

Hundreds of Golden Retrievers join meet-up to honor Spencer, Boston Marathon's official dog

Boston Common became a sea of wagging golden tails Sunday afternoon as hundreds of Golden Retrievers and their owners convened for a "Golden Strong" Marathon Weekend Meetup to honor the official dog of the Boston Marathon, Spencer, and raise awareness for canine cancer.

Spencer, a beloved fixture of the marathon who appeared along the course for seven years to cheer runners on, died in February 2023. Sunday's meetup, which included a walk and "social hour" for pups and humans alike, was meant to honor Spencer's memory and raise money to fight cancer in golden retrievers.

The organizers of the paw-ty, Massachusetts Golden Meetups, sold gold and blue tees and bandanas for participants to wear at the event; 20% of each sale was donated toward canine cancer research.

"This year we came together to celebrate the beautiful golden community and bring smiles to as many faces as we could, while raising money for Morris Animal Foundation's research on hemangiosarcoma with the hope that someday the golden breed will no longer be plagued by cancer like it is today," said Elisha Bussiere, co-founder of Massachusetts Golden Meetups.

Appearing at the marathon since 2015, Spencer was named the official Boston Marathon dog by the Boston Athletic Association in April 2022.

The event also featured a meet and greet with marathon runners, which was particularly "special," Bussiere said. "I accidentally stumbled on this, this morning!" one commenter said. "It was Heaven!"

Spencer was recently honored with a statue along the marathon route in Ashland, which was unveiled last month.