



THE PAW STREET JOURNAL

The latest news and updates from Canine Assisted Therapy



COSTUME CONFIDENCE: DOES YOUR DOG REALLY LIKE DRESSING UP?

Halloween is right around the corner, and sometimes it's not just humans you see dressed in costume, but dogs too! From bumblebees to tacos to superheroes, our canine companions can be the stars of the season. But not every pup is thrilled playing dress-up. As adorable as a dog in a pumpkin hat may be, it's important to make sure our canine friends are comfortable, safe, and happy in their costumes.

How can you tell if your dog is costume-confident? Look for relaxed body language: a wagging tail, soft eyes, and a willingness to move around freely. If your dog freezes, tries to shake off the costume, or avoids eye contact, it might be time to ditch the outfit or try something simpler, like a festive bandana.

Tips for a positive costume experience:

- Let your dog sniff and explore the costume before putting it on.
- Choose lightweight, breathable materials that don't restrict movement.
- Avoid anything that covers the face, ears, or paws.
- Watch for signs of stress and if your dog seems uneasy, skip the costume!
- Keep it short—snap a few photos, then reward with treats and praise!

Whether your dog is a full-on costume lover or prefers to keep it low-key, the most important thing is their comfort. A happy, confident dog makes the best dog, no matter what they're wearing.

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UPCOMING VOLUNTEER ORIENTATIONS

ONLINE ORIENTATIONS

Learn about Canine Assisted Therapy (C.A.T.) and how to become a certified volunteer team with your pet. The session covers what makes a great therapy dog and handler, requirements to become certified, and an overview of our programs and volunteer opportunities.

DATE & TIME

Tuesday, November 4th at 5:30 PM

LOCATION

Online - [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)



UPCOMING EVENTS



We're excited to be participating in **Zoo Boo at Zoo Miami** on **Saturday, October 25th from 10 AM - 3 PM!** This annual Halloween celebration is South Florida's premier family-friendly trick-or-treating event, and this year, **Canine Assisted Therapy** will be there with some of our amazing therapy dogs!

Bring the whole family for a day of costumes, candy, and animal encounters. Stop by our booth to meet some of our sweet therapy pups, learn more about the heartwarming work we do, and enjoy a beautiful day at the zoo.

Highlights include: trick-or-treating, costume contests, magic shows, face painting, fun inflatables, a live DJ, fun vendors (like us!), and of course...animals at the zoo!



Zoo Miami



Saturday, October 25th



10 AM - 3 PM



Tickets required for admission at: zoomiami.org/zoo-boo

We can't wait to see you there—come say hi and share some smiles with our therapy dogs!

To learn more about how to become a pet therapy team with your dog, visit catdogs.org/become-a-pet-therapy-team/

MEET THE NEWEST MEMBERS OF OUR PACK



Steve with Zeke

Emmalyn with Ellie

Anne with Quinzy

Karen with Olaf

Leeann with Emma

MEET OUR NEW THERAPY DOGS!

We're excited to introduce five wonderful new therapy dog teams who have recently joined the C.A.T. family. Each dog brings their own unique personality and warmth to the people they'll be visiting.

Zeke is a spirited Vizsla whose charm is hard to miss. His shiny coat matches his bright personality, and he's a happy, lovable boy who's sure to bring smiles wherever he goes. **Ellie** is a sweet little Schnoodle with a gentle heart. Her affectionate personality makes her a natural at comforting others, and she'll win people over with her precious charm. **Quinzy** is a soft and friendly Goldendoodle who's following in the footsteps of his therapy dog sister, Fenway. He's soft and fluffy and loves getting gentle pets. He's a wonderful addition. **Olaf** is a beautiful Great Pyrenees whose size is matched only by his gentle nature. He's calm, comforting, and incredibly kind, bringing a peaceful presence and making people feel at ease. **Emma** is a Rottweiler with a special story. She's been with C.A.T. for years, working alongside her dad, who recently passed. Now, she continues their legacy with her mom, bringing the same warmth and compassion to her visits. She's gentle, friendly, and always happy to see you.

CELEBRATING GROWTH AND GRATITUDE

Canine Assisted Therapy began in 2009 with our founders and their two incredible therapy dogs, **Dillon and Chance**, whose gentle spirits helped lay the foundation for everything C.A.T. has built.

Now, we are on the brink of a major milestone of having **nearly 150 volunteer pet therapy teams!** This incredible growth is a testament to the dedication of our volunteers, the increasing recognition of pet therapy's impact on mental health, and the compassionate people in our community who commit their time, hearts, and canine companions to this work. We're also deeply grateful to our supporters who help make it all possible. Every visit, every smile, every moment of comfort is part of this journey, and we can't wait to celebrate this milestone with you when we get there!



Dillon



Chance



Therapy dog Penny passing her advanced evaluation to work with children

C.A.T. IN THE COMMUNITY

October has been full of heartwarming moments, meaningful connections, and community impact, and the month's not even over yet! Here are some highlights:

Earlier in the month, we joined **NAMI's Mental Health Walk** at NSU, where Pearl, Bailey, and Dalton were there to encourage, comfort and put a little extra joy in the steps of the participants.



