



Memorial



RILEY
paws4people™'s FIRST DOG
December 20, 1996 – May 2, 2008

RILEY passed away in his sleep the morning of May 2, 2008. He choose as his final spot, his favorite, looking out the sliding glass door into the backyard.

RILEY first entered our home on Valentines Day, 1997, after a year-long, relentless and persistent campaign by our then nine-year-old daughter, Kyria, to get her first dog. Little did we know how much this little bundle of fur was going to change not only our lives, but the lives of countless others.

Within a few short months, "The RILEY Dynamic" began; first with puppy kindergarten, then basic obedience class, and then advanced obedience class. All because RILEY was "Some day going to visit people and make them happy!" Therefore, he had to be properly trained. Then, in November 1998, we purchased BRIELLE and OATLIE, "Because RILEY needs friends and we need more dogs like RILEY to make more people happy!"

In the summer of 1999, when Kyria turned 12 (that had been our deal with her, when she turned 12, she could start taking RILEY to visit people to make them happy), the visits to nursing homes and geriatric hospitals began. Kyria and RILEY, a 12-year-old little girl and a 70+ pound Golden Retriever. - it was a sight to see! The residents and patients sure got a kick out of it. And, despite all of his training, RILEY proved to be quite a handful, as he never was able to get past his propensity to become overly excited every time he got to meet someone new. In 2002, visiting nursing homes and hospitals gave way to working inside schools with children. So, RILEY began his life of leisure and his role as pack leader for the slow-growing pack of dogs living at the Henry residence.



RILEY and his "BEST" Friend

RILEY sired, with BRIELLE, the first litter of paws4people™ puppies born July 1-2, 2002. Three of these puppies went on to become paws4people's second generation Social-Therapy and Educational Assistance Dogs.

RILEY also had the burden of enduring my learning curve as I learned the difference between training methodologies and techniques; my previous experience had been in training German Shepherds, not Golden Retrievers. There is a HUGE difference - a difference that to this day I am still learning with every Golden I have the privilege to come in contact with.

RILEY also taught me an absolute respect and love for the Golden Retriever breed. Every "dog person" has their own reason for loving their breed of choice - RILEY directed my path to the Golden Retriever. Their level of unconditional love, their NEVER ending desire to please, to give affection, their innate ability to perceive human emotions and needs, coupled with their ability to inspire select human beings to strive to achieve a goal – all of this with one simple expectation – to simply receive love and affection in return.

RILEY's most significant achievement was the "spark" he placed in Kyria's heart and soul to serve others by using HIM, and other dogs. He helped to teach her the concept of unconditional love, a basic appreciation for other human beings, the discipline of caring for him, and the ability to appreciate his lumbering gait and his wagging tail. Oh, and I can't forget that 99% of the time, RILEY would carry some blanket, towel, or other item to you in his mouth when you arrived home - no matter the time of day or the mood you were in – it was his way of greeting family and those he loved. All children should be so fortunate as to learn so much about life by such a wonderful animal.



Every student who is touched by a paws4people™ dog, every patient in a nursing home or Hospice that smiles when a paws4people™ dog brightens their day,

every resident of a mental health residential treatment center who experiences a positive moment in their day, and every prison inmate whose life is changed by their opportunity to work with a paws4people™ dog, owe their experiences to RILEY.

No words can ever express the true level of impact RILEY will have had, because paws4people™ is only just beginning, I can only wonder over time how many more people will benefit from what he and a little 12-year old girl started.

Terry Henry
Executive Director
paws4people™

Kyria Henry
5/6/2008
Religion 293 Final

Apocalypse Reflection

As I reflect upon what I have learned this semester in the Theology of the Apocalypse class, the lessons all seem to be rather ironic. As we learned more about the theories surrounding the end times, we became aware of how little we really know. Likewise, the more I learn about the apocalypse, the less I want to focus on it. Overall, the class has taught me that our focus should really be on the “now” in which we are living, not the future when it will end.

In class we discussed how so many individuals and groups—from Miller to the Aztecs—have spent their lives calculating then waiting for the end to come. In doing this, these people failed to actually enjoy the time they had to spend here. Their sole focus was on preparing for the end, rather than actually *living* in the time that they “had left.” To add insult to injury, with the hundreds of different dates and times that have been calculated with “certainty,” the end has yet to come. Although with good intentions, so many people have so unfortunately wasted their lives living in fear and anticipation.

We have looked at every apocalyptic aspect available in our culture, from scripture itself to pure creations of pop-culture. In all of these, we have found aspects of numerology, symbolism, dualism, and judgment; among other things. However, we have also found that when trying to translate these numbers or symbols into real-life occurrences, the chances of accuracy are inevitably less than zero. Therefore, the conclusion I have come to from our learning together this semester is that we are supposed to be aware, not wary. There is no use in trying to figure out God’s plan for our demise; and it is equally inefficient to sit around waiting for it.

It’s really interesting, because ever since you had given this assignment as our final, I have been wondering what I was going to write about. However, as with most things in life, the answer came to me at just the right time. On Friday night, I got a phone call with some of the worst news I could imagine. My father called to tell me that RILEY, my first dog, had passed away in his sleep Thursday night. At first, I was furious that they had waited to tell me; but I had a very difficult business meeting which I was dreading on Friday afternoon; and they knew I could not have faced it had I known beforehand. Just as with everything else, my parents were only thinking of me.

Now, losing a dog is never an easy thing; but for me, it is sort of different. Dogs are not just my dogs, my best friends, my confidants; they are my inspiration, my passion, and my drive. My dogs are the reason for everything I am doing, and they define my future. And RILEY is the epitome of this. Before him, I had never known what the love of a dog could do to change lives. It is very literally because of him that I now have a successful business, a career, and why thousands of people have been touched and changed. Riley was the beginning of it all. He taught me responsibility, selflessness, patience, and most importantly how to love. So when I first got the news, I could not help but feel like this

was the end.

Strange as it sounds, though, this class helped me to get through that phase of grieving very quickly. Through all we have discussed this semester, I really feel that in some ways my outlook has changed. You see, nothing in life can be the end unless you let it be so. If you are looking for a reason to escape, to hide, to quit, to wallow in pity; in this world I guarantee you can *always* find one. It is finding the reasons in life to be happy that are a little bit more difficult. But for me, RILEY has already given me that. Because of him, every day I am able to help someone and accomplish things beyond my imagination. I was given RILEY for a reason, so I have to believe he was taken for a reason, too.

So, I could have looked at losing RILEY as the start of my own apocalypse. I could let everything go downhill from here, as so many others have done when times are bad. It is comforting, and it is easier. But over the last 48 hours of many laughs and many, many tears, I have decided that this is instead my new beginning. The most certain thing I have learned about the apocalypse is that we have no idea when it is going to come. And thus I have decided that I am going to spend each day I have left bringing happiness to others; just like RILEY did for me.



L to R: OATLIE, ADDIE, BRINKLEY (RILEY & BRIELLE daughter) RILEY, and BRIELLE

