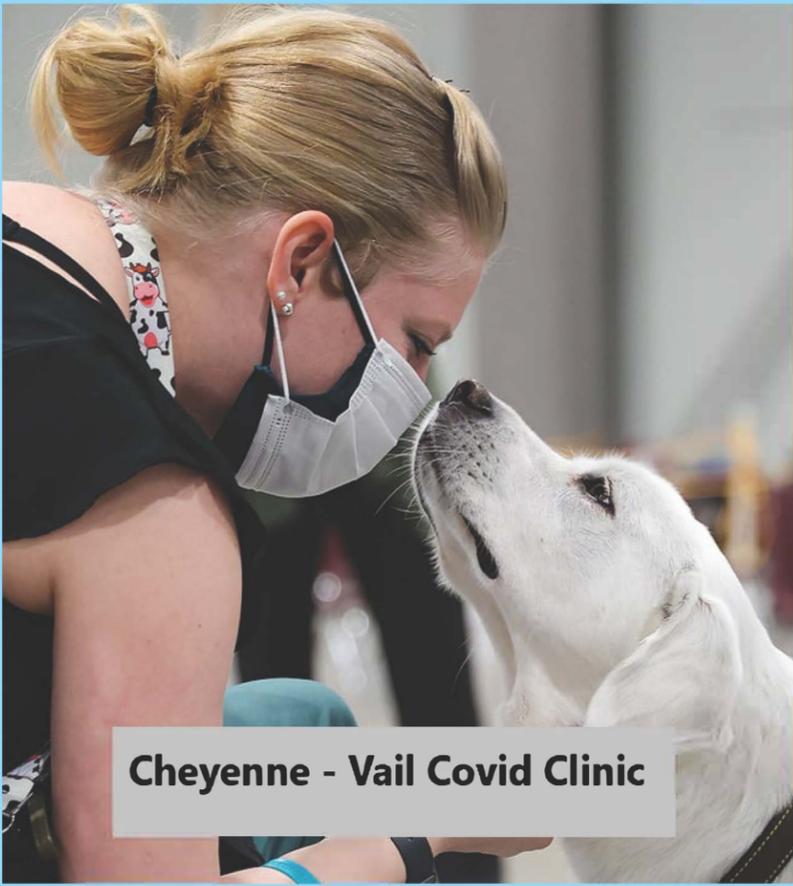
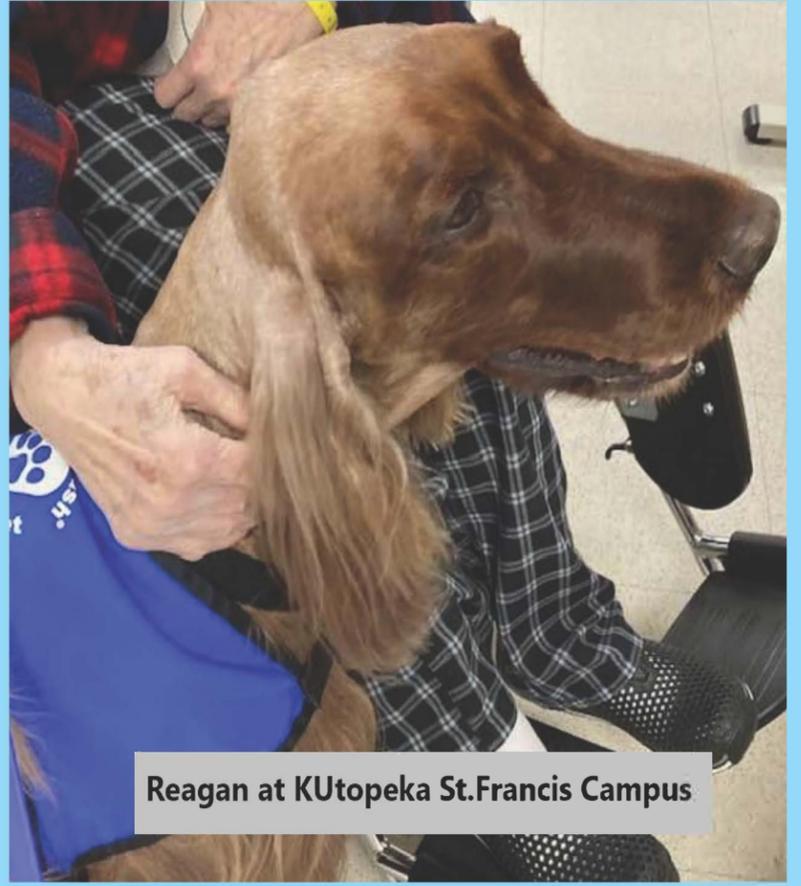


