



City of Yakima

NEWS RELEASE

Subject: Pet Fire Rescue

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Release Date: Tuesday, October 29th, 2013

New Donated Pet Oxygen Mask Helps Save Dog From Fire

As East Valley firefighters got to the scene of a house fire in Terrace Heights on October 14th, they were discouraged to find the home fully involved, but were pleased to learn that man who lived there was not inside. However, the man's dog, Thor, was reportedly trapped in the blaze.

Once additional fire crews from Yakima and Union Gap arrived, a search of the house began. Union Gap Fire Department Captain Brian Line and his crew quickly found Thor, who had likely been trapped in the fire for about a half hour and was suffering from smoke inhalation and heat exposure, and carried him outside. There, Yakima firefighters and medics from Advanced Life Systems attempted to revive Thor using a pet oxygen mask that was donated to the East Valley Fire Department by the Yakima Valley Veterinary Clinic just last year.

Thanks to the donated oxygen mask and special training that the first responders had gone through to deal with pet emergencies, a short time later Thor was happily wagging his tail, much to the delight of his owner, Tim Besheone. A day later, Thor got a thorough check up at the Yakima Valley Veterinary Clinic and was given a clean bill of health.

Thor's owner was especially pleased about his dog's successful rescue because Thor serves as a constant reminder of Besheone's wife, Jill, who passed away in 2009 after battling cancer. Thor became part of the Besheone family two years before Jill died and has been a source of comfort for Tim ever since.

Thor's dramatic rescue emphasized the importance of an effort started a few years ago by local radio personality Lance Tormey to outfit most frontline fire apparatus in Yakima County with pet oxygen masks. Last year, clients and employees of the Yakima Valley Veterinary Clinic built on the success of Tormey and his supporters by donating money to buy pet masks for the East Valley Fire Department. Staff from the clinic also provided free pet first aid training to area firefighters and other emergency personnel.

"It's great when stories like this have a happy ending," said Yakima Fire Department Lieutenant Jeff Pfaff. "Thanks to the generosity of people like Lance Tormey and the folks from Yakima Valley Veterinary Clinic, fire departments in our area are well equipped and trained to deal with exactly the type of situation that led to Thor being rescued. We are very thankful for that," said Pfaff.

A video of the rescue can be seen on the City of Yakima Youtube channel at the following link - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fD_p46Ys2lw

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