

CIVIL MONEY PENALTY (CMP) FUNDED PROJECT REPORT

Grantee

**Lutheran Homes of Oshkosh, Inc.
225 North Eagle Street
Oshkosh, WI 54902**

Project Title

Noah's Landing Program

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Additional Information and Resources

Final Report

Video



**Department of Health Services / Division of Quality Assurance
Quality Assurance and Improvement Committee**

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Noah's Landing Program



**Dogs are not our whole life,
but they make our lives whole.**

**Just when you think
you've seen the cutest thing in the world,
a kitten comes along.**

The Noah's Landing program

enhances the lives of elders living in skilled nursing centers by encouraging relationships between residents and pets. Residents are actively involved in the love and care of the dogs and cats.

Emerging opportunities include illustrating a model for sustainable collaboration between skilled nursing centers and the great community and setting aside uninformed often negative beliefs about nursing centers held by individuals not familiar with elders and nursing home life.

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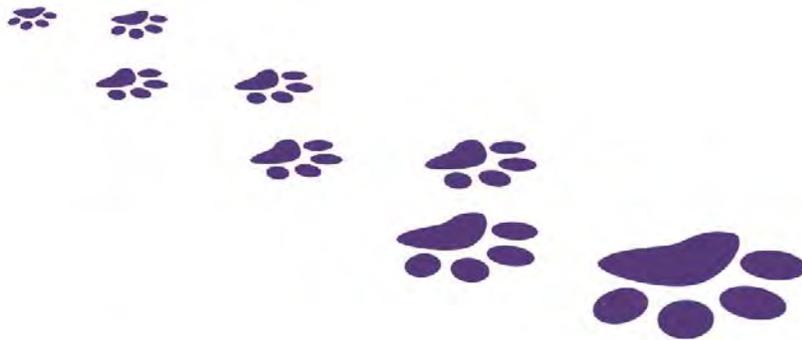
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NOAH'S LANDING PROGRAM GOAL

...wagging tails, unconditional love, and hearts filled with joy

Noah's Landing is a unique program meant to enhance the lives of residents living in nursing homes by encouraging relationships with pets. Residents are actively involved in the love and care of the visiting dogs and cats.

As a natural next step, Noah's Landing may be expanded to allow nursing home residents to bring their own pets with them for both short and long-term stays.

Dogs are incorporated into therapy programs to lessen reliance on traditional equipment. For example, elders may brush a dog with a light wrist weight on to build strength.

Dogs and puppies ... cats and kittens make a positive difference in life at a nursing home.

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

Noah's Landing programs are expected to be unique to resident and staff preferences and the setting.

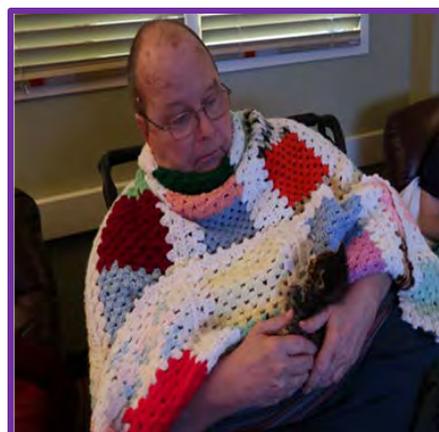
- Visiting pets (owned by families or volunteers)

- Full-time visiting pets (owned by staff members and present when employee is working)
- Resident's individually-owned pets

Visiting pet therapy is the most common type of pet therapy and involves volunteers or staff bringing in their pets to visit with residents in nursing homes.

Full-time visiting pets offer employees the opportunity to bring their dog or cat to work with them. The visits are so regular residents get to know the pets and anticipate and enjoy them.

Resident's pet therapy allows residents to maintain responsibility over their own pets. Before allowing this type of therapy, the resident's physical and psychological capabilities should be assessed. In addition, their caregivers must be willing to share responsibility in taking care of the pets.