# BECOME A PET THERAPY TEAM



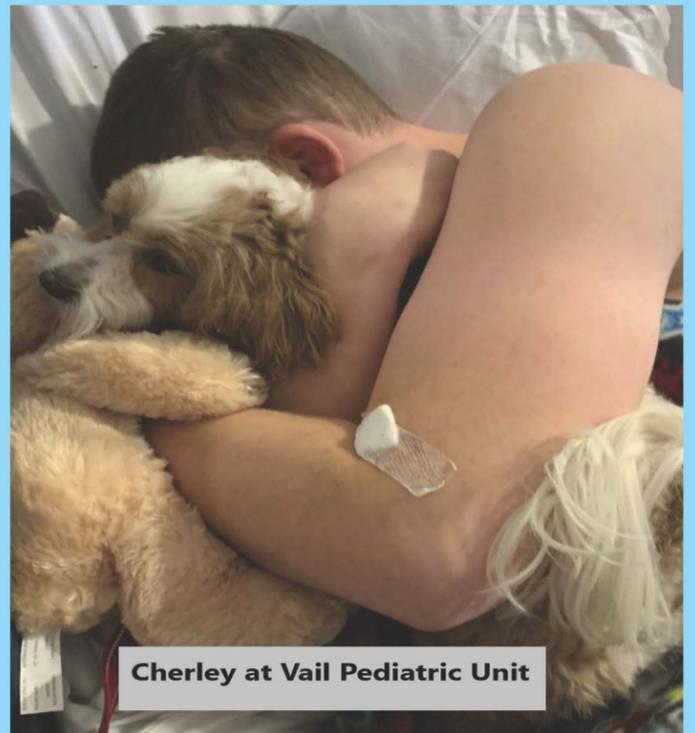
Cheyenne - Vail Covid Clinic



Reagan at KUtopeka St.Francis Campus



Lee & Waverly - Reading with Prairieland Dogs-Library



Cherley at Vail Pediatric Unit

*A Comforting paw to hold during treatment*



*If you are interested in pet therapy, please go to our website: [www.prairielandvisitinganimals.com](http://www.prairielandvisitinganimals.com) and check out our "Become a Therapy Team". If you have more questions, please contact Karen Simecka at [ksimecka1@gmail.com](mailto:ksimecka1@gmail.com).*



A therapy dog is an incentive, a motivational tool, and a non-judgemental listener ... all in one. Breathe new life into your lesson plans, your classroom activities or your library's reading program with the engaging presence of a qualified volunteer and their animal. Whether you have just a few students who need extra help, or a whole classroom of students eager to practice their skills, a therapy team can provide just the ticket to get them in a positive mindset and ready to learn. Read With Me is a special initiative of the Pet Partners Therapy Animal Program. After our volunteer teams complete their coursework, they are qualified to provide skilled support when needed.



**Contact Information**

PrairieLand Visiting Animals Association

[www.prairielandvisitinganimals.com](http://www.prairielandvisitinganimals.com)

[prairielandvisitinganimal@gmail.com](mailto:prairielandvisitinganimal@gmail.com)

PP evaluation scheduler

Sharon Fricke: [slintonf@gmail.com](mailto:slintonf@gmail.com)

PP handler's class

Julie Hoffman: [julie199@aol.com](mailto:julie199@aol.com)

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LOAL & ATD scheduler

Karen Simecka:  
[ksimecka1@gmail.com](mailto:ksimecka1@gmail.com)

Remember to follow us on -

Facebook & Instagram



**PrairieLand  
Visiting  
Animals  
Association**



**Topeka, Kansas**



When a child reads to a R.E.A.D. dog, the experience is magical. It's really amazing to see a child's face light up when they are able to read a difficult word. What? Dogs can't read, can they? Of course not, but they can be wonderful listeners. Their presence creates a relaxing and comfortable setting for learning. They also provide a nonjudgemental and safe environment that allows children to explore new books. While building self-esteem, confidence and social skills, kids make huge strides in reading, comprehension and communication skills. Performance in other subjects tend to improve, as does attendance and even personal hygiene. The handler is a skilled facilitator (who has completed the required R.E.A.D. course) and gives the child support when he/she needs help with a word or concept. They can help the child build their vocabulary, increase their understanding and gain fluency as a reader. It's a win-win for everyone!

