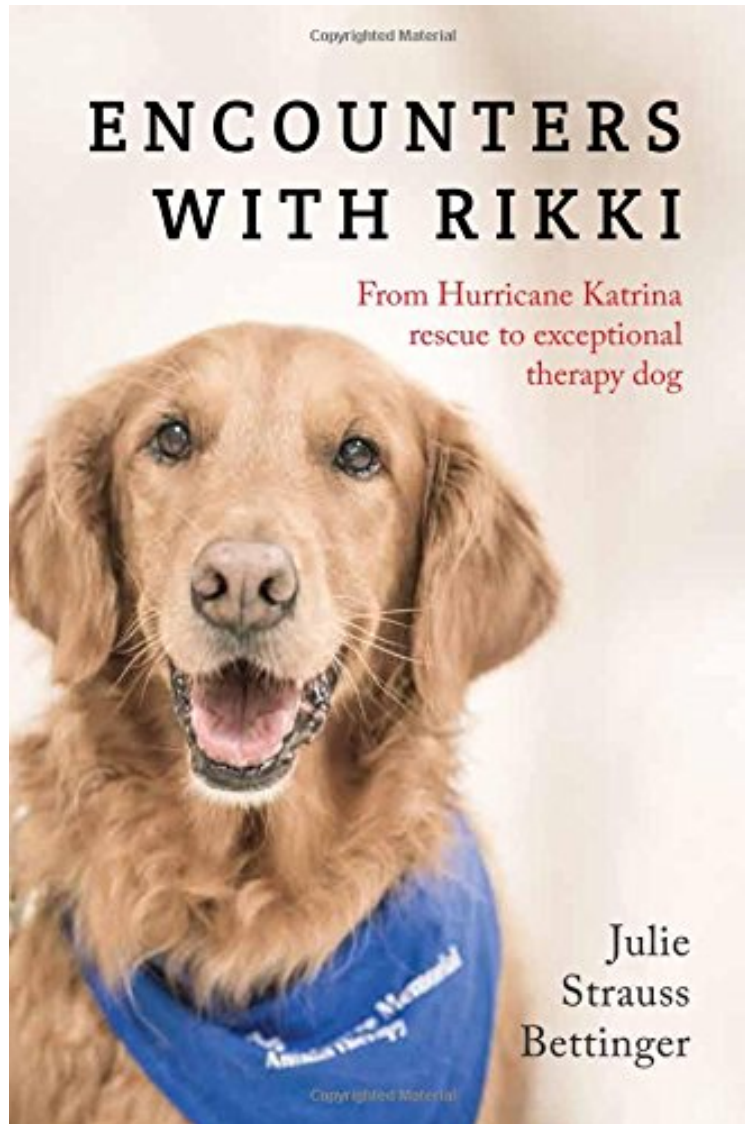


# Encounters with Rikki: From Hurricane Katrina Rescue to Exceptional Therapy Dog

*Julie Strauss Bettinger*  
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**Julie Strauss Bettinger : Encounters with Rikki: From Hurricane Katrina Rescue to Exceptional Therapy Dog** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Encounters with Rikki: From Hurricane Katrina Rescue to Exceptional Therapy Dog:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An absolutely outstanding read....By Florida JoeWithout any doubt, this is one book that is difficult to "put down." We've all heard that phrase before, but it is absolutely true for this true

story of "Rikki," and all those who have been helped by this remarkable therapy dog and the animal-assisted therapy team who works with her. This account is far more than a story of an animal, for we learn how victims of crime are helped along the path to healing by a loving touch of a paw or nose. Having been a member of an active book club for many years, I will recommend "Encounters with Rikki" as our next selection.<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Uplifting and amazing story  
By Diana H  
Firstly, I must say that I am related to Patty and Chuck Mitchell, Rikki's human Mom and Dad. We live on opposite coasts of the country and have not met Rikki and only have heard of her abilities. I approached reading this book as if I knew nothing about the work of Chuck, Patty and Rikki. Surprisingly, I learned so much about the exceptional volunteer work, but also a great deal about the Mitchell's themselves that even as a relative I didn't know. As a book it is well written, and the stories of the children told with compassion. While parts can be difficult to read because of the subject matter, the book is uplifting and filled with hope.<sup>3</sup> of 3 people found the following review helpful. Being an animal lover, I feel the connection that ...  
By Lisa Lazarus  
Being an animal lover, I feel the connection that can take place between humans and animals...but knowing the exact moment when those connections are being made and being able to describe that for others is so unique. Julie, Chuck, Patty and of course Rikki have given us those moments of connection in pristine detail. Along with the individuals whose lives have been positively altered by their presence, they have shown us a new gift when looking into the eyes of an animal. We may all watch the animals a little differently now -- and look for new ways of assisting each other.

