

Cory is 'Top Dog' with Patients

Cory can play the piano, dance and take a bow – amazing accomplishments for a two year old, especially a two-year-old Shih Tzu.

But Cory's best trick isn't rolling over, begging, shaking hands or even jumping through hoops (all of



With the help of owner Don Munro, Pet Pal volunteer Cory puts "on the dog" for OSU Medical Center patient Lacy Litteral.

which he can do to perfection, of course). His best trick is making smiles appear on the faces of OSU Medical Center patients.

An OSUMC Pet Pals volunteer, Cory began making his regular University Hospital rounds on 10-West Rhodes recently along with co-volunteer Don Munro.

Even the anticipation of Cory's visit brightened the face of patient Lacy Litteral, who fondly recalled the canine companionship her family has enjoyed. Then Cory entered the room to snuggle with Litteral who, in turn, showered him with affection. While Munro shared a bit of Cory's background, Litteral smiled brightly as she stroked Cory's curly, down-like coat.

Popular among staff as well as patients, Cory graciously allows staff members to welcome him with a pat on the head as he strides the hospital corridors.

Standing a little more than a foot-and-a-half tall (on his hind legs) and weighing-in at nearly 20 pounds, Cory could be described as confident, but not cocky, and extremely well-mannered and educated. This poster pup for good behavior has numerous diplomas to his credit from obedience schools and agility classes to our own OSUMC Pet Pals class.

Cory, who also volunteers part of the year at the Arnold Palmer Children's Hospital in Orlando, Florida, is a member (Munro is assistant director) of Central Ohio Good Shepherds, a local chapter of Therapy Dogs International, which is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing qualified handlers and dogs for visitations.

Munro, who first learned about pets visiting hospitals from an Animal Planet show, acknowledges that his volunteer visits to the Medical Center are "all about the dog." However, he adds that he is happy to share Cory with others because he knows the visits "do something good for someone else."

OSUMC PET PALS

Cory is one of many dogs who volunteer their services at University Hospital (including Dodd Hall), OSU Ross Heart Hospital and University Hospital East.

"All breeds and sizes of dogs are welcome, but dogs must be certified," says Margaret High-Thomas, who oversees this Volunteer Services program.

Certification, offered through Therapy Dogs International and also Delta Society, acknowledges that the dogs adhere to strict behavior and health standards appropriate for visitations. Once the dog has been certified, the owner must complete the OSU Medical Center volunteer orientation. Organizational meetings for the Pet Pals program are held about twice yearly.

"Our pet volunteers provide a level of comfort and help patients relax. The dogs are very popular with our patients, especially those who are already missing their own pets at home," adds High-Thomas.

Learn more about Therapy Dogs International at www.tdi-dog.org or about Central Ohio Good Shepherds at www.centralohiogoodshepherds.com. For information on the OSUMC Pet Pals program, contact Margaret High-Thomas through GroupWise.



Like thousands of central Ohio pets, Cory wears an OSU Ross Heart Hospital charm that reads "Keep me close to your heart." The charms were distributed recently with information about how pets can help heart health and Ross Heart Hospital services.