Facility Dog's:

Why Your Volunteer Department Needs One!

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Releases on file for all photos in this presentation.

University Hospitals
Rainbow Babies & Children's

PETPALS

Diane Pekarek, C-CAIS, CAIS, NCCMT

AAI Coordinator, University Hospitals Health System
In the animal field for 25+ years. First noticed the therapeutic effect animals had on humans while working at the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo, and later at the Greater Cleveland Aquarium. Have developed AAI programs for at-risk youth interacting with grey wolves, female offenders in the prison system working with alpacas, and children on the autism spectrum interacting with stingrays and invertebrates.

- Studied at University of Denver's Graduate Institute of Human-Animal Connection
- Canine Assisted Intervention Specialist.
- Certified Animal Assisted Intervention Specialist.
- Nationally Board Certified Canine Massage Therapist.
- Canine Arthritis Management (CAM), Level 1
- Puppy Start Right Educator with the Karen Pryor Institute
- AKC S.T.A.R. Trainer.
- AKC Canine Good Citizen Evaluator.
- Certified in Force-Free Training & Enrichment from the Association of Zoos & Aquariums.
- Canine CPR & First-Aid Instructor.
- Canine Wilderness First-Aid Instructor.
- Trainer and Handler for Canine Assistants Facility Dogs, using Bond-Based Learning
- Canine Companions Therapy Dog Evaluator

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I'm a "Dog Girl" in a Hospital World

About University Hospitals

With 150 locations throughout Northeast Ohio, the University Hospitals Health System encompasses hospitals, outpatient centers, and primary care physicians.

UH Cleveland Medical Center is home to world-class clinical and research centers, including cancer care, pediatrics, women's health, orthopedics, spine, radiology, radiation oncology, neurosurgery, neuroscience, psychiatry, cardiology, cardiovascular surgery, organ transplantation, and human genetics.

UH is very dog-centric!

University Hospitals

UH Pet Pals Annual Calendar

They're not all the same…

Good Dog! SERVICE CANINES	I'm a Service Dog	I'm a Facilty Dog	I'm a Companion Dog	I'm a Therapy Dog	I'm an Emotional Support Animal
Definition	A dog trained specific tasks to mitigate their person/handler's disability	A dog trained specific tasks to help multiple individuals in a designated facility	A pet dog trained specific tasks to help a person with a disablity at home or anywhere pet dogs are allowed	A temperament-tested pet dog providing comfort in an approved facility	A pet dog that provides emotional support to its owner with a mental health condition
Training Required	Extensively trained specific tasks to mitigate their person's disablity including public access training and obedience	Trained specific tasks to help multiple individuals in a variety of situations within the facility	Trained specific tasks to help a person with a disablity at home or anywhere pet dogs are allowed	Basic Obedience and certification from a Therapy Dog organization	Basic manners expected but none required by law
Access Rights	ADA rights to access public places with their person/handler	Only with permission from a designated facility (school, therapy office, etc)	None; legally this dog is considered a high-trained pet	Only with permission from a designated facility (library, hospital etc)	Only allowed in owner's home, college, & airplanes, see Fair Housing Act and Air Carrier Access Act
Ownership (Dog lives with)	The person with the disability (and their family if a child)	A professional working in a field that serves individuals with disabilities; profession-al must be educated to best utilize the dog	The person with a disability that they serve (and their family if a child)	The dog owner that brings their dog to a designated facility to comfort others	The individual diagnosed with a mental health condition

Animal-Assisted Interventions in the Hospital Setting

Animal-Assisted Interventions (AAI)

Goal-oriented and structured interventions that intentionally incorporate animals in health, education, and human service for the purpose of therapeutic gains and improved health and wellness**.**

Think of this as an umbrella term.

Animal-assisted therapy (AAT), and Animal-Assisted Activities (AAA) are both forms of Animal-Assisted Interventions.

- **Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT)**
  Animal-assisted therapy is a goal-oriented, planned, structured, and documented therapeutic intervention directed by health and human service providers as part of their profession. Possible practitioners could include physicians, occupational therapists, physical therapists, certified therapeutic recreation specialists, nurses, social workers, speech therapists, or mental health professionals. **Facility Dogs with Patients.**

- **Animal-Assisted Activity (AAA)**
  Animal-assisted activities provide opportunities for motivational, educational, and/or recreational benefits to enhance quality of life. While **more informal in nature**, these activities are delivered by a specially trained professional, paraprofessional, and/or volunteer, in partnership with an animal that meets specific criteria for suitability**. Volunteer Therapy Dogs & Facility Dogs interacting with Staff.**

Loki (L) acquired at 15 months old

So what **IS** a Hospital Facility Dog?

