

miami valley Pet Therapy association (mvPTa) Class Information

Class Information

Classes are offered twice each year at several different locations in the Miami Valley Area. Registration packets for our spring classes are mailed in early January and the classes typically start around the last week of February. Registration packets for our fall classes are mailed out in early July and classes typically start the last week of August. Please read the information below for more details about what is expected of the animals/handlers prior to the start of classes and throughout the classes.

If you are interested in receiving a registration packet for one of our upcoming classes, or if you have additional questions about the classes please email us at mvpta@yahoo.com.

About Pet Therapy

Many trained domesticated animals may be used for pet therapy: dogs, cats, and hand pets, such as rabbits, hamsters, or rats. Exotic animals and animals listed in Ohio's dangerous animal laws are not eligible to be certified for pet therapy by mvPTa. All therapy animals must be highly predictable, calm, and proficient in obedience skills.

About the Miami valley Pet Therapy Association

The mvPTa is an all volunteer community-based organization whose purpose is to promote the use of highly trained domesticated pets to help people improve their health and quality of life.

mvPTa offers two 10-week training courses each year. The purpose of the class is to teach handlers the basic skills required for facilitating visits with their pet. Topics include: Handling yourself and your pet in a variety of situations; recognizing animal's behavioral signs of stress; learning methods to de-stress an animal; discussion of various diagnoses and how that impacts your visit; etiquette during visits; HIPPA and other hospital policies; and how to prepare for a visit. Teams, both student and animal are evaluated for suitability for pet therapy throughout the 10-week class.

As part of the course, the handler/pet team engages in a practice test, a practice visit to a facility, completion of a written exam and a final practical evaluation of the handler/pet team to assess the appropriateness of the team for the healthcare setting. **Class attendance is required in order to successfully complete the course.** Points are awarded based upon class participation, attendance, and class evaluations and a minimum amount of points are required to take the practical test.

Course Pre-Requisites

In order for a handler/pet team to complete the course successfully, there are several factors for you to consider before committing to this class:

Pet Aptitude: Confident, calm, and cooperative, gets along with various animals and people, adjusts to changes and uncertainties in the environment. Animals that don't get along well with other animals or have a strong prey drive are not suitable for pet therapy classes.

Pet Manners/Obedience: Dogs must have basic obedience skills prior to starting class. This includes: sit, down, stay, heel, come. Dogs that have not mastered these skills should postpone taking the class until proficient. Animals also should be able to greet people/animals calmly; take treats gently; walk with a loose leash; walk calmly through a crowd.

Hand pets should be well socialized and able to stay where you put them.

Pet Age: Pets must be 12 months of age or older prior to start of class.

Handler Age: Handlers must be at least 12 years of age and accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times until they are 16 years of age. Handlers need a parent's approval from the age of 16 - 18 years of age.

Handler aptitude: Enjoys meeting strangers, able to initiate conversation, good listening skills, ability to empathize without getting emotionally involved, polite, able to concentrate on pet's behavior and client's behavior simultaneously and to act on it. Maintain confidentiality as dictated by federal law.

Demand for our classes has been very high. Every class session we have had to turn interested teams away. We have also enrolled teams into our classes who did not have the basic skills required to successfully complete the class. Classes are not intended to provide instruction in obedience. Please note carefully the pet aptitude and obedience skills listed above.

Because of the increased demand for pet therapy classes, we require all teams who are enrolled into class to attend an orientation/pre-screening session prior to the first class. A schedule and locations will be mailed to you with your registration confirmation.

Some classes fill up more quickly than others, so mailing your registration as early as possible is suggested.