Welcome to the Pets on Wheels Family!

Volunteering for Pets on Wheels can be one of the most rewarding things you have ever done. Our volunteers make an important difference in people’s lives, and the visits make a difference in the lives of our volunteers and their pets, too.

Pets on Wheels brings the joy of friendly pet therapy to people in the state of Maryland west of the Chesapeake Bay. Regularly going to nursing homes and hospitals, assisted living facilities, homeless and domestic violence shelters, veterans’ hospitals, libraries, schools, colleges, corporate campuses and more, Pets on Wheels volunteers fight stress and help lick loneliness one visit at a time.

We are a 501(c)3 organization and our visits are delivered at no charge to recipients. Pets on Wheels Volunteer Therapy Pet Teams interact with more than 175,000 people each year. Our work is supported solely by organizational and private donations.

We never charge the facilities for our teams’ visits. Each year, we raise funds to carry out our mission, administer all requisite forms and paperwork, insure our volunteers and pets and recruit teams and facilities. We are able to deliver our visits at a cost of far less than one dollar per person we see.

We do this because we have a carefully managed organization with an amazing group of dedicated volunteers and supporters. Our volunteers – with and without pets – give more than 12,000 hours of their time every year to our work at nearly 400 facilities and special events. Many of our therapy pet teams visit their chosen facilities once a week or more.

We invite you to consider making a donation on our website or by mail. You can also support Pets on Wheels through United Way of Central Maryland by designating your donation for us on your donation form using code #887428, or through the Combined Federal Campaign by designating Pets on Wheels using code #90148.

If you are interested in sponsorship or planned giving opportunities, please contact info@petsonwheels.org. Our donors and volunteers make our mission possible.

"Yesterday we had the privilege of meeting a woman with disabilities. She said the pups made her problems disappear even if for a brief moment, and that we would be what she remembered from the day." Erin S., volunteer
Pets on Wheels Volunteer Information Packet

This packet provides essential information and guidelines for you as a member of our organization. Please be sure to read it through and refer to it regularly.

Volunteers are asked to sign the last page of this orientation packet – the Volunteer Acknowledgment Agreement - and bring it to their screening for their local coordinator to retain when first joining, screening or re-screening their pet.

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Please also regularly visit our website – www.PetsOnWheels.org – for event invitations, updates and information and to sign up for our enewsletter.

We also encourage all of our volunteers to follow us on Facebook @PetsOnWheelsInc for news and photos from Pets on Wheels and more.
Volunteer Requirements

Pets on Wheels’ volunteer requirements are easy to meet. You need to:

- Complete volunteer training and pet temperament testing. There is a $40 fee for the screening; additional volunteers and/or pets are $20 each to be screened and certified.

- Adhere to the Pets on Wheels guidelines and procedures.

- Adhere to the Facility’s guidelines, policies and procedures.

- Meet the minimal requirement of one volunteer hour per month.

- Keep current on mandated medical requirements for pet, including the annual health certificate requirements.

- Maintain confidentiality and respect for those we visit at all times.

- Have your pet’s temperament rescreened every three years. There is a $20 fee for the rescreening.

Pet Requirements

Pets on Wheels accepts all animals who pass our Temperament Screening, regardless of breed, size or species, although individual facilities may have some restrictions. Pets must be one year of age and must be with you at least six months prior to joining. No specific training is needed, only good manners and passing the Temperament Screening are required to certify your pet.

Service animals may be cross-certified as therapy pets with Pets on Wheels, however it is up to their handlers to develop a mechanism for indicating to the public and their pet when they are working as a therapy pet and when they are working as a service animal. Therapy pets DO NOT have the same rights and privileges as service animals; those are reserved for when the animal is performing its service function only. Pets on Wheels does not train or certify service animals. If you are interested in training or certifying a service or support animal, we suggest you visit the following sites for information:

https://www.ada.gov/regs2010/service_animal_qa.html

http://servicedogcentral.org/content/
We have a one animal per handler policy, although more than one volunteer may accompany a therapy pet on its visits. There are very rare exceptions available for animals with special needs – if this applies to your pet, please contact our Executive Director for a special exception review.

1. Pets on Wheels Health Certificate

As required by the Maryland State Health Department, your vet must fully complete a Pet Health Certificate to certify that your pet is up to date on all vaccinations, and is healthy. This certificate is necessary to keep your pet insured and must be kept up-to-date and completed in full regardless of what information may have expired. Due to insurance requirements, no other types of forms can be accepted.

A copy of the Pet Health Certificate will be retained in your Pets on Wheels file. You are responsible for ensuring each facility you visit has a current Pets on Wheels health certificate for your pet. We recommend keeping a copy with you when you visit as well – you can fold it up and keep it with your ID on your lanyard.

