

## "Therapy Dogs"

*By: Betty J Cottle (As published in the Pinscher Patter, June 1997)*

A few weeks ago I was talking on the phone to our president, Sharon Krogh, and mentioned that "Glitter", our 2 1/2 yr old champion Min Pin bitch, had finished her training and was now a Therapy Dog. Her training consisted of six group visitations to various locations. Sharon asked me to write this article as she thought our members would be interested on what therapy dogs do.

Space Coast Therapy Dogs is comprised of dog owners from all walks of life who have been afforded very special animals. These are owners who have realized "their best friends" need to be shared unselfishly with people who respond to tender loving wet noses, warm furry bodies, and soft gentle kisses. We are affiliated with Therapy Dogs, Inc., a national organization. Only dogs that are registered with Therapy Dogs, Inc. can become members of SCTD. Both SCTD and T. D., Inc. are non-profit, all volunteer organizations. We go to nursing homes, retirement homes, assisted care homes, senior centers, children homes, day care centers, schools, hospitals, hospices, and churches. We are working with patients with Alzheimer's, Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, physical disabilities (deaf and/or blind), stroke patients, brain-injured adults and children, multi - handicapped, profoundly retarded children, also emotionally disturbed teenagers. Due to the therapy dogs loving and outgoing temperaments, we have crossed seemingly Impenetrable barriers.

Working with Alzheimer's patients really makes you know your pet is truly crossing barriers. We have discovered that these people will remember our animal's names when they do not remember much of anything else. This is why the founder of Therapy Dogs, Inc., Jack Butrick, always said, "We help the forgotten to laugh", because many of these people are forgotten.

We also "CHANGE TEARS INTO SMILES" for the little child in the hospital, who is lonely and frightened, or perhaps our special dog walks into the room of a senior who is depressed. Somehow, our therapy animals sense this and they "go the extra mile" to be noticed. Maybe a silly trick is in order, or just to lay a head in a lap, no matter what it takes, a single tear becomes a happy smile.

We have three Min Pin therapy dogs Ch. Carlee Silk Tuxedo (Tux) a 14 year old red dog, Milebet's Star Trick or Treat (Trixie) a 5 year old black bitch, and Ch. High Voltage Glitter of Milebet's (Glitter) the 2 1/2 year old red bitch. Glitter has a black 4 month old son, Timmy. He has a great temperament. He will start his training at six months to join his mom as a Therapy Dog. Hopefully, Milebet's Intimidator Scorpio (Timmy) will start his show career then too.

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Miniature Pinscher Club of America, Inc.