

FAQs Canines for Christ of Greater Cincinnati ***www.caninesforchrist.org***

What is Animal Assisted Activity?

AAA is the casual “meet-and-greet” activity that involves pets visiting people. The same activity can be repeated with many people, unlike a therapy program that is tailored to a particular person or medical condition.

Why should my dog and I be evaluated and certified?

The training, evaluation and Canine Good Citizen (CGC) certification helps ensure that visiting teams have the skills and aptitude to make a good team. As a member in good standing (annual membership dues of \$50 paid in full and dog certified as a CGC), you and your pet are covered by a liability insurance policy while volunteering.

How do I know if my dog is suited for therapy work?

You and your pet should have an interest in people and enjoy visiting. Your pet should be healthy, have at least a basic level of training and be reliable, even in crowded or unexpected situations. Some essentials:

- Friendly to strangers; solicits interactions with people.
- Enjoys being petted, touched and hugged and can sit politely while being petted.
- Can walk nicely on a leash; stays when told; sits and lays down when told; comes when called.
- Behaves nicely around other dogs.
- Leaves items alone when told to leave it.
- Can take treats gently from a person’s hand.
- Demonstrates reliable, controllable, predictable behavior.
- Able to remain calm in disruptive settings.
- Outgoing, friendly and confident in new settings.

If your animal is unpredictable, doesn’t like being around people, or is aggressive to people or other animals it would not be suitable for therapy work.

Does the age of my dog matter for therapy visits?

Yes, your dog should be at least one year of age before making therapy visits. Younger dogs can be enrolled with Canines for Christ of Greater Cincinnati for training and to obtain their CGC certification.

Does my dog have to have all its vaccinations?

Your dog must be up to date with rabies vaccination and any other state required vaccine. Individual facilities may have their own requirements.

Can my children volunteer with me or do this on their own?

Children as young as 10 years old can become a registered as a handler for a therapy animal team. All handlers, regardless of age, will need to complete the training and obtain CGC certification. Handlers that are 10 – 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent or guardian on all visits. Please be aware, some facilities may have age limits.

What is the difference between service and therapy animals?

Service animals are legally defined by the American's with Disabilities Act (1990) and are trained to meet the disability-related needs of their handlers. Federal laws protect the rights of individuals with disabilities to be accompanied by their service animals in public places.



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Federal law does not legally define therapy animals, but some states have laws defining therapy animals. They provide people with contact to animals, but are not limited to working with people who have disabilities. They are usually the personal pets of their handlers, and work with their handlers to provide services to others. Federal laws have no provisions for people to be accompanied by therapy animals in places of public accommodation that have "no pets" policies. Therapy animals usually are not service animals.

As a handler, you may be asked about your animal while out in public. This is a great opportunity to provide accurate information about the differences between these types of animals. It is important that, as a handler, you are careful not to misrepresent the role of your animal which could inadvertently impact those legitimately using service and emotional support animals in public.

How much does Canines for Christ of Greater Cincinnati charge for visits?

Members volunteer their time and do not charge for any pet therapy visit.

Can I get paid for visits?

No, Canines for Christ of Greater Cincinnati is a volunteer organization. Members donate their time to bring happiness to others. Any expenses you incur providing therapy, including mileage, uniform, and extra expenses for grooming, may be tax deductible (this should be reviewed with a tax professional).

What is the required volunteer commitment?

We do not require volunteers to commit to any number of hours or visits per year. We recognize that every person's availability is different. As a volunteer, you determine where you would like to visit and with what frequency. It is your responsibility to maintain a schedule that works for you and the facility where you volunteer.

Where should I take my dog for visits?

Consider the type of environment your dog would enjoy. For example, your dog may enjoy being in the presence of quiet, elderly people but may not like places with a lot of activity. They might prefer being with one person, but not like to be the center of attention in a group. Thinking about these things should help you decide the type of facilities you would like to visit with your dog.

How do I find a place to visit once we are certified?

Once you obtain your CGC, you may check our website to find facilities that are currently being visited by other Canines for Christ of Greater Cincinnati. You can also network with other local teams or contact places of interest to you and inquire directly with them. If you would like a member of our organization to contact a facility on your behalf, please let us know.

What does it mean that Canines for Christ of Greater Cincinnati is a 501(c)(3) organization?

501(c)(3) refers to the Internal Revenue Service's tax code that allows a corporation to operate as a nonprofit and accept contributions from the public without paying taxes. This designation also allows you to count your contribution as a tax deduction.