It is imperative that the Pet Health Certificate is completed annually. This is a condition of Pets on Wheels membership and the continuance of pet therapy visits, as well as attending Pets on Wheels events with your pet.

Non-compliance with this policy will put you, the facility, and Pets on Wheels at risk. If something unexpected happened involving your pet, you would not be covered by insurance if this information is not kept current.

If the information on the certificate expires, your pet’s status will change to “delinquent.” This means that no visits can be made until we receive the updated information. To ensure that this doesn’t happen, you will receive email reminders at 60, 30, and 14 days prior to any information expiring. Please be sure to verify your current email regularly and to update your volunteer profile so that you will receive these important reminders.

2. Vaccine Requirements

Our current policy on vaccinations requires rabies and distemper vaccines to be current for all dogs and cats. We will accept the one or three year rabies vaccination and we will also accept one or three year distemper (if approved by the veterinarian).

Leptospirosis, parainfluenza and other vaccinations are to be given at the discretion of the owner and veterinarian and indicated on the health certificate.

If there is a medical condition or other reason determined by your veterinarian, we can accept annual titers for distemper with a letter from your veterinarian stating why the titers were run and that he or she accepts responsibility for their accuracy.

We cannot accept titers for rabies.
We also require a yearly fecal test. The results must be negative. If the pet tests positive, proof of a negative fecal test is required before a health certificate will be accepted.

If your pet is being treated for parasites, or becomes ill with any other infection, no visits may be made until your pet is fully recovered.

Requirements for Other Species

Since we accept other species of friendly pets, we will determine health certificate requirements as needed for each particular species.

Please email the appropriate coordinator for information. Please see our contact us page to determine the coordinator covering your county.

3. Prepare Your Pet for Visiting

Before each visit, groom and exercise your pet. Be sure your pet is clean and free of unpleasant odors. Trim and file nails to avoid scratches. Brush to remove debris.

Avoid using flea/tick medications at least 24 hours prior to your visit.

Dogs in heat may not visit.

No metal collars or leads may be used due to the risk of delicate skin being damaged while petting your animal. This means prong collars, chain collars, chain martingale collars, electronic collars, leashes with chain ends or flexi leads are not permitted to be used on your pet. We recommend leather or cloth collars and 4’-6’ leashes, fabric harnesses or fabric head collars of any type.

Metal buckles, snaps and clasps on collars and leads are permitted.

Animals must be leashed or under handler’s control at all times during the visit.

Costumes, clothing and accessories are encouraged at the pets’ and owners’ discretion.
Facility Visit Information

We will assist you in finding a facility that’s nearby and in need of visits. This is where you will be assigned. **We encourage you to visit additional facilities!** If you have time, it’s a great idea to check the website for those on the unused or unassigned facilities list to visit.

Making your first visit to a facility can be a bit confusing. **If you would like someone to accompany you on your first visit, please let your local coordinator know and we will try to arrange for someone to help show you the ropes.**

1. **Contacting the Facility Coordinator**

Once your facility is assigned, you’re ready to start! Contact the facility coordinator to introduce yourself and to discuss what you will need to do prior to visiting, if anything (e.g., background check, TB test, etc.).

Request an orientation in which the facility coordinator that covers such things as policies and procedures, where to sign in, forms that may need to be completed, emergency procedures, contact person if the coordinator is not available, where visits will be conducted (e.g. individual rooms, activity area), personal and resident safety, and incident reporting. This can be done either prior to or during your visit. **We recommend asking the facility coordinator to determine if your first visit should be with or without your pet.**

You are responsible for ensuring that the facility coordinator has a copy of your pet’s current Pets on Wheels Health Certificate. Having an up-to-date certificate is necessary to keep your pet insured.

2. **Visiting the Facility**

**Volunteers may only visit facilities listed in the Pets on Wheels database.** Only visits to those partner facilities are considered Pets on Wheels activities and covered by our insurance. If you want to visit a facility not listed, invite them to join!

It is a requirement that you wear your Pets on Wheels ID badge for all visits and participation in special events. Your pet must wear their Pets on Wheels collar ID tag.

Clothing should be neat and comfortable and suitable for bending and kneeling. Wear comfortable closed toe shoes with non-slip soles.
Pack supplies in case you need them - grooming equipment, toys, water bowl, paper towels, poop bags, towels, etc.

Your pet must be on-leash with the leash being held by the handler at all times.

Friends and family members, unless they are a registered Pets on Wheels volunteer, are not allowed to go with you on visits.

Due to the following safety reasons, pets are not allowed to receive treats/food from others.

