

## What is the definition of animal assisted activities?

Member volunteers take their dogs to visit schools, hospitals, and nursing homes. During those visits, the volunteers will talk about their dog and encourage the people they are visiting to pet and perhaps even brush the dog. If the dog is small enough, the people can hold him or her. These activities, along with walking with the dog and owner and throwing toys for fetching games are considered “therapeutic contact.”

## How do I become involved?

To find out if you think you might enjoy participating in animal assisted activities, you are welcome to contact a current member of Therapy Dogs Incorporated and follow along on a visit, without your dog. You may decide that you won't like this “work,” as it can be hot and difficult. If you think you and your dog will enjoy making these fulfilling personal contacts, you will be introduced to a Tester/Observer. The T/O will test your dog's manners with strangers and with other dogs. The T/O will also test for basic obedience, and determine whether or not your dog enjoys petting in all forms. Tester/Observers do not train dogs or charge for observations. Once that test is completed, you will make three or more provisional visits with a Tester or Observer. Finally, upon payment of the proper fees, your membership will be registered with the office of Therapy Dogs Incorporated.

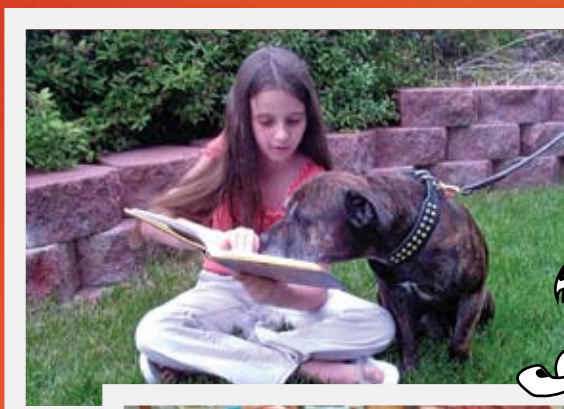
You will receive a tag for your dog's collar and an ID card for your wallet that will identify you as a member of Therapy Dogs Incorporated.

## Why should I register my dog with Therapy Dogs Incorporated?

For the safety of the people you are visiting. Registration proves to the administration of the facility that you and your dog have been tested and are covered by Therapy Dogs Incorporated's liability insurance. This insurance covers the people you visit in the event of injury or illness as a result of contact with your dog. The insurance does not cover you or your dog from injury or illness as a result of your participation in this program. Another benefit of this insurance policy is that coverage is primary and does not wait for response from another carrier, such as your homeowner's policy. Only volunteers are covered by this policy. People whose dogs are used in work settings are not.

## Which dog makes the best therapy dog?

There is no perfect breed or mix of breeds for therapy work. As long as the dog is more than one year of age, is healthy, well-mannered, and not dog aggressive, and enjoys human contact he or she will likely make a good therapy dog. Knowing tricks is not a requirement, but many members



Top photo: Staffordshire Bull Terrier Murdock in a “paws” for reading.  
Center photo: Doberman Pinscher Cassie making new friends at a Cheyenne Frontier Days Parade.  
Bottom photo: Cairn Terrier Maggie entertains a young friend.



have taught their dogs special tricks such as “shake hands” or “speak” as a conversation starter. Obedience routines are helpful and serve the same purpose, while conformation dogs often excel at standing still for petting. Each dog/handler team is unique and offers wonderful opportunities for therapeutic contact. Cats, wolves or wolf hybrids, and other species of animals will not be considered for membership in Therapy Dogs Incorporated. Only canines will be registered.



Reading by Osmosis — Therapy Dog, Addie, was so excited about Brooklyn reading her book Hugs to her, that she laid on the book. Children reading to dogs helps them improve their reading skills.

## What is a typical visit like?

In some facilities, the dogs and owners walk from room to room, always asking permission before entering, and will spend a few minutes visiting with the resident. Other times the activities director will gather several residents in one area to pet the dog or dogs. Some dog/handler teams will perform a little show, involving tricks or skits or obedience routines.



*Co-founder Ann Butrick presenting the first Jack Butrick Memorial Scholarship.*

Once in a while you will be rewarded for your commitment and dedication by almost miraculous responses from residents. Members have reported people waking from comas and speaking for the first time when they become aware of the dog. These instances are very rare and most volunteers are satisfied simply by knowing that people have briefly forgotten their problems while petting the dogs.

## Do the dogs ever wear costumes?

Wearing costumes, vests, or hats is not required, but if the dog is comfortable, it is perfectly acceptable to wear fancy outfits for special holidays or just for fun.

## Do I need to commit a specific amount of time weekly or monthly?

Most visits last an hour or less, but how often you visit, or where you visit, is completely up to you. You may become involved with a group that goes to different places, or you may want to go on your own. You will need the prior permission of the facilities activities director or administrator. Many facilities even welcome unscheduled visits, as long as mealtimes are avoided.

## Can children become Therapy Dogs Incorporated members?

Children under the age of 16 may become registered by going through the Exception Committee.

## I still have questions about Therapy Dogs Incorporated. Who should I ask?

Please call the toll-free number at 1-877-843-7364, the Cheyenne office at 1-307-432-0272, or write to Therapy Dogs Incorporated at P.O., Box 20227, Cheyenne, WY 82003. You may also fax information or questions to 1-307-638-2079. Visit our web site at [www.therapydogs.com](http://www.therapydogs.com) or send emails to [therapydogsinc@qwestoffice.net](mailto:therapydogsinc@qwestoffice.net).

*Thank you for inquiring about Therapy Dogs Incorporated!*

Therapy Dogs Incorporated was founded in 1990 by Jack and Ann Butrick of Cheyenne, Wyoming, and since then has grown into an organization of more than 7,500 members in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, and U.S. Territories.

It is a goal of Therapy Dogs Incorporated to provide registration, support and insurance for members who are involved in animal assisted activities.



*Founders Jack and Ann Butrick of Cheyenne, Wyoming with Doberman Pinschers JR and Cricket, Pug Weebie, and the activities director of a Cheyenne care facility.*

## **THE THERAPY DOGS INC.**

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