

Letters



Back in our May/June 2003 issue, Lisa Mink sent in an "Above & Beyond" article about her chocolate Lab, Koko, her seizure-response dog. Set for brain surgery, Lisa felt that without Koko, she never would've made it through her disability. Now, two years later, Lisa sent us this note.

Dear Just Labs,

Once upon a time, there was a chocolate Lab who changed my life forever. His name is Koko, and he is a

since. Koko was at my side through the whole ordeal. There were several struggles that I had to overcome during my recovery. One of these was losing all my hair. I donated over 13 inches of hair to "Locks of Love," an organization for children with cancer. Koko didn't care if I had a shaved head, his love has no boundaries.

As I lay in bed, tired and weak, he was the one who brought a smile to my face as he retrieved for me one of his favorite toys, covered in slobber.

California. I am under the supervision of Ginger Adam Little, who is the center director and a trauma specialist.


At this center, Koko has the opportunity to touch the lives of many different people the way he has mine. I work with clients who are struggling with such issues as post-traumatic stress, anxiety, phobias, addictions, and depression. Koko has several different functions in the office. He provides a calm, non-threatening comfort, a strong willingness to please, and all the unconditional love you can handle. Koko makes a great transitional tool to help ease the journey through the difficulties of therapy. In addition to all this, there are plenty of kisses and tail wags to go around.

As we work together with my clients, I am continually surprised by his abundance of therapeutic skills. The reassuring thump of his tail never seems to lose its effectiveness. It is amazing to see his healing power, which touches young and old.

Now that I am feeling healthier and stronger, I am blessed to be able to share this wonderful gift Koko possesses. We also want to help educate others on the services that dogs can provide. Koko and I visit local schools, hospitals, and city functions to do just this. I am

surprised at the number of people who are unaware of the skills that service and therapy dogs can contribute to our society. My hope is to one day help expand the animal-assisted therapy field, to educate and share with others the healing power that animals can offer. If you would like more information or have any questions, we can be contact at Lighthouse Therapy (805) 374-9582.

Sincerely,

Lisa Mink – and Koko 



seizure response dog. We became best buds about four years ago, and as my seizures got worse, Koko and I grew closer. He gave me the comfort and security I needed to continue with my disability. With Koko at my side, I was able to go places without being afraid of having a seizure, and if I did, I was never alone.

A little over a year ago, I underwent brain surgery at UCLA for my seizures. The surgery was a huge success! I have been seizure-free ever

He continues to assist me in such things as alerting me when it's time to take my medications, and simply helping me get up in the morning.

Koko and I have come a long way, and he remains at my side, loyal as ever. He currently works as my partner in my therapy office. I am a Marriage Family Therapist Intern, and Koko is working as my co-pilot, a therapy dog. We work at The Lighthouse Therapy, Trauma and Training Center in Thousand Oaks,