Encounters with Rikki tells the true story of the incredible partnership between Chuck and Rikki, a very special rescue dog. Rikki first found her home with Chuck and Patty Mitchell in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. Even though the golden retriever was a shy, shell-shocked puppy still adapting to the stress of displacement, Chuck recognized her innate abilities as a therapy dog. Together they bring healing and hope to recovering patients, accident victims, and the mentally ill. Soon Rikki's quiet confidence attracts the attention of advocates of child victims. Called upon to testify in court, child witnesses must recall horrific memories in the presence of their abusers; the tireless work of Chuck and Rikki allows these children to do so with a therapy dog by their side. Inspiring and heartfelt, Rikki's story illustrates the far-reaching effects of the human-animal bond.

"The human-animal bond has quite a storied past but perhaps fewer stories can match that of Rikki . . . It is her work with child abuse victims, however, that is her most important . . . offering them a calming presence in a difficult and heartbreaking situation." Chicago Tribune  
"Julie Strauss Bettinger has written a winner." WCVE  
"Heartfully captures the amazing power animals have to lift the human spirit." Barbara Natterson, MD, coauthor of Zoobiquity and professor of medicine, UCLA Division of Cardiology  
"This beautiful book shines a light on what vulnerable crime victims encounter and how the loving touch of a paw can provide the strength on the path to healing. We need more Rikki and Chuck teams in the world." Allie Phillips, cofounder of Therapy Animals Supporting Kids (TASK) Program  
"A wonderful read . . . told with the details that make the possibilities of therapy through animals real and will stir even a pessimist to optimism." Talbot  
"Sandy" D'Alemberte, former president of the American Bar Association  
"Children who enter the criminal court system as victims may have to relive the abuse they experienced by testifying . . . Encounters with Rikki tells the story of an amazing therapy dog who helps children cope with this stress so they can tell their stories and so justice can be served. It's essential reading . . ." Cynthia J. Najdowski, PhD, Assistant Professor, School of Criminal Justice, University at Albany  
"A moving account of how a loving dog and a determined man can make a world of difference in the lives of those who need it most." Janice Gary, author of Short Leash: A Memoir of Dog Walking and Deliverance  
"A compelling story of the human-animal bond at its absolute finest." Mary R. Burch, PhD, director of the AKC Canine Good Citizen Therapy Dog Program  
"Encounters with Rikki tells the story of a truly amazing bond between man and dog and the life-saving healing and companionship their relationship has inspired . . . [It captures] the magical way in which therapy animals unlock love and trust for those who most desperately need it." Lauren Book, MS.Ed, founder and CEO of Lauren's Kids foundation  
"This riveting story will forever change how you view the power of animal therapy." Martha Barnett, Former President of the American Bar Association  
"An extremely moving book . . . A profoundly human journey told through the unlikely story of a canine." Armand B. Cognetta Jr, chief of dermatology, Florida State University College of Medicine  
About the Author  
Julie Strauss Bettinger received her master of fine arts in creative nonfiction from Goucher College in 2013. Her work as a freelance writer spans twenty-five years, primarily for publications in Florida and the southeast United States. Her writing appears in Florida Trend, Florida Small Business, FSU's Research in , and Florida State Law magazine. She wrote a weekly business column for the Tallahassee Democrat and was the editor of Tallahassee and Emerald Coast magazines. For nearly twenty years she was the editor for two law-enforcement journals. Her published works include the coauthored book Blasted by Adversity: The Making of a Wounded Warrior, published by Inkshares in May 2015. For more information, visit [www.JulieBettinger.com](http://www.JulieBettinger.com).