



THERAPY DOGS

WHAT IS A THERAPY DOG?

- “Therapy Dog” is the term commonly used to refer to dogs that do “Animal-Assisted Therapy” and “Animal-Assisted Activities”.
- Therapy dogs and their handlers visit people in nursing homes, hospitals, schools, retirement centers, and prisons.
- When Therapy Dogs and their handlers visit as a part of an “Animal-Assisted **Activities**” program, the dogs provide outward focus, entertainment, and unconditional attention as a part of a Recreational Therapy Program.
- When Therapy Dogs and their handlers visit as a part of an “Animal-Assisted **Therapy**” program, they work together with a Physical Therapist or an Occupational Therapist to help patients reach their prescribed therapeutic goals.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A **SERVICE DOG** & A THERAPY DOG?

- These two terms are often confused, but are NOT the same. A service dog is trained to assist a person with a disability. A therapy dog belongs to a volunteer and is used for therapeutic activities.
- Service dogs have rights guaranteed to them (like access to buildings and airplanes) by the Americans with Disabilities Act. *Therapy dogs do NOT have these rights.*

HOW CAN MY DOG BECOME A THERAPY DOG?

- Therapy dogs and their handlers should seek certification through an International Professional Organization, like **Carolina Canines for Therapy Program®**. Handlers will take a class to learn about subjects like infection control and special patient populations and take a written test.
- Therapy dogs and their handlers will have to pass an evaluation that simulates situations encountered in a typical therapy visit.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF BECOMING CERTIFIED?

- Certification through an organization like **Carolina Canines for Therapy Program®**
- will provide the handler / dog team with extra liability insurance and professional support, should an incident occur.
- This organization issues photo identification cards and vests for the dogs to wear for identification.
- Certification helps to assure that facilities will continue to allow Animal-Assisted Therapy and Animal-Assisted Activities by making sure volunteers are educated and dogs are well-trained.

WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING DOES TEAMWORKS OFFER?

- Therapy dogs and their handlers can take the [Teamworks Therapy Dog class](#) to prepare their dogs to take the **Carolina Canines for Therapy** evaluation.
- The class includes exposure to medical equipment and unusual sights, sounds, and smells.
- The class includes a guest speaker, a shadowing visit, and in-class practice visiting scenarios. →



WHAT ARE THE PRE-REQUISITIES FOR THE THERAPY DOG CLASS?

- Therapy dogs and their handlers must have a **Canine Good Citizen title** before taking the Therapy Dog class. [Canine Good Citizen preparation classes](#) are also offered by Teamworks Dog Training®.
- Dogs must be 1 year of age before being tested and should have lived with the handler for at least thirty days.

CAN OTHER TYPES OF ANIMALS BE CERTIFIED?

- Only dogs can be certified through **Carolina Canines for Therapy Program®**.

IS THERE A NEED FOR PET THERAPY VOLUNTEERS?

- Yes! There are many places requesting Animal-Assisted Therapy volunteers. Contact the Activities Director or the Volunteer Coordinator at your local hospital, senior residence, or school.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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