

Suffield Veterinary Hospital December 2016 Patient of the Month

Meet Reigner (pronounced Ray-ner), a seven-year-old Rhodesian ridgeback owned by Concetta Jez of Somers. As you might guess from this handsome portrait by Lil Blue Farm Photography of Monson, MA, Reigner easily became a champion in the AKC show ring several years ago. But it is what he does now that is even more impressive.

When Concetta had a recent period of illness and injury, Reigner was initially trained as a service dog. She has now trained him to detect high levels of stress in people, and comfort them. When people are under stress they have elevated cortisol levels that some dogs can detect. In Concetta's words:

I work in a very busy acute care medical facility and Reigner has made a tremendous impact on the staff that cares for extremely ill patients of all ages. He is not a therapy dog, rather he performs a specific service by laying his head on the stressed person's shoulder or arm. His ability to detect stress has been amazing to watch and he has made a huge difference in the department. The higher the stress of the caregiver, the more Reigner will lean onto the arm or shoulder and he truly hugs the person. Watching this you can actually see the person relax and start to smile, made all the better by the touch of a dog. A hug from a dog is priceless. I believe it to be a gift from God that Reigner freely shares.

For all the help and love he has provided the grateful hospital staff, we are proud to name Reigner our patient of the month.



Suffield Veterinary Hospital

Dr. Ann Huntington ❖ Dr. Anita Sabellico ❖ Dr. Dawn Burke
❖ Dr. Griffin O'Connor ❖ Dr. Daniel Rothbart

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