



Visiting Team Handbook

Updated Jan 2019

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Introduction to the Warm Hearts Network

Why we do it

Creating social, physical and emotional benefits to a wide range of people through human-animal interactions. Benefits include physical touch and activity, social and mental engagement, nurturing, pleasure, empathy and more.

History

Warm Hearts Network (WHN) is a not-for-profit organization that started as an informal group of three women who worked at the Los Lunas Training School, a residential facility for adults with developmental disabilities. In 1989, these three - a psychologist (Beverly Babik), a librarian (Peg Fletcher), and a physical therapist (Jennifer Jarpe) - began bringing their well-mannered dogs to work with the residents. In 1990, when the national organization, Delta Society, created the Pet Partners program, these women joined the program, registered as Pet Partners teams with their dogs, and began to recruit additional members. Area groups created chapters of Delta Society Pet Partners, and the greater Albuquerque/Los Lunas/Belen chapter was called the Warm Hearts Network. At the time there appeared to be no differentiation between visiting dogs (animal assisted activity) and healthcare and human service professionals who asked their dogs to be part of formal treatment plans.

The new Delta program was not yet formalized, so the WHN founders served as instructors and evaluators of the teams who wanted to join. The testing of human and dog teams, like you, was done at the Training School with actual residents with disabilities, rather than role-playing volunteers. In 1992, Corrales dog trainer, Dani Weinberg, began teaching a special class for prospective Pet Partners teams. In 1998, the State of New Mexico closed the Training School, but by that time, Delta began offering training for Team Evaluators and Instructors.

Delta Society Pet Partners program became a leader in the field of human-animal health connection. Their program developed eligibility requirements, training of handlers, team testing procedures, registration policies and procedures, and limited liability insurance for volunteers who wanted to share their pets with other community members. Since that time, Delta Society has re-organized and formally removed the name 'Delta Society'. The organization is now called Pet Partners. In 2010, Pet Partners added a policy with specific diet requirements for visiting teams, which excluded raw diets. This meant that if any dog ate any sort of raw component in their diet for any reason, the dog was no longer allowed to visit. As a direct result, in 2011, WHN members made the decision to leave Pet Partners. Our program joined forces with Animal Humane New Mexico and maintained our branch name of the Warm Hearts Network. With the growth and changes, the WHN became its own legal organization in Fall of 2013. WHN has a working volunteer board of directors with experience in business, healthcare, disability, dog training and handling, animal assisted activities, animal assisted therapy, assistance dogs and more. Some of our board members have even published articles, journals, books and research! We continue to work side by side with Animal Humane New Mexico to build a great community resource for people to share their dogs with others. We also have some links to [Animal Assisted Intervention International](#), a non-profit organization that caters to practitioners who work with their dogs during paid work. For more information please go to www.animalassistedintervention.org.

Shelter Dog Inclusion

We support Animal Humane's mission to improve the lives of New Mexico's cats and dogs through sheltering, adoption, community education, providing quality veterinary services to families in need. WHN serves as an important component of Animal Humane's community service programming. It is not uncommon to see dogs from Animal Humane become WHN teams. We provide services to evaluate shelter dogs at Animal Humane for potential to become teams. So when you are ready for an additional dog with visiting or therapy involvement, please consider adopting one of these fantastic dogs so they may have a forever home and help change the world one interaction at a time.

Requirements and Benefits of Registration

The **Warm Hearts Network** is comprised of human-dog teams who both enjoy meeting new people and new environments. Our team members include volunteers, dog trainers and handlers, and human healthcare/social service professionals, pet dogs and dogs with more professional duties.

Teams are expected to visit at least twice a month to maintain active membership. Teams that have a 60-day lapse are not considered active members, and can retest at the owners expense, to become an active member.

The WHN only offers opportunities for Volunteer Visiting Teams. This means all of our teams are visiting strictly within the confines of voluntary work with their dogs. We do not offer a track for professional healthcare/human services providers who wish to use their dogs in their daily work. If you are interested in this aspect of the work, please reach out to Animal Assisted Intervention International.

Remember, this is an active volunteer group of people and their dogs, and is meant to be a service to the community—not just a title. It is expected that you will be available for volunteer visitations an average of twice a month.

These are human-dog teams who perform volunteer visitations focused on activities that are casual and leisure-based. They may visit individuals or groups of people in a variety of our pre-approved community locations. A volunteer visiting team may be requested to work directly with a paid licensed healthcare/social service provider (Animal Assisted Therapy or AAT), or educational provider (Animal Assisted Education or AAE) within their scope of practice, when the professional does not have a dog of their own in the work setting. If the licensed professional is not present, it is a visiting session with animal assisted activities. WHN visiting teams participate in a screening, an entry level WHN course, a formal evaluation, and then if everything is successfully completed, they are registered as WHN Visiting Team. The team re-evaluates and re-registers every two years.

Volunteer Visiting Team Track

Track to Registration		
EVENT	DESCRIPTION	COST
Screening	By reservation. Screening team sends form to registrar and class instructor (or coaching class instructor if need be).	No Fee
Entry Level Handlers Workshop	Workshop fee payable to WHN. Payment due at workshop.	\$15 per person
Verify Reservation for Testing/Evaluation	Email whn_registrar@yahoo.com to confirm spot for testing day.	N/A
Veterinary Screening & Vaccinations	Have your veterinary complete provided paperwork and retain for submission on testing day.	Varies depending on clinic
Testing/Evaluation	1 dog + 1 human (couples must each pass handler evaluation).	\$15 per team, pass or not
Volunteer Visiting Registration/Membership		\$30/team or \$50/couple
2 Year ID Card	Ordered from registrar	\$16.95 per handler/per dog
After Registration		
WHN Vest	https://www.therapydogvest.com . Search for Warm Hearts Network	\$30.95 + Shipping (prices may vary depending on vest size)
WHN Bandana	Order from: Focus Ink - Nancy Denker 335 Jefferson SE Nancy@focusink.com	Free bandana provided at registration. \$7.50 each + tax, S&H
Placement Selection & Mentorship	Select the location you wish to visit at. Communicate with Placement Coordinator. When possible, attend with mentor or work with Mentor Coordinator. See contact list (page 25).	N/A
Renewals/Reactivations		
Renewal 2 year Active Member	Renewal and retesting every 2 years if you visited an average of 2x per month. Refresher Handlers' Workshop required every 3 years.	\$15 re-eval
Reactivate	a.) If you did not visit an average of twice a month during the 2 year registration period, and your 2 year period is not expired, or b.) if you changed settings/populations during your most recent 2 year period	\$10

Team Skills Requirements

The Warm Hearts Network (WHN) trained volunteer teams provide volunteer visiting (Animal Assisted Activities) and /or assistance with healthcare/human service professional engagement (Animal Assisted Therapy or Animal Assisted Education) in the community. Our human-animal teams are screened, evaluated, and then registered to visit healthcare facilities, schools, senior living and activity centers, hospice, and others.

To be successful in these situations, the registered handler and dog must have well-established specific skills:

Expectations of Handler:

- Respects the dog's preferences and limitations for duration, population, and activity expectations
- Able to predict and respond positively to environmental factors that may prove challenging to the dog
- Able to identify general dog body language and their dog's common stress signals.
- Positive communication and handling techniques (example: communicates with words rather than physical force or leash corrections)
- Has lived or worked with dog consistently for at least 6 months
- Follow WHN policies and procedures
- Has a positive relationship with dog
- Uses a maximum of three cues to direct dog
- Is interested and willing to continue training with their dog to continuously strengthen the dog's behavior and skills

Expectations of Dog:

- At least two years old at testing time
- Has lived/worked consistently with handler at least 6 months
- Enjoys meeting new people and going to new places
- Engages with people other than handler- displays a desire to visit
- Has basic obedience skills: sit, come, down, stay, loose leash walking, gentle mouth under verbal control
- Be able to ignore or calmly observe another working dog without requiring an interaction with that dog (note: dogs should not visit with each other during volunteer visiting sessions)
- Be able to ignore or calmly observe and be redirected from dogs owned by residents at visiting facilities that may bark, lunge or jump at them
- Does not require a choke chain, prong collar, e-collar, head halter or leash corrections to maintain polite, controlled behavior in busy, public spaces
- Can respond correctly to a regular speaking voice within two cues
- Does not eliminate/mark indoors
- Can walk by food or pills on ground without picking it up (can 'leave it')

Handlers' Workshop Discussion:

What are your team's current strengths and challenge areas based on the above requirements?

