

ARE MY DOG AND I READY TO DO THIS?

Visiting a facility is different than anything you and your dog have ever done before. Regardless of your background as a trainer, breeder, exhibitor, or health care professional, this is a new experience for both of you. Everyone “begins at the beginning” as a new animal-handler team!

Many people think because their dog has a soft personality, those qualities make him/her a candidate for a facility visiting dog. The dog and the handler must also have the required skills in addition to aptitude. Aptitude is what makes him attractive to others - his soft face and his affection - and skills (obedience training for him- handling training for you) are required to safely and effectively move from place to place inside the facility. Both qualities - skills and aptitude - are equally important.

Whether you and your dog have passed the Delta Society evaluations, or whether your dog has a CGC, you are not yet ready to visit in the hospitals. Our teams must be trained well through mentoring and instruction, and equipped to handle any and all incidents that may come their way in an acute care setting - people who walk and talk and act differently, wheelchairs, walkers, loud noises, men with beards, people in gowns, staff wearing face masks, crowds, children with loud voices and quick movements, and elevators. These are just some of the distractions the animal and handler will encounter. At all times the dog must be well-behaved, under control, and a perfect gentleman. They cannot pull on the lead; bark or vocalize in ANY way; or jump on anyone. You and the dog must instill confidence in everyone you meet.

If you are joining our program, we will mentor you and your dog on the floors and units of our hospitals so you and he “know the ropes,” gain special skills that we have developed over the years; things that work; things that will make you more confident and effective as a volunteer visiting animal-handler team. Care and caution must be taken to be sure your animal is comfortable and confident, that he poses no threat-real or implied-to anyone you encounter through shying away, bolting, lunging, barking, pulling on the leash, etc.

Your animal is to welcome and enjoy handling in a variety of ways. You will encounter situations at a facility that will require restraint and judgment on your part on behalf of your dog, and you will need to practice tolerance and be ready for unpredictable human behavior on the part of patients, staff, family, staff members, and visitors.

Some patients will act differently than you or your animal have ever encountered before. They may talk loudly, gesture wildly, stagger or limp, or say inappropriate things. They may have coordination challenges, or have strange odors or make strange sounds. All of these will affect your animal team mate. Not everyone you meet will want to visit with, or even like your dog!

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When these situations happen, how will you deal with it to keep your animal confident and under control? Work now to get the obedience skills handled. You and your dog are considered equal parts of the team, so your handling ability is a big part of the equation.

If your animal is afraid or shies away and avoids interactions, they do not inspire confidence in everyone they meet. If they are “up” and exuberant, they can cause injury. Your animal may NEVER show aggression to any person or other animal. One incident in the facility will ruin it for everyone else.

Is your animal in proper physical condition? If he has a progressive disease, if he is overweight or structurally compromised, if he has hearing loss or vision loss, he can become overly stressed or will be in pain, and will not make an appropriate visiting animal. It's not fair to the animal to put him under increased stress when he is physically or emotionally unable to deal with it.

Do you know how to recognize stress in your animal? In yourself? In the patient or staff member? The animal handler training class which follows our evaluations will give you excellent tools to use to make your visiting more effective and enjoyable for all concerned..... your dog too!

Good obedience skills are a must... for they are the foundation upon which all your other visiting skills are built. You and your dog must have the skills to handle the basic obedience commands (sit, down, on lead, stay, come,) and must have the aptitude (does the dog enjoy the encounters and interactions?). If you have earned the CGC title, please understand that the CGC is only an indication that the dog and handler may be on the right track. It is no guarantee of skill and aptitude, and is no guarantee that you and the animal can pass the evaluations. The CGC is simply an elementary test.

Are you and he confident and poised to handle the distractive, unpredictable things that can and do occur in a hospital setting? Again, the basis for confidence in both ends of the leash is a good solid obedience background and good socialization to different sights, sounds, and smells. Formal training at a busy, noisy, highly distractive school with lots of other dogs all learning together is our best recommendation for preparation. A private trainer is good for eliminating some undesirable behaviors, but will not give you all the distractions and stimulus that you and the dog will encounter while volunteering. “Home schooling” sometimes makes successful candidates also. But the time tested method we have found is old fashioned obedience training at a busy school.

