

**F**idos For Freedom, Inc. is composed of a dedicated group of volunteers who strive to increase the quality of life in our community through the use of specially trained Hearing Dogs, Service Dogs and Therapy Dogs. Other programs include: Junior Volunteer Program, DEAR Program (Dogs Educating and Assisting Readers) Community Education Program and Sponsorship Program. Please call (410) 880-4178 for more information about any of these other exciting aspects of our organization.

Volunteering with the Fidos For Freedom Therapy Dog Program is a wonderful way to spend quality time with your special dog and share him/her with members of our community who are often forgotten. Imagine the warm feeling you will get when you enter the lobby of a health care facility and have residents waiting to see you and your dog.

Allowing your dog to give unconditional love to residents of nursing homes or patients in local hospitals will be one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. It will be an activity your dog will grow to eagerly anticipate. You will have the opportunity to see people smile who seldom find a reason to smile. You will know your efforts are appreciated when you are thanked for coming by the people you visit. Fidos For Freedom is always seeking new volunteers to participate in our Therapy Dog Program.



### What Is a Fidos Therapy Dog Team?

A Therapy Dog Team consists of one dog and his/her handler. Therapy dogs are pet dogs owned by our volunteers and are specifically trained to perform quality pet therapy visits at local healthcare facilities. Therapy dogs also participate in our community education programs.

### Volunteer Opportunities for Fidos For Freedom Therapy Dog Teams

- Visits to Health Care Facilities
  1. Cherry Lane Nursing Home
  2. Hillhaven Nursing Center
  3. Laurel Regional Hospital
  4. Sheppard Pratt Psychiatric Hospital
  5. Holy Cross Hospital, Pediatric and Transitional Care Wards
  6. Holy Cross Rehabilitation and Nursing Center
  7. Montgomery General Hospital
  8. Johns Hopkins Children's House
  9. Brooke Grove Rehab. & Nursing Center
- DEAR Program (Dogs Educating & Assisting Readers)
- Disability Awareness Programs at local schools
- Demonstrations, information booths and fund raisers (e.g. —civic clubs, businesses, Maryland Renaissance Festival, University of Maryland Agricultural Day)
- Junior Volunteer Program (volunteers 12–17 years old are partnered with a Therapy Dog Team and taught how to train and handle a dog during Wednesday evening classes.)

Fidos For Freedom Therapy Dogs make a positive impact on the lives of many people in our community that are frequently forgotten by society.



If you would like to participate in this important program, call 410-880-4178 to schedule yourself and your dog for Therapy Dog Testing.

Fidos Therapy Dog Program Sponsored By:  
PET BARN, INC.  
Burtonsville, MD

## Therapy Dog Program Information



**P.O. Box 5508  
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Fidos For Freedom, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is a voting member of Assistance Dogs International (ADI). All donations are greatly appreciated and are tax deductible.



**Combined Federal Campaign:  
CFC # 41908  
Maryland Charity Campaign:  
MCC # 2605**

**United Way - Write-in: "Fidos For Freedom, Inc."**

Fidos For Freedom Therapy Dog visits are done on a regular basis (at least once each month/facility) at local healthcare facilities. Each visit is done by a minimum of two Fidos Therapy Dog Teams. Working with other teams makes the visits more fun for both the human and canine members of the teams. Each new Therapy Dog Team is matched with an existing team for an initial 3-month period. Teams must visit nursing homes or assisted living facilities for at least 6 months before they are allowed to make visits at hospitals. Dogs must be bathed within 72 hours of a visit.

#### There are two types of facility visits:

**Room-to-room**—Teams visit patients/residents in their rooms. Dogs are taught how to place their front feet on beds or to sit in a chair next to the bed so they can be easily reached to be petted.

**Group**—Patients/residents come to a central location, usually a multipurpose room, and watch and laugh as the teams perform obedience demonstrations, play games, perform dances or do parlor tricks. This is followed by time for them to pet the dogs.

#### What it Takes To Become a Fidos Therapy Dog Team....

Before becoming an official Therapy Dog Team, there are several requirements that each member of the team must meet. The following requirements ensure the safety and well-being of the residents, patients and children that we visit. Therapy Dog Testing is done to ensure that your dog is well-mannered and under control. Good temperament and basic obedience skills are a must for healthcare or school facility visitations. We offer Therapy Dog Testing every 6 months. Testing is announced in the Fidos newsletter and on our web site. You may also call Fidos and request to be notified about the next testing date. Bring your dog's veterinary records to the test including proof of a current Rabies shot.

There is a small fee for this test, to help defray our costs. The test is divided into two portions:

1. Temperament—Therapy Dogs must be able to react appropriately in a wide variety of circumstances. They must pass all of these
  - a. Observation of dog (dog is placed in a pen)
  - b. Reaction to a stranger's approach
  - c. Reaction to handling by stranger (sudden movements, rolling dog on back, brushing dog, playing tug etc.)
  - d. Reaction to ball and unusual object
2. Obedience—Dogs 8 months and older must pass at least 3 of the following exercises in order to be able to participate in training classes at the Fidos facility. They have 3 months to complete remaining exercises and must pass all of them before they can begin visiting.
  - a. Heel on leash
  - b. 3 minute sit-stay
  - c. 1 minute visiting stand-stay
  - d. 15 minute down stay
  - e. 20' off-lead recall at an angle, with distractionsHandlers will be interviewed.

**Handler Classes** prepare you for situations that might be encountered in healthcare facilities. These classes are offered as needed on Wednesday nights.

- a. Hand washing
- b. Patient's rights
- c. Hospital signs
- d. Public department

(How to handle yourself and your dog in public)

**Veterinary Requirements** are set to maintain the highest standards for the well-being of the people we visit. Veterinary records must be submitted to Fidos twice each year. All dogs must have:

- a. Fecal check every 6 months
- b. Annual vaccine(s) for DHLPP w/Corona (Distemper, Hepatitis, Leptospirosis, Parvovirus, Parainfluenza) or titers accepted
- c. Annual vaccine for Bordatella
- d. Vaccine for Rabies

e. Year-round heartworm medication

In addition, Fidos Therapy Dog Program offers an additional opportunity for selected teams: participation in our Dogs Educating and Assisting Readers (DEAR) program. DEAR is a reading literacy program in which Therapy Dog Teams are matched with children with literacy problems to tackle the challenges of reading.

#### Attendance/Participation Requirements

Therapy Dog Teams must maintain their skills and ability to work with each other. Therefore, each dog is required to participate in:

- One Fidos training class each month  
AND
- One additional non-public event at our facility (e.g. —meeting or training class)

Training classes are conducted on Wednesday evening's and on Saturday morning's at our training center. Dogs must participate in four Wednesday evening classes before they can start visiting. These classes provide opportunities for the dogs and handlers to socialize with each other while learning new skills and practicing Therapy Dog visits. Dogs are taught how to work around wheelchairs, IV poles and walkers. They have fun practicing their obedience skills while playing games and working with their human partners. Meetings are held to keep everyone informed of upcoming events. They also provide an opportunity for the dogs to socialize and to practice their down stays. Fidos Therapy Dog Teams are required to participate in at least six healthcare facility visits per year.



The information contained in this brochure summarizes some of Fidos' activities and requirements. Complete descriptions are contained in our "Fidos for Freedom, Inc. Therapy Dog Handbook," which you will receive after you and your dog have met all of the Therapy Dog Team requirements.