

## Delivering Services – The Dog

### *Great Pets versus Great Warm Hearts Volunteer Visiting Dogs*

Visiting dogs must be extraordinary dogs to meet the dynamic and challenging environments they will encounter. They must be people-oriented and very social, comfortable being touched by strangers, comfortable being touched awkwardly. They should be relaxed in crowds and new situations, good natured, reliable, well trained, and able to respond safely and recover from stressors easily. There must be a strong bond of mutual trust and respect between dog and handler. Consider who and where your dog is comfortable working and playing. You might be surprised that your dog might not like the same populations that you do. If a dog is not comfortable, the liability risk goes up. Watch for signs that your dog does or does not like specific population, individuals, groups, etc.

<b>Desirable characteristics for a visiting dog</b>	<b>Unacceptable characteristics for a visiting dog</b>
Enjoys meeting new people, and the environments and people visited and activities engaged in	Anxious or aggressive behavior toward unknown humans or dogs
Reliable response to cues and confident personality	Known history of significant instability or abuse
Controllable at all times, even in unfamiliar situations	Poor or incomplete training
Able to create confidence and ease in people, responds well to human body language and needs	Introverted, shy or in need of psychotropic drugs to alter behavior