At all times, we must remember that we are GUESTS in the facility. We must be on our very best behavior at all times. Because the public sometimes perceives us as staff, we must remember that we are to properly represent the facility and Delta Society by being poised, professional, and competent.

Delta Society Pet Partner Team Training Course and Evaluations

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY!

Evaluations are conducted to determine if the handler and animal have the required skills and aptitude to be a therapy team, how well the animal handles distractions and unpredictability and how well the handler interprets and manages his and/or her animals' behavior.

AULTMAN HOSPITAL will conduct a Delta Society Pet Partner Handler Training course for all potential team partners on Saturday, October 2, 2010 from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. Registration for the class is required by Friday, September 17. Team evaluation will be on Saturday, October 23, by appointment only.

REQUIREMENTS

The handler must attend and successfully complete the instructions regarding the Team Training Course. Registration will be given to you upon successful passing of this course. Aultman Hospital's "Happy Tails" program requires the in-class version of the handler training (not the home-study version).

In order to be successful as a Delta Society registered (and insured) Pet Partner team, you and your animal must be evaluated for the necessary skills and aptitude required according to Delta Society's standardized Pet Partner Skills (PPST) and Aptitude (PPAT) tests, a 22-part screening.

Dogs are the only species that are eligible for the hospital program at Aultman Hospital. However; dogs are not the only animals that are eligible for registration as Delta Society Pet Partners. Cats, rabbits, horses, pot-bellied pigs, goats, miniature horses and ponies, llamas, guinea pigs, hamsters and certain breeds of birds are also eligible for evaluation. These animals can make wonderful Pet Partners in the appropriate facility environment.

Delta Society guidelines for selection of suitable, competent teams require that both the animal and handler must be able to handle any and all situations that may occur in a facility (school, nursing home, Alzheimer care center, hospice, rehab center, and hospital). Dogs that have had Schutzhund protection training or bite work even as part of dog-sport are ineligible to be evaluated for the Delta Society Pet Partner program.

All animals that visit in health care facilities, schools, etc. must be calm and polite at all times and their handlers must possess the necessary skills to give everyone they encounter a feeling of confidence. Dogs cannot pull or tug on the leash—they must walk quietly and politely on lead.

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NOTE: We, of course, want animals that are friendly, but a dog that is overly friendly, exuberant or excitable, will not make a good candidate. His/her exuberance could cause a frail person whose balance and strength are at risk to be threatened. An exuberant dog, or one that is not in control, will pose a threat to the safety of people he/she meets - inside and outside the facility. Professionalism and poise are required at all times. Animals like this have the social skills we are looking for, but they need more obedience skills to remain calm and polite at all times.

The Pet Partner selection process for Pet Partner candidates will help keep everyone involved safe - the patient, staff, visitors, and of course, you and your wonderful animal. Every team that passes the aptitude and skills screening is then re-evaluated every two years for ongoing suitability. Additionally, our program requires annual health screens and annual cultures.

SPECIAL NOTE: If your dog causes an injury to a bystander, evaluator, another candidate, etc., your own personal homeowner coverage will be required to pay for any and all claims arising out of the incident.

The HANDLER TRAINING COURSE will be held at AULTMAN HOSPITAL, Canton, Ohio on Saturday, October 2, 2010. **This class is mandatory for anyone wishing to join our hospital-based program.** The class begins at 9 a.m. and concludes around 4 p.m. Only the handler is required to attend this class - **not the animal.** Directions to the classroom will be given upon receiving the workshop manual. Manuals can be purchased from Aultman Hospital Volunteer Services for the price of \$30 and can be picked up in Volunteer Services prior to the team training course. **Registration deadline is Friday, September 17.**

- If you are NOT joining our hospital program at Aultman, the fee for the full-day Delta Society Team Training Course is \$50. Your workshop manual is included in this cost and is yours to keep after the course.

SPECIAL NOTE: While Delta Society will accept handler applicants age 10 and above, the hospital program requires volunteers to be at least 15 years of age and have completed the ninth grade.

Children, family members, friends, etc., are not permitted to accompany a handler on visits. Host facilities have very strict liability insurance requirements that apply only to their own volunteers.

Successful volunteer members of the animal visitation programs understand they must make a definite commitment of time and energy (grooming, bathing, preparation) to the programs. Volunteer guidelines will be given to each candidate who successfully passes the Pet Partner Skills and Aptitude tests (evaluations).