- Over-zealous pets accidentally nipping
- Possible food aggression with other pets nearby
- Recalled treats
- Residents may ingest a dog treat thinking that it was for them

Do not bring or offer food or drinks to residents.

If a resident needs medical services or assistance, inform the staff at once. **Volunteers may not assist any residents due to medical and liability restrictions.**

Photographs or video may not be taken without first obtaining the signed consent of the resident or a legal guardian. Photo Release forms are available on the website. Remember all personal information is private and confidential, and protected under HIPAA guidelines.

If you need to change or cancel your visit, contact the facility coordinator as soon as possible. If there are any changes at your facility or you have concerns, contact your local coordinator.

Watch your pet to know when it’s time to leave. Some facilities can be very warm and the work can be stressful – always put your pet’s welfare first!

**Visiting your place of employment while “on the clock” – i.e. receiving compensation - is not allowed under the auspices of Pet on Wheels insurance coverage.** This is to avoid conflicting liability claims.

### 3. Incidents and Accidents

**ANY incident with your pet – nip, bite, scratch or other -- or accident involving you, your pet, a resident, guest or staff member needs to be reported to Pets on Wheels immediately. All information will be treated sensitively and with complete confidentiality.**

- Inform the staff on duty and the facility coordinator prior to leaving the facility.
- Notify your Pets on Wheels Coordinator who will process an incident report.
- Make notes of the incident – who was involved, what happened, what were the circumstances, when, who was called/responded, etc. – and share those with your Pets on Wheels coordinator along with keeping a copy for yourself.
4. Visiting with Minors

Minor volunteers may accompany a volunteer provided that:
- A Minor Release Form has been filed with Pets on Wheels (found on the website).
- The Facility has agreed in advance to the minor visiting.
- **Minors under age 16 may not handle pets;** they can only accompany a registered volunteer handler. **Minors age 16-18 MAY handle pets IF the following conditions are met:** they are registered volunteers; have handled the pet at the temperament screening; are under the direct supervision at all times of an adult volunteer who is their parent or guardian; the facility agrees in advance of the visit.

**Events & Activities**

In addition to your facility visits, there are a variety of special events and activities throughout the year that you are invited to participate in. Volunteers will receive emails from their local coordinators regarding events, or may check the Events section of the website to see what is coming up.

Pets on Wheels is a regular participant in area festivals, parades, college and corporate wellness events and more. These events are always a great chance to meet other volunteers and really show off your pet, so please do try to join us!
We also host volunteer appreciation events throughout the year, along with fundraising events like our annual fundraising dinner. Volunteers Without Pets are a critical part of these events, so if you have some time, please let us know – we welcome your help.

Please note that we do require that volunteers wear a blue Pets on Wheels shirt when participating in events to create uniform visibility. Pets on Wheels merchandise is available for our therapy pet teams and volunteers without pets.

Merchandise is available at our screenings, or it can be ordered online for home delivery. Occasionally we will have some limited time offers of specialty items available, and we have also partnered with Lands' End store, where you can purchase items with the Pets on Wheels logo embroidered on the most popular items. Visit the website for more information.

**Required Record Keeping**

You are required to visit a facility at least once per month in order to keep you and your pet’s certification. Record the visit and/or special event activity right after each is completed for accuracy.

Recording your visits helps Pets on Wheels to:

- Develop funding and grant proposals.
- Calculate hours towards the annual President’s Volunteer Service Awards.
- Evaluate and document effectiveness of service delivery to our partners.

To record your volunteer time, just log in to the website with the name and password you set up when you applied.

- Click on My Visits to log your time.
- The drop-down menu will prompt you through the process.
- If you can’t log your time, check to make sure that your pet is up to date on all medical records – if anything is overdue, your pet will not be listed as Active and you cannot log your time.
  - **If you miss logging your time, you will receive a reminder notice.** Reminders are sent the 7th of each month for the month prior. **If you receive five (5) reminders, you may be set to inactive status** and will need to contact your local coordinator to be reinstated as a volunteer in good standing.
- If you receive a reminder or warning inadvertently, contact your coordinator to have it removed.
- Reminders and warnings are removed after one year if you remain a volunteer in good standing.
Special Circumstances

Sometimes life gets in the way and you are not able to meet your volunteer obligations. If that happens, please contact your local coordinator as soon as you can so that we can be sure to update your status as needed.

1. Leave of Absence (LOA)

If you or your pet will be unable to meet your monthly volunteer commitment, you may request a leave of absence. LOAs can only be issued prior to the 19th of each month.

- If you are unable to visit during the month, submit a request for a LOA. The form is on the website under the Volunteer Menu “My Absences.”
- LOAs are issued for reasons relating to the health of the volunteer, their pet, or their family. They can also be utilized for extended travel or special circumstances.
- Consult with your local coordinator if you have any questions.

