



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Petco Foundation Invests in Canine Therapy Corps' Life-Changing Work Supporting Therapy Animals**

*Investment of \$2,500 will extend efforts to help pets and people in Chicago live their best lives*

**CHICAGO (June 28, 2018)** – Canine Therapy Corps of Chicago, today announced it has been awarded a \$2,500 grant investment from the Petco Foundation to support its goal-directed, interactive animal-assisted therapy services.

Canine Therapy Corps is a Chicago-based nonprofit organization that empowers and motivates individuals to improve their physical and psychological health and well-being by harnessing the human-animal bond. Since 1991, Canine Therapy Corps has catalyzed positive change and inspired individuals to work on the arduous task of regaining strength, confidence, and independence as they persevere over traumatic injuries and devastating illnesses or live with chronic disabilities.

This grant was made possible through the Petco Foundation's annual Helping Heroes fundraising campaign, in partnership with Natural Balance Pet Foods. Each October during the campaign, Petco customers are invited to donate online and in Petco stores across the country to support the life-changing work of service, therapy and working animals.

The Petco Foundation investment will help to keep Canine Therapy Corps' services free of charge to the thousands of individuals in need they reach each year. The overarching goal of every Canine Therapy Corps program is to help each individual, whatever his or her needs, achieve the highest quality of life possible through rehabilitative canine therapy programs. While many organizations provide therapy dog visits, few provide goal-directed programs designed to help individuals with mental and physical challenges heal. Canine Therapy Corps programs are customized and tailored to meet the therapeutic objectives of clients, making the therapy dogs an integral part of recovery.

"We are so fortunate to have been recipients of Helping Heroes grants for several years now," said Callie Cozzolino, Executive Director of Canine Therapy Corps. "With these important funds, the PetCo Foundation is empowering our 60+ dog teams to motivate individuals through their recovery process, as well as enriching the lives of the therapy dogs by enabling them to do this important work."

For more information about Canine Therapy Corps or the Petco Foundation, visit [www.caninetherapycorps.org](http://www.caninetherapycorps.org) or [www.petcofoundation.org](http://www.petcofoundation.org). Join the conversation on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#) or by using the hashtag #HelpingHeroes.

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### **About Canine Therapy Corps**

With more than 60 certified therapy dogs and over 100 volunteers, Canine Therapy Corps operates free, rehabilitative programs in the Chicago metropolitan area for men, women, and children facing physical and emotional challenges. In 2017, Canine Therapy Corps' teams provided nearly 1,500 hours of animal-assisted therapy services to over 9,000 individuals.

Canine Therapy Corps empowers and motivates individuals to improve their physical and psychological health and well-being by harnessing the human-animal bond; provides goal-directed, interactive animal-assisted therapy services, free of charge, using volunteers and certified therapy dogs; and advances animal-assisted interventions through research and collaboration.

For more information, please see the enclosed fact sheet, visit Canine Therapy Corps' website at [www.caninetherapycorps.org](http://www.caninetherapycorps.org), or call the office at (773) 404-6467.

### **About the Petco Foundation**

At the Petco Foundation, we believe that every animal deserves to live its best life. Since 1999, we've invested more than \$200 million in lifesaving animal welfare work to make that happen. With our more than 4,000 animal welfare partners, we inspire and empower communities to make a difference by investing in adoption and medical care programs, spay and neuter services, pet cancer research, service and therapy animals, and numerous other lifesaving initiatives. Through our Think Adoption First program, we partner with Petco stores and animal welfare organizations across the country to increase pet adoptions. So far, we've helped more than 5.5 million pets find their new loving families, and we're just getting started. Visit [petcofoundation.org](http://petcofoundation.org) to learn more about how you can get involved.



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COME. SIT. STAY. HEAL.

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## WHAT IS CANINE THERAPY CORPS?

Since 1991, Canine Therapy Corps' volunteers and certified therapy dogs have been serving the Chicago metropolitan area, working with health care, education, and social services professionals and helping people recover from physical and emotional trauma. Canine Therapy Corps customizes and tailors our programs to meet the therapeutic objectives of the special needs population served. Programs are goal-directed and interactive, so working with a Canine Therapy Corps dog is an integral part of each client's recovery.

The foundation of Canine Therapy Corps' successful animal-assisted therapy (AAT) programs is the strength of the human-animal bond, which encourages and empowers individuals facing and overcoming personal challenges. The continuous and immediate positive feedback provided in AAT sessions catalyzes the motivation necessary to persevere during difficult or painful therapy. In addition, working as a team benefits the volunteers. Sharing their love and compassion, working together, and serving the community deepens the bond between the handler and his or her dog.

In 2017, Canine Therapy Corps volunteer teams donated nearly 1,500 hours of animal-assisted interventions to over 9,000 individuals.

## WHO ARE OUR PROGRAM PARTICPANTS?

Canine Therapy Corps serves individuals of all ages, inpatient and outpatient, via collaborations with highly respected Chicago area hospitals, schools, and rehabilitation facilities. Our participants include individuals recovering from a number of challenges such as catastrophic accidents, illnesses, strokes, surgeries, substance use disorders, or abuse at the hands of a family member or caregiver, as well as children with chronic illnesses like cerebral palsy and those with chronic conditions like autism, Down syndrome, and mood and behavior disorders.

## WHERE ARE OUR PROGRAMS?

Canine Therapy Corps currently provides therapy dogs to the following institutions in the Chicago metropolitan area:

- [ADVOCATE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL - PARK RIDGE](#), with children who have chronic medical and developmental challenges.
- [ARIELLA JOY FRANKEL KESHET DAY SCHOOL](#), with children and adolescents on the autism spectrum, some of whom also have other complex or chronic medical conditions.
- [CHICAGO CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY CENTER](#), visitation with children, who have suffered sexual abuse and assault, awaiting appointments with treating professionals at a multidisciplinary facility.
- [EASTERSEALS ACADEMY](#), with children and adolescents on the autism spectrum.
- [HAYMARKET CENTER](#), with adults in a residential substance use disorder recovery program.
- [HEARTLAND ALLIANCE](#), visitation with unaccompanied minors and other youth awaiting family reunification or repatriation.
- [JESSE BROWN VA MEDICAL CENTER](#), with veterans in treatment for a myriad of mental health issues, such as chronic post-traumatic stress disorder, and severe depression at the hospital's outpatient psychosocial rehabilitation and recovery center.
- [LAWRENCE HALL](#), with children and adolescents who have severe emotional and behavioral challenges due to trauma, abuse and neglect.
- [NORTHWESTERN MEMORIAL HOSPITAL](#), inpatient visitation in a variety of departments.
- [RUSH UNIVERSITY MEDICAL CENTER](#), a physical rehabilitation program for adult inpatients.
- [SHIRLEY RYAN ABILITYLAB](#) (formerly the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago), with clients of all ages recovering from spinal cord injuries, head trauma, burns, and other physical trauma.
- [SWEDISH COVENANT HOSPITAL](#), with adult inpatients recovering from strokes, joint replacements, and other physical trauma.

Our dogs just help people feel better; they help them get better.

## WHO ARE OUR VOLUNTEERS?

- Approximately 65 dogs of different breeds, mixes, shapes, and sizes (from Pomeranians to American Pit Bull Terriers to Irish Wolfhounds) have passed our rigorous therapy dog certification test and promote healing, health, and hope.
- CTC has over 100 people working in our programs; developing new and innovative applications for animal-assisted therapy; staffing outreach events and our program evaluation efforts; educating the community about animal-assisted therapy and humane issues; publishing our newsletter; and planning fundraising events.