BENEFITS OF NOAH'S LANDING

- **Enhances setting**
Pets help a facility be warm and inviting improving not only resident experiences but also guest perceptions and staff morale.
- **Shifts focus**
Residents in nursing homes often experience isolation. Pets provide a new focus for their attention and invite conversation.
- **Offers acceptance**
Dogs and cats accept people unconditionally which is heartwarming and soothing for the residents.
- **Improves socialization and mental stimulation**
Pets are a wonderful source of interaction, entertainment and enjoyment.
- **Lowers anxiety**
Interacting with pets lowers anxiety and may reduce agitation that comes with living with dementia.

PLANNING TOOLS

Setting up the program

Key staff may choose to form a planning committee to set up the pet therapy program. Committee will determine strategies for involving residents, acquiring and/or introducing pets, identifying strategies for introducing pets, handling communications and reviewing and revising program as needed.

When introducing pets, it is important to remember the nursing home is home for all residents. Resident preferences must be respected. Those who desire pets should have access to them and those not wanting to be exposed to pets, should not be subjected to them.

When setting up the program, the following areas should be explored:

- benefits
- financial considerations
- pet selection
- policies and procedures
- public relations
- safety

Benefits

While there are many physical, psychological and recreational benefits to the Noah's Landing program, not all residents will be interested in interacting with dogs and/or cats. It is important to honor resident preferences.

Financial Considerations

Funding considerations include cost of purchasing the pet(s), training, equipment, food, supplies and medical care. Fund raising, grants, donations from businesses and community groups may help reduce program costs. Animal trainers, breeders and veterinarians may also volunteer their services or reduce their fees. Partnering with a pet store can assist with costs of food and general supplies.

Pet Selection

There is no one breed, size or type of animal that will be the best for all residents.

Consider engaging a Certified Animal Therapist. They can be an amazing resource for identifying animals with a readiness to be a therapy pet.

Policies and Procedures

Policies vary based on the leadership and facility and generally include a statement describing the scope and direction of the program. Procedures spell

out how the program operates and address program requirements, orientation of pets and volunteers, complaint and incident reports, safety, etc.

Safety

Facility must ensure appropriate animals are selected for the Noah's Landing program. Measures must be taken to ensure the safety of residents, staff, visitors and pets. Precautions must be taken to protect animals from wheelchairs, being dropped, stepped on, mishandled or abused.





KEY SUCCESSES AT MIRAVIDA LIVING

- Partnering with a local Certified Professional Pet Trainer and area Humane Society significantly increased the probability for successful adoptions. The two worked collaboratively to research and rescue qualified pets for our program.
- We were able to hold onsite Dog Training group classes for some of our interested employees and their dogs. The cost was paid by a grant from the State of Wisconsin. Trained dogs are now able to come to work with their owners and visit with residents.
- We learned from our Certified Professional Pet Trainer how to use essential oils as a holistic

approach to deterring the cats from entering certain areas.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Considerable thought and advance planning should take place before introducing pets and a program like Noah's Landing.
- Engage staff and elders in planning. Residents, pets and program components are unique to the community.
- Miravida Living adopted two younger male cats. The cats had a great deal of energy and curiosity and soon left the area intended to be their home. The cats explored the entire 3-story nursing home and eventually left the building to explore the entire campus. For their safety, the cats were readopted by a staff member. When adopting a cat(s), we recommend an older, 'retired' cat content to stay in an area and enjoy the attention of residents.
- Pets must be trained to not enter the kitchen, dining room, food storage areas, garbage rooms, medication rooms, linen storage, and bedrooms when meals are being served in the room, or in rooms of residents known to have allergies to the animal.



Now that you have an interest in Noah's Landing Program, it is important to spread the word about this wonderfully rewarding volunteering opportunity. The most effective recruitment strategy is word-of-mouth.

Here are a few ideas of places to network:

- Facility website
- Facebook
- Veterinary offices
- Professional dog trainers, obedience schools, agility classes
- Groomers
- Dog parks and doggy daycares
- Pet retailers, bakeries and boutiques
- Breed specific groups
- Other animal-focused non-profit organizations and associations

KNOW THE FACTS

Here are answers to frequently asked questions:

What types of animals can qualify?

