

Tony La Russa's



Animal Rescue
Foundation



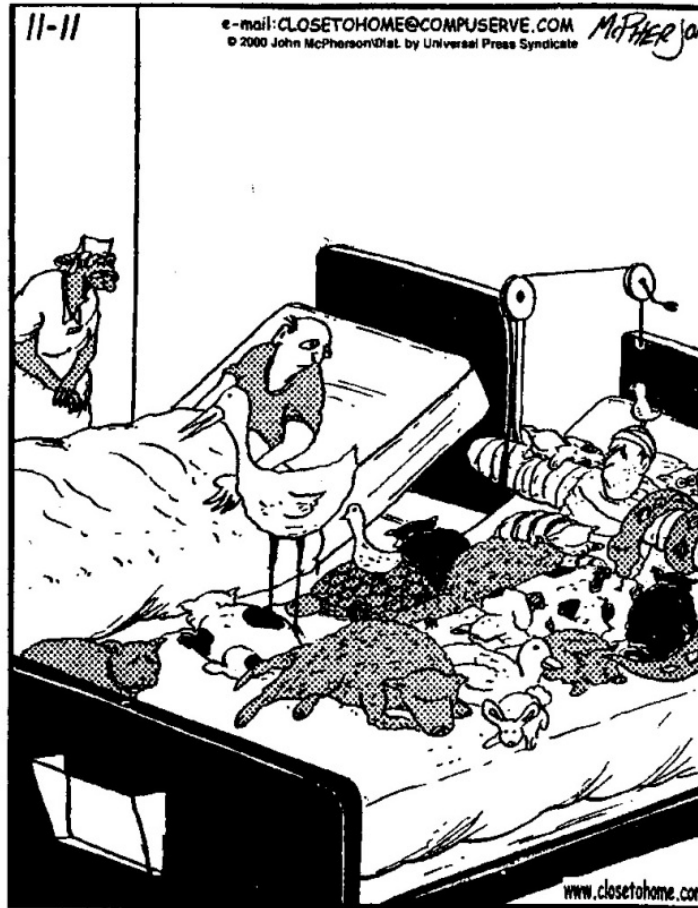
How Pet Hugs Make a Difference

*The Physical and Emotional Benefits of
Animal Assisted Activity/Therapy*

What is Animal Assisted Therapy?



CLOSE TO HOME



"How about you, Mr. Clark? Would you also like to be part of our pet therapy program?"

What is Animal Assisted Therapy?



- Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) is a *goal-directed* intervention in which an animal is an integral part of the treatment process. It is directed and/or delivered and *documented* by a *health/human service professional* with a specific clinical goal for a particular individual in mind.
- Physical therapists, occupational therapists, certified therapeutic recreation specialists, recreational therapists, teachers, social workers, and others can incorporate AAT into their work and treatments
- Animal-assisted activities (AAA) provide social, motivational, educational or recreational benefits for people during interactions. They do not have to be overseen by healthcare professionals and do not work toward clinical goals. These are often meet-and-greet sessions and are run by visiting pet groups.



Benefits of Animal Programs



Numerous studies have documented the physical and emotional impact of animals on humans. Findings include:

- Elderly individuals with animals have significantly lower systolic and diastolic blood pressures.
- Elderly dog owners/guardians walk for longer periods of time each day than their counterparts without companion animals, significantly and positively impacting their health.
- A high percentage of participants in a study of friendship bonds between elderly people and their animals said that their dogs were their only friends (78% of men and 67% of females), and that the friendship bonds they had with dogs were as strong as any they had experienced with humans.
- Animals can help abused and neglected children acquire nurturing skills that their parents have neglected to teach them.



Benefits of Animal Programs



- Children experiencing divorce benefit from their animals. In one study, 95% of children described their dogs as indispensable in the crisis; 85% described their dogs as a companion to whom they could tell their problems, anger and rage.
- Children with autism display behaviors toward their animals that they rarely, if ever, display toward human companions. These behaviors include seeking animals out for companionship, providing comfort, and confiding in animals in ways never shown to family members.
- Persons with HIV/AIDS who have animals report less depression than persons with HIV/AIDS who do not have animals.

