



2021 Highlights



AIR® Recognizes and Thanks the Top Three Volunteers

AIR sends infinite gratitude to the top three volunteers:

- Marlene Sisti with AIR DogSM Harley
- Sandy Rosenstock with AIR Dog PB
- Harvey Walker with AIR Dog Brie

AIR also sends a special shout-out to long-time volunteers:

Laura Cerrito, who put in a lot of time to ensure the Taste of Hope and Annual Miki & Friends Open AIR events were organized and had enough volunteers.

Shauna Moses for coordinating meetings, working at events and creating Board, volunteer/donor and media communications.



Harvey Walker has agreed to be the AIR Veterans Coordinator, who will work with local veterans groups to increase mental health education and prevent suicides among our veterans. Currently, we lose 22 veterans EVERY DAY, and with Harvey's partnership, AIR will help to reduce this number.

AIR® Creates and Expands Programs, Adapts to COVID to Increase its Life-Saving Impact

COVID Did Not Slow AIR® Down



The pandemic did not distract AIR from its vital mission. In fact, the mission became even more critical as fear of COVID and social isolation resulted in significant increases in depression, anxiety and a traumatic rise in suicide risk, attempts and deaths among students – most strikingly throughout AIR's key audience: middle, high school and college students. AIR maximized its technological resources, relationships with school personnel and AIR

Therapy DogSM teams to provide emotional support and continue its life-saving education. AIR Dog visits and presentations were held virtually. By year end, half of the presentations were delivered virtually and half took place in person, during which all COVID-related safety guidelines were followed.

Overall, AIR visited 32 schools and facilities, presenting its various programs in 10 different counties: Bergen, Burlington, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Ocean, Passaic, Somerset and Union. More than 10,000 students participated in and benefited from these presentations in 2021 alone. In total, AIR has educated more than 100,000 students across the U.S.

AIR DogsSM Program Expands

AIR continued to expand the AIR Dogs: Paws For MindsSM School-Based Therapy Dog program that was created in partnership with the Hopewell Valley Regional School District (HVRSD) in 2019. A third cohort of HVRSD school personnel and their dogs are currently being trained; the program was launched in Middletown School District; and plans are under way with several additional school districts across New Jersey.



AIR Therapy DogsSM are already making many scheduled visits at new schools and youth centers, such as Carteret High School, Lawrence Middle School, and the BeTheLi9ht Center. We shared AIR Dogs with students in Maple Shade for Back-To-School after COVID.

"The kids asked a lot of questions, and they were happy to see Harley. One boy hesitated at first to pet Harley, but within 10 minutes, he saw how calm she was, and he started to get closer to her. It always makes me happy when Harley can put people at ease."

– Long-time AIR Volunteer Marlene Sisti

AIR® Thanks New Supporters

All of AIR's efforts have resulted in more new supporters, including:

Sam Valenza Jr., Owner of **Mid Atlantic K9**, who is donating \$10 for every "AIR DogSM" leash, which AIR Co-Founders Tricia and Katelyn Baker designed.



G.O.Y.D. (Get Off Your Devices) is a student organization based at West Windsor-Plainsboro Community School under the guidance of Dr Rebecca McLelland-Crawley. The students turned off their electronics to help raise funds for AIR.

... and Celebrities for their Shoe Donations!

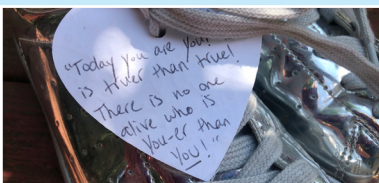
Jared Padalecki, actor in hit shows such as *Gilmore Girls*, *Supernatural* and currently *Walker*. Jared is a supporter of AIR's and has donated three pairs of shoes from different periods of his career.



Jeff McNeil, Infielder, Outfielder for NY Mets, 2019 MLB All Star



Cassadee Pope, pop, punk singer, songwriter and musician



AIR Dogs Visit and Benefit People of All Ages

Between July and December, AIR Therapy Dog teams visited Artis Senior Living 25 times. "We love having the dogs visiting our community," said Christina Mueller, Director of The Artis Way Experience at Artis' Princeton Junction location. "The dogs bring moments of pure joy and peace to our residents. The ability to connect to another warm, living being is priceless and definitely improves the emotional well-being of our residents. We love working with your organization."



AIR Dog Willow comforts an Artis Senior Living Resident. Willow's handler is Eleanor Dock.