Handler's Strengths	Dog's Strengths
Handler's Perceived Challenges	Dog's Perceived Challenges

Delivering Services – The Handler

Animal Assisted Activity (AAA) and Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) – Understanding the Difference

The following definitions were coined by Pet Partners, however, they are commonly used in the literature around the world.

AAA is a volunteer position that provides opportunities for motivational, educational, and/or recreational benefits to enhance quality of life. AAA are delivered in a variety of environments by a volunteers in association with animals that meet specific criteria. A human and their pet go into the community to visit at our approved sites.

AAT is a goal-directed intervention in which an animal, meeting specific criteria, is an integral part of the treatment process. AAT is delivered and/or directed by a health/human service provider working within the scope of his/her profession. AAT is designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive functioning. AAT is provided in a variety of settings and may be group or individual in nature. This process is documented and evaluated.

WHN does not provide any kind of certificates for professionals and does not offer a "Professional Track" for individuals interested in incorporating AAT into their health services. We simply evaluate so that you can rest assured that someone other than you has observed your dog to perform well under normal conditions of the environment in which it was evaluated. The evaluations are good for two years at a time as dogs' preferences and abilities often change over time. Recall that they age faster than we do, and we cannot expect all dogs to work under the same conditions we do for the amount of time we do.

The WHN is a great organization to evaluate teams in professional settings, however, the liability insurance only covers people who are in the volunteer capacity, not people on the clock. If you plan on using your dog in healthcare, social, educational, or other professional services, you will need to follow up with your professional liability insurance. Check your professional licensure, standards of practice, job description, or other professional descriptors for your practice framework, ensure you have a continuing education course from a professional, submit for continuing education if available, and check your professional liability policy to determine if there are any other best practice recommendations.

Evaluating Visiting Environments

There are many factors that influence the working environment of facilities you and your dog will visit or work: staff involvement, number of people, type of clients, smells, noise, activity levels etc. Your first registration will be for a basic environment. Later, when you renew your registration, you and your dog might qualify to work in more complex environments, and handlers should understand the factors that influence that ranking, understand the natural fit for yourself and your dog, and understand how strategies and tools for visiting success may vary from setting to setting.

If we look at the world from a dog's point of view, environments can be categorized according to how much within that environment demands a dog to adapt and respond to in order to navigate his or her surroundings:

Basic Environments

- Quiet/ambient noise
- Slow Movement
- Participants/patients have low activity
- People in chairs or beds
- Floors might be carpeted
- Lighting may be low
- Few noisy machines

Intermediate Environments

- Loud noise/chatter
- Less carpet, window coverings, echo
- Staff/participants moving around
- Some unanticipated/spontaneous interactions and activity
- Some distractions
- Participants using walkers/wheelchairs/equipment/canes
- Potential IV and oxygen lines, etc.
- People using more gestures
- Slick floors/shiny

Advanced Environments for Volunteer Visiting

- High activity
- High distraction
- Many more people
- Staff moving quickly/Participants moving
- Carts moving quickly- perhaps with food
- Participants may be in groups and more interactive, asking dog to do things
- Unpredictable interactions- distance, duration, quality and quantity
- Many people crowded around dog and talking to it
- Dog moves between many areas and people Intercoms/music/etc.
- Dog & handler might participate in structured, goal oriented activities with healthcare/human service provider

Handler's Responsibilities

At all times you are responsible for implementing, following and understanding the following **Warm Hearts Network Policies and Procedures:**

1. Handler will ensure dog can walk on a loose leash and respond to verbal cues. It is expected that your dog is trained and does not require negative equipment or handling. You should only have to say the cue once or twice (up to three times will be accepted if it is a very distractible situation). Avoid repeating cues over and over as it will appear to others that your dog is not trained.
2. Perform your duties in line with your volunteer role. Ensure that participants understand your role-- sharing your dog with them. They should not be seeking advice or any sort of intervention.
3. A Warm Hearts registered pet is not an assistance dog. A dog that works in animal assisted therapy/education is not an assistance dog. People with disabilities for which they have a dog assist them with 2 tasks directly related to their disability have assistance dogs (guide, hearing or service). People with disabilities have ADA rights— dogs do not carry the rights. Please do not represent your dog as such or attempt to get exceptions for your pets using your Warm Hearts registration or identification. Your dog only has access to the facilities in which you visit or work.
4. At all times, treat animals and people with respect, dignity, and sensitivity. People will be watching what you do more than listening to what you say.
5. Be informed and educated about animal assisted activities versus animal assisted therapy. Please know that your team is a visiting team. Avoid misrepresentation. Call it what it is.
6. Be professional when representing WHN. This includes but is not limited to maintaining appropriate appearance and behavior. You should dress casual professional, and ensure that you can bend forward, squat, or lift arms above your head and not show cleavage, midriff, or lower back/buttocks.
7. When you or your dog are ill, please contact your facility supervisor by phone as soon as possible. If your dog is on medications, ask about visiting recommendations. Some medication may cause increased urination, dehydration, diarrhea, etc. Your dog might need to miss visiting until released for work by your veterinarian. If you have to miss visiting, it is a good idea to follow up in writing. If you are no longer able to visit a specific location, please give them at least two weeks' notice and also contact WHN so we may place a new team and possibly have you and the new team go together once so you may train them on the ins and outs of that site.
8. Be on time and reliable. For many people, this is one of the few things they look forward to. Facilities have the right to ask you to stop coming for any reason. Please contact the Placement Coordinator anytime there is a change in your status:
WarmHeartsABQ@gmail.com.

9. Wear your Warm Hearts Network identification at all times while visiting or representing WHN and Animal Humane in the community.
10. Handlers and dogs may not be substituted. You may visit without your dog, or with the dog you passed the testing with. You may not substitute another pet, nor may your dog visit with another person unless that person has tested and been registered as a handler for your dog.
11. Abide by all policies, procedures, and safety measures of each facility visited.
12. Observe all rules related to privacy and confidentiality. The Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act protect people's privacy. To discuss cases with friends or family is a violation of privacy. Please be respectful.
13. Ask for permission to photograph people you visit (ensure they are competent and their own guardian) and obtain a release signed by the client and a representative at the facility.
14. Be prepared for each visit:
 - Insure your dog is healthy: vaccinated, clean and healthy. Ensure clean teeth, clean ears, and a clean personal hygiene area. Nails should be trimmed so they do not scratch people or impair the dog's gait.
 - Cleanliness: Your dog should be free from dirt, debris (leaves, grass, etc.) and odor. Dogs should be bathed on a regular basis (most veterinarians recommend a typical dog be bathed every 6 weeks or so). Avoid human and dog perfume- many people are sensitive to this and most facilities ask that they not be used.
15. Be responsible for your dog at all times. This includes your dog's safety and well-being as well as the safety and comfort of those around you. Stay with your dog at all times during a visit, do not leave your dog with anyone or unattended.
16. Do not allow your dog to visit or play with other dogs during visiting work. Your dog's focus should be on the humans you are visiting.
17. Clean up after your dog, inside and outside the facility. Your dog should be taken to eliminate away from the main entrance, and any dining area view! Be careful of hot sidewalks in the summer time!
18. Visitations are on a volunteer basis without expectation of payment, or exchange of goods or services. Avoid offering your personal contact information to participants.
19. In case of any out of the ordinary incident, injury or accident, report the event to WHN immediately. Contact us in writing and attach the incident form IMMEDIATELY (within 12-24 hours of the incident), even if you think it is not a big deal.
20. Use common sense: ask for help if you need it, do not take risks! Alert facility staff if you have concerns about a participant. If you have any issues with your direct supervisor, contact WHN program coordinator. It is not in your role to go to their supervisor, that is the role of the site coordinator or the program coordinator at WHN.

