

Animal Assisted Activity Handler Guide Assignment Guidelines

Goal:

Lift the spirits of Doylestown Health patients, visitors, and associates via interaction with qualified animals.

Requirements:

1. Animal Assisted Activity handlers and animals must personally pursue and earn certification from any one of the following independent national pet therapy organizations:

Bright and Beautiful	golden-dogs.org	973-292-3316
Pet Partners [formerly Delta Society]	petpartners.org	425-679-5500
Therapy Dogs Inc.	therapydogs.com	877-843-7364
Therapy Dogs International	tdi-dog.org	973-252-9800
Comfort Caring Canines	comfortcaringcanines.org	

Volunteers are expected to contact pet therapy organizations directly for information about certification requirements and the testing process and venue, and to personally schedule testing with the pet therapy organization.

Volunteers who will visit in the Pediatric Unit must also be members of the Roxy Reading organization. Roxy Reading members may not be members of Therapy Dogs International.

Questions about animal assisted activity opportunities at Doylestown Health should be directed to the advisory chair* of the Doylestown Hospital Animal Assisted Activity Team.

* *Joyce Rivas 215-588-9201 joycerivas@comcast.net*

2. Certification credentials from Bright and Beautiful, Pet Partners, Therapy Dogs Inc., Therapy Dogs International or Comfort Caring Canines must be provided to the Doylestown Health Volunteer Office. A copy of the current certification card must be provided to Doylestown Health Volunteer Services for inclusion in the Volunteer file.
3. Insurance is the responsibility of the volunteer via his/her certifying therapy organization.
4. Animal Assisted Activity Handlers must provide documentation of the animal's current health and inoculation records. Doylestown Health Volunteer Services must have proof of the following: Proof of annual veterinary examination; Proof of current Rabies vaccination with expiration date; proof of current DHPP or DHLPP with expiration date; Proof of annual negative fecal exam; Proof of current heartworm blood test with expiration date OR proof that monthly preventative heartworm medication is given by the handler.
5. Animal Assisted Activity Handlers must provide proof of current animal license as required by state law.
6. It is the responsibility of the Animal Assisted Activity Handler to provide updated records on an on-going basis for certification, health and inoculation records, and local license.
7. Animal Assisted Activity Volunteers must be at least 16 years of age.
8. Prospective Animal Assisted Activity Volunteers must complete a volunteer application and then interview with a member of the Doylestown Health Volunteer Office staff.
9. Following a successful application and interview, Animal Assisted Activity Volunteers must complete the Doylestown Health Orientation Process, which includes attendance at a hospital orientation session. All Volunteers must agree to abide by Doylestown Health policies and procedures and complete all required forms.
10. Doylestown Health Volunteers are required to get two, two-step PPD (TB) test before beginning to volunteer. Results of these TB tests must be read within 48-72 hours of testing. Doylestown Health provides PPD testing at no charge to the Volunteer.

11. Every Doylestown Health Volunteer must receive an annual flu vaccine. Vaccines are provided at no charge by Doylestown Health; if Volunteers receive vaccines outside the hospital, documentation of receiving the vaccine must be provided to the Volunteer Services Office.
12. All Animal Assisted Activity Volunteers must pass Criminal Background Clearance, FBI Fingerprint Clearance, and PA Child Abuse Clearance for Adults. Doylestown Hospital will complete the PA Criminal Record Clearance at no charge to the new Volunteer after the interview with the Director of Volunteer Services. At the time of application, Volunteers will be given directions on obtaining the FBI Fingerprint Clearance and PA Child Abuse Clearance. Clearances must be returned with the application. New Volunteers will be responsible for any charges for these two clearances initially; PA State Law requires these clearances to be repeated every 5 years. Doylestown Hospital will pay for repeat clearances for any AAA Volunteers who have completed 36 unsupervised visits.
13. Animal Assisted Activity registered Handlers may bring one registered animal per visit. Handlers and animals who visit Doylestown Health must be registered together as a team. A team consists of one registered Handler with one animal registered with that Handler. If the AAA team will visit in the Pediatric Unit or if an escort is required by the certification agency, a team must also include an Escort.
 - Bright and Beautiful: requires an Escort on Pediatric visits
 - Comfort Caring Canines: Escorts required on Pediatric visits only
 - Pet Partners: Members who are minors are required to have an Escort on all visits; Adult members are required to have an Escort on Pediatric visits only
 - Therapy Dogs International: Escorts required on Pediatric visits only
 - Therapy Dogs Inc.: Escorts required on Pediatric visits only
14. Escorts may be either Doylestown Health Animal Assisted Activity Handlers or Doylestown Health Animal Assisted Activity handler Volunteers. Escorts are required to participate in volunteer orientation and an escort briefing and fulfill the necessary clearances as well as administrative and medical requirements. Individuals other than members of the Doylestown Health Animal Assisted Activity team (handlers and escorts) may not accompany Handlers on visits or serve as Escorts.
15. A signed permission slip must be in place before visiting a patient in the Pediatric Unit. The staff will have parents/guardians sign the permission slip as part of the admission process. The Handler or Escort should check with the Pediatric Unit staff to determine which pediatric patients can have animal visits.
16. An animal may only be on the grounds of the hospital while with their handler as an Animal Assisted Activity Volunteer.
17. Animal Assisted Activity Volunteers should avoid interaction between their animals while on the grounds of any Doylestown Health campus.
18. Animal Assisted Activity teams (Handler and pet together) must initially complete a **minimum** of three supervised visits at Doylestown Health with an experienced Animal Assisted Activity Volunteer. The purpose of those accompanied visits is to help Animal Assisted Activity Volunteers become acquainted with Doylestown Health and its Animal Assisted Activity procedures as well as to help identify the best volunteering opportunity for the new Animal Assisted Activity team.
19. Approval to visit from two evaluators who participated in supervised visits and completion of the training checklist is required for a team to become a part of the Animal Assisted Activity team at Doylestown Health.

