



Dear Friends:

In the last year, thanks to the creativity of Good Dog's staff, trainers, and volunteers, Good Dog has pioneered new ways to employ therapy dogs to help humans heal.



This brief report, which summarizes some of these new programs, illustrates just one more way in which The Good Dog Foundation is leading the field of therapy dog services.

Such leadership and innovation doesn't happen in a vacuum. It's the result of people coming together—professional staff; well trained, committed, and creative volunteers; facilities that are open to new ways of helping their clients and patients to heal; the people we visit; and Good Dog's generous supporters. Every member of this community is essential to helping The Good Dog Foundation achieve its mission.

Consider these achievements in 2006–2007:

- Volunteer/Good Dog teams: 423
- Number of facilities Good Dog visits: 140
- Number of visits made to patients/clients in need: 104,244
- Number of visits made to staff: 40,500
- Number of volunteer hours: 9,164

During this season of giving, we welcome your support for The Good Dog Foundation. If you already give to Good Dog, we hope you will renew and increase your support. With the generosity of all of our supporters—new and old—together we can bring healing to those in need.

Sincerely,

Rachel McPherson

Rachel McPherson
Founder and Executive Director



THE GOOD DOG FOUNDATION PROVIDES THERAPY DOG services to people in need in health care, social service, educational, and community facilities in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, and Massachusetts, and at disaster sites around the country. Its highly trained, all-volunteer, human-dog teams offer exceptional, healing services completely free of charge. A nonprofit organization, The Good Dog Foundation advances research and promotes awareness about the benefits of the human-animal bond.



the good dog foundation
dogs helping humans heal

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY KATHY LANDMAN

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The Good Dog Foundation
2006–2007
THE YEAR IN INNOVATION





Supplementing Palliative Care

The medical world is beginning to recognize that people with chronic, progressive conditions often need treatment to alleviate symptoms and pain caused by these illnesses. Traditionally reserved for people at the end of life in hospice, palliative care is beginning to become integrated into hospital care. Pioneering medical institutions now offer palliative care services for a much broader range of patients for whom pain and symptom management will improve the quality of their remaining life.

Patients report that the dogs help alleviate some of their pain.

The Good Dog Foundation has joined with New York-Presbyterian Hospital, supplementing the care provided by the hospital's new palliative care team. Susan Feldstein, R.N., a Good Dog volunteer and hospital employee, says the Good Dog visits bring much-needed comfort to people who are in distress and pain. "Patients report that the dogs put them at ease and help alleviate some of their pain," she says. "The dogs are equally helpful for family members, calming them and giving them some much-needed distraction when their loved one is dying."

Preventing Bullying

When children bully others, they often have no idea what kind of emotional impact their words and deeds are having on those they are bullying. Getting bullying children to grasp this concept—and thus prevent bullying—is the idea behind a new Good Dog pilot program in a Yorktown Heights, New York elementary school.

The pilot project, developed by Good Dog trainer Peg Munves and volunteers for grades K-2, uses dogs as a teaching tool to help children learn empathy for others. Children discuss how a dog responds to a reprimand. They talk about the proper way to treat dogs and, by extension, other children. And so on.



The program had barely begun when teachers started asking for the program in their classes. It has been such a success that Good Dog plans on expanding this program to all the regions we serve this year.

Helping Our Veterans Heal

The Good Dog Foundation is proud to announce that, on Veterans' Day 2007, Good Dog launched a visitation program for veterans ages 60 and older at the VA New York Harbor Healthcare System in St. Albans, Queens. Our first Veterans Affairs facility, opened after much work on the part of Good Dog, we have seen institutional resistance give way to embracing therapy dog services as a powerful form of healing. Inpatients are slated to be the first veterans to receive visits from Good Dogs.

Helping Abused Children to Heal from Their Trauma

For children who have experienced physical or sexual abuse or severe neglect, recovering from the trauma can take years. The Good Dog Foundation began visiting such children last fall at the residential program at the Astor Home for Children in Rhinebeck, New York.

Good Dogs help abused children to verbalize their traumas, learn life skills, and begin to trust adults again.

Good Dog teams participate in the trauma therapy group and in therapeutic recreation activities, helping the children to verbalize their traumas, learn life skills, and begin to trust adults again.

In just a short time, Good Dog teams have become integral to these children's healing process. "A big part of healing from trauma is talking about it," says Kathy Hagan, Psy.D., senior clinical coordinator. "Before, the kids in the trauma group would not participate. Since the dogs started coming, they've begun speaking about what happened. The Good Dogs and volunteers have made all the difference."