Reporting Incidents & Accidents

If there is any damage to property or injury to people or pets, file an accident or incident report with the facility you visit AND with Warm Hearts Network. A copy of the report can be located in the back of this handbook (page 31). Once completed, it should be signed and submitted to your staff liaison at the facility you visit, and a scan/copy of the signed report should be emailed to the Warm Hearts Network Placement Coordinator at WarmHeartsABQ@gmail.com.

If the situation is urgent contact law enforcement or medical personnel as needed to stabilize the situation. Be Proactive! Be aware of the environment, the people, other dogs, the context, and what your dog might be thinking about!

We are not able to take liability responsibility for so many human-animal teams. It is not possible for WHN nor an insurance company to consistently observe your ability to predict and respond to many different situations, people, and environments. We are only able to say that your dog was evaluated at one point in time by a number of individuals with dog training and/or behavior and licensed healthcare/human service provider experience. WHN offers a very limited liability certificate similar to most other visiting organizations. However, these policies are *not* designed to cover specific injuries, damages to property, etc. Insurance companies do not offer specific coverage to visiting organizations as the training and handling of each dog is different and the circumstances are not regulated. Therefore, they are not able to offer full coverage to volunteer visiting organizations. The policies are very limited and do not clarify what exactly they do cover. The WHN is not able to see you and your dog in all circumstances, and it is not possible for large insurance companies to assume responsibility for thousands of community do-gooders. So it is best to have a back-up policy.

We recommend that you contact your personal homeowner/renter insurance company and see if your policy can be amended to cover you and your dog when you go into the community to do visitations. It is critical that you tell them your dog has been evaluated and registered with Animal Humane New Mexico and Warm Hearts Network and deemed to be friendly and obedient under a variety of circumstances. If they will offer you coverage, it is a good idea to add it.

Please note: Sometimes, things happen! We understand this! It is important to submit an accident or incident report if there is ANY incident involving your dog while visiting, from incidents that might have harmed or upset a human recipient, to negative interactions with other dogs, and so on. Incident reports are not designed to get you into trouble, but to ensure we have plenty of information from your perspective should an incident take place. Using the incident report, we may be able to make suggestions to the facility to change how visitations are handled, or provide training support to you for specific difficulties you have

Delivering Services – The Dog

encountered with your dog. Remember that it is always better for us to have information on any incidents directly from you, rather than from the facility you are visiting with.

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.

Desirable characteristics for a visiting dog	Unacceptable characteristics for a visiting dog
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

Health Concerns for Participants and Pets

Please be aware that taking your dog to visitations can potentially put clients' health at risk or (although very uncommon) can expose your dog to illness. The most common health concerns for both humans and animals to be aware of include:

Allergies (in clients): Allergies come in many forms and are present widely in all populations. Common allergens associated with animals include animal saliva, animal urine, animal dander, ingredients in flea powder or other products on your dog, latex toys, foods that might be in your dog's treats (e.g. peanut butter), or pollen or dust carried in on dog's coat. Be aware of such sensitives, ensure participants do not have known allergens before visiting, and end visit and notify staff if participants show any sign of an allergic reaction while interacting with your dog.

Zoonotic Diseases are diseases that can be transmitted from humans to dogs and from dogs to humans. There are three major ways they are transmitted:

- Urine/Feces – hookworms, crypto, giardia, leptospirosis, roundworms, tapeworms.
- Walking on contaminated soil, bathing, swimming or drinking contaminated water, eating contaminated wildlife.
- Hair/skin – Through skin-to-skin contact: ringworm, mange, scabies, MRSA; through contact to parasites (fleas, ticks) carried on skin: Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, Lyme disease; through bites/scratches: bartonellosis, rabies,

If have any concerns about your dog's own infection with a zoonotic disease or their possible exposure during a visit, cancel your visits immediately and seek the care of your veterinarian.

Immunodeficiency in clients

HIV/AIDS, chemotherapy, radiation, leukemia, dialysis, burns, skin concerns etc. may inhibit a visit due to compromised immune response in the participant. Educate yourself about any immune concerns specific to the population you are visiting – activities that are harmless to a healthy immune system can cause serious risk to others! Ask your direct supervisor about any precautions that may be of concern.

Knowing Your Dog

Your job as the handler in a visiting team is to ensure your dog is prepared for the visiting environment, and will succeed and enjoy his or herself during visits. In order to do the latter, you must be familiar with your own dog's preferences and be able to identify what situations are challenging or stressful for your dog that you might avoid.

Understanding Stress

Stress is a part of every animal's life, but as a handler you must understand the impact of stress on your dog, as it might also impact your dog's success in the visiting environment. Here are some points about stress to remember:

1. There are different kinds and levels of stress: Understand the difference between eustress (moderate or normal psychological stress that is routinely encountered and typically easily navigated) and distress (more intense stress resulting in feelings of discomfort, anxiety, or panic) is critical for managing your dog's experience while visiting.
2. Stress "stacks": the level of your dog's stress and his or her ability to cope with that stress will vary from day to day depending on how much stress has been encountered overall. Encountering high levels of stress or multiple stressing events can bring your dog closer to his or her "stress threshold" where behaviors might occur to elevate the feelings of stress.
3. Stress changes behavior: Animals under stress will offer behaviors to remove or avoid the stress-inducing stimuli (stressors). Common behaviors offered by dogs to remove or escape stressors include: offering body signaling to communicate discomfort, moving away from the stressor (retreating), hiding, growling, snapping or biting. We do not want to push our dog to the point where the only perceived way to remove the stressor is through behaviors such as growling, snapping or biting.
4. Stress is damaging to the body: Repeated exposure to intense stress has long term impacts on health and wellbeing.

How is your dog communicating with you and others around you?

Dogs are constantly communicating information about their health, intentions and emotional states using body language. Learn everything you can about common dog body signals, and learn about your dog's particular signals. Be aware of stress or "calming" signals your dog may use to communicate discomfort with an environment or activity, and make any changes as needed to ensure your dog continues to enjoy the visiting experience.

Common Stress/"Calming" Signals Include:

Panting (lips drawn back)	Averting eyes/gaze
Body or head turns/C-curves	Paw lifts
Whale eye/"Half-moon" eye	Pupil dilation
Yawning (out of context of physical tiredness)	Lip licking (out of context of eating food)
Shake-offs	Sweating paw pads
Stress shedding	Scratching
"Tune outs" when cued	Sniffing the ground

What particular stimuli impact your dog's comfort and how does he/she respond?

Some stressors are universal (i.e. extreme temperatures, loud noises, sudden or unexpected movements or appearances, illness) while others might be unique to your dog and more subtle. One dog might respond to the same stressor with fear, while another with withdrawal. Your dog might respond differently week-to-week depending on how stressing stimuli are "stacking" on any given day or at any given time. Be aware of what elements in the environment tend to stress your dog and manage them as best you can. If stressors in the environment are impossible to manage efficiently, manage the amount of time you ask your dog to engage in work or the types of interactions you pursue. If you are at all worried that an environment is too stressful for your dog to navigate successfully, end the visiting session and reevaluate whether you should continue to visit at that location in the future.

Examples of Individual Stressors and Related Scenarios

<i>Other animals</i>	Another team enters the environment, and dog gets excited. Or, a resident dog at the facility being visited is barking and jumping at your visiting dog.
<i>Too many bosses – several people issuing commands to him, asking him to sit or lay down or come.</i>	Not all dogs are skilled enough, or perhaps do not prefer that anyone other than the handler ask them for anything. The dog may become anxious, start panting, drooling, or retreating.
<i>Fatigue</i>	Shut down/checks out. Sometimes he gets tired after 30 minutes, other times is happy and working well for an hour and half – watch for the signals.
<i>Dog goes to visit in a retirement home or a hospital in which there are walkers...with tennis balls installed to help them move easier and quieter.</i>	Uh Oh! Make sure your dog can leave it PRIOR to the event occurring!