October 18th, Hudson County Community College at the JSQ Students Center, Jersey City.

As of early December, the In Their ShoesSM exhibit was presented to more than 2,000 students at one high school, three colleges and a community event.

AIR's new program, *Miki & Friends Go to SchoolSM*, for students in kindergarten through fourth grades is becoming more popular. AIR Co-Founder and Program Creator Tricia Baker discusses emotions, including how to identify and respond to them with the children.

Within its first couple of months early in the year, several teachers have shared their positive feedback on this new, tailored presentation. For example:



NJ Assemblywoman Annette Chaparro



"The best part of the program was the kids getting to interact with the host and the dogs. The entire assembly was filled with opportunities for the kids to engage in conversations."

"I loved the book and the message it had, the chance that the students had to pet the dogs, and the fact that they got the trading cards at the end."

Art for AIR

Stephanie Bonnet is a gifted dog portrait artist who is donating a percentage of proceeds on an ongoing basis.

Reach out to Stephanie to purchase your amazing pet portrait at stephanie.bonnett1990@gmail.com. You will get a great portrait while supporting AIR's mission of hope.



AIR® Forges Ahead with Mission

AIR continued to spread its message and share hope through events, several of which were hosted by AIR and others that AIR was invited to from various organizations.

On May 15, AIR participated in Woodland Park's Stigma Free Task Force's Mental Health Awareness event.

On May 20, AIR partnered with more than 600 leading brands, government agencies, cultural leaders and other nonprofits for the first-ever Mental Health Action Day, which was sponsored by MTV Entertainment.

"We are eager to be more active on a national level, which Mental Health Action Day, enables us to do, and, of course, to do much more throughout New Jersey," Tricia said.

Also on May 20th, AIR gave presentations to three groups of children: 3- to 7-year-olds; 8- to 11-year-olds; and 12 years and older at an event sponsored by Liberty Martial Arts in West Windsor. This event highlighted the equal importance of physical and mental health and how these aspects of health affect each other.

On May 22, more than 250 people attended the 11th Annual Miki and Friends OPEN AIR event. AIR sends tremendous gratitude to the May event sponsors: Princeton Brain, Spine & Sports Medicine, Oaks Integrated Care, Szaferman Lakind Attorneys at Law, Hot Topic, Stark & Stark Attorneys at Law, BeTheLi9ht Foundation, Certified Wealth Mortgage & Investment, Liberty Martial Arts, PerformCare New Jersey, and Iggybragg Design. AIR is also grateful to Partners and Exhibitors: EASEL Animal Rescue League, Home Care Vets, VCA Twin Rivers Animal Hospital, West Windsor Police Department, 20 Paws, Knights of Columbus Chapter #12004, Lightning Lacrosse, Mid-Atlantic K-9, AIR Club at West Windsor Plainsboro High School South, and Kappa Delta Rho Fraternity at The College of New Jersey.



Pictured left to right: Kurt Baker and Miki; Phyllis Hornstra of the Woodland Park Stigma Free Task Force; Former Governor and current NJ Senator Richard Codey; Christine Tiseo, Vice Chair of the Stigma Free Task Force; Tricia Baker; and Woodland Park Mayor Keith Kazmark.



West Windsor Police Chief Robert Garofalo, pictured here with his wife Gloria and Kiki, their AIR Therapy Dog in training.

"We are honored to work with Trish and Kurt. They have provided help for so many over the years and no matter when we call, they come running. We have had some horrible situations over the years that truly needed their resources and expertise. Even when the school had a horrible suicide years ago, Tricia was the first to come in with support dogs and help," said Chief Garofalo.

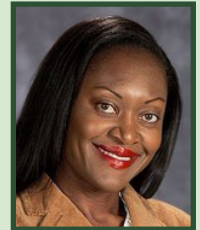
During this event, AIR Heroes West Windsor Police Chief Garofalo and Sergeant Jelinski, who have contributed tremendous support to AIR over the past several years, were honored. "They have conducted fundraisers, assigned officers to ensure everyone's safety at our events and helped build awareness of AIR, its mission and the importance of mental health education," said AIR Co-Founder Kurt Baker.



West Windsor Police Department Detectives Brian Jany and Megan Erkoboni presented a donation from their November fundraiser to AIR Co-Founders Kurt and Tricia Baker in December.

