

**From:** friendsofnikki@comcast.net [mailto:friendsofnikki@comcast.net]  
**Sent:** Sunday, March 10, 2013 12:08 AM  
**To:** Donna  
**Subject:** Friends of Nikki Meets Sunday March 17th 1:00 - 2:30pm

Dear Friends of Nikki,

As of tomorrow, Friends of Nikki is officially back from vacation. The time off turned out to be almost busier than my regular schedule! I did catch up on some long overdue visiting with family and friends, but I guess Nikki thought my "rest time" would be the perfect opportunity to find new and exciting roles for "her" support group. The first event will be tomorrow, and I've attached the flyer and schedule. Ordained Vision Ministries contacted me just 2 weeks ago regarding Doggy Love Day, a beautiful program they put together for underprivileged kids in the Newark area. These are kids who have the possibility to adopt a pet, but before doing so will experience this day of education in how to care for one (shouldn't we all do this!) Amazingly, they included pet loss as one of the topics discussed, and asked if I would be willing to volunteer some time to address the dozen or so kids. What an opportunity, and an honor! As you can imagine I practically said yes before she even finished talking! So, that is first on Nikki's agenda for me.

One of the tangible gifts I had hoped to bring these kids was a Rainbow Bridge rubber bracelet. I thought of it way too late, but called the company in Oregon anyway to check out the possibility. I assumed I'd get a voice-mail so I told God that if so I would hang up - if not, I would know that the call was something greater than my initial intention. That's the way my brain and heart work. To make a long story short, although it was impossible to overnight them at that point, I had a wonderful conversation with a woman named Christine Davis. Chris wrote For Every Dog An Angel, For Every Cat An Angel, and several more special little books on pets. Her newest one is Forever Paws, which is on audio and I will download and share some of it with Friends of Nikki in the near future. We plan to keep in touch as her heart and brain works similarly, from what she told me, so we can keep that support going from coast to coast. (Alright Nikki, enough is enough -don't wear Mommy out all at once!! What a kid!!)

Those of you who attended the last meeting may remember I mentioned doing some educational workshops for members who have, or plan to have, another pet in their future. This is the piece of Friends of Nikki that I've been wanting to add since my little Danni died in 2003. With all his health issues, I wish I had access to more info than I did. We do the best with what we know at the time. The emotional support piece is Nikki's domain, and the educational piece belongs to my angel boys - Ziggy, Danni, and Doogie - in their memory. I am a member of the Animal Concerns Ministry at my church, and have done a few things with them for Friends of Nikki. However, this time I did the asking. I asked if they would be interested in me doing the educational classes in conjunction with the Ministry. They were excited, too, and now all we have to do is get some dates that will fit into our church's busy calendar. The great part about this for Friends of Nikki is a bigger space so we can accommodate more members without limits. The plus for the Parish Community is exposure to a source of pet loss support,

and of course, the info shared. The furry babies benefit with possibly better care as their human families learn more about how to help them. It's a win-win situation all around. I will keep members posted as this progresses.

Last, but certainly not least, is my participation in a class called Pet Loss Support Groups: Start Up, Structure, and Effective Facilitation. This is one of many classes in the Animal Loss and Grief Professional Program of Study through Animals In Our Hearts. This has been in the fire for a few months, but now we have the dates and program in place. They were awaiting my bio. I will be teaching with Enid Traisman, MSW, whom some of you may know of through her pet loss books, particularly those on journaling. Teresa Wagner, another name many of you know, will be our moderator, as she is the founder of this wonderful program. She is the author of Legacies of Love Audiobook, an amazing Animal Communicator, and has taught pet loss and communication classes for many years. I need to get preparing for this as I will be as anxious as I was with APLB's conference last year. However, I am again very honored to be asked by Teresa. I almost fell over when she told me who I would be teaching with. I have never met or spoken with Enid, as yet, but have known of her since Nikki died, and I started Friends of Nikki. Our support group just had our 12th anniversary yesterday, and Enid has had more than double that! She is definitely one of the pioneers in the field of pet loss support.

I have been in touch with a few of you during these past few weeks. Those whom I haven't are probably thankful for the break after reading this long email message! Seriously, I have kept each of you in my thoughts and prayers. I can never be fully on vacation from Friends of Nikki (that little feisty love of mine just won't allow it). I hope this finds all of you well. I know several are struggling with illnesses of their little ones, and that is a very difficult path. Any of us would take the illness on ourselves if we could. Through all of it take care of yourself as well. As a long-time caregiver I know how important this is, and want to stress that importance with you. None of us can do it all, alone

Friends of Nikki will meet next Sunday, March 17th from 1-2:30pm, as usual. Please RSVP if you do plan to attend. First time members must have the intake questionnaire and phone interview prior to attending. I appreciate your cooperation. Any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

If you haven't checked out our website, please do so. If you would prefer to be taken off Friends of Nikki's email list just let me know. Happy 12th Anniversary Friends of Nikki - it was all of you that made my dream possible, and I thank each of you from the bottom of my heart.

Warmly,

Donna

<http://friendsofnikki.memberlodge.com>