Hospital Volunteers (and staff) are evaluated on an annual basis.

- Animal Assisted Activity team – a registered Handler with and his/her own registered animal -- will prove initial competency after all items on the Training Checklist are covered and the team has completed a minimum of three supervised visits with an experienced AAA Volunteer. The registered Handler with his/her own registered animal will be evaluated using the Bi-Annual Team Competency form every two years; an independent evaluator will evaluate the team at this time.
- Animal Assisted Activity Handlers (without their animal) will be evaluated annually using Animal Assisted Activity Volunteer Competency.

Uniform & Equipment:

1. Animal Assisted Activity Volunteers should wear a Doylestown Health shirt or jacket with khaki pants and sneakers or other flat, rubber-soled shoes.
2. Doylestown Health photo-IDs must be worn by handlers. Doylestown Health Animal ID badges should be displayed either near the handlers ID badge or on the animal.

ID badges are created and provided as part of the orientation process. Ideally, the animal's ID badge will be obtained in conjunction with their first supervised visit inside Doylestown Health.
3. Teams must conform to the credential display requirements of their certification agency.
4. Teams must use a leash and collar/harness approved by their certification agency; however, prong collars, pinch collars, and choke collars are not acceptable at Doylestown Health. Doylestown Health advocates the use of a flat buckle collar and a leash no longer than six (6) feet.
5. Dogs must be on leash or harness, or in a pet carrier at all times while on the grounds of any Doylestown Health campus.
6. Roxy Reading requires members to wear the Doylestown Health/Roxy Reading shirt while in the Pediatric Unit and the animal must wear their Roxy vest or scarf while in the Pediatric Unit.

Duties:

1. Teams are requested to make one visit per week and required to make a minimum of one visit per month on average over the course of twelve months.
2. Teams should make every effort to adhere to their assigned visiting schedule, which could include weekdays, evenings, or weekends.
3. If it is necessary to cancel or reschedule a visit, or to take a leave from service, the handler should call the Volunteer Office at 215-345-2204.
4. Handlers who are required to have an Escort by their certification agency or because they are visiting in the Pediatric Unit are expected to coordinate their schedule and any changes to that schedule with their Escort. AAA Handlers who will need an Escort will be given a list of Escorts and their contact information to find an Escort and coordinate schedules. Escorts who cannot fulfill a commitment are expected to coordinate a replacement with the Handler. If the patient census on the Pediatric Unit allows, a nurse or PCT may serve as an Escort for the Handler.
5. Volunteer Handlers are responsible for the behavior of their animals at all times and are expected to use a leash, pet carrier, and voice and/or visual commands to manage animal behavior.
6. Handlers must prioritize the health and safety of their animal. Handlers must look for signs of stress in their animal. If animal stress is observed the visit should be ended immediately, without regard for planned length of the visit.
7. Handlers who wish to change their venue of visitation should contact the Doylestown Health Volunteer Office at 215-345-2204.
8. Groom animal prior to every visit. Grooming includes bathing before each visit, good oral hygiene and trimmed/filed nails.
9. Check animal for cleanliness, fleas, temperament, and general health immediately prior to every visit.
10. Visiting animals must be healthy, parasite free, and on a flea control program. Pets may not be treated with a product such as Frontline within 48-hours of a visit, however. Animals who are ill or in estrus [heat] may not visit.
11. Handlers must be free of contagious disease and avoid visiting if exposed to contagious disease.
12. Potty animal prior to every visit prior to entering the hospital. Pick up after your pet and then use hand sanitizer.
13. Animal Assisted Activity begins the moment the therapy team enters the grounds of any Doylestown Health campus. Take time to greet and interact with patients, visitors, and associates who show interest in the animal while the team is en route to/from the patients the team is assigned to visit.

14. Supervise every animal interaction and prioritize safety.
15. Dogs must be leashed at all times and the handler must always hold the dog's leash regardless of where the team happens to be on the hospital grounds.
16. An animal must always be under the control of the Handler. Only the Handler may pick up an animal. If it is appropriate for a small dog to be placed on a patient's lap, the Handler should very carefully place the dog with the patient while keeping the dog on leash and remaining next to the patient.
17. It is the responsibility of the registered (and insured) Handler, not the Escort, to manage the behavior of the animal. It is not appropriate for an Escort to walk an animal on a leash, for example.