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SKILLS AND APTITUDE SCREENING

The Skills and Aptitude Screening is conducted by licensed Delta Society animal/handler team evaluators. All evaluations are standardized by the Delta Society Pet Partners Program and are objective. The obedience portion of the screen does not follow American Kennel Club rules – that is, you may cue your animal more than once to get the requested behavior. Also, the obedience and handling skills required are NOT advanced level...what we need are solid basic-level obedience skills.

If, however; you have to cue your animal multiple times or model him (i.e., push him/her into the sit or down) to the behavior desired, we will assume the animal does not know that command, or is stressing and shutting down. If the animal pulls on the leash and yanks the handler around, if he shies away, avoids being handled or touched, barks, growls, jumps on anyone, including you, he needs more obedience and socialization work to make him suitable.

SPECIAL NOTE: Please do not bring us an animal that is clearly not ready for evaluation.

If you do not pass the Pet Partner Skills Test and the Pet Partner Aptitude Test the first time, we encourage you to try again, (but not on that same day). Sometimes, the team may not test well the first time, but passes with flying colors the second time.

The evaluation takes approximately 15 to 20 minutes. We will schedule evaluations after you have completed the Handler Training course on Saturday, October 2.

NOTE: Delta Society's fee for a two-year registration (includes Delta Society's \$1,000,000 primary liability insurance) is \$50 with our affiliate discount.

At the time you pass the behavioral evaluation, we will give you the registration application and instructions. The registration fee of \$50 (made payable to Delta Society) is to accompany your registration application.

SKILLS

This program has been developed over time by animal behaviorists, medical health care professionals, animal trainers, veterinarians, etc., to closely simulate situations and circumstances that can and do occur in a health care facility, school, or prison. Delta Society wants you and your animal to be comfortable and equipped to handle anything that comes your way. The animal/handler team is to inspire confidence in everyone they meet. Good manners and competent obedience skills for both handler and the dog, a professional appearance, suitability to the task, and an outgoing pleasant personality on both ends of the leash are what we look for.

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At no time during the Delta Society Pet Partner Evaluations for Skills and Aptitude will your animal be put in any danger, or pushed to the point where he/she is frightened. If we see that your pet is stressed to that point, we will stop the test and ask that you come back another day to test again – at no charge.

PLEASE READ THIS SECTION CAREFULLY!

You must show the evaluators that **your animal is polite** and performs willingly for you on cue to the following behaviors:

- SIT (applies only to dogs)
- COME from 20 feet directly to the handler (applies only to dogs)
- DOWN (applies to dogs, only)
- STAY
- ON LEAD (does not apply to rabbits, pocket pets, birds or cats).

Your animal must:

- walk **quietly** on the leash
- lead with no pulling, tugging, wandering
- all dogs, regardless of size, must be proficient on lead and have the same obedience skills of being polite and walking on a soft lead beside the handler as well as sit, down, stay, come.

NOTE: Small dogs, those that weigh 10 pounds or less and can be picked up with one hand, are permitted to be carried for part of the test and in the facility. However; the obedience requirements (walking on lead, sit, down, stay, come, etc.) of the evaluation are the same, regardless of size.

- For obvious reasons, your animal must not jump on, hop up, or paw at anyone.
- Your dog cannot pull the handler around, tug on the leash, or wander.
- Your dog must not whine, growl, “sing”, “hum”, “talk”, or bark.
- Your dog must be confident and not shy away from the testers or the equipment.
- Your dog cannot be accepted if he is overly friendly and exuberant - he must be in control, quietly willing and compliant, at all times.
- Your animal must **accept and enjoy handling and restraint in a variety of ways by a variety of different people**.....(petting, hugging, squeezing, holding, touching all over, handling feet, ears, tail, stomach, etc.).
- Your animal must be **confident** around various hospital equipment – he or she will be exposed to wheelchairs, walkers, IV poles, etc., and distraction during the evaluation, just as you and your pet will encounter in the hospital setting.
- Your animal must be **polite and calm around other animals**. Your pet will meet another animal in the facility you visit. He or she will meet a “neutral dog” during this evaluation. The “neutral dog” is an experienced member of our hospital program and will pose no threat to your animal.