Handler’s Workshop Discussion:

Identify environments or stimuli you know your dog finds challenging or uncomfortable ("triggers"). Then identify what body signaling you have observed your dog engage in during these encounters:

Trigger	Common Body Signals

Arousal Levels

Arousal level refers to the level of energy expressed by your dog during an activity. Very high arousal levels mean a dog is becoming overly excited and can result in a dog losing self-control; high arousal is also a stressor. Very low arousal can indicate a dog is not enjoying, not interested in, or stressed by an activity, or that the dog is not feeling well.

How do you know when your dog is at the right arousal level for an activity, and how do you adjust it if needed? Some techniques include rowdy play with favorite toy (to increase arousal), quiet time outside, massage or touch, or alone time (to reduce arousal).

Always Consider: What can you do to train for better coping in your dog? What can you do to avoid/mitigate situations that are going to trigger your dog?

Always Remember: Do not ever force your dog to perform under stress!
Your dog might not enjoy this work forever – how to watch for times your partner need a break from the work, or when retirement is in order.

Providing Services – Navigating Facilities & Settings

Types of Facilities

Warm Hearts Team visit rehab centers, VA, hospitals, schools, assisted living facilities, hospice, in client's homes, and in other healthcare, social service, and educational settings. More and more options become available every day as facilities learn of the benefit of visiting to their participants. If there is a particular organization you wish to visit and they are not already on the WHN list of facilities, please contact the Placement Coordinator.

*****Reminder*****

Volunteer visiting is a good beginning if you are utilizing the dog in professional work, but you have just begun your journey. Please research your job description, what is within your scope of work or practice, what you might have to do so that more formal animal assisted intervention may be utilized, professional liability insurance, and by all means, professional level coursework. This will demonstrate that both dog and professional were educated and trained in this formal practice.

How to select your facility

Spend time considering: the activity level preferences of you AND your dog (and remember they might not be identical!); what emotional triggers you have; what your dog is likely to be best suited for; where such facilities are located and what schedules they typically keep; whether you like one- to-one or group interactions; do you like presentations; do you like ongoing relationships or new clients each time.

Discuss your preferences with the Placement Coordinator to find the best match.

Rules and regulations

You are responsible for learning and understanding the rules and regulations of the facility where you are visiting and following them at all times. These regulations will vary from facility to facility: nursing homes and schools expect visitors to sign in, a treatment center may insist that you are never alone with a client, another facility might control what you are allowed to bring onsite.

Staff relationships

The staff at each facility play a key role in the visiting relationship. Within the facility you will need to have formal acceptance of the program as well as the acceptance of the "front line" staff. Learn to cultivate and manage both aspects. Look for a key ally and partner in the facility, someone who is a fan of the program and can help make your visits as positive and successful as possible. Learn which "frontline" staff enjoy the program and form relationships with them. Many staff will have concerns about visiting programs if they have

not experienced one before. You can address such concerns in casual discussions with staff if appropriate.

Common Concerns from Staff about Visiting Programs
How much of their time will it take?
Will it add to their duties or workload?
Will hours need to be changed to fit in the program?
Are the dogs mean/dirty/wild/have parasites/do they shed? (Remember, not everyone has always had positive experiences with dogs in the past).
Will participants get sick if the dog is sick?
What if the animal goes to the bathroom indoors?
What if there is an injury? Who is liable?

Look for your key ally and partner in the facility. Find out what the roles of staff are in relation to your visits (i.e. providing a list of who is approved for visits; helping transport you or participants for visit; providing supervision for visits when needed; helping with names and group dynamics; helping manage any difficult situations; enjoying your pets!). Do not disregard the importance of staff relationships in terms of access and acceptance of the program as well as the positive benefits your visits can provide to staff as well as clients.

Providing Services – Working with Clients/Participants

Populations

Visitations and Animal Assisted Therapy are effective and appropriate for many populations: seniors, kids, veterans, persons with a developmental disability, dementia, psychiatric disorders, substance abuse, visual impairments, persons with strokes or brain injuries, hearing disorders, ill, injured.

HOWEVER, there are people who are not well suited for this. Some people may have a fear of dogs, allergies, a history of domestic violence and animal abuse (witnessing/participating, animal used as a pawn for abuse). Some people may like animals for the simple reason that they think they can boss the dog or have some sort of control

– especially if they perceive that they do not have control over their own lives.

Your preferences and attitudes have a lot to do with the success of your visit, too. Identify your own passion and interest, your own triggers, and your family/social experience. If you have been a victim of a crime, you might not want to visit incarcerated populations. The team is what is important, the handler engagement and response will be scored as much as the dog's.

Techniques

You are there for the clients, and your responsibility is to understand their rights and their needs, empower them, respect their privacy, don't be patronizing, be yourself and be present. Here are some tips for good visiting techniques:

- Avoid touching clients unless asked
- Be thoughtful about positioning yourself and your dog during the visit (the dog should be within their reach)
- Respect verbal and non-verbal communication from the client during the visit. Pay attention to the body language of your client, as well as your dog
- In conversations, try the following:
 - Use open ended questions, questions with “who”, “what” or “when” Avoid questions that can be answered with yes or no
 - Use active listening skills: reframe and rephrase, ask questions like “tell me more about the dog you had when you were a child.” The visit is all about them, and they appreciate you taking the time to give them the spotlight
- Some participants do not want to talk at all, and that is okay. They may just like the quiet unspoken communication of your dog. Try to adjust to meet their needs – they may not enjoy the visit if you are talking for the duration of the visit

Keep in mind you are facilitating opportunities for clients to experience emotional connection, empathy, socialization, acceptance, recreation, physical contact, mental stimulation, and possibly specific goals related to AAT. As you visit and interact look for techniques and dynamics that cultivate these positive outcomes. Empower people by asking if they want to visit, give them decision-making opportunities where appropriate.

Handlers' Workshop Discussion:

As a group, let's brainstorm: What modifications of your own behavior or your dog's behavior can you make to match these physical, emotional, social or cognitive needs of clients?

Physical disabilities (examples: wheelchair bound, limited range of motion, poor motor control)	
Cognitive disabilities (examples: memory issues/Alzheimer's, verbal comprehension, ADHD)	
Psychosocial disabilities (examples: anxiety disorders, adjustment disorders, personality disorders)	

Providing Services – Difficult Situations

As you work with your dog, you will experience many situations, some of them difficult, uncomfortable or even dangerous. You are expected to understand how to manage the wide range of dynamic situations that might come your way.

- AAT and AAA are not scripted or predictable activities and you will find yourself needing to assess and respond to difficult situations
- Clients might intentionally or unintentionally be hurting your frightening your dog
- You might be asked by clients to do things that you are not allowed to do or are comfortable with
- You and your dog can become a source of rivalry in a group
- A client might become hostile, threatening or frighten you
- A client might become possessive and controlling of your dog
- Clients may be experiencing difficult emotions such as grief, fear, anger that you have to respond to
- An individual might not like animals and/or be afraid
- Allergies can create breathing problems
- Individuals with depressed immune systems can be especially vulnerable to zoonotic diseases
- Individuals (staff or clients) might be resistant to the program

Best Way to Prepare for Difficult Scenarios

Before you start visiting on your own, you will be asked to go observe a mentor who is already visiting in the community. Observe how the handler and dog work together. Observe the noise, visual stimuli, etc. Pay attention to things on the floor. Watch how the dog checks in with the handler, how it engages with people, and any sights that the dog might be uncomfortable. Observe how experienced teams navigate difficult scenarios.

The best way to avoid difficult scenarios is to know what to expect during your visit.

