

## **ElderPet** ([www.elderpet.org](http://www.elderpet.org))

**ElderPet** is a service organization staffed by community volunteers, and is based at the Thompson School/UNH. The main goal of **ElderPet** is to facilitate important relationships of senior citizens, people with disabilities, hospice families, and clients of health care and other facilities with pets.

Started as an Applied Animal Science project in 1982, **ElderPet** is registered with the State of New Hampshire as a Non-Profit Corporation and has received federal tax-exempt status under IRS Code 501 (c)(3). (EIN 06-1714543)

**ElderPet** strongly recommends that facilities offering Animal Assisted Activities and Therapy require registration of their visiting pet teams. Registered teams are trained and carry volunteer liability insurance.

If your facility has volunteers who are not yet registered and would like to be, **ElderPet** provides Pet Partners® Handler Courses and Team Evaluations in the Seacoast area of New Hampshire. **ElderPet** also provides on-line Animal Assisted Therapy classes for your health care staff through UNH Professional Development, should you wish to provide "therapy" rather than "activities."

**ElderPet** can assist health care facilities and other institutions in finding trained volunteer teams for Animal Assisted Activities/Therapy or child reading programs.

**Pet Partner® Training/Evaluation Information:** [elderpet@gmail.com](mailto:elderpet@gmail.com). Please put "Pet Partners Program" in the subject line.

**Finding Pet Partner Teams:** [elderpet@gmail.com](mailto:elderpet@gmail.com)

**Facility Consultations:** [elderpet@gmail.com](mailto:elderpet@gmail.com)

ElderPet  
P.O.Box 624  
Durham, NH 03824

# **Animal Assisted Activities and Therapy for Health Care and Educational Facilities**

Animal Assisted Activities and Therapy have come a long way since its warm and fuzzy beginnings in the late 1970's and early 80's!

Has your facility kept up with the latest? This brochure will quickly bring you up to date and give you ideas on how to incorporate AAA/T into your enrichment and health care programs.



[www.elderpet.org](http://www.elderpet.org)

Information courtesy of ElderPet, a Pet Partners® community Partner

## Animal Assisted Activities

Animal Assisted Activities (AAA) provide opportunities for motivational, educational, recreational, and/or therapeutic benefits to enhance quality of life. AAA are delivered in a variety of environments by specially trained professionals, paraprofessionals, and/or volunteers, in association with animals that meet specific criteria. \*

What does this really mean? Animal-Assisted *Activities* are basically the casual “meet and greet” activities that involve pets visiting people. The same activity can be repeated with many people, unlike a therapy program that is tailored to a particular person or medical condition.

### Examples of AAA

- A group of volunteers takes their dogs and cats to a nursing home once a month to “visit.”
- An individual brings her dog to a children’s long-term care facility to “play” with residents.
- A dog obedience club gives an obedience demonstration at a residential facility for teenagers with behavior issues.
- Pets are brought to a school by volunteers to lie quietly while children read to them.

\* *Standards of Practice for Animal-Assisted Activities and Therapy*

## Animal Assisted Therapy

Animal Assisted Therapy (AAT) is a goal-directed intervention in which an animal that meets specific criteria is an integral part of the treatment process. AAT is directed and/or delivered by a health/human service professional with specialized expertise, and within the scope of practice of his/her profession.

AAT is designed to promote improvement in human physical, social, emotional, and/or cognitive functioning [cognitive functioning refers to thinking and intellectual skills]. AAT is provided in a variety of settings and may be group or individual in nature. This process is documented and evaluated.

### Examples of AAT

- A volunteer brings her cat to a rehabilitation center to work with an occupational therapist and a child who has difficulty controlling fine motor skills. The therapist has the child manipulate buckles, clasps on leashes, collars, and animal carriers.
- In an animal-assisted therapy session designed to improve a client’s ability to sequence events, a therapist teaches a client the steps of brushing a dog.
- A woman recovering from a stroke has limited standing and walking tolerance. A physical therapist uses the presence of a dog to motivate the client by placing the dog on a raised table and asking the client to stand while stroking or brushing the animal’s back and head.

## Registering Organizations

There are currently three major national agencies that register animals to accompany their handlers into facilities and schools. Therapy Dogs International (TDI), Alliance for Therapy Dogs, and Pet Partners®. Private clubs and institutions sometimes require their own training evaluations for insurance carrier purposes.

The national organizations require animal health and temperament screening in order to register with them. Volunteer teams are provided with identification as well as with liability coverage. TDI and Alliance for Therapy Dogs register only canines, while Pet Partners will register teams with many different domestic animals. Also, Pet Partners requires that all handlers complete a course prior to the team evaluation.

### Contact Information

Pet Partners  
345 118th Ave SE, Ste 200  
Bellevue, WA 98005-3587  
website: [www.petpartners.org](http://www.petpartners.org)  
425-679-5500

Therapy Dogs International, Inc (TDI)  
88 Bartley Rd.  
Flanders, NJ 07836  
973-252-9800  
[www.tdi-dog.org](http://www.tdi-dog.org)

Therapy Dogs, Inc.  
PO Box 20227  
Cheyenne, WY 82003  
877-843-7364  
[www.therapydogs.com](http://www.therapydogs.com)