Animal Assisted Therapy and Heart Failure



- **UCLA Medical Center in LA - Kathie M. Cole R.N.,M.N., C.C.R.N**, studied 76 hospitalized heart failure patients and their reactions to a visit from either a human volunteer and dog team, a human volunteer only or no visit at all. Patients were randomly selected.
- They looked at the dogs' effects on variables that characterize heart failure: changes in cardiac function, neuroendocrine (stress hormone) activation and psychological changes in mood
- They provided a 12 minute intervention with the dog for ease of interaction
- Researchers monitored hemodynamics just before the intervention, 8 minutes into it and 4 minutes after it. They also measured epinephrine and norepinephrine levels



UCLA Study Result



- Anxiety scores dropped 24 % for participants who received a visit from a dog team. Volunteer only groups anxiety dropped 10%, the at-rest group did not change.
- Stress hormone epinephrine dropped 17% in the dog teams; 2% in the volunteer-only, and rose 7 percent in the rest of the group
- Pulmonary capillary wedge dropped an average of 10% for dog teams and increased 3% for volunteer only and 5% for at-rest group
- Systolic pulmonary artery pressure dropped in the dog team 5% during and after therapy, and rose in the other two groups.
- They concluded that even a short-term exposure to dogs has beneficial physiological and psychosocial effects on patients who want it.



Children



- When 31 pet visits were observed by the Department of Pediatrics' Division of Cardiology at The Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, researchers found that pet visits relieved stress, normalized the hospital milieu, and improved patient and parent morale.

These findings were related in the October 2002 Journal of Pediatric Nursing article "Acceptability and impact of pet visitation on a pediatric cardiology inpatient unit."



Mood Changes with Pet Visits



- In 1999 a survey was administered to hospitals and nursing homes in Vermont, including Central Hospital of Vermont, Pillsbury Manor Retirement Home, Fletcher Allen Hospital, Fanny Allen Hospital, and Porter Nursing Home.
- The data comes from 74% of the patients or residents on each ward visited who all experienced dog therapy. 26% of patients were not visited because they were resting, unable to receive visits, or were not interested in a therapy dog visit.
- Participants were surveyed after a therapy dog visit. Data was also collected from friends and family of patients as well as hospital and nursing home staff members.
- Patients hospital and nursing home staff, friends and family members were asked to rate the moods of patients and residents during a therapy dog visit on a scale of 1 to 5 (5 being the highest).

The results.....

Vermont Results



- Happy 4.79
- Relaxed 4.50
- Calm 4.35
- Lowered Stress/Anxiety Level 4.45
- Increased Cooperation 4.05
- Created More Positive Attitude 4.73
- Reduced Stress/Anxiety of Staff 4.62
- Reduced Stress/Anxiety of Friends/Family 4.69

ARF's Teaching Loving Care (TLC) AAT Female Juvenile Offenders



- The Chris Adams Girls Center is a residential treatment center for juvenile offenders. The study utilized an intervention model designed to socialize rescued cats through sessions with residents. Residents developed social skills and pro-social behaviors to develop cat rapport and relationships. Residents generalized these positive enhancements to other settings and practiced them in several areas of their lives.
- Ten graduates were interviewed. Results were positive. Seven core themes were described: cat's presence enhanced the quality of life, significant increases in self-awareness/self modulation, connecting with cats provided a healing experience, increase self-esteem, and development of positive personal qualities such as becoming more caring, development and practice of pro-social skills fostered a sense of community and positive enhancements were transferred to other areas.
- GAF scores increased from admission to discharge with an overall functioning increasing from 4 to 31 points.



Zoonotic Diseases & Infection Control



- Current evidence supports the fact that pets pose a minimal risk
- Working with reputable groups help ensure visiting animals will be healthy and clean
- Working with reputable groups help ensure that teams are trained and understand facility protocols for infection control
- Setting facility standards and what to look for in a visiting animal therapy group
- An Ounce of Prevention
- Follow Center for Disease Control Guidelines
<http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets>

Cartwheels anyone?



PICKLES

