

Pet Therapy Program

of the Wolfson Children's Hospital Auxiliary

Jacksonville, Florida

For more than two decades, the Pet Therapy Program at Wolfson Children's Hospital has been bringing smiles to the faces of our sweet patients, their families, staff and visitors at Wolfson.



Dogs provide a therapeutic value to hospitalized children beyond what their human family members and our hospital team can.

The Wolfson Children's Hospital Pet Therapy teams are comprised of trained volunteers and their dogs, bringing joy to children of all ages. Patients are able to interact safely with the dogs and receive their unconditional love, making their hospital stay less stressful and more like home. Pet visits also help to reduce anxiety and provide much-needed distraction from illness and hospitalization.

The Wolfson Children's Hospital Auxiliary oversees the Pet Therapy Program and has for more than 20 years.

Pet Therapy Program Dog Requirements

To be considered for the program, the dog must:

- Be a minimum of two years of age
- Be spayed or neutered
- Have passed the AKC Canine Good Citizen exam
- Maintain current registration with either the Alliance of Therapy Dogs or Pet Partners

- Pass the Wolfson veterinarian health and temperament/behavior screening (no charge to owner)
- Have a negative fecal test performed by Baptist Hospital's lab (no charge to owner)
- Successfully complete the initial training visits

Note: Unfortunately, dogs that are fed a "raw protein" diet are ineligible to participate in Wolfson's Pet Therapy Program. Raw food diets present an increased risk of pathologic bacterial and protozoal shedding and infection that can compromise the health of our patients.

If the dog is approved to become part of the Pet Therapy Program, the owner must provide documentation of the dog's annual physical examination by a licensed veterinarian and are required to have current vaccinations and rabies boosters. Annually, a fecal sample must be tested by Baptist Medical Center Jacksonville's Laboratory, at no cost to the owner.



Pet Therapy Program Dog Owner Requirements

To be considered for the Pet Therapy Program, the dog's owner must:

- Join the Wolfson Children's Hospital Auxiliary and abide by its policies, including attending new volunteer orientation, purchasing and wearing the approved Auxiliary uniform and attending the annual Auxiliary training.
- Wish to work with children
- Commit to two pet visits each month for a maximum of two hours each (weekdays only)
- Assume a designated administrative duty to support the Pet Therapy Program
- For admission into the Auxiliary, human volunteers must have a background check and prove their immunity to mumps, measles, rubella and chickenpox. They also are required to have a TDaP vaccination. In addition, volunteers are required to receive an annual tuberculosis (TB) skin test and seasonal flu vaccine, both provided at no cost to volunteers.

Potential new members of the Pet Therapy Program shadow an experienced team to observe and learn hospital protocols. The human member of an experienced team will observe the potential new team on one or more training visits to ensure they are properly prepared to assume their new responsibilities.

Becoming a Volunteer

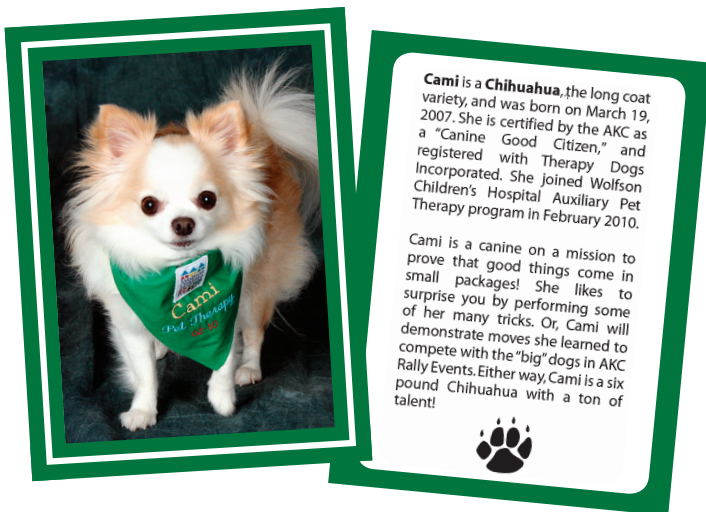
Active members of the Wolfson Children's Hospital Auxiliary receive numerous benefits. They include:

- Free meal on service work day (\$7.50 maximum)
- National Volunteer Week Recognition
- Free annual TB skin test (MANDATORY)
- Free annual flu vaccination (MANDATORY)
- Spring and fall volunteer luncheons
- Annual holiday brunch



Additional benefits may become available based on service day/service hour levels, including discount tickets to Florida attractions, hospital blood bank membership, a discount on inpatient/outpatient hospital services after insurance payments, and more!

For more information or to apply to become part of this rewarding volunteer service, contact the Wolfson Auxiliary office at 904.202.8008.



Dogs are provided a "trading card" with the pet's photo and brief bio. The children love receiving the trading cards and collect them from all the dogs that visit.