

CPAWS SCOOP

“Nurturing the human-animal bond”



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The World’s Largest Pet Walk

On Saturday, September 25th, Compassionate Paws participated in "The World's Largest Pet Walk" at the Berry Trail behind the main post office. We had over 30 participants from our CPaws Team and community members plus their wonderful pets. Through our fundraising efforts, we raised \$940 for Pet Partners along with raising awareness in our community about the human-animal bond and the importance of exercise. It was a wonderful event!



Therapy Animals in Hospitals and Healthcare Settings

What are the benefit?

- Physiological effects include reduced blood pressure, lower heart rate, and decreased anxiety.
- The presence of therapy animals can bring a sense of normalcy to a hospitalized patient.
- Therapy animals have been found to have a positive effect on patients' pain level and satisfaction with their hospital stay.
- Don't underestimate the power of a therapy animal in a waiting room, chaplain's office or even in the staff break room to reduce stress.

Therapy Animals and College Students

What are the benefits?

- Studies show interactions with therapy animals decrease stress and anxiety.
- Therapy animals have been found to be a social lubricant, promoting increased social interaction with other students on campus and reducing loneliness.
- Social engagement with handlers as well as the therapy animal can help students to see life outside the campus.

Welcome and Congratulations to our new and renewing Pet Partner Teams

On Saturday, September 18th, our evaluators Laurie Angel and Misty Rigas evaluated three pet partner teams. Thank you to all that volunteered. Volunteers were D'Ann Downey, Cathy Varidel, Vicki VanPelt, and Rany Logan. A big thank you to Rany Logan for securing our testing location. Congratulations and welcome to our new Pet Partner Team, Mary Ann and Bailey, and to our renewing team, Bonnie and Quincy! We look forward to seeing all the wonderful things you will do as Pet Partners.



What have we been up to recently?



“Paws”ing to thank our healthcare workers at Floyd



Greeting incoming students at Berry College

What have we been up to recently? (Continued)



Visiting residents at The Spires



Visiting residents at Riverwood Senior Living

What have we been up to recently? (Continued)



Summerville Community Event - "Read With Me"

Therapy Animals and Aging Adults

What are the benefits?

- Improved mood, decreased depression, decreased loneliness, facilitation of memory
- Increase in socializing between nursing home residents and staff which is frequently documented to continue after the visit has ended
- Increased physical activity from stretching to pet, and co-walking with the therapy animal team

Read with Me™

"Read with Me" is a special initiative of the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program, registering the best therapy animal teams with the highest credentials across the country. Handlers in the Read with Me program have learned how to apply their proactive handling and constructive communication skills in a setting with children. Scientific research demonstrates the positive impacts of animals on children's learning: A 2012 study showed that the children reading with dogs had significantly greater improvements in reading competence, motivation, and reader self-confidence than those reading without. A 2014 study of third graders showed those who read with a dog reported participating in additional voluntary reading practice during their summer break, while none reported summer reading from those without dogs.

Criteria for Prospective Therapy Animals:

- Pet Partners Therapy Animals must meet the following criteria:
- Are at least one year old at the time of evaluation, or six months old for rabbits, guinea pigs, and rats.
- Have lived in the owner's home for at least six months, or one year for birds.
- Must be reliably house trained. Waste collection devices are not permitted, with the exception of flight suits for birds.
- Be currently vaccinated against rabies. Rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, and birds are exempt from this requirement. Titters are not accepted in lieu of vaccination.
- May not be fed a raw meat diet.
- Have no history of aggression or seriously injuring either people or other animals.
- Demonstrate good basic obedience skills. Animals walking with a lead should walk on a loose leash, and respond reliably to common commands such as "sit," "down," "stay," "come," and "leave it."

Helpful Hints & Tips:

- *Self and dog health check:* Handlers should evaluate their dogs' health and attitude, as well as their own, prior to every visit.
- *Olfactory sensitivity:* Avoid using perfumes, colognes, and other scented oils on both the handler and the dog. Handlers want to look and smell their best when taking their dogs to visit, but it is also important to remember some individuals may have severe allergies to these products.
- *Water for your dog:* Keep your dog well hydrated. Bring water and bowl. Folding fabric or plastic bowls are perfect for taking along on visits.
- *Expect encounters with other dogs and animals:* Be aware that some facilities have their own pets or may allow visiting family pets. Residents may have their own pets as well. These animals may not behave in the same manner as a therapy dog. You may want to find out if there is a visiting time set aside for family pets and try to avoid visiting during that time.
- *How is your dog really feeling?* Be alert to signs of stress in your dog and yourself. Monitor the body language of your dog for signs of stress, including, but not limited to:
 - ✦ Excessive panting
 - ✦ Jumping or climbing on you for security
 - ✦ Hiding behind you
 - ✦ Shaking or developing tremors in the body or legs
 - ✦ Showing the whites of the eyes
 - ✦ Pressing the ears and tail close to the body
 - ✦ Yawning or changing facial expressions
 - ✦ Looking for an escape route or doorway
 - ✦ Refusing to socialize
 - ✦ Lowered body

Helpful Hints & Tips: (Continued)

- *Dogs can say “no:”* Never force your dog to interact with a patient or any patient to interact with your dog. This should be a pleasant experience for you, your dog, and the patient or resident.
- *What’s on the floor?* Be aware of pills, food, or other items on the floor. It is a good idea not to let your dog pick up or even sniff anything, including a treat, that has been dropped on the floor. Keep your dog away from trash containers. A good command to teach your dog is “Leave it!” Avoid areas where cleaning chemicals were recently used.
- *Visiting a room:* Always knock first before entering a patient’s room. Ask if s/he would like a visit from your special dog. Never awaken sleeping patients. If the patient is having a meal in the room and wants to visit, excuse yourself and offer to return when s/he has finished the meal.
- *Never take your eyes off of your therapy animal!* When visiting it is important to always be aware of where and what your therapy animal is doing. Remember accidents can happen in a split second.
- *Always support your therapy animal with PETS!* First and foremost, don’t get stressed out too! Your dog looks to you for support and will become further stressed if they sense your anxiety. Remember the principles of PETS and use to calm your dog through Presence, Eye contact, Touch, and Speech. This affirmation that you are there for your pooch may be all that your dog needs to get back on track.
- *Always remember YAYABA!* If you find that even after practicing PETS, your dog is still exhibiting anxious behaviors, it’s time to use YAYABA: You Are Your Animal’s Best Advocate. For example, if you know that your dog is responding negatively to being petted a certain way, calmly redirect the client and guide them on the best way to pet your animal. If there’s a particular circumstance that’s causing unusual anxiety, you could choose to move to another area of the facility to remove your dog from the source of the stress.

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www.romepaws.org