2. Retirement or Resignation

Sometimes it is in the best interests of your pet to retire them from active status. If this is the case, please contact your local coordinator and we will make sure to update your pet’s records.

If you need to resign for any reason, please also contact your local coordinator as soon as possible. If anything happens with your pet, please do let us know. We care about all of our team members.

3. Revocation of Volunteer Privileges

Conduct including but not limited to the list below is considered serious enough that violations can result in revocation of your volunteer status with Pets on Wheels:

- Breach of confidentiality.
- Falsifying documents.
- Falsifying visits and/or volunteer hours.
- Failure to report an incident or accident.
- Using the Pet on Wheels therapy vest and/or credentials to gain public access or otherwise misrepresenting your pet as an assistance animal.
- Making visits on behalf of another therapy pet organization while serving as a Pets on Wheels volunteer. This will cause an insurance conflict if there is an incident or accident.
- Directly or indirectly soliciting during visits or special events for potential purchases, donations or support of any product, service, belief or personal agenda.
- Inappropriate social media posts, posts that disparage the organization and/or its staff or volunteers, posting or sharing of photos for which permission has not been obtained.
4. Scheduled Visits or Event Cancellations and Information Changes

- If your personal information, such as address, phone, or email changes, let us know as soon as possible so that we can update your account. This is critical for continued insurance coverage.
- Contact your facility coordinator if you need to change or cancel a visit.
- Contact your Pets on Wheels coordinator ASAP if you need to change or cancel your sign up for a special event, or if there is a change of staff or policies at your assigned facility.

Organizational Information & Resources

Your local coordinator is your first resource for information and questions. If you’re not sure who that is, just visit www.PetsOnWheels.org and you can look up the correct person by county. We do ask that you please be patient when contacting us – all of our staff are part-time only so they may not always be able to respond to inquiries immediately.

Replacement IDs - Replacement pet tags can be ordered by your local coordinator for $10. Replacement ID cards/lanyard can be ordered by your local coordinator for $6. Please send a note with payment for your replacement IDs indicating the information needed.

Therapy Dog Vests - Raspberry Field is the authorized Pets on Wheels vendor who supplies our customized Pets on Wheels therapy pet vests. This vest identifies your pet as a therapy pet only. These are not the same as service animal vests or identification, and do not confer the same privileges that service animals enjoy. Vests are optional.

To place an order visit www.raspberryfield.com to register and create an account. After registering, be sure to email sales@raspberryfield.com and advise that you set up your account and that you are a Pets on Wheels volunteer. Your account will then be linked for a 20% Pets on Wheels permanent discount. After receiving confirmation of your PoW discount, you can then access their website once again and place your order.

Trading Cards – Trading cards customized to your pet are available from http://www.custom-tradingcards.com/PetsOnWheels/.

Memorial Markers – Memorial markers with the Pets on Wheels logo are available from http://www.4everinmyheart.com/. Engraved Pets on Wheels logos available on request.

Thank you for caring enough to volunteer. All of us believe in what we do. We see the happy faces of the people we visit and hear the joy in their voices. We get to see the smiles when the facility goes abuzz with excitement when the pets arrive. We see college students release their stress from exams while playing with our animals. We see children with disabilities hugging a pet and letting them lick their faces and laughing with sheer joy. We know that Pets on Wheels is a program that makes a difference, and we are glad that you will be joining us.

Pets on Wheels is a 501(c)3 organization and our Federal ID # is 52-1657528.
Volunteer Acknowledgment Agreement
(Please sign and give to your local coordinator)

I have read and understand the contents of this orientation packet and will act in accordance with these policies and procedures as a condition of volunteering with Pets on Wheels.

I understand that the email address I registered to become a volunteer with and that is associated with my Pets on Wheels account will be used for communication by administrators and by the automated database.

This email address can be changed at any time under the “Account Overview” page. I understand that a valid email address must remain on file at all times in order for Pets on Wheels administrators to contact volunteers regarding volunteer status, pets’ health certificate information, upcoming events, policy changes, etc. Volunteers’ email addresses on file will not publicly be disclosed without prior approval of that volunteer.

I understand that any person who visits, is registered by, or is active under the auspices of another Therapy Pet-related visitation program, organization, or group other than Pets on Wheels will not be able to become or remain a member of Pets on Wheels unless a special exemption is requested and granted.

I also understand that Pets on Wheels administrators reserve the right to update, change, or modify these policies and procedures at any time.

Name (please print) ___________________________ Signature ___________________________

Address ___________________________

Phone ___________________________ Email ___________________________