



Therapy Animals and College Students

Have you considered bringing therapy animal visitation to your college or university? Pet Partners is the premier therapy animal program providing qualified volunteers in settings just like yours.

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.

Examples of Interactions

- Events where students can pet therapy animals around exam time are popular stress relievers.
- To combat homesickness and the challenges of transition, therapy animal events for freshmen might include activities such as petting, grooming, demonstration of ‘tricks’ as well as conversation.

How to Select Teams

In addition to meeting the basic standards for all therapy animal teams, look for other key characteristics for your particular setting.

- Animals of any size who are comfortable in crowds and respond promptly to their handler’s cues even in noisy settings can be effective.
- Since these events are often group settings, animals who will engage with students while ignoring other animals present is another important quality.
- Even for young adults, allergies and germs are worthy considerations. Thorough grooming and good hand hygiene helps to mitigate potential problems.

Learn More

- For details about our program as well as our policies that help ensure safe and effective visits, go to www.petpartners.org/facilities

Why Choose a Pet Partners Team?

Handler Training

- All Pet Partners handlers complete training prior to registration and have access to continuing education opportunities.
- Pet Partners offers the only handler training on infection prevention publicly endorsed by the Society of Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA).
- Pet Partners offers a canine body language course consistent with SHEA guidelines.
- Pet Partners' education underscores the importance of healthy handlers and animals.

Handler and Animal Assessment

- All Pet Partners handlers must pass a written assessment at the time of registration demonstrating knowledge of best practices for safe and effective visits.
- Pet Partners teams are required to pass an in-person, role play based evaluation every two years, more frequently than recommended guidelines, to continue visiting.

Animal Welfare

- The core tenet of Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program is “you are your animal’s best advocate,” also known as YAYABA™. This requires handlers to modify or end interactions animals no longer enjoy, consistent with animal welfare guidelines.
- Pet Partners limits all visits to no longer than two hours, consistent with recommendations to limit overwork and fatigue.
- To register and renew, Pet Partners teams submit animal health screening forms signed by a veterinarian to ensure the overall health of the participating animal.
- Pet Partners ascribes to a relationship based handler-animal support model to be used during visits, a skill on which handlers are assessed during the evaluation process, known to Pet Partners handlers as PETS™.

Safety Standards

- To ensure that policies reflect current scientific information, Pet Partners relies on veterinary advisors, including those with specialization in epidemiology.
- Based on their guidance, requirements for rabies vaccination and grooming are purposefully stringent.
- Policies prohibit raw protein diets, animals with compromised health, and protection dogs.
- Pet Partners has an easily accessible system for incident reporting and a thorough resolution process to determine if a team can resume visiting. When combined with training, Pet Partners has a very low incidence of serious accidents.