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- Your animal must be **friendly, calm, and polite and willing to be handled by** people who walk and talk and act differently (loud voices, staggering, gesturing, etc.). People (visitors and patients alike) may have had a stroke, have a neurological deficit or be hard of hearing.
- Your animal must be properly groomed and in good physical condition. Your pet cannot be overweight or underweight. They must be able physically and mentally to do the work. Both ends of the leash must portray a professional, polished appearance.

*****YOU MUST PRESENT YOUR ANIMAL'S UP-TO-DATE PROOF OF INNOCULATION prior to having your animal evaluated for skills and aptitude. Your animal's veterinary office can run a copy of that inoculation record for you. Please be ready to present it at check-in prior to being evaluated.*** Your animal will not be evaluated without this record.

Currently, titre reports are not accepted in the hospital programs. The OVMA, AVMA and AVA are working on a new vaccination protocol for dogs, and the hospital will entertain a new policy regarding the volunteers at a later time. Currently; however we must have proof of vaccination for ParvoVirus, Leptospirosis, Hepatitis, Distemper, Para Influenza, Bordatella, and Rabies.

SPECIAL NOTE: Animals that are fed a raw meat/bone diet, or those who have, as part of their diet, raw meat and/or raw crushed bone will not be handled or evaluated. Dogs that live with other dogs that are fed a raw meat/bone diet are ineligible for the hospital program, as they are in contact with the raw-fed dog and can be a carrier of disease. Dogs that are fed raw meat - fresh beef, pork, chicken -- even if it is human grade, pose a documented threat to the health of patients, and anyone else they come in contact with.

The Infection Control Departments at all health care facilities where the question was posed, have stated without exception, raw fed dogs are not to enter their facilities. The public health risk of zoonotic infections caused by raw fed dogs has the medical profession (human and veterinary) extremely concerned.

(Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association, Vol 219, No 9, Nov 1, 2001 -- ..Jeffrey T. LeJeune, DVM, PhD and Dale D Hancock, DVM, PhD)

“...many idiopathic digestive upsets in dogs can be related to the feeding of raw meat/crushed bone diets. Some of the bacteriological pathogens present in raw meat, even human food grade, fed to dogs are Salmonella spp, Campylobacteriosis (a human enteric infection) , Shiga toxic Eschericia coli (STEC) are routinely isolated in fresh ground chuck and ground round; Yersinia enterocolitica, another Enterobacteriaceae, is commonly found in fresh raw pork, as is Toxoplasma gondii. In raw horsemeat intended for consumption by dogs, the pathogen Burkholderia (Pseudomonas) malei is present and dogs are susceptible to infection with this organism. Depending upon the hygienic

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conditions during slaughter of the animal, packaging and storage of the product, as much as 89% of commercially available raw meat intended for human consumption may be contaminated with *Yersenia enterocolitica*. Other bacteriological pathogens have been identified: *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Clostridium perfringens* both cause enteritis in dogs which can be transmitted to humans.”

We are not permitted to accept raw fed dogs, and cannot risk the chance of contamination by raw fed dogs to our evaluators, bystanders, or clients of the health care facilities that have entrusted us with providing suitable animal-handler teams.

The facilities you visit may require a throat and fecal culture of your dog. Raw fed animals will be identified through these culturing procedures.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Prong training collars, chain collars, chain leashes, flexi leads, and “No-Jump” training harnesses are not permitted. Delta will accept head halters and harnesses, but we cannot use dogs that are worked on Halti’s or other head halter type equipment in our hospital programs. If you work your dog on a harness, his skills must be as exact as dogs worked on collars. If you work your dog on a Halti, we will be happy to evaluate you for a lower acuity, less demanding facility.

APPROPRIATE ACCEPTABLE EQUIPMENT: Flat fabric or leather buckle collars and limited slip martingale collars made of nylon web or leather (no chain links) are appropriate. A leash of web or leather 6 feet or less is appropriate.

PLEASE BRING WITH YOU:

- A grooming tool for the evaluation (Pin brush, slicker, body brush, etc).
- Your animal’s inoculation record

Your animal will not be evaluated without these two important items!!!

Thanks for your interest in this volunteer opportunity! We will look forward to meeting you and your wonderful animal!