

Those of you interested in making visits to local nursing homes with your furry friend (dog or cat), here are things to consider if you and your pet are a good fit:

- calm around strangers
- dog must be leashed and assisted by you at all times and walk on a loose leash (not where you have to keep leash tight for control)
- cannot jump up on people or scratch for attention
- is not rattled by vacuum cleaners or machines, loud noises, or yelling
- likes to approach people and be touched/petted
- does not get startled by a restraining hug from a resident
- accepts calmly a treat when offered
- is calm when approached by multiple people
- is not skittish around wheel chairs, walkers, or crutches
- is calm when around another pet (from our group)
- will sit and stay upon command
- does not slobber/drool
- will leave alone food or water that is in a residents room
- owner needs to ensure safety of their pet and residents (i.e. some residents have rougher handling so you need to monitor and show them how to touch your pet; watch out for wheel chairs to not run over your pets feet; ensure your pet does not disturb a residents injuries like a broken leg or bandaged arm)

Your pet does not need to be a certified therapy dog to go to either of these places. However, if you want to take a Therapy Dog training class from a dog training facility, it's always a good thing for both of you and I can help point you in the right direction.

Right now I have two local nursing homes that we can visit. Each have different requirements to participate, so depending which one you want to participate in, here are the requirements:

1 - Palm Gardens of Port St. Lucie (just off Hwy 1 and Tiffany Ave)

Your pet will need to be current on vaccinations and rabbi shots (get proof of this from your vet). I have volunteer forms for you to complete just call me 612-308-1781 and you can pick it up at my place.

I would like to schedule a regular day and time each week for us to visit since residents like to know when we are coming so they don't miss out. We can determine day and time once we discuss among those of us interested.

2 - Life Care Center of Port St. Lucie (just off Hwy 1 and Jennings Ave)

You will need to contact Sabrina at 772-398-8080 and tell her you want to bring therapy pet in with Lynn Ergen and that you want to get scheduled for pre-requisites (copy of your pets vaccinations and rabbi shots from your vet, drug test, finger prints and chest X-ray for TB) needed before doing visits. Once these prerequisites are completed, you can bring your pet in.

Right now we are on their activity schedule for visits every Friday at 1:30.

Those interested or have questions, feel free to call me, 612-307-1781!

P.S. When I visited last Friday at one of the nursing homes, a gal said that the resident I was visiting hardly ever talks but when I came with the puppy she talked the entire 5 minutes we visited her!

This is why we do this, to make a difference!

Lynn Ergen
6123081781