

# Therapy dogs

Business



Therapy dogs can help the healing of many people including autistic children. There are many different benefits that these dogs have to offer for people in need. It is a fact that pet interaction lowers blood pressure and heart rate (Bogart 1). Due to this fact there has been an increase in the use of therapy dogs and many different organizations are working to help heal people, especially autistic children. One organization is called Therapy Dogs International and is full of helping, caring volunteers.

They provide handlers and their dogs for visitations to hospitals and many more places such as facilities and institutions where they can help heal sick patients (" About TDI" 1). One other organization that has changed the lives of many people is 4Paws For Ability. They are the first agency placing autism service dogs. They quickly learned what a difference a therapy dog can make on a child's life. They provide the highest quality of dogs to every child that applies.

This not only makes the children happy but takes a lot of stress off the parents (" Autism Service Dogs" 1). Therapy dogs have a lot of effect on the life of an autistic child. They can serve as a child's best friend at times. The dogs can be used to teach kids social skills and help them understand the importance of eye contact and tone. These dogs have been helping many different people and are very effective; they should be used in many more situations throughout our country (" Autistic Kids Benefit From Therapy Dogs" 1).

Therapy Dogs can provide the perfect amount of help that an Autistic child needs. Autism is one of the worst things that could happen to a young child.

It has a major effect on the life of the child and the family as well. Children with autism put a lot of stress on their parents (“Autism Service Dogs.” 1). The impact of autism on a family can either bond a family together or tear it apart.

It is a very challenging time for the whole family to try and raise an autistic child. The impact of the autism on the family is mainly toward the mother. It is she who is crucial in bringing up the child. The mother may suffer from other emotional stresses as well. Some of these emotions can range from disbelief through anger and then total relief in finding out what is actually causing your child’s behavior. These emotions don’t end there; parents go through many other ups and downs as well including surprise, guilt, devastation, and maybe even understanding.

Parents need massive amounts of support in order to raise them (“The Impact of Autism on The Family 1”). Raising a child with autism can also cause problems between family members, parents, and performance at work. This may lead to financial problems in the household as well. The siblings of the child also can be very affected by autism. It may cause embarrassment to them among their friends. Others may have a positive effect on their autistic sibling and feel very protective toward them.

This may aid greatly in their development (“The Impact of Autism on The Family” 1). This has the greatest effect on the child. It causes them to act out in many different ways. One effect of autism is the children do not communicate with peers in their environment at all and are in high need to routine acts on a daily basis. Social skills are one thing that does not come

naturally to an autistic child and many of them have a tendency to wander a lot. They get very easily distracted.

Some children with autism have a tendency to have lack of sleep. One story told about an eight-year-old boy who hadn't slept one night in his own bed alone until the help of a therapy dog. Other problems that these children have are that they struggle with loud noises. They respond to this by closing their ears and making moaning sounds. They then have to be moved to a quieter room in order to calm themselves down (" Autism Service Dogs" 1). It is a very big struggle for children with autism to understand verbal language, this could be compared to a radio station with static.

They hear something but it doesn't comprehend in their mind. They get very overwhelmed with many situations. These children suffer from excessive sensory, this means that lights are too bright and sounds are extremely loud. They struggle with changes in routine; this means it can be an all-day job to get them to go to the bathroom. Lastly autism can cause trouble in transitioning to one emotion to another, if they are sad or angry it can be prolonged.

Autism has a horrible effect on the mind of a child (Stokley 1). Therapy Dogs are great to help people with disabilities. Dogs are a can help you to forget the stresses of the day. Studies show that interactions with pets can actually help lower heart rate and blood pressure. This fact has helped with the spread of therapy dogs in hospitals and health facilities throughout the country. Dogs always have a positive effect on the people in their lives; children have been proven to be less selfish than children without pets.

Also elderly people that are dog owners are better able to cope with everyday activities. Dogs give isolated people a sense of routine and purpose. Just sitting down and petting your dog can give you a sense of relaxation. They can help reduce the risk of heart attack and asthma as well. People with Alzheimer's can be influenced by a dog in the fact that it can help ease up their day (Bogart 1). One story told of a dog that worked at a children's hospital and helped heal sick and injured kids.