An Escort may interact with an animal while the Handler presents and manages the animal.

The Handler may not turn over the animal to the Escort to "watch" while taking a break.

18. Avoid all restricted areas and do not agree to any visit requested in a restricted area. Restricted areas include maternity; emergency department; ICU; CVICU; OR areas; respiratory and vascular rehabilitation areas; physical therapy, occupational therapy and speech therapy areas; medication storage/preparation areas; clean/sterile supply storage; and food preparation areas. Animals may not go into any patient room where an isolation sign is posted (Droplet, Airborne, Contact or Enhanced Contact Precautions). Animals can go into the second floor atrium waiting area where families sit while patients are in the OR or in the Maternity Waiting area on the second floor. Animals may not go inside the Wound Care Center but may go into the waiting area for the Wound Care Center.
19. Animal Assisted Activity is not permitted with patients with any contraindication for contact with animals. Rooms marked to indicate contact precautions will be avoided and the charge nurse can be consulted to identify other patients who may not participate in animal assisted activity, including those with allergy, fear of animals, aggressive behavior, open wounds, neutropenia, HIV infection, immunoglobulin deficiencies, isolation restrictions, illnesses that can be transmitted to animals. Patients with a tracheotomy may be seen only if the tracheotomy is covered with oxygen or capped.
20. Postpone visits with patients who are in consultation with medical professionals, eating, on the telephone, or involved in some activity that is best left uninterrupted.
21. Greet patients, visitors, and associates. Introduce the animal and answer questions. Encourage dialog with comments and questions about pets and animals; ask if the patient ever had a pet, for example.
22. Never ask questions about anyone's medical condition or personal situation other than to ascertain whether or not it is appropriate to offer an interaction with an animal.
23. Always be sensitive to the individual's medical and emotional situation; for example, conclude visits with remarks like "Thank you" or "It was a pleasure to meet you" rather than "Have a nice day." or "Hope you feel better." Never refer to a person that you are visiting as a patient; treat and refer to each person as an individual.
24. Customize every Animal Assisted Activity interaction experience based on human needs and preferences as well as the characteristics of the animal. A patient who does not want to pet an animal may want to see the animal or talk about the animal.
25. If the team is not accompanied by an Escort, the Handler will perform the duties of the escort:
 - i) Determine whether or not each patient is a candidate for Animal Assisted Activity.
If an associate is with/near the patient, make sure the timing is appropriate for a visit.
 - ii) Give each person the option to meet the animal before the Handler enters the room/approaches the patient. Keep in mind that some people choose not to interact with an animal because it is one of their few decisions. Respect the wishes of each person graciously.
 - iii) Provide fresh linen for each patient when it is appropriate for the animal to be on a patient's lap

or on a patient's bed next to the patient. Be sure used linen is handled appropriately; place it in dirty linen bins or give linen to nurse, volunteer, or staff member to place in the appropriate bin.

- iv) Offer any person who has interacted with an animal hand sanitizer and encourage/facilitate its use.
- v) In the event of an animal bite or scratch or any suspect physical injury, immediately inform nursing staff who will provide or facilitate appropriate clinical care. A Problem Event Form will be filled out by a witnessing staff member.
- vi) Report any animal incident to the Volunteer Office as well as the registration organization. Incidents include, but are not limited to, bites, scratches, excessive barking, animal "accident," and destructive behavior.

26. Include the visitors in the experience based on interest and available time.

27. Remember to protect privacy by strict adherence to confidentiality.

28. In the event of an animal "accident," assist with clean up and contact housekeeping for disinfectant.

29. Doylestown Hospital has the option to suspend a team following the investigation of an incident.

30. Discourage licking. "Kisses" are permissible if requested by a person with no contact restrictions.

31. Sign in and sign out with your volunteer number on Doylestown Hospital electronic system.

32. Be a proactive communicator. Share insights, exceptional interactions with patients, problems, potential issues, and suggestions with Karen Langley, Director of Volunteers klangley@dh.org

(215) 343-9548 and Joyce Rivas, advisory chair of the Doylestown Health Animal Assisted Activity Team 215-588-9201 joycerivas@comcast.net

33. Identify potential volunteers. Put people interested in volunteering on the Animal Assisted Activity Team in touch with Joyce Rivas 215-588-9201 joycerivas@comcast.net and those interested in other volunteering opportunities in touch with Karen Langley klangley@dh.org (215-345-2204).

Hazardous Materials: None.

Essential Functions: Walking, standing, seeing, kneeling, stooping, reaching, and talking.

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I have read and understand the Animal Assisted Activity Handler Assignment Guidelines and agree to follow all of the procedures and requirements outlined in the Animal Assisted Activity Handler Assignment Guidelines. I have also read and understand the Animal Assisted Activity Escort Guide.

Handler's Printed Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____