Facility Dogs are unique in that, unlike normal Therapy Dog Programs, these specially educated dogs are allowed special access to patients in almost all areas of the hospital. In fact, the dogs are considered staff members. Often times the dogs are owned by the hospital, in conjunction with the organization they were acquired from.

Their specialized teaching and calm disposition means that they are able to visit patients that would not be eligible for normal Therapy Dog programs.

The dogs handlers, who are also specially trained, are employees of the hospitals. Some are Child Life Specialists, but we also have handlers who are Nurse Practitioners, Employee Assistance Managers, and most recently, Volunteer Service Staff!

At UH dogs are allowed on the bed, as long a barrier is down.

Strong Volunteer Therapy Animal Program

UH Pet Pals Program encompasses both the Therapy Animals and the Facility Dogs.

130 Therapy Dogs & 1 cool cat

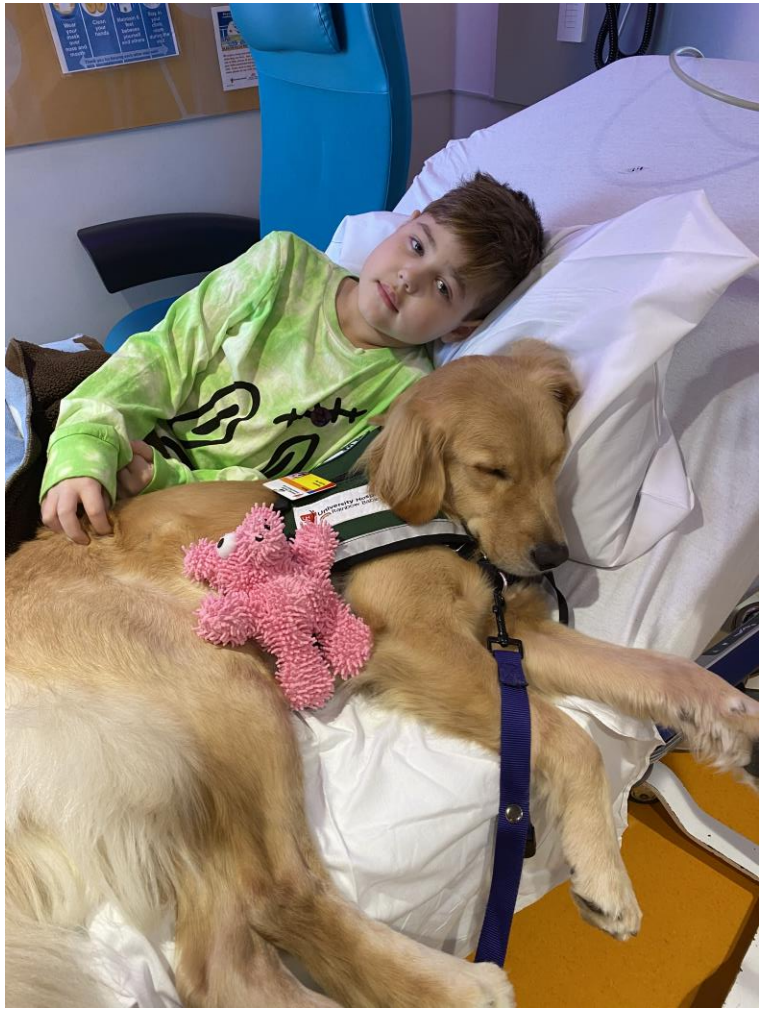
Mobile Aquarium Therapy

Equine Therapy

Why a Facility Dog in Your Hospital?

The current data collection at UH in 2020 found the following:

- Substantially positive attitude towards having the dog on the unit (96% with rating of 81-100 on visual analog scale where 0=very negative, 50=neutral, and 100=very positive, mean rating 98, SD 4.5).
- Substantially positive impact of the dog on their work environment (96% with rating of 81-100 on visual analog scale where 0=very negative, 50=neutral, and 100=very positive, mean rating 97, SD 7.3).
- Substantially positive impact on staff morale (94% with rating of 81-100 on visual analog scale where 0=very negative, 50=neutral, and 100=very positive, mean rating 96, SD 6.8).
- Substantially positive interactions between patients and the facility dogs (98% with rating of 81-100 on visual analog scale where 0=very negative, 50=neutral, and 100=very positive, mean rating 97, SD 5.8).
- All staff members reported that they would recommend the Facility Dog program to other floors/ facilities



Melena would cuddle with this patient during **every** infusion appointment. The pink dog toy pictured is one of MANY he brought for her to say thanks.