He sees six different children a day and helps put a smile on their face while healing them. He plays fetch with the kids that need more strength or helps children learn social skills by listening to their commands (Mattox 1). Dogs also can be known to bring out a more independent side of the children ("Autism Service Dogs" 1). Having a dog is therapy in itself; it can ease your stress or can be trained to help children in the hospital. Many people have come up with things to help children with the struggle of Autism and try to make the lives of the parents and the child simpler.

Therapy Dogs have shown to have the greatest effect on the life of Autistic children. Many different organizations have been formed to get therapy dogs noticed. 4 Paws For Ability was the first agency to place autism service dogs and continues to be the largest organization in the United States. They are the only organization that is placing assistance dogs in other countries with tracking. They are going the extra mile to help autistic children through the use of therapy dogs. They continue to provide quality dogs to any child that applies and make sure that every child can and will get a dog.

First the physician needs to approve and then make sure that the home is safe for the dog. Once that is ensured no family is turned away. This is an amazing foundation and has placed many assistance dogs in good homes with families in need (“Autism Service Dogs” 1). There are many other organizations and people that have realized how much these dogs can help autistic children grow. People have developed and are working to get them involved with therapy dogs.

One other organization that was developed is called Therapy Dogs International. This was founded in 1976 by Elaine Smith; her goal was to provide therapy dogs and their handlers with visitations at hospitals or institutions. Therapy dogs, no matter the breed or size, all have a love for people. This organization has the oldest registry for therapy Dogs in the United States and they have dogs working in the U. S, Canada, and some other countries as well. This is a thriving organization that still does work today (“About TDI” 1).

Many individual people have also made an influence of the lives of autistic children through the work of therapy dogs. Patricia Stokely is one individual that had a huge effect on children with autism. She owned therapy poodles and started bringing them around autistic children about 13 years ago. She has been changed the lives of children ever since. Katie and Molly were the two dogs that helped her develop the idea of helping people through therapy dogs and she loved making a difference in people’s lives. She was a school therapist and worked with special needs students and one thing really stuck out to her, autism.

One of the first kids that she worked with was AJ and had progressed a lot just through the work of her and her team so Patty asked his mother if she would be interested in trying out animal- assisted therapy. Patty thought that if the child could be the instructor of the dogs that he would become a better learner himself. After seeing the progress that AJ had achieved Patty realized she wanted to start helping many other children as well (Stokley 1, 2). There are many different stories about the progress that these children have achieved just by meeting with these dogs everyday. 4Paws told us about how they help one child finally start sleeping in his own.

Their eight-year-old son had never slept one night in his own bed until he made a new friend Shadow and now has no problem sleeping on his own. Another success story is about Noelle, a young girl that would normally have to have her mother glued to her worrying about her wandering away but now she can sit alone near her new therapy dog, safe and sound. A therapy dog also helped another young child with social skills. She had the ability to communicate verbally but rarely chose to use it until Harley, wonder-dog, came into her life. She then could be found giving her new friend commands and whispering secrets in his ear for hours. These dogs were a great therapy for the children (“ Autistic Service Dogs” 3, 4).

One problem with autistic teenage boys is that they can't deal with their emotions so they end up just being angry all the time. It is critical to teach them strategies to manage their anger. One teen was named Trevor and he especially was in need of help. Patty and his teacher came up with the idea to have Trevor carry a laminated card that had the words 1. Stop, 2. Step Back, 3.

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Breath. On the other side of the card was a picture of Trevor standing with therapy dog Molly. This made Trevor think of a happier and peaceful time. This was very effective in helping Trevor deal with his anger. The key to helping these kids through the work of therapy dogs is knowing what works for them and make them happier (Stokely 4).

Autism is a horrible thing that could happen to a child. It can take a very big toll on the family as well. It can send them through a thousand emotional ups and downs. This can either make or break a families bond. People have worked to come up with ideas to help children with autism and make their lives easier and organizations have been developed to prove through inspiring stories that therapy dogs can really help autistic children.

These dogs are a loving companion for the child and teach them great new things. It gives the children a sense of being in charge and helps them become better learners. Therapy dogs can change the lives of an autistic children and the family. Works Cited " About TDI" Therapy Dogs International. Therapy Dogs International. 2008.

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