

Having learned of the call for nominations for this year's CSPCA Canine Distinguished Service Award, I am writing today to nominate a highly suitable Shar-Pei, Frank Walker (Owner Jerod Walker). This award is to recognize a Shar-Pei that has made an extraordinary contribution to their community or to an individual. I believe Frank has made a significant contribution both to the cancer patient community as well as to his family: Jerod, Jerod's mother, Roxy and brother Todd.

Shortly after purchasing Frank, Jerod's brother Todd was diagnosed with cancer. Jerod took some time off from work and with Frank in tow, left California to be with his brother Todd and mother Roxy (who live in Seattle) at a treatment center in Phoenix.

After arriving at the cancer center Jerod realized Frank had an uncanny ability to hone in with needs of the patients in the hospital, including his brother's. Frank would sit quietly and gently with Todd during chemotherapy and if Todd got tired, Frank would allow himself to be his pillow. At other times Frank made the rounds on the floor and visited all the other patients. He allowed patients to take his picture or hug all over him and even at times cry on him.

For the next two years Frank went from treatment center to treatment center, in Phoenix, Seattle and California. Traveling with his family, hotel rooms became the norm, as did elevators and strangers. But when his therapy vest came on, he knew what his job was, no matter what city he was in. Jerod recounted a story to me about a young girl who was fighting cancer down the hall from his brother. One day Frank decided that's where he was needed. He nudged his way into her room and she was so excited! Frank immediately made his way onto her bed and lay with her. Her father pulled Jerod into the hall afterwards and told him, that he was so grateful for their arrival, as his daughter had always wanted a Shar-Pei and they had told her when she got better they would get her one.

It is difficult to explain in a short letter what Frank's accomplishments are. I was in touch with Jerod off and on through those two years and I can never properly describe what Frank has done for his family, so I have attached a few of the emails sent from Jerod and his mother Roxy. I would like to copy a portion of Roxy's email here: "I'm Roxy, Jerod's mother. Sounds like Jerod keeps you updated on Frank's life. We really do love him. For the last year and a half of my youngest son's life, Frank helped us all cope with a really tough time. Frank was young, but he was so amazing with all the cancer patients at the cancer center in Phoenix. He would go right up to them and let them love on him and cry over him and take his picture. He brought a lot of joy to a lot of people that were dealing with life threatening cancer... When Todd was in the hospital, he was with him. He brought us lots of laughs that were much appreciated at that time. "

I hope you will consider Frank for the Distinguished Service Award for servicing not only his extended family in their time of need, but the other patients at the hospitals and treatment centers. I can only attempt to express how proud I am of Frank for being not only a good pet but an outstanding ambassador for the breed.