Advisory Board

AIR also honored Dr. Thomas Smith, then Superintendent of the Hopewell Valley Regional School District (HVRSD), who reached out to AIR in 2019 to create the AIR School-Based Therapy Dog program. Dr. Smith recently took on the role of Superintendent in Pennsbury, PA, where he plans to launch this program. His successor at HVRSD, Dr. Rosetta Treece, is working with AIR to continue the program.



AIR is proud and grateful to welcome School Superintendents Dr. Thomas Smith and Dr. Rosetta Treece to the Advisory Board

AIR in the News!

NJ Attitudes In Reverse® and Hopewell Valley School District School-Based Therapy Dog Partnership. • News 12

AIR Therapy Dogs: Paws for Minds Program • Sept 2021

Therapy Dogs aren't just a teacher's pet at these NJ Schools. They're staff. • NJ.Com • October 2021

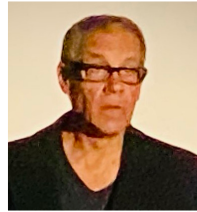
Hopewell Valley Students Manage Stress with Help of AIR Therapy Dogs • The Times • October 16, 2020

AIR Dogs - A Breath of Fresh AIR: Talking (and barking) It Out. How a Mental Health Organization Uses Therapy Dogs • SIX09 • August 2021



Check out our AIR Media page
<https://air.ngo/airs-in-the-news>

In August, AIR® attended *Outta the Darkness, Into the Light*, a performance by Anthony Montes on Fire Island, New York. Tricia and Kurt participated in a Q&A session after each show.



Anthony Montes

On Sept. 20, AIR and the New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies held their Ninth Annual Suicide Prevention Conference, *Back to School: Breaking the Barriers*. This was the second year the conference was presented virtually and it continued to attract more than 100 attendees from schools (teachers and superintendents), behavioral healthcare organizations and the New Jersey Department of Children and Families. AIR presented on the AIR DogsSM program.



AIR held its fifth annual Taste of Hope event on Oct. 13th in honor of **Peter Weedfald**, Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Sharp Electronics Marketing Company of America. Thanks to Lee Hornick, AIR Board Member and Chief Program Director of Business Communications Worldwide, for coordinating the event. AIR is extremely grateful to the event sponsors: Arc Intermedia; Sharp Home Appliances; Stark & Stark/J. Robert Bratman, Esq.; Almo Corporation; Dealerscope; Monarch Title Agency, Inc.; Nationwide Marketing Group; Princeton Brain & Spine; Silas Baker, Jr.; Szaferman Lakind Attorneys at Law; Leary Bride Mergner

and Bongiovani, P.A.; Technology Designer; Certified Wealth Management & Investment, LLC; Continental Marketing; Dr. Cynthia Bratman; Dr. Uday Bhatt; Dynamic Marketing, Inc.; Hackensack Meridian Carrier Clinic; Hinkle, Fingles, Prior & Fischer, Attorneys at Law; Roselli, Griegel, Lozier & Lazzaro; The Weedfald Family; BeTheLi9ht Foundation; Steve Cody; Brian D. Greenwald, M.D.; Gary Hofing; Peppercomm and Guy J. Renzi & Associates.



Pictured are AIR Co-founders Kurt and Tricia Baker with Peter and his wife FrancesAnn and daughter Tara.

On Nov. 7, AIR participated in a Veterans Day Ceremony and Celebration sponsored by Mercer County Veteran Services. AIR is most grateful to AIR Volunteer Harvey Walker, who worked out all the details for this important event.



AIR® Shares the School-Based Program with Teachers at NJEA

Adults also comprise an important segment of AIR's audience. For example, Tricia and AIR Board Member Jennifer Walters, LPC, an elementary school counselor for Princeton Public Schools, presented at the New Jersey Education Association's annual conference.

AIR could not thank our Board of Trustees, Advisory Board Members, volunteers, other donors, participating schools and partnering organizations enough for your support!

We look forward to working with you to increase our impact in 2022 and beyond!



Glacier, a cousin of AIR Therapy Dog Misha Silver Lining, was rescued from a hoarding situation in 2021 and received specialized training in foster care with Adrienne Carson, CPDT-KA. Glacier, now named Clover, with the Ullman family.

Please Help Us Make Even More of a Difference

DONATE ONLINE – www.AIR.ngo

START AN ONLINE FUNDRAISER – www.SupportAIR.org

Have a Happy, Healthy 2022!