Before You Visit

Prior to doing your first visit with your dog at your approved site, go and see the facility and meet people. This is a good time to look at the following:

- ✓ How far is the building from the parking lot?
- ✓ Where will you bathroom your dog?
- ✓ Is there a path that is shaded in the summer? (Tip: if not, you may consider training your dog to wear booties so they do not burn their paws. If you can't walk on the sidewalk barefoot please do not expect your dog to)
- ✓ What kinds of doors are at the entrance? Is there anything your dog may be afraid of? (Tip: Try to keep your body closest to the door—on the hinge side—so that your dog's feet do not get stuck under the door or the door hits your dog as you are going in).
- ✓ What kind of floors are in the building? What might your dog be thinking?
- ✓ Where is your facility liaison? Do you need to sign in?
- ✓ Where are you expected to go- single location or multiple? Who are you approved to visit? How long?
- ✓ Who do you contact if you cannot go or will be late?
- ✓ Look at the floor- is there food, trash, medications, etc.?
- ✓ Listen to the sounds (close or avert your eyes) – what are all of the different sounds (inside and outside)?
- ✓ What smells are present? Food? Diapers? Trash? Food on peoples' clothing?
- ✓ What is the activity level- are people paying attention to their surroundings?
- ✓ What kind of activities are potential participants already doing? Are they engaged in anything?
- ✓ What does the schedule look like for the day(s) that you will go?
- ✓ Where are you able to offer your dog water and elimination opportunities?
- ✓ Look at the people you will be visiting. Is there equipment to be aware of? Thin skin? Bruise easily? Are they in chairs, in bed?
- ✓ Identify any precautions: Ex: Can the people control their movements, grasp and let go at their own will? Do they have balance issues?
- ✓ Are there areas that you should NOT go to? "Dog Free Zones" dining rooms, kitchens, medical?

Putting It All Together

Your checklist of preparation prior to all visits, but especially for visiting for the first time or visiting a new facility.

How you have prepared:

- You have trained with your dog in a variety of environments and exposed your dog to different sounds, flooring, smells, crowd level and activity level similar to what is expected at the visit
- You are familiar with the people/parking/layout of the facility you are visiting and you have a plan for your visit
- You and your dog are rested and not feeling ill
- Your dog is properly groomed
- Your dog has exercised and relived him/herself.
- You have ensured there are breaks built into your visiting plan
- You are realistic about how long you will visit

What to take with you

- Your WHN identification badge (showing you and your dog),
- A copy of your veterinary screening sheet
- Your dog's WHN vest/bandana (and your optional WHN t- shirt)
- Your dog's visiting collar & leash (the collar/harness you tested in; no choke, prong or e- collars)
- Brushes, toys, treats, water bowl and water for your dog
- Anything for cleanup (hair remover if needed, towelettes or hand wipes in case clients want to clean up after a visit)
- Note pad and pen
- Your flexibility and responsiveness changes in the environment and to your dog's changing needs

What your Warm Hearts team looks like:

- There is a strong bond of mutual trust and respect between dog and handler
- There are excellent skills in both members of the team: the dog responds quickly and accurately to the handler's cues. The handler interacts warmly and appropriately with the people being visited. The handler takes full responsibility for the dog's comfort and well-being.
- The dog enjoys going to new places and meeting new people.
- When the team enters a room, people smile spontaneously. The team inspires confidence and comfort in the people they are visiting!

2019 Contacts:

Acting President – Judy Bissett, judy@losbissetts.com

Registrar/Test & Registration Coordinator – Ray Trowbridge, (505) 270-7828

Screenings - Jennifer Allen, jennallenkpa@gmail.com

Held at least two weeks prior to Team Testing, 3 times/year.

When a large number of teams screening, there may be two screening sessions held on Screening Day – one morning, one afternoon

Handler Workshop Instructor – Ellen Schmidt, ellie.schmidt@gmail.com

The Handlers' Workshop must be completed prior to testing in order to complete registration. Additional, registered teams are required to repeat the workshop every four (4) years.

Team Test Evaluators –

- Jennifer Allen, jennallenkpa@gmail.com
- Judy Bissett, judy@losbissetts.com

Test Assistance Coordinator – Mary Waring, WarmHeartsTesting@gmail.com

Events Coordinator – Jeanne Frye-Mason, fryepack@aol.com

***Placement Coordinator** – (Temporary) Kara Satches, WarmHeartsABQ@gmail.com

*Contact the placement coordinator with questions regarding facilities that you visit or would like to visit – **currently seeking new volunteer for this position***

***Mentor Coordinator** – Chris Davis, sportmom4u@aol.com

The mentor coordinator will assist you when you need mentorship as you first start visiting.

Animal Humane Coordinator – Kelsey Gutierrez, KelseyG@animalhumanenm.org

Testing Preparation Training class – Jennifer Allen, jennallenkpa@gmail.com

Dog Training/People Training Referrals

The Warm Hearts Network is dedicated to ensuring the highest standards for training people and dogs. We care about animal welfare and recommend positive training methods. If your dog requires ongoing training, we recommend the following people. If you seek another trainer, please ensure that the person has the training and experience for whatever you and your dog are interested in. For example, if you are interested in an assistance dog (guide, hearing or service) look for members of Assistance Dogs International. For therapy and educational training, look for a member of Animal Assisted Intervention International. And for volunteer visiting (such as the Warm Hearts Network), look for active volunteer members. Ensure that you get what you pay for, and that they are experienced in all facets of the training they offer. The Warm Hearts Network recommends the following trainers in the field:

WHN Test Prep Training class

Basic clicker class designed specifically for Warm Hearts Network teams

\$100 for 7 weeks

Register directly through trainer: jennallenkpa@gmail.com

The Center at Animal Humane New Mexico also offers many other training classes

Registration: <http://thecenter.animalhumanenm.org>

- Click on Classes
- Click on Behavior
- Recommended classes for potential visiting teams: **Civilized Canine I or 505 Pit Crew for basics, Civilized Canine II and III, CGC Preparation, Perfect Pub Pet, Trick Training for advanced training**

Melissa Winkle, OTR/L

Assistance Dog Trainer, Assistance Dogs of the West/Assistance Dogs International Member
President, Animal Assisted Intervention International

Business Name: Dogwood

Type of Training Offered: Human-animal bond, DOGA (yoga with your dog), Animal Assisted Interventions, Animal Assisted Therapy & Animal Assisted Education, Disability, and Visiting Dogs who want to do advanced work in AAT/AEE

Contact Information: www.dogwoodtherapyservices.com (Albuq./International) 505-228-4650

Publications: *Professional Applications of Animal Assisted Interventions: Doga, Doga Espanol, Blue Dog, Gray Dog, Eva's Favorites*

Dani Weinberg PhD., Certified Dog Behavior Consultant,

KPA CPT Faculty

Business Name: Dogs & Their People

Type of Training Offered: Private, In-home behavior consulting only (not regular obedience)

Contact Information: (505) 898-7568, daniw@earthlink.net

<http://home.earthlink.net/~hardpretzel/DaniDogPage.html>

Publications: *TEACHING PEOPLE TEACHING DOGS*

Additional Resources

Dog Training & Behavior Publications

The Other End of the Leash by Patricia McConnell

On Talking Terms With Dogs: Calming Signals by Turid Rugass

Culture Clash (2nd Edition) by Jean Donaldson

How to Behave So Your Dog Behaves by Dr. Sophia Yin

Don't Shoot the Dog by Karen Pryor

The Power of Positive Dog Training by Pat Miller

Dog Training & Behavior Web Resources

The Other End of the Leash behavior blog: www.theotherendoftheleash.com

On socialization: www.thek9coach.com/articles/socialization.php

Tellington TTouch: www.ttouch.com

Behavior and Body Language: Sarah Kalnajs – the Language of Dogs

<http://www.bluedogtraining.com/videos-dvds.html>

In-Town Training & Care Supply

Long Leash on Life - <http://www.longleashonlife.com/> (NE Albuquerque, NM)

Wild Pet Food Plus - <https://www.wildpetfoodplus.com/> (Central Albuquerque, NM)

Information on Zoonotic Diseases

<https://oregonvma.org/care-health/zoonotic-diseases-dogs>

<https://www.avma.org/public/PetCare/Pages/Pets-and-Zoonotic-Diseases-FAQs.aspx>

<https://www.avma.org/News/JAVMANews/Pages/090815b.aspx>

<http://www.cdc.gov/healthypets/pets/dogs.html>

Dog Friendly Stores in Albuquerque

These dog-friendly stores are perfect places to visit to practice your dog's behaviors and help your dog generalize them to many different environments.

