

St. Joseph Campus Welcomes K9 Unit

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Wheaton Franciscan – St. Joseph Campus is pleased to welcome a few new associates to our team! Two K9s and their handlers have joined our security team.

The K9s began working this spring and help to ensure a positive and healing environment for our patients, families, associates and physicians. The use of K9 units represents a best practice that fosters a calm and secure setting. These highly-trained dogs and their handlers work within our Emergency Department and other areas to act as safety ambassadors and enhance our healing environment.

St. Joseph Campus is one of two central city hospitals in Milwaukee and operates the busiest Emergency Department in the state. It also has some of the most talented, dedicated staff members in health care, serving a high-needs population on a daily basis. These professionally trained K9 security units will provide many benefits, including:

- A calming presence – these dogs are extremely calm and relaxed, not excitable or easily distracted. They respond when necessary only to the commands of their handlers, no matter what the situation.
- Training for a variety of situations – the units use pet therapy techniques, for example –to calm a frightened child, soothe someone with mental health issues, or de-escalate a tense situation.
- One unit can free several security officers to respond to other needs by handling situations as varied as soothing a patient or something as extreme as detecting an explosive.
- Individuals who might feel uncomfortable with the presence of additional security personnel usually respond more quickly and positively with the presence of a K9 security unit.
- The ability to interact in a positive way with the public – who can resist the greeting of a friendly smile and a wagging tail. The handler gives permission to individuals who want to approach the dog. The dog never approaches individuals without being directed to do so, which helps maintain a distance for people who may have allergies or other conditions.

We are thrilled to have a few new furry friends on board. You too can help support our K9 team as well as assist in its growth by making a donation to our Wheaton Franciscan - St. Joseph Foundation Emergency Department Fund by donating here.