## **PrairieLand Visiting Animals**

PrairieLand (PVAA) is a friendly group of people from the heartland who are interested in promoting the human/animal bond by:

- Providing registered therapy teams to facilities
- Providing mentoring for newly registered teams
- Conducting educational classes and workshops
- Promoting the benefits of animal visitation

Our member teams visit nursing homes, retirement homes, hospitals, schools and other facilities where contact with a therapy animal can be beneficial.

### **Therapy Organization Information**

Interested in becoming a therapy team? We have members that belong to:

#### Pet Partners

<https://petpartners.org/volunteer/become-a-handler/program-requirements/>

Contact Carolyn Buono at [buonocw@cox.net](mailto:buonocw@cox.net)

#### Love On A Leash

<http://www.loveonaleash.org/>

Contact Karen Simecka at [ksimecka1@gmail.com](mailto:ksimecka1@gmail.com)

#### Alliance Of Therapy Dogs

<https://www.therapydogs.com>

Contact Karen Simecka at [ksimecka1@gmail.com](mailto:ksimecka1@gmail.com)



## **P E T P A R T N E R S**

You MUST take the Pet Partners (PP) Handler's Class before your evaluation. Julie offers a class locally, usually 8 hours on a weekend. Contact her at [ocj710c@gmail.com](mailto:ocj710c@gmail.com) to sign up for a class. The Pet Partner's evaluation cost is \$20 and is only scheduled online. PrairieLand offers these at least 3-4 times a year. Check out our website for the next handler's class and evaluation. The evaluation begins when you both walk through the door. The animal must be clean, well groomed, shots up to date, no raw diets please. The SKILLS part of the test is designed to ensure that the animal has adequate training and can behave appropriately in a therapy setting. Your animal must demonstrate good basic obedience skills. Animals walking with a lead should walk on a loose leash, and respond reliably to common commands such as "sit," "down," "stay," "come," and "leave it". Welcome, not merely tolerate, interactions with strangers and behave calmly around another dog that is passing by at a distance. Testing also includes visual distractions, such as medical equipment and auditory distractions. The APTITUDE part of the test evaluates how your animal is likely to react to situations commonly encountered on a visit. This includes exuberant, crowded and clumsy petting, a restraining hug, a staggering individual, angry yelling and being gently tapped from behind. PP evaluates dogs, cats, birds and 6 other species. You can contact Julie at [ocj710c@gmail.com](mailto:ocj710c@gmail.com) for more information on the PP Handler's Class.