Why a Facility Dog in Your Volunteer Services Dept.?

Facility Dogs are typically unit specific, visiting only patients & staff in their Handlers work area as a full-time employee.

At UH:

- Pediatric Hematology/Oncology at Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital
- Breast Health Center at Seidman Cancer Center
- Pediatric ICU at Rainbow Babies & Children's Center
- Surgical Cancer Unit at Seidman Cancer Center
- Child & Adolescent Psychiatric Unit at Rainbow Babies & Children's Hospital
- UH Employee Assistance Program

With a Facility Dog in Volunteer Services we can provide comfort & love throughout the entire hospital (Lakeside, Lerner, MacDonald Women's Hospital, Hannah House, Pediatric & Adult ED):

- Critical Needs
- Code Lavender
- End of Life Situations
- Community Outreach
- Helps you understand the challenges your other Facility Dog Handlers face.

Loki with Carol Passerell (L) Volunteer Services Manager, Primary Handler and Barbara Nalette (R), Director of Volunteer Services, Secondary Handler

In Addition:

A Facility Dog can break down barriers in communication:

"Loki has helped the medical staff see Volunteer Services in a whole new light. While petting Loki they take the time to smile, talk, and tell us what their needs are…how our department can better work together."

Carol Passerell

"It's the 1-minute decompression that I need to keep me going"

Emergency Department Doctor

But is it a good fit for YOU?

What Your Volunteer Department Will Need:

- Animal well-being policy
  - The dog is not a "tool", they are sentient animals
    - enrichment, massage, play & rest schedules, high-quality diet, regular vet care.
- Handler selection protocol
  - Clear understanding of the needs of a dog AND a working dog.
  - A lifetime commitment to the dog…
    - Professional training & certification from AAAIP (Association of Animal-Assisted Intervention Professionals
    - If you don't know where to start, start here!
- Handler role & expectations clearly defined, for both the Handler and your Hospitals Leadership
- To be financially prepared for the unexpected.
- Well thought out introduction of Facility Dog to Therapy Dogs & Handlers
  - This is **key** for safety, and to head off any feelings of resentment
- Strong policies that address infectious control, human allergies, phobias and physical harm
  - Strengthen your Therapy Dog Program BEFORE adding a Facility Dog!
- An ongoing relationship with the organization the dog is acquired from
- A strong understanding of canine cognition & behavior, including canine stress signals (or the ability to have a resource with this knowledge)
- Consistency in Handlers…at ALL times.
- An open-mind, sense of humor, and deep respect for the "magic" that dogs can bring.

From grumpy to grateful. Working with the Hospitals Patient Experience staff to make the change.

What Does a Facility Dog need?

Love:
Hospitals are scary places, for people and for dogs. Recognize that and always have his back.

Patience:
Being a team is hard work, for both of you. There will be times when you'll question the process (Psssst: He's not being stubborn, he just doesn't know what you want).

To be a dog:
He'll need to play during the work day, and roll in the grass and bark at the squirrels, and that's okay!

Recovery time:
He's feeling ALL the "feels". He'll need quiet time throughout the day ("Oh, sorry no…he's off-duty right now")

His language:
He's going to try **really** hard to learn what you're saying. Try even harder to learn what he's saying.

Love:
Worth mentioning again!

Loki debunking the "Halo Effect"

"When animals express their feelings they pour out like water from a spout. Animals' emotions are raw, unfiltered, and uncontrolled. Their joy is the purest and most contagious of joys and their grief the deepest and most devastating. Their passions bring us to our knees in delight and sorrow."
— **Marc Bekoff,**

Acquiring a Facility Dog:

Where you acquire a Facility Dog from will depend on:

- Time frame
- Budget
- Abilities you need in the dog
- Hospital Location (adult? peds? both?)
- Handler Availability

Assistance Dog International
https://assistancedogsinternational.org/
This organization offers a listing of many of the facilities that breed and/or train facility dogs.

Canine Companions
https://canine.org/
Facilities across the country

Duo Dogs
https://duodogs.org/
Headquartered in St. Louis. MO

Canine Assistants
https://www.canineassistants.org/
Headquartered in Milton, GA

There are **many** other Facility Dog Organizations, including those that just work with hospitals local to them.

When you meet all the needs of your Facility Dog he'll meet all the needs of your patients & staff…and then some.

Still not sure if a Facility Dog is right for your Volunteer Services Department?

Please ask questions now, or reach out to me privately.

I'm here to help!

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Thank you!

PETPALS

Society for Healthcare Volunteer Leaders

Breakout Session Evaluation