

## Senior Corps Work Plan SAMPLE

<b>Work Plan Name:</b> Mental Health – Sample 1 (RSVP)	<b>Work Plan ID:</b> ALE13092
<b>Issue Area:</b> Health/Nutrition	<b>Total # Stations:</b> 1
<b>Service Category:</b> Mental Health	<b>Total # Volunteers:</b> 12
<p><b>Community Need:</b>  When residents enter senior housing, assisted living, and nursing homes in Marshall County, most of these individuals have already lost the touch of a spouse, and many of them have no family or friends who visit them. For some people, touch from another person is not acceptable, especially in hospitals where most touch is painful or invasive. These residents need the safe, non-threatening touch of an animal to hold, hug, and touch. This touch can make a world of difference to people who would otherwise have no positive, appropriate physical contact. Pet therapy is widely recognized in the medical community as a form of “expressive therapy” that can enhance the emotional, psychological, social, and physical well-being of hospital patients and nursing home residents.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>Prior to RSVP’s development of the Therapy Dogs Program in 2003, Marshall County had no animal-assisted therapy program at any of its senior housing, assisted living or nursing home facilities. This network of caring individuals now shares their special animals in order to bring happiness and cheer to people who need something to hold and love. The Therapy Dogs Program provides residents the opportunity for empathy, outward focus, rapport, entertainment, socialization, mental stimulation and physical contact/touch.</p>	
<p><b>Service Activity:</b>  10 RSVP volunteers will serve in the Therapy Dogs Program as dog handlers for the Animal-Assisted Activity Teams (AAA). 2 additional RSVP volunteers will coordinate visits of the AAA team to senior housing, assisted living and nursing home facilities.</p> <p>Once the AAA Team is ready, RSVP will schedule the therapy work at five assisted living and nursing homes (Albertville Assisted Living, Boaz Health and Rehabilitation, Branchwater Assisted Living, Garden House Alzheimer and Merrill Gardens Assisted Living, and Marshall Manor Nursing Home). AAA Teams will make an average of two 1.5 hour visits per month, for ten months, to five local senior residential facilities over the next year, for a total of approximately 100 visits.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> American Medical Association: <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/17840.html> and <http://archinte.ama-assn.org/cgi/reprint/159/8/789.pdf>

Churchill M, Safaoui J, McCabe B, et al: Using a therapy dog to alleviate the agitation and desocialization of people with Alzheimer's disease. *Journal of Psychosocial Nursing and Mental Health Services* 1999; 37:16-24.

Fritz C, Farver T, Kass P, et al: Association with companion animals and the expression of noncognitive symptoms in Alzheimer's patients. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease* 1995; 183:459-463.

**Anticipated Input:**

Twelve RSVP volunteers will serve in the Therapy Dogs Program.

- Ten RSVP volunteer dog handlers will each receive 16 hours of training and observation. Volunteer dog handlers will learn about special needs, interaction, health and safety, and patient confidentiality. Volunteer dog handlers must also pass a skills test which shows whether the animal can be controlled by the handler and follow basic commands. Dogs must pass a health screening by the animal's regular veterinarian, have immunizations as required by state law, and be free from parasites, disease, infections and illnesses. Therapy Dogs, Inc. will provide a trainer to certify team members as an in-kind contribution to the program.
- RSVP will cover the volunteers with insurance during the training and observation period. Once certified and membership papers are submitted, Therapy Dogs, Inc. will provide the insurance that protects the people visited, in the event of injury or illness; as a result of contact with a dog.
- Two RSVP volunteers will assist with coordination of training and AAA Team visits to facilities.

**Anticipated Accomplishments/Outputs:** The AAA Teams will visit approximately 12 residents a month at each of five facilities for a total of 60 residents.

**Indicator:** Number of residents receiving a visit

**Target:** 60 residents at the five facilities will receive visits.

**How Measured?** *AAA Team Visit Logs* completed by the teams after visiting the facility

**Anticipated Intermediate Impact/Outcome:** Residents who receive visits will be happier in the presence of the AAA Team.

**Indicator:** Percent of residents who receive at least three visits and are happier in the presence of the therapy animal team (e.g. smiling, talkative, animated)

**Target:** 75% percent of residents who receive at least three visits will be happier in the presence of the AAA Team.

**How Measured?** *AAA Team Observation Visit Report* completed by the activity director during visits

**Anticipated End Impact/Outcome:** Residents visited by AAA Teams on a regular basis (over ten months) will show elevated socialization even when the dogs are not present.

**Indicator:** Percent of residents who receive at least ten visits that show elevated socialization even when the dogs are not present (e.g. responding to conversations, initiating conversations).

**Target:** 50% of the residents visited by AAA Teams at least ten times will show elevated socialization even when the dogs are not present.

**How Measured?** *Therapy Dogs Program Resident Socialization Report* completed by the activity director over the ten month period for residents who have at least ten visits during that time period.