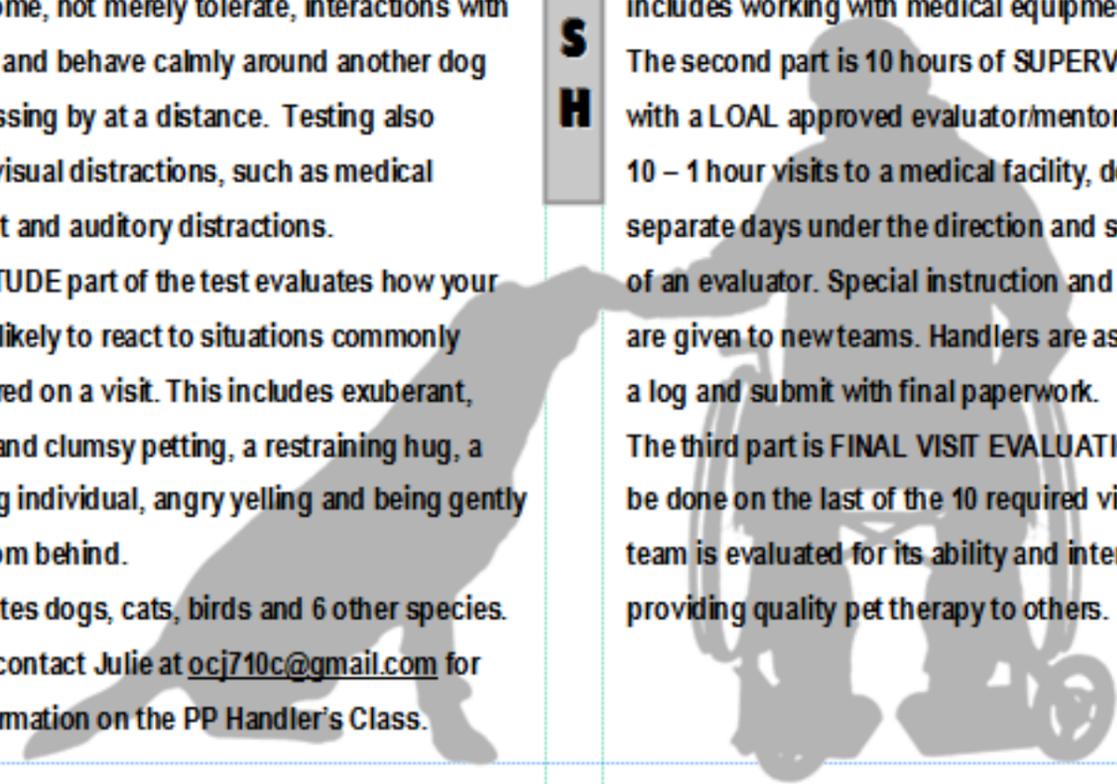
## **L O V E O N A L E A S H**

Love on a Leash (LOAL) has a three part evaluation and this is done by two different evaluators. Evaluations are done in Topeka, KS and can be scheduled with Karen at [ksimecka1@gmail.com](mailto:ksimecka1@gmail.com) at any time. LOAL only evaluates dogs, cats and rabbits.

The first part is the CONTROL EVALUATION and scheduled with an AKC CGC evaluator or Certified Obedience Instructor/Trainer. The animal must be clean and well groomed and ready to go on a visit. The evaluator asks the animal for a sit, down, heel with people close by and come when called while on a leash. The animal must be able to do a 2 minute down or sit/stay and meet another dog, without being aggressive or over stimulated. The animal should allow petting and remain calm when a person approaches in an erratic manner. Test includes working with medical equipment.

The second part is 10 hours of SUPERVISED VISITS with a LOAL approved evaluator/mentor. These are 10 – 1 hour visits to a medical facility, done on separate days under the direction and supervision of an evaluator. Special instruction and guidance are given to new teams. Handlers are asked to keep a log and submit with final paperwork.

The third part is FINAL VISIT EVALUATION and can be done on the last of the 10 required visits. The team is evaluated for its ability and interest in providing quality pet therapy to others.



## **ALLIANCE OF THERAPY DOGS**

Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) requires a background check and a completed health verification form done before an evaluation can be scheduled and ATD only evaluates dogs. Karen [ksimecka1@gmail.com](mailto:ksimecka1@gmail.com) can schedule evaluations.

Evaluation is done by an AKC CGC Certified evaluator or a Certified Obedience Instructor/Trainer. The handler's test includes: the handler's attention to instructions (being on time, ready for visit and have a 4' leash), initial meeting (good impression of team), canine-human behavior (dog and handler working together), petting, walking on loose leash, seeing another dog and evaluating the dog's responsiveness to the entire test.

ATD does not have an approved evaluator in the Topeka, KS area and only requires 2 reference letters. The evaluator will fill out an EVALUATOR FORM (which lists his/her qualifications to test teams) and give this to the team to be sent in with the team's final paperwork. Teams must also sign a Release of Claim Form.

Each group has different requirements for joining and maintaining your membership. All provide personal liability insurance. Evaluations determine whether your animal is suited for visitation – not all animals are. If you register the animal and he/she doesn't enjoy the visits, then you must decide whether or not to continue. If in doubt, ask a PVAA member for advice.