Store policies may change between versions of this handbook. Call and verify dogs are still welcomed at a location before you visit for the first time.

ABQ Dogtown 3845 Rio Grande Blvd NW, Albuquerque

Anthropologie 2260 Q Street NE, #3-A, Albuquerque

Bed, Bath & Beyond 2451 San Mateo Blvd NE

Book Works 4022 Rio Grande Blvd. NW, 344-8139

Cabela's 5151 Lang Ave. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87109

Chick's Harley-Davidson/Buell 5000 Alameda Drive NE, 856-1600

Chelsea Morning 7400 Montgomery Blvd. NE, 883-1159

Clark's Pet Emporium (two locations)

- 4914 Lomas Blvd. NE, 268-5977
- 11200 Menaul Blvd. NE, 293-5977

Davis Tru Value Hardware 12168 N. Hwy 14, Cedar Crest, 281-4072

The Dawg House 304 San Felipe NW, 244-3294

Home Depot (multiple locations)

Jackalope 6400 San Mateo Blvd NE Albuquerque

Long Leash on Life 9800 Montgomery Blvd N.E., 299-8800

Lowe's (multiple locations)

Mister Car Wash (four locations)

- 9516 Snow Heights Cir NE
- 5308 Central Ave SE

- 5215 San Mateo Blvd NE
- 8100 San Pedro Dr NE

Old Town Basket Shop 301 Romero NW, 842-8022

PETSMART (multiple locations)

PETCO (multiple locations)

Pet Vet Market 11200 Montgomery Blvd. NE, 296-7200

Sportsman's Warehouse 1450 Renaissance Boulevard NE, 761-9900

Staples (☞ Ask first, some locations allow)

- 6001 Menaul NE, 830-3322
- 9701 Montgomery NE, 292-2440
- 10242 Coors Blvd. Bypass NW, 890-8822

Tema Contemporary Furniture 7601 Montgomery Blvd. NE, 275-2121

Three Dog Bakery 9821 Montgomery Blvd. NE, 294-2300

Urban Outfitters 3225 Central Avenue NE Albuquerque

Wild Pet Food Plus 3301 Menaul Blvd. NE, Suite 10, 990-0099

This is not an exhaustive list!

There are also many other places in Albuquerque and Rio Rancho that are dog friendly, including many restaurants with “petios” and many of our local breweries.



Warm Hearts Network
A Partner Program of Animal Humane New Mexico

Photo & Media Release

I authorize Warm Hearts Network (a program of Animal Humane New Mexico) and Animal Humane New Mexico to use still and video images of my dog and I, for use in future handler workshops and media content related to WHN or Animal Humane.

Handler Name (Print) Date

Handler Signature

If additional members of the community included in the photo:

Community Member Name (Print) Signature/Date

Community Member Signature

Community Member Phone/email



INCIDENT/ACCIDENT REPORT
NOTICE OF ACCIDENT for VOLUNTEERS

I, _____, was involved in an on-the-job accident at
(print name)
approximately _____ on _____ at _____
(time) (date) (location)

What happened and where:

Animal Name: _____ WHN # _____

Handler's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Volunteer Coordinator Signature: _____

Date: _____

If necessary please seek medical attention at your doctor or at the emergency room.

Submit the original copy of this document to the volunteer coordinator at the visiting facility. Email a copy or scan of this form to Warm Hearts Network at WarmHeartsABO@gmail.com.

Notice of Incident/Accident Liability

If there is any damage to property or injury to people or pets, file a report. If the situation is urgent contact law enforcement or medical personnel as needed to stabilize the situation. Be Proactive! Be aware of the environment, the people, other dogs, the context, and what your dog might be thinking about!

We are not able to take liability responsibility for so many human-animal teams. It is not possible for WHN nor an insurance company to consistently observe your ability to predict and respond to many different situations, people, and environments. We are only able to say that your dog was evaluated at one point in time by a number of individuals with dog training and/or behavior and licensed healthcare/human service providers. WHN offers a very limited liability certificate similar to most other visiting organizations. However, these policies are not designed to cover specific injuries, damages to property, etc. Insurance companies do not offer specific coverage to visiting organizations as the training and handling of each dog is different and the circumstances are not regulated. Therefore, they are not able to offer full coverage to volunteer visiting organizations. The policies are very limited and do not clarify what exactly they do cover. The WHN is not able to see you and your dog in all circumstances, and it is not possible for large insurance companies to assume responsibility for thousands of community do-gooders. So it is best to have a backup policy.

We recommend that you contact your personal homeowner/renter insurance company and see if your policy can be amended to cover you and your dog when you go into the community to do visitations. It is critical that you tell them your dog has been evaluated and registered with Animal Humane New Mexico Warm Hearts Network and deemed to be friendly and obedient under a variety of circumstances. If they will offer you coverage it is a good idea to add it.

I understand that Animal Humane New Mexico, Warm Hearts Network, offers a limited liability certificate for volunteer visiting teams only. I acknowledge that I do not take my dog to a professional work setting in which I receive any kind of compensation (unless I have pursued the professional track and additional liability coverage thereof). I also acknowledge that I have been advised to contact my homeowners/renters insurance company for an “add on” policy for insurance coverage for myself, my dog and damages to people or property.

Signature

Date

Printed Name

Signature of WHN Representative



Warm Hearts Network
A Partner Program of Animal Humane New Mexico
615 Virginia Street SE
Albuquerque, NM 87108
WarmHeartsNetwork@AnimalHumaneNM.org

Veterinary Screening for Volunteer Visiting Team Registration

The person whose name is identified below is applying to the Warm Hearts Network for a two year registration to participate in volunteer visiting activities in facilities in New Mexico. Please complete the following information as a required portion of this process, and return the form to the handler. If you have additional information you would like to submit, please use the bottom of page 2 or add an extra sheet of paper.

Test date will be _____ Location: _____

Owner's Name _____ Dog's Name _____

Types/Dates of Vaccinations: (Veterinarian Fills In)

Rabies _____ Expiration _____

Others (list) _____ Date _____

Types/Dates of Tests:

Fecal/Result _____ Date _____

NOTE: Fecal test must have been within the 6 months prior to test date above

Test/Result _____

Test/Result _____

Vital Signs: (Normal or Abnormal)

Pulse _____ Respiration _____ Temperature _____ Weight _____

Medications/Reasons: _____

How long have you known the owner? _____ The dog? _____

Describe any health or behavioral issues that will play a role in where this dog will be placed (i.e., bad knees, so cannot jump; timid and should not be in a noisy, bustling atmosphere; painful areas that should not be touched, requires medication for behavioral issues, etc.):

The overall health of the dog is

- Excellent - No serious chronic diseases or disorders
- Very Good – Minor complaint(s) associated with normal aging
- Good – Chronic condition(s) with occasional flare ups
- Poor – Serious chronic condition(s) requiring ongoing treatment

How often do you see this dog?

- At least annually
- Regularly as part of a wellness program
- Only when ill or injured
- Every ____ months

In your professional judgment, is this dog a good candidate for the WHN Volunteer Visiting Program?

- Yes No

Printed Name

Signature

Office Name

Address

Telephone Number

Date



Welcome to Testing

Before you and your dog enter the testing room, please read through this entire sheet, ask any questions you may have, and make sure you and your dog are ready. Below are some requirements and suggestions to help you and your dog pass. Throughout the testing process, the evaluator will tell you exactly what will happen next and guide you through each part of the test.

