two dogs hit it off and formed a fast friendship.

"Sydney not only acts as my little greeter, he also goes on walks to visit residents," said Williams. "I am a widow, and I do not know how I would get along without him. For this reason, I understand just how meaningful his visits are to residents of La Posada. It is a good feeling knowing they are getting the same enjoyment out of his company that I do."

"In addition to visits from Keagan and Sydney, Lorie organizes a special event twice a year during which a gentleman brings a variety of farm animals for residents to feed and pet," said Brad Cadiere, executive director of La Posada. "After they go through the farm-inspired zoo and interact with cows, emus, pigs, roosters and chickens, they sit and hold a baby bunny or baby chick. It is such a calming and heartwarming moment to witness. Everything melts away, memories flood back and happiness fills their hearts. We value creating opportunities to integrate animals and children into the lives of those living within our community. Together, we are all mastering The Art of Living Well®."

If you are interested in covering this story, please contact Lauren Witt via phone at 214-378-7970 ext. 306 or email at lwitt@thepointgroup.com or Amy Jones via phone at 214-378-7970 ext. 302 or email at ajones@thepointgroup.com.

ABOUT LA POSADA

La Posada is a resort-style life care community located in the heart of Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. The continuing care retirement community features 193 luxurious independent living apartments, 11 independent living cottages, as well as assisted living apartments, memory care suites, private rooms for short-term rehabilitation and skilled nursing, all nestled within 22 prime acres of sparkling lakes and



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lavish courtyards. Providing a variety of amenities, residents enjoy chef-prepared meals, concierge services, state-of-the-art wellness programs, transportation services, and intellectually stimulating events and activities.

As a Kisco Senior Living community, The Art of Living Well® philosophy is in every aspect of community life. Unique social and wellness opportunities strengthen the mind, body and spirit.

For more information, call 561-514-5114 or go to <http://www.mylaposada.com>.

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