Miravida Living's program currently includes dogs and cats.

How do I know if my animal is a good candidate for this work?

In addition to having good basic obedience skills, animals should be calm and reliable in unfamiliar settings with unfamiliar people. They should not demonstrate avoidance, aggression, or fear. All pets should be housebroken. Dogs trained to aggressively protect and/or been encouraged to bite, are not eligible.

My animal has some health problems. Can we still register?

Noah's Landing does register animals with conditions requiring prescription medication. However, animals receiving antibiotics, antifungals or immunosuppressive medications (such as steroids or chemotherapy) may not register with the Noah's Landing Program until that course of treatment has been completed.

I just got a new puppy! Can we register / apply to volunteer?

Puppies and kittens are welcome as long as they are healthy, have been immunized and enjoy being held and petted.

What training courses do you provide for the animal?

Miravida Living provides training in partnership with a certified trainer.

What is the required volunteer commitment to Noah's Landing?

We do not require volunteers to commit to any specific number of hours or visits per year.

RESOURCES

Animal Behaviorist, Ideal Dog provided the following resources which are included as attachments:

- Outline for Therapy Dog Skills Class
- Suggested Tips and Rules to follow for a successful visit
- Principles of Positive Training.

Links to Noah's Landing videos:

1 min : <https://youtu.be/QQmfYleAYD8>

3 min : <https://youtu.be/artiSPTRQpc>

Miravida Living is committed to creating extraordinary experiences for its residents, their loved ones and our team. If we can help you implement the Noah's Landing program at your facility, please contact us.

Miravida Living
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Oshkosh, Wisconsin 54902
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miravidaliving.com





Ideal DOG 920-791-0990

www.idealtrainer.com

Welcome to Therapy Dog Skills Class- In the next 4 weeks you and your dog will be introduced to cues and skills needed to be a successful Therapy Dog team including but not limited to:

- ✓ Loose Leash Walking- with distractions –“Watch me”
- ✓ Polite Greetings- Evaluate dog’s response to attention
- ✓ Sit, Down and Stand Stay ,Place/Settle
- ✓ Exposure to and tolerance of mobility equipment
- ✓ Leave it- used for food, dropped items and other dogs
- ✓ Paws up, Off, Back, Up
- ✓ Handler Skills: understanding dog body language and stress signals

Week 1: This week we will introduce ourselves and begin with basic training evaluation.

- Sit, Down, Stand- surfaces (slippery/cold floors?), Lures? Duration?
- Leash walking skills-“ Heel” on either side, equipment and reliability
- Place/Settle- bring a dog blanket or bed
- Dog body language- evaluating your dog’s social skills and tolerance levels

Week 2: This week we will practice cues that may be helpful while doing therapy work

- “Watch me”- used to gain your dogs attention and eye contact
- Polite Greetings- command words, socialization gaps and head pats
- “Leave it”- food, pills and other dogs- safety considerations
- Paws up- position maneuver for reaching patients who are not mobile

Week 3: This week we will role play and meet and greet each other’s dogs in a variety of situations

- Mobility Equipment- the sights and sounds of facilities
- Paws Up/ Off, Go Say Hi, Back- handler positions and cues for a variety of spaces
- Discussion: your dog’s ability to handle 1 hour + of “working”- honest assessment of skill set
- Etiquette- Some people do not want to meet your dog!

Week 4: This week we will visit residents and put our skills to the test!

- Discussion-TD Inc. info- Compassionate Canines- Testing, Becoming a registered Therapy Dog Team and Therapy Dog Volunteer Opportunities in the Fox Valley

Tips and rules to follow for a great visit!

Please arrive a few minutes early to give your dog an opportunity to go potty before entering the building. Remember that your visit begins as soon as your dog is out of your car on the property; please be on your best behavior as you represent yourself as a therapy dog team.

For our visit each handler must have proof of the dog's vaccination records. They will ask to see and make a copy of the papers for their own records. You may be required to sign a volunteer release/agreement form.