The **Warm Hearts Skills Test** begins when you enter the room and the evaluator greets you. There are two formal sections to the test: the **Skills Test** and the **Abilities Test**. As soon as you have passed the Skills Test, you will take the Abilities Test with no pause in between. The evaluator will give you instructions throughout. The entire testing process takes about 20-25 minutes.

- Before starting the test, be sure to exercise and pick up after your dog. Elimination indoors is an automatic dismissal.
- During the test you may offer verbal and petting praise and reassurance, smile at your dog, interact and repeat cues up to three times.
- WHN asks that during screening and evaluation you do **NOT** use treats or toys to motivate your dog.
- The human team member may **NOT** control or position the dog physically, with a taunt leash or leash corrections, or with any part of their body.
- Be sure to bring proof on paper of your dog's most recent rabies vaccination and veterinary screening form. Rabies tag is not sufficient.
- You must bring your dog's grooming comb or brush and, if he/she is on a limited diet, a treat that your dog can accept from the evaluator at the end of the test.
- Your dog must be on leash and under verbal/hand signal control at all times – during the test and while you are anywhere in the area.
- Your dog may wear: a plain (buckle or quick-release snap) or cloth-only martingale (no portion made of chain) collar made of leather, fabric, or nylon, or a body front- or back-attachment body harness. Be aware that whatever your dog wears for testing is what s/he must wear when you are visiting.
 - Your dog may **NOT** wear: a slip collar ("choke chain" whether metal or fabric), a prong/pinch collar, an electronic shock collar (e-collar, stim collar, etc) or a head-halter (Gentle Leader® or HALTI style head collars).
- The leash must be leather, fabric, or nylon and should be between 4 and 6 feet long
 - No chain leashes, ropes or flexi leashes

During the test, you MAY: ***Talk to your dog***Smile at your dog***Pet your dog***Repeat cues in a normal speaking voice up to 3 times***Offer verbal encouragement and reassurance***

You may NOT: ***Use a choke chain or prong collar***Use leash corrections***Use treats, toys or other tools aside from your voice to lure or motivate your dog***Yell at your dog***Repeat cues more than three times***Position your dog using physical pressure with any part of your body***

Automatic Dismissal: ***Eliminating indoors*** Aggression or Reactivity (barking, lunging, jumping, other intense vocalizations) toward other dogs or people***

Teams with Members with Disabilities

WHN advocates for people and dogs who have disabilities and who want to participate in recreational and professional engagement. Each team member will demonstrate evaluation and visiting activities with reasonable accommodations that have been agreed upon prior to the formal evaluations and/or re-screening.

People who are their own guardian are able to outline their own accommodation needs. If an individual is not their own guardian, the guardian or representative should contact the WHN test evaluators for explanation of accommodations.

Some examples of accommodations for handlers with disabilities include:

- Having a hook on a wheelchair for the leash so that the person has their hands free to propel the wheelchair.
- Not doing the treat portion of the test if the dog is also a service dog.

Dogs who have disabilities are able to become WHN team members with the written release and accommodation recommendations from the veterinarian. The WHN wants to encourage that the dog enjoys WHN activities, meeting new people and is free of pain or discomfort. The dog must be able to work directly with the people the team is going to see, and maintain self-control and manners.

Some examples of accommodations for dogs with disabilities include:

- Hand signals for deaf dogs
- Ensuring that the handler picks up small dogs to be put in a lap, or not requiring a sit (but dog would then demonstrate the ability to stay in some other manner).

GOOD LUCK AND HAVE FUN!



**Warm Hearts Network
Skills and Abilities Test**

Evaluator's Name:		Test Date:
Handler's Name:		<input type="checkbox"/> Initial evaluation? <input type="checkbox"/> Re-evaluation?
Dog's Name:		Small Dog? (Under 10 Pounds) <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Breed:		
Dog's Age:	Sex: <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Unaltered <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Spayed/Neutered	
How long has the dog lived with the handler?		

Handler should complete all above sections in white prior to starting their test. Sections in gray will be completed by test evaluator.

Handler should bring this copy of the test with them on the date of testing. It may be torn out of the Handler's Handbook.

Part 1: Skills Test

Scoring Criteria:

2 = Pass; Mastery of this skill

1 = Pass; Adequate skill, minor issues noted

0 = Fail; Inadequate skill, comments attached

The team must pass all exercises. Do not continue the evaluation if any exercise receives a 0 score.

Skill 1: Accepting a Greeting	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>When the team is ready, three of the volunteers begin the first role-play. Two of them sit in chairs previously set up in another part of the room, and the third stands near them. The three start chatting among themselves. The team is instructed to go to the group, and the volunteers will fuss over and pet the dog.</p>	2: The dog stays next to the handler. Does not jump or tug at leash. Respects volunteers boundaries. Interested in visiting.	
	1: The dog can easily be managed to meet above criteria. Slight pull on leash is acceptable.	
	0: The dog is overly eager to visit. Pulls on leash, or jumps on the volunteers, or is not interested in volunteers, or is fearful and does not stay next to handler.	
Comments:		

Skill 2: Loose-Leash Walking	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The team walks along an L- shaped path in the test room. The team walks straight, makes a left turn, walks straight to a designated point, makes a U-turn, and then makes a right turn to get back to the starting point. The team is asked to stop once during the walk and once at the end of the walk. The dog does not need to sit when stopping but must stay by the handler</p> <p>Handler may hold leash in either hand, but leash must remain loose, without putting sustained tension on the dog's collar or harness while walking. Handler may use verbal cues or hand signals, but should not use sustained hand lures or physical prompts to keep the dog close.</p>	2: Passes with criteria. Dog walks with a loose leash though out; dog is responsive to handler.	
	1: Some tight leash noted; dog needs reminders; handler is slow to redirect but is able to retain a loose leash for majority of walk.	
	0: The dog changes sides in relation to the handler; the handler does not control the walking; there is excessive pulling on the leash; the dog does not stop when requested.	
Comments:		

Skill 3: Moving Through a Crowd	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The team walks along a straight “path” as though walking down a hallway in a building. One volunteer walks <i>next to the team</i> talking with the handler, one volunteer <i>follows closely</i> behind, and one volunteer <i>suddenly comes out</i> from the side of the room in a hurry and moves in front of the team. Repeat this exercise going the other way.</p>	<p>2: Dog maintains loose leash and responds well to the handler. The dog is interested in the people but does not follow them.</p>	
	<p>1: Dog needs some reminders to keep loose leash; some tugging on the leash; responds well to redirection.</p>	
	<p>0: The dog or handler is too attentive to others and not to each other; the dog does not listen to the handler; tight leash; stress noted; fearful of strangers.</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>		

Skill 4: Sit	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The handler may use words, hand signals, or both to cue the dog to sit. Touching the dog or using other physical lures or prompts is not allowed.</p>	<p>2: The dog sits immediately and stays in the position at least 5 seconds.</p>	
	<p>1: The dog needs repeated directions. Cue can be repeated <u>up to two times</u> using a normal speaking voice, hand signal or both.</p>	
	<p>0: The dog does not sit within three cues.</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>		

Skill 5: Down	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The handler may use words, hand signals, or both to cue the dog to lie down. Touching the dog or using other physical lures or prompts is not allowed.</p>	<p>2: The dog goes into a down position with one command and stays in the position at least 5 seconds.</p>	
	<p>1: The dog needs repeated directions. Cue can be repeated <u>up to two times</u> using a normal speaking voice, hand signal or both.</p>	
	<p>0: The dog does not go into the down position.</p>	
<p>Comments:</p>		

