Is your hospice going to the dogs?

Therapy dogs, that is?

Perhaps it should!

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Presenter Disclosure

**Presenters**
- Peggy A. Pritchard, Volunteer with St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program (Guelph), and Hospice Wellington (HW), Guelph
- Rachel Stockdale, Integrated Wellness Coordinator, Hospice Wellington (HW)

**Relationships with commercial interests:** None

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- HW’s Therapy Dog program is one of a suite of programs and services run by Rachel Stockdale (salaried employee)
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- No presenter has received payment for this presentation
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**Mitigating Bias:** None
The bond between humans and companion animals is a mutually beneficial & dynamic relationship influenced by behaviors essential to the health and wellbeing of both.

American Veterinary Medical Association (2007)
Just published March 2019

 Anthrozoös, Volume 32, Issue 2

 Special issue on human-animal interaction (special focus: healthy human aging)
Benefits of Companion Animals

**Psycho-social**
❖ companionship, unconditional love & affection
❖ release of de-stress hormones thru interaction increases sense of happiness and wellbeing
❖ mitigates effects of loneliness, loss, depression
❖ enhances social networks

**Physical**
❖ inspires regular, outdoor activity (routine)
❖ improves a variety of health outcomes, including chronic conditions

**Cognitive**
❖ caring for dependent animal keeps mind active
Hospice Wellington’s TD Program
Hospice Wellington™
YOUR STORY MATTERS
Residential Programs & Services

- 10-bed residence
- New admissions 24/7
- No restrictions on visiting hours
- Provided care for 294 residents (2018-19)
Community Programs & Services

Support Programs
❖ Palliative care & caregiver support
❖ Palliative Day Program
❖ 1-to-1 volunteer palliative support
❖ End-of-life volunteer Vigil Program
❖ 1-to-1 volunteer caregiver support

Grief and Bereavement Groups
❖ Adult Grief Group
❖ Spousal Loss Group
❖ 1-to-1 volunteer grief support
❖ Grief Education Workshops
❖ Youth Legacy Project
❖ Youth Sensory Camp (pilot)
Community Programs & Services

Art Therapy
❖ Closed Group programs
❖ Open Studio practice
❖ Encaustic card workshops
❖ 1-to-1 legacy projects

Education and Resources
❖ Advance Care Planning (ACP) Education
❖ Volunteer Ambassador [speakers] Program
❖ Lending library
Community Programs & Services

*Integrated Wellness* (15 programs including...)

- Bereavement Walking Group
- Comfort Cats
- Gentle Yoga Program
- Meditation Program
- Music Program
- Qigong
- Reiki
- Student Massage Program
- Therapeutic Touch®
- Therapy Dog Program
What is a “Therapy Dog”? 

❖ Member-in-good-standing of a recognized therapy dog organization
❖ Dog (personal pet) and owner have passed formal application process and behavioural assessment
❖ Standards of service; accountability
A therapy dog is not...

A service dog
❖ a working dog
❖ bred, socialized, rigorously trained, and tested to fill a specific role in the life of its human partner

An emotional support animal
❖ personal pet certified by a physician or licensed mental health professional as beneficial to owner with mental or emotional disability
How to choose a TD partner

Consider their membership process
- Formal application process? What is involved?
- References required? Police checks?
- Vaccination (e.g. TB)?

Examine their requirements for the dogs
- Behavioural assessment? Additional assessment for working with children?
- Regular regimen of vaccinations?
- Annual attestation?

Do they fully insure their teams?

Do their standards and philosophies of service align with your organizations?
SJA & TPOC Guidelines

For all therapy dog visits

❖ TD walked & groomed before visit
❖ Owner & TD in full uniform
❖ TD not to interact with personal pets
❖ TD on-leash & under control of owner at all times during visit
❖ All interactions monitored by owner to ensure comfort and safety of clients and welfare of the TD
Additional guidelines for HW’s palliative care setting

Precautions & contraindications
- Non-hypoallergenic TDs
- Licking behaviours
- Raw food diet
- No interaction with personal pets
- Contact precautions (e.g., MRSA, VRE, Hepatitis B, C & D, ESBL, C. difficile, Influenza)

TD Volunteer training
- TD volunteers serving at HW complete 33 hours of volunteer training in line with HPCO standards
HW Therapy Dog Program

Fall 2015
❖ Program introduced
❖ 1 team in residence; weekly visits

Fall 2019
Residential program
❖ Four teams
❖ Weekly, one-hour visits

Community program
❖ Weekly, one-hour “drop in” for Day Program clients and their caregivers
Sources & Resources

Therapy Dog organizations
St. John Ambulance (SJA) Therapy Dog Program
https://www.sja.ca/English/Community-Services/Pages/Therapy%20Dog%20Services/default.aspx

Therapeutic Paws of Canada (TPOC)
https://tpoc.ca/

Society for Healthcare Epidemiology in America (SHEA)


Benefits of Companion Animals
Human-Animal Bond Research Institute

Images
Hospice Wellington building used with permission
Hospice patient with dog. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O8p4vFM0xRo
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TD volunteers hosting our Meet & Greet

From Hospice Wellington, Guelph

Liz Brant and 9-year-old Yellow Lab, Daisy (TPOC)

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From SJA, Federal District (Ottawa)

Dan Bradford and 6-year-old Great Dane, Nyxie

Christine Phillips and 5½-year-old Irish Setter, Caileigh
Coming Up: Therapy Dog Meet and Greet