Dogs should be brought on a 4 foot leash, and flat buckle collar, harness or head halter, no chain collars or prong collars allowed.

Dogs must be well groomed and have had a full bath (free from excess shedding hair, mats, or odor), and nails trimmed and filed smooth within 24 hours of the visit.

Evaluate your dogs' health and attitude, as well as your own, prior to any public visit. If your dog is not feeling well, he or she may not enjoy the visit, or worse pair the feeling of pain or illness with the people/facility. If you are not well, you may potentially spread illness. On the same note, you may arrive at a facility only to find there is an outbreak of something like flu, and may not be able to complete a visit that day/week.

Avoid wearing perfumes, colognes and other scented oils (on both you and the dog). It is important to remember some individuals may have severe allergies to certain scented products. Handlers who smoke or are exposed to smokers should minimize their smoke exposure before entering a facility.

Leave your cell phone in your car.

We will ask when we check in, what areas we are allowed to visit in the facility. Nurses are very helpful, as they often know which residents like dogs, and which residents may enjoy (or not enjoy!) a visit from you and your dog.

Bring poop bags to clean up after your dog when you do your pre-visit potty break outside of the facility. I ask that you walk your dog away from the main entrance for potty breaks.

Although treats may be used during our visit, do not allow the patients or residents to give treats to your dog. Please do not bring any dog treats which contain peanuts due to the risk that these treats might pose to people with peanut allergies.

Wear comfortable casual clothing, and closed toes shoes. Please bring a small bag to carry a towel to wipe your dog's paws off if they are wet/dirty when you enter the building. You may also bring hand sanitizer, and a small baggie of treats, water (if you feel your dog will need a drink break in the hour).

Wear your smile and your happiness and relaxed attitude will travel down the leash as you and your dog spread joy!

Principles of Positive Training

Training should be an enjoyable experience for both you and your dog. The more you understand about how your dog thinks and learns, the more effectively you can communicate. Clear communication means successful training and good behavior—with no need for coercion or physical corrections.

1. Behavior that is rewarded is more likely to reoccur. In other words, dogs do what works for them. If your dog was given praise and a cookie the last time he sat, he is more likely to sit again the next time you ask. If he knows that jumping up on you will earn your attention, he'll keep jumping, as your attention is a reward. This powerful principle is a key component of reward-based training.

2. Dogs learn by association. When training, it is important that the reward closely follow the desired behavior. For example, when teaching your dog to sit, the praise and treat should be given when his rear touches the floor, not after he's stood up again. On the other side of the coin, reprimanding your dog for something he may have done hours, or even minutes ago (for example, you come home to find your slippers shredded) is pointless; your dog won't associate your yelling with what he's done, and if it happens often enough, he may begin to fear your arrival home, as you're always angry for no reason he can fathom.

3. Reward behaviors you want, rather than punishing behaviors you don't want. Most of us are so accustomed to noticing "mistakes" our dogs make that it seems strange to notice and reward "good" behaviors. For example, your dog barks, so you yell at him to be quiet. Sure, a barking dog is hard to ignore. But what about when he's calmly lying down? Most of us never consider rewarding calm, so the dog only gets rewarded with our attention (even yelling is attention) when he is doing something we don't like. Naturally, he keeps doing those things! If, on the other hand, he gets attention for being calm, he will be calm more often. Make it a point to catch and reward your dog for doing something right. If your dog is engaged in a behavior that cannot be ignored (such as chewing the table leg), interrupt with a sharp verbal, "Eh-eh!" then lead him away from the area, ask him to sit, and give him a chew toy or other activity to keep him busy.