Skill 6: Stay (Sit or Down Stay - 10 seconds)	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The handler cues the dog to sit or down, cues a stay, then walks 15-20 feet away from the dog. Cue can be words, hand signals, or both. The handler turns to face the dog and waits for the Evaluator to give the instruction to return to the dog's side.</p> <p>Dog may shift from one position into another during stay, but must stay in the place where he/she is left by handler without taking steps forward.</p> <p>Handler cannot continually face or use a sustained cue (verbal or hand signal) through this test item.</p>	<p>2: The dog stays in place throughout the handler's movement and does not get up until cued to do so.</p> <hr/> <p>1: The dog breaks the stay after the cue to stay is given and needs to be reset (owner can reset/recue the dog up to two times); dog is visibly stressed.</p> <hr/> <p>0: The dog does not stay in place even after resetting.</p>	
Comments:		

Skill 7: Come	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The handler cues the dog to sit or down, cues a stay, then walks 15-20 feet away from the dog. Cue can be words, hand signals, or both. The handler turns to face the dog. The Evaluator acts as a distraction by walking in front of the dog--between the dog and the handler. The handler then calls the dog to come when cued by the Evaluator. Handler is allowed to move (take steps backward, pat legs, etc.) to encourage the dog to come.</p> <p>All doors are shut, as the dog is not controlled on a leash. Remind the handler that the dog is never off leash on a visit.</p>	<p>2: The dog comes on the first call. Is not distracted by the Evaluator, or the dog looks at the evaluator but refocuses on the handler without additional cues.</p> <hr/> <p>1: The dog needs repeated cues to move toward owner (owner can repeat cue up to two times); dog must be reset to hold stay at beginning (owner can reset the dog to stay one time); dog is stressed.</p> <hr/> <p>0: The dog does not wait to be called after one reset or the dog does not come when called/avoids owner to visit the room.</p>	
Comments:		

Skill 8: Reaction to an Unfamiliar Dog	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The handler and dog visit with a volunteer. Both people are seated, facing each other. The neutral dog enters the room, walks to a seat, and visit with another volunteer about 10 feet away from the testing team. The visit lasts about 30-45 seconds.</p> <p>The dog should see the neutral dog and handler enter the room and be able to see them without a visual block throughout visit. If the testing dog shows interest in the neutral dog, the handler may redirect the dog, but without physical restraint and by using only voice or petting.</p>	2: The dog has little reaction to the neutral dog and does not pull or tug on the leash.	
	1: The dog tries to approach the neutral dog in a calm manner but responds to redirection by handler and reengages with the volunteer he/she is visiting.	
	0: The dog barks or lunges toward the neutral dog; displays other excessive vocalizing; loses interest in the volunteer he/she is visiting and cannot be redirected; shows stress.	
Comments:		

Part 2: Abilities Test – Working Together on a Visit

The team must pass all exercises. Do not continue the evaluation if any exercise receives a 0 score.

Ability 1: Brief Physical Exam	Grading Criteria	Score
A volunteer lightly brushes the dog, using the dog’s own brush. Next, the volunteer does an overall exam, being aware of any sensitive areas of touch as reported by the handler. The exam consists of lifting each front paw, checking the dog’s teeth and ears, rubbing the stomach, and stroking the tail.	2: Dog seems to enjoy the interactions.	
	1: Dog is comfortable with support from the handler; the handler is proactive in reassuring the dog or advising the evaluator. .	
	0: Dog is too sensitive; withdraws from interactions; fearful; aggressive; shows excessive stress; handler does not reassure/redirect the dog.	
Comments:		

Ability 3: Assertive Petting (Small Dog in a Lap)	Grading Criteria	Score
The volunteer, wearing a hat or a long, dangling scarf, approaches the team. The volunteer lightly pats the dog repeatedly, tugs at its ears and tail, and progressively talks louder to the dog.	2: Dog seems to enjoys the interactions.	
	1: Dog shows discomfort, but handler redirects/reassures the dog; the dog responds well to additional input from the handler and recovers if initially stressed.	
	0: Handler does not support the dog; the dog is stressed; dog pulls away from interactions.	
Comments:		

Ability 3: Tight hug (Small Dog in a Lap)	Grading Criteria	Score
The volunteer kneels and gives the dog a hug around the dog’s torso/belly.	2: The dog handles the interaction well.	
	1: Dog shows discomfort, but handler redirects/reassures the dog; the dog responds well to additional input from the handler; the dog stays with the volunteer.	
	0: The dog shows overt stress; the handler does not interact with the dog; the dog tries to lunge, bite or leave the situation.	
Comments:		

Ability 4: Meeting People With Equipment	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The dog and handler walk next to a volunteer using a walker or wheelchair. As the team proceeds across the room, another volunteer will drop a cane on the floor behind them. Repeat this exercise going the other way. This time another volunteer, using a different piece of equipment (walker or wheelchair), walks towards and past the team.</p>	2: The dog recovers easily, if slightly stressed, and enjoys the interactions.	
	1: The dog needs additional direction; handler is late in providing support; dog does not initially want to interact with the volunteer; dog is uncertain of the equipment, but does interact with the volunteer with the walker.	
	0: Dog lunges away from the equipment; dog shows signs of stress or aggression; handler is not responsive to dog's needs.	
Comments:		

Ability 5: Bumped From Behind or Side	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The Evaluator bumps the dog from behind while rushing past the team. If the dog is small, the handler may carry the dog. The Evaluator bumps the dog with the forearm or elbow.</p>	2. Dog attends to the bump but continues activities.	
	1. Dog recovers with support from the handler.	
	0: Dog startles or cowers and does not recover. Handler does not redirect.	
Comments:		

Ability 6: Group Interaction	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>Three or four volunteers walk in a group toward the team. They all express excitement to meet and pet the dog, and they approach the team. The volunteers may approach on either side of the dog, or by looming over the front of the dog. All the volunteers pet the dog gently and use normal voices when talking.</p>	2: The dog enjoys the interactions. No stress signals observed.	
	1: Handler is slow/late to help the dog; dog needs handler support; dog moves away.	
	0: Handler offers little or no support; dog is clearly stressed; dog tries to leave or shows aggression.	
Comments:		

Ability 7: Leave It	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The Evaluator puts a small piece of attractive food on a plate on the floor. The team walks within 6 feet of the food with the dog on the food side of the handler. The dog must see the food. If necessary, the handler directs the dog to leave the food alone as they continue walking past it.</p>	2: Dog sees and ignores food and/or responds to handler's proactive command to "leave it."	
	1: Dog responds to redirection; some tight lead is acceptable.	
	0: Dog lunges to grab food; handler does not anticipate the dog's reaction or does not redirect the dog.	
Comments:		

Ability 8: Offer an Edible Reward	Grading Criteria	Score
<p>The evaluator offers the dog a treat. The treat can either be the one provided by the evaluator, or a treat the handler brings specifically for this portion of the test. Handler can use a cue word to allow dog to know when he/she can have the treat.</p>	2: Handler is proactive about advising the evaluator how to hold or give the treat; dog may either take treat gently or refuse the treat.	
	1: Dog needs extra direction; dog uses extra mouthing to obtain the treat.	
	0: Handler does not support the dog; dog grabs treat; bites; lunges.	
Comments:		

Evaluation Results

Total score:

- ___ Did not pass and is not a candidate for WHN
- ___ Did not pass but can be retested when ready
- ___ May visit facilities that are consistent in activity level
(low activity, regularity and routine, one-on-one, or small groups)
- ___ May visit facilities that are busy (high activity level, variable, unpredictable)

All newly registered WHN Volunteer Teams are rated to visit only in a consistent/beginner environment.

PLEASE NOTE: This is NOT a professional level pilot test for healthcare/human service providers or educators who have canine colleagues.

Additional requirements:

Handler: _____

Dog: _____

Comments:

Evaluator: _____

Evaluation results have been shared with the handler. (Evaluator Initials) _____

Handler

Signature: _____ Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Parent/legal guardian (if handler is under 18 years of age) or signature of the person who will visit with the handler if s/he cannot visit independently.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____

Dog's Owner (If Other Than the Handler)

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: _____