GROVER (MAINE COON MIX)

He's been called a Golden Retriever in a cat suit, one in a million and a pain in the backside.

Grover was brought into the veterinary hospital as a stray where his owner worked. A young college student found him living behind a diner, begging for scraps, and brought him in for veterinary care. He had a broken leg and pelvis, was emaciated, covered in ticks and fleas and looked to be a very old cat. He was taken into the "Purr Project" a feline rescue, run through the hospital, for injured strays. He was cared for and fed, and soon he grew to be this wonderful cat. Through all the poking and prodding, he would just look at his rescuers and lick their hands.

Grover's human had three cats, and wasn't looking for a fourth. Yet something kept drawing her to him, so for a birthday present, she adopted him.

Grover entered his new home and a peaceful world was turned into chaos. He would chase the other cats, jump up on the counters and with his huge paw, clear anything that was in his way. His human knew then that what he needed was a job; he was going to be a therapy cat. She worked with Grover, getting him used to being handled and groomed. Friends and family would come over, pick him up, make noise and he never flinched. In fact, when the doorbell would ring, he would run to the door to see who was coming to visit. Grover passed his Delta Society Pet Partners test with flying colors.

At the veterinary hospital, there was a sign posted on the bulletin board looking for Creature Comforts volunteers. Grover's human had always been interested in doing Hospice volunteer work. Having had a family member who was in a hospice program and remembering that being at home with her family and pets brought much comfort to her, she decided to get more information. They met with the hospice coordinators and were accepted into the Creature Comforts program.

Grover and his human visited patients in nursing homes and extended care facilities. Grover loved it! His human would take his harness down and tell him "Let's go to work," and he was ready and waiting. In the patient's room, Grover's blanket was placed on the bed next to the patient, or on a table next to them. Grover would then jump out of his carrier and get up on his blanket. Patients could then pet him and talk to him. Grover would sit in the patients lap if allowed, but 17 pounds is a bit heavy for a lap cat.

They have visited numerous patients over the years, but memories of the first patient stick with them. She had very few visits from any family members; asked if she wanted a visit from a cat, her smile went ear to ear. She was so happy! Her smiles were worth more than anything money could buy.

Grover has not been visiting patients over the past year and a half due to allergies. He was on medication that lowered his ability to fight off infection, so for his safety, he was briefly retired. They are happy to report that he is doing much better and will soon have medical clearance to return to his hospice work.