Genesys Pet Therapy Volunteer Program

The Genesys Pet Therapy program was developed to help reduce stress and anxiety, provide comfort and a sense of peacefulness, and offer patients a much-needed distraction from their illness. The program currently has 40 furry volunteers and their human handlers, all volunteers for Genesys.

Therapy animals have demonstrated several different health benefits. Their use in hospitals has helped to reduce stress and anxiety in patients, resulting in lower blood pressure. Interacting with the trained canines has also been shown to bring happiness, increasing levels of endorphin and oxytocin in the body which can in turn make patients healthier.

To be a volunteer in the Genesys Pet Therapy Program, handlers and their dogs must have successfully completed a recognized Pet Therapy certification program. Recognized pet therapy programs require all canine partners to obtain the AKC Canine Good Citizen Certificate and certification as a therapy dog. The dog must demonstrate good manners, be comfortable at all times around crowds and noise, walk calmly on a leash and follow basic commands. In addition, the volunteer and dog must be interviewed for fit with the Genesys program.

Recognized Pet Therapy Certification Programs:

- Mid-Michigan Therapy Dogs  
  http://www.midmichigantherapydogs.com/

- Therapy Dogs International  
  www.tdi-dog.org

- USA Therapy Dogs, Inc.  
  www.usatherapydogs.org

If you would like more information on the Genesys pet therapy program, or know of a Genesys patient in need of some ‘doggy love’, please call Volunteer Services at (810) 606-5100.

If you and your dog are already certified and want to volunteer at Genesys, please complete the volunteer application.