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PONY EXPRESS THERAPY DOGS NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

WELCOME/INTRODUCTION:

Sponsored by MU Buchanan County Extension Office

MISSION STATEMENT:

Pony Express Therapy Dogs is dedicated to enhancing the life experiences of all through interaction/contact with therapy dogs.

EXPECTATION OF THERAPY TEAMS:

- Provide Health Record prior to Evaluation
- Pass Evaluation (CGC is an option)
- Minimum 3 month probation (2 visits/month); *[new teams]*
- Graduate as Registered Team
- Payment of annual dues
- Visits: required minimum of 1 visit/month
- Handlers must have therapy pack/badges; dogs must have vest or scarf at all visits
- Handlers must be in control of their dogs at all times: no tying up or handing to someone else.
- Meet all guidelines of the Pony Express Therapy Dog program
- Always pick up after your dog
- Know your dog and be an advocate for your dog
- **This is a commitment!**

PREPARING FOR THE EVALUATION:

- Arrive 5-10 min. before scheduled time
- Do not enter until instructed
- Bring Therapy Pack (see Team and Organizational Guidelines) and an extra copy of the Health Record
- Dog should be clean and pest free
- Use appropriate leash and collar (Team and Organizational Guidelines)
- Be courteous of other teams

THE EVALUATION:

- At all times the dog will remain on the leash held by the handler
- Review of Evaluation Items
- Examine therapy pack/documents
- Controlled entry
- Friendly stranger
- Appearance and grooming

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- Walk with handler on loose lead
- Milling crowd
- Stay from distance
- Neutral dog
- Reaction to distraction
- Leave it
- Separation from handler (3 min.)
- Control throughout the test
- Explanation of the CGC (Canine Good Citizen) as an available option

VISITS:

- Teams choose from several facilities/events posted on the calendar each month. Facilities include libraries, nursing homes, and other special events, i.e. youth camps, etc.
- There is a Facility Coordinator for each facility who is responsible for the coordination of that facility.
- Each team is required to sign up on the calendar (SignUp Genius) for their visits. If anything changes, the handler is required to notify the Facility Coordinator and adjust the calendar appropriately.

Visit Requirements:

- Visits start as soon as you arrive at the site and leave your car.
- Per the [Team and Organizational Guidelines](#), two sets of eyes required for all visits
- Report 5-10 minutes prior to the visit for a “meet and greet”;
- Dog should be clean and wear scarf during probation; vest after completing probation and graduating; and
- Handler should have therapy pack, Pony Express ID badge and be dressed appropriately ([see Team and Organizational Guidelines](#)).

INFORMATION PACKET:

- Application
- Animal Evaluation
- CGC (Canine Good Citizen) Information
- Team Guidelines and Organizational Operations
- Health Record
- Handler Agreement

PROBATION REQUIREMENTS: *[new teams]*

- Completion of required visit with satisfactory reports from the Facility Coordinator
- Evidence of following Guidelines
- Approval by vote of the Executive Committee

TEAM REQUIREMENTS:

- “Team” is defined as either: Probationary (*passed evaluation but not completed probationary period*), Registered (*passed evaluation, probationary period and graduated*) and Non-Registered (*no dog*)
- Pass Evaluation: Minimum three (3) month probation before full registration/graduation
- Initial Dues: cost of vest (approximately \$50 depending on size)
- On-going dues: \$20 annually
- Re-evaluation: two years

MAINTAINING MEMBERSHIP:

- Demonstrate commitment to the program and follow approved guidelines at all times
- Stay up to date on vaccinations
- No incidents (see Incidents and Aggression Policy in [Team and Organizational Guidelines](#))

INCIDENTS: (see Team Guidelines and Organizational Operations)

- Needs to be reported within 12 hours to any Executive Committee member
- Aggression Policy: Pony Express Therapy Dogs will not tolerate aggressive behavior being exhibited by any of our dogs.
- Prevention: Know your dog and be their advocate
- Continue working with and socializing your dog
- Be aware that a dog's temperament may change over time. There is no disgrace in withdrawing your dog from the program.

SIGNING UP FOR VISITS:

- Sign up through SignUp Genius calendar
- Every team needs an email address to set up account
- Email will be sent by Calendar coordinator with link to sign up each month
- Probationary teams need to sign up for two (2) visits each month; Registered teams are required one (1) visit a month, but are encouraged to participate in additional visits.
- During the probationary period, teams should sign up using one of the probationary slots on the respective visit

SPECIAL VISITS: (teams can be involved only after probation and meet additional requirements; see Guidelines)

- Hospice
- Book Buddies (library/schools)
- Prayer Buddies

QUESTIONS:

CONTACT INFORMATION:

	<p style="text-align: center;">Bill Luce Executive Director Pony Express Therapy Dogs 816-232-5162 William_luce49@yahoo.com</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Barb Tansey Secretary 704-905-9571 DrBTansey@gmail.com</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Sharon Luce Treasurer 816-232-5162</p>
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