Therapy dog Bailey and handler at NAMI walk

Our teams brought calm, care and respite to the dedicated staff at **CityHouse, Inc.**, a local nonprofit supporting single mothers and their children as they rebuild their lives.

Students from the **Boys and Girls Club** had a field trip to our office and helped evaluate some of our therapy dogs for work with kids in schools and hospitals.



Therapy dog Sadie with students

At **Louis and Anne Green Memory and Wellness Center** at FAU, our teams spent time with seniors facing memory challenges, offering cognitive and social interaction as well as lots of love and attention.

And what's October without a little Halloween fun? We joined the **Flamingo Flea's Halloween Puppy Brunch** at **Tarpon River Brewing**, where we connected with the community, raised funds alongside a local rescue, and had a fun afternoon of costumes, brews, vendors, and puppy love.

Still ahead: visits to the **PACE Center for Girls**, **Sunny Isles Library**, and a festive Halloween pet parade at **Holtz Children's Hospital**. October's been busy — just the way we like it!



Therapy dogs Sylvie and Ranger at Tarpon River Brewing with C.A.T. staff, Amanda

BECOME A SUPPORTER

Donations made to C.A.T. help provide therapeutic interactions to at-risk youth, pediatric patients, seniors, individuals with special needs, Veterans, and many others.

Visit catdogs.org/donate



C.A.T. IN THE COMMUNITY cont'd.



Therapy dogs Dorothy, Kaito, Franklin, and Dalton at their monthly visit at a drug addiction treatment center



Therapy dog Ember with her friends from the Boys and Girls Club



Therapy dog Charli getting some love at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital



Therapy dog Pearl at NAMI's Mental Health Walk



Therapy dog Kenzie at Elison Senior Living



Therapy dogs Cody and Cassie at NSU



Therapy dog Ranger at FLL Airport

To learn more about how to become a pet therapy team with your dog, visit catdogs.org/become-a-pet-therapy-team/



MEET CHICO — AND HELP HIM SPREAD TWICE THE JOY

When Albert Miniaci was facing some health challenges, his wife brought home a tiny mini schnauzer named Chico. What started as a way to keep Albert moving turned into something much more — a bond that brought purpose, healing, and joy.

Today, Albert and Chico are a certified therapy dog team with Canine Assisted Therapy. Together, they visit children undergoing chemotherapy, struggling students, and individuals with disabilities across South Florida, spreading comfort and connection wherever they go.

Their story inspired **CHICO'S Challenge**: a special opportunity to make your gift go twice as far. Now **through December 31**, donations from new donors or those who haven't given in the past year will be **matched dollar-for-dollar**, up to **\$25,000**, thanks to Albert and the **Alfred and Rose Miniaci Family Fund of the Community Foundation of Broward**.

But whether you're new, returning, or a longtime supporter, **every gift matters**. Your donation helps us **support nearly 150 therapy dog teams** who bring hope and healing to people in hospitals, schools, senior centers, treatment centers, shelters, and more.

As we move through the final months of the year, we're reflecting on the tens of thousands of lives touched by our therapy dogs teams. Like the young girl who found a moment of peace in quietly talking to a therapy dog during a long, scary hospital stay, or the elderly man in memory care who smiled for the first time in days when a dog rested its head on his knee.

Your support today helps us reach even more people who could use a little comfort and connection. Not just now, but in the months ahead and well into 2026.

Give today — and your impact could be doubled.

JOIN CHICO'S CHALLENGE

BECOME A SUPPORTER

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THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS

This month, we're proud to recognize two foundations whose generosity and support is helping us expand our reach into Miami-Dade County, bringing comfort, connection, and healing to even more people in need.

To **The Miami Foundation** – Thank you for joining us as a new supporter. Your belief in our mission is helping us grow where we're needed most. And to the **Dr. John T. Macdonald Foundation** – We're so grateful for your continued partnership and commitment to the power of therapy dogs.



GUIDING OUR MISSION - MEET OUR BOARD

Our board of directors is also a driving force behind our growth. Their leadership, vision, and dedication help guide our mission and ensure we can continue reaching people during some of life's hardest moments. Whether it's expanding into new communities, strengthening our programs, or helping us navigate challenges, their commitment plays a vital role in everything we do.

Nancy Brown, Board Chair – President, Fritch Foundation

Tanya Bower, Vice Chair – Partner, Business Law Team

Philip Verde, Secretary – Wealth Advisor, Truist Bank

Evgeny Munkov – Director of Investments, BBX Capital

Dr. Stephanie Jones, DVM – Veterinarian, Animal Hospital of Fort Lauderdale

Paul O'Connell – Public Safety Advisor, City of Sunny Isles Beach

Jennifer Homan – Executive Director, Arts & Culture Center/Hollywood

Jennifer Powers – Major Gifts Officer, Wounded Warrior Project

Lana Pernia – Tax Director, Gearson Preston

Beverly Joseph – SVP Commercial Lender, Pacific National Bank

Ellen Springs – Firm Administrator, Tripp Scott

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