



CANINE ASSISTED THERAPY

Helping heal lives, one paw at a time.

Founded in 2009, Canine Assisted Therapy, Inc. (C.A.T.) is a 501(c)(3) human services organization located in Broward county. For more than 14 years, C.A.T. has been providing pet therapy visits to those in need throughout South Florida at no cost. Our 100+ volunteer pet therapy teams serve over 55,000 individuals each year in Broward, Palm Beach, and Miami-Dade counties.

Therapeutic interactions with trained dogs and their handlers are provided to vulnerable populations including at-risk youth, pediatric cancer patients, isolated seniors, veterans, those faced with trauma or mental health issues, individuals with special needs, first responders and many others. Visits take place at facilities like hospitals, foster care, schools, VA centers, treatment and behavioral health centers, shelters, police and fire departments, etc.

Canine Assisted Therapy's mission is to enhance quality of life and well-being through the human-animal bond. Programming and services include a range of animal assisted activities and animal assisted interventions that promote healing, education, health care and wellness, disaster response, and respect for animals and all human beings.

Canine Assisted Therapy's programming includes:

- **Mental Health and Trauma Response (MHTR):** This important program was created after C.A.T. pet therapy teams responded to the 2018 mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School and recognized the need for community support following traumatic events. The MHTR program provides intermediate emotional support to those struggling with mental health issues and individuals facing the aftermath of a crisis or trauma. Therapists, first responders, and trauma response professionals can utilize therapy dogs in group meetings or other settings to assist with healing.
- **Canine Comfort:** Provides in-person animal assisted activities to children and adults in hospitals, foster care, nursing homes, treatment centers, Veteran centers, shelters and hospice in a safe, supervised and therapeutic environment. The positive interaction with a therapy dog helps to improve ones' overall mood and mental well-being.

- **Bite Prevention:** Educational lesson that teaches children the appropriate way to approach a dog, the basic skills to help prevent avoidable dog bites, and the importance of respecting animals.
- **Paws for Reading:** Helps at-risk and struggling students achieve their reading goals and build confidence. One-on-one or small group visits provide struggling students a safe place to practice their reading skills with the support from a non-judgmental canine.
- **Courthouse Canines / Kids in Judicial Care:** Through our partnership with the Broward County Courthouse, therapy dogs are provided to be present in dependency or delinquency court to be by the child's side as they give testimony in a Judge's chambers. The dog's presence provides the child with a sense of comfort which helps he or she give a more accurate and comprehensive testimony.
- **Paws for Special Needs:** Provides animal assisted therapy to children and adults with special needs and/or receiving physical or occupational therapy. Therapy dogs can be incorporated into supervised interactions to help individuals become more aware of their surroundings, improve their coordination, encourage social skills, increase their self-confidence and reach their goals.
- **Paws to De-stress:** Visits to corporate and college campuses are provided to employees and students to help decrease stress and anxiety levels during exam periods, work deadlines or other stressful times.

Partnerships and Facilities: Canine Assisted Therapy provides services and support to more than 50 facilities and partners with organizations like: Women in Distress; Aid to Victims of Domestic Abuse (AVDA); SOS Children's Village; Monarch Senior Living of Coconut Creek; Eagles Haven; Coconut Creek High School; Covenant House Fort Lauderdale; Broward Health; Broward County Courthouse; Jackson Health System; Destination Hope Treatment Center; Behavioral Initiatives; Holy Cross Hospital; Nova Southeastern University; and many others!

Recent Accomplishments: A winner of the 2021 Community Foundation of Broward's Hidden Heroes Awards; Selected by The Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber for the Small Business Award for Creative Pivot during the COVID pandemic; Received the Great Non Profit's 2022 Top-Rated Non Profit gold seal and Candid's 2022 Platinum Transparency Seal.

