

Teddy, 1996-2008

It wasn't my idea to get into therapy dog work. I took Teddy for a CGC test and when he cuddled into Carol's arms during the handling parts of the test, she asked, "Have you considered doing therapy work with him?"

"I'm not good with people."

"Doesn't matter. He is."

That was it. For years afterward, I was chauffeur and social secretary to a poodle.

Teddy understood that there were non-dog people. He simply never thought it applied to him. Much of the time, it didn't.



On one visit to EagleCrest, we met a woman who told us up front that she did not like dogs in general and standard poodles in particular. She was just in the community room to break up the monotony. By the second visit, she was wearing special bunny slippers to amuse Teddy when she wiggled her feet. Another time, the client Teddy was spending time with was unable to use her arms much. Teddy didn't mind. He sat toe-to-toe with her and lifted his chin just enough to catch a toy she flipped a few inches to him. He then carefully put the toy down in her lap and smiled up at her. (As magical and charming as it was for him to do that, I also know it was bone-deep laziness. He was delighted not to have to run all over to play fetch.)

Teddy was asked to be part of a read-to-the-dogs program at a school. He hated the hours ("Hellooo, what happened to afternoon naptime?") but loved the kids and the attention. When the program made the local news, my clever dog quickly figured out that the reporter wasn't the key to getting airtime for himself and "his" kids. He charmed the cameraman, who he somehow knew had a poodle in his history.



Teddy "worked" almost to the end of his life. He never thought of it that way, of course. In his mind, he was simply meeting his adoring public. In my mind, he was just magic.