4. Extinction If a behavior is ignored, it will eventually extinguish on its own. Imagine you are trying to buy a soda from a vending machine. You insert your money, press the button, and wait. Nothing happens. You press the button more forcefully, and try a few others as well. Still nothing. You jangle the change lever. No soda, no change. You might even become so angry that you shake or kick the machine. All that effort and still no soda! Grumbling to yourself, you give up and leave. In this example, the soda-seeking behavior extinguished because there was no payoff, no reward. Kicking or shaking the machine is an example of an extinction burst. What that means for your dog is that if you ignore an unwanted behavior such as jumping or barking, before your dog gives up, the behavior may actually escalate. The important thing is to wait it out rather than giving in; it will eventually stop, and will stop even sooner the next time around.

5. Positive reinforcement is something the dog wants. Just because you think those expensive new treats are a great reward doesn't mean they are. If your dog turns his nose up at them, they're not much of a reward in his mind. A reward can be petting, verbal praise, a throw of the ball, a quick game with a favorite toy, sniffing the grass, or saying hello to another dog. The sky's the limit. Consider which things your dog finds rewarding, and use them.

6. Jackpot! The jackpot is something really special, head and shoulders above the usual reward. Your dog can earn this amazing prize by doing something especially wonderful. While

it's always important to use training treats your dog likes, save the Super-Yummy, Best-Thing-In-The-World as a jackpot. Here's an example of how to use the jackpot: In teaching Sit, your dog obviously understands what is expected, but doesn't sit very quickly. When you give the sit cue, he watches for a moment, then languidly lowers his butt to the floor. You can almost hear him sigh, "Oh, okay, if I must." However, on the fourth repetition, he responds immediately; butt hits floor in record time. Jackpot! You immediately give him a few pieces of the jackpot treat one after another, along with effusive verbal praise. (You can also give a jackpot by tossing a shower of the usual treat.) Jackpotting makes an impression. It calls your dog's attention to the fact that he's done something really great. He is therefore more likely to perform the behavior better than usual the next time. A jackpot doesn't have to be food, either. If your dog lives for a toss of the ball, use that as your jackpot. Know your dog and use what works for him.

7. Find an alternate behavior. When you want your dog to stop doing something, give him something else to do instead—that is, something that is incompatible with the behavior you don't want. For example, if your dog jumps up on you, have him sit instead; he can't sit and jump at the same time. Does he chew on furniture? Give him an appropriate chew toy instead; he can't chew items on both at once. Try this: Take a piece of paper, and draw a line vertically down the center. On the left side, list all the things your dog does that you'd like him to stop doing. On the right, next to each behavior, write down a behavior he could do instead. Once you start thinking about things in this way, you'll be surprised at the creative solutions you come up with—and how needless punishment really is.

8. Raise criteria gradually in small increments, building upon each success. Simply put, that means don't expect too much too soon. Build small steps to get from Point A to Point B. For example, when teaching your dog to stay, start with a three-second stay. If successful, try for a stay that is two seconds longer. If the five-second stay is too much (your dog breaks the stay), don't correct him. You've asked for too much too soon. Simply go back to three seconds and start again, then build slowly, one second at a time. Any time your dog does not perform an exercise correctly, ask yourself if you have raised the criteria too quickly. Go back to the point at which your dog was last successful, then build gradually. Raising criteria gradually eliminates the need for correction by setting your dog up to succeed.

9. If trained correctly, behavior is not contingent on food being present. This is something that many people who are opposed to food-reward training don't understand. If you phase treats out gradually and begin to substitute lots of real-life rewards (like petting, games, the

door opening for a walk), your dog will perform the desired behaviors even when you don't have food with you. We use plenty of treats at first to teach and practice new behaviors. Eventually, a schedule of random (unpredictable) reinforcement, along with real-life rewards, will ensure that the good behavior continues. You wouldn't want to stop getting paid once you got better at your job, so don't forget to reward your dog sometimes for a job well done!

10. Training should be fun! - Keep training sessions short; three to five sessions of three to five minutes a day is fine. - Focus on one new behavior per session. - Keep an upbeat attitude when training. Don't train when you're cranky! - End each training session on a successful note. Did your dog just do ten good sits, with the last one being really great? End the session there. - As each behavior is learned, incorporate it into your daily routine as often as possible.

Above all, BE KIND TO YOUR DOG AND HAVE FUN!