

Local Author Praises Disabled Pets

We might call a dog in a wheelchair "disabled," but try telling that to the dog. Vicki Tiernan knows better than most just how happy a disabled pet can be – and how much happiness the dog brings to the people who love him.

Tiernan, a San Francisco resident and long-time member of SFDog, is the author of a chapter in *Almost Perfect: Disabled Pets and the People Who Love Them*. The book is an anthology of true stories about disabled pets and their people written by eleven different authors from three different countries.

"When I read through the other essays in the book, I saw common themes," Tiernan said. "I saw how inspired the authors were by their pets, and how their lives were changed in a positive way by caring for the pets. And the pets never seemed to know they were disabled. They were joyful and happy and spirited." She added, "The whole book is very uplifting."

Tiernan's chapter is about her last dog, Ruby, who was diagnosed with canine degenerative myelopathy at the age of eleven. Tiernan describes it as "the doggy equivalent of multiple sclerosis." Ruby lost the use of her back legs, so Tiernan got her a doggy wheelchair, which elevates the back legs, allowing the dog to use her front legs to walk around.

"When she got that wheeled device, it was amazing," Tiernan remembered. "She had her mobility back. She was like, 'Okay, I'm fine, I can go from here to there, I can sniff things, so let's go!'"



Ruby is the happiest dog on wheels.

She just had the best spirit."

Tiernan's chapter began as a post on the SFDog email list. Others on the list encouraged her to publish the story. When a friend in a writing program found a listing asking for stories about

disabled pets, Tiernan submitted her essay, the first thing she had ever submitted for publication.

The author list also includes previously published authors like Sharon Sakson, author of *Paws and Reflect* and *Paws and Effect*. It was edited by Mary Shafer, who drew her inspiration for the project from her blind cat.

For more information or to buy the book, visit the website at almostperfectbook.com.

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