

# Pet Therapy has Positive Impact at Senior Living Community

*The Pines of Mount Lebanon Residents Benefit from Interaction with Puppy*

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EINPresswire.com/ -- The residents at The Pines of Mount Lebanon recently welcomed a "Buddy" into the senior living community.

Actually, Buddy is a 1-year-old Morkie Poodle. The lovable white puppy with black spots and black ears quickly made an impression as part of a pet therapy program held in conjunction with Pinnacle Palliative Care in Pittsburgh.



Jill Conroy of Pinnacle Palliative Care presents the puppy Buddy to The Pines of Mount Lebanon resident GiGi Vitelli as part of a pet therapy program.

"Pinnacle brought the therapy dog to our community for the first time," said Shelly Hyde, LifeStages Director at The Pines of Mount Lebanon. "Many residents have had their own pets when growing up or when they were raising a family. When pets come to the community, it brings back many fond memories."

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*Jill Conroy, Pinnacle Palliative Care*

"The benefits of pet therapy bring a sense of joy," Hyde continued. "The residents all begin talking and reminiscing about their own pets that they once had. They always look forward to having animals visit our community. It seems to bring out the inner child."

Pet therapy, sometimes referred to as animal assisted therapy, uses animals such as Buddy to interact with seniors to improve their quality of life. Studies have shown that spending even 15 minutes bonding with an animal

may promote hormonal changes in the brain.

The bond between people and their pets may increase fitness, lower stress, and bring happiness to their owners – regardless of age. Researchers said some of the health benefits of having a pet may include decreased blood pressure, decreased cholesterol and triglyceride levels, decreased feelings of loneliness and increased opportunities for socialization.

The seniors at The Pines of Mount Lebanon certainly appreciated their time spent with Buddy.

“Buddy loves the seniors as much as they love him,” said Jill Conroy of Pinnacle Palliative Care. Conroy brought Buddy to the senior living community and introduced the puppy to the residents and team members.



The Pines of Mount Lebanon resident Lois Dormaracki enjoys spending time with the puppy Buddy as part of pet therapy at the senior living community.

“Buddy really brings so much joy to the seniors all over and I think it brings back a lot of memories for them as to when they had pets,” Conroy said. “Buddy is very friendly and loves to be loved. Pet therapy is one of the most rewarding programs. It can help with those who are feeling isolated, and it may help manage anxiety, loneliness and depression.”

“These are just a few benefits that prove pet therapy can have such a huge impact on their lives,” Conroy said. “I feel so honored to bring Buddy into their environment.”

Residents had an opportunity to pet and interact with the puppy throughout the visit. Hyde said the smiles on the seniors’ faces revealed the impact a few moments with Buddy had on them.

“We do have some family members that bring their dogs for visits. The residents love seeing them and giving them some love,” said Autumn Metzmaier, Executive Operations Officer at The Pines of Mount Lebanon. “This visit by Buddy was even more special because Buddy visited residents throughout the community and really brought joy to our building.”

Any animals brought to The Pines of Mount Lebanon must meet certain standards. “The animals are required to have their current vaccinations and any shots,” Metzmaier said. “We have that information on file. As of now, we do not have a regular schedule of when pets such as Buddy will visit The Pines again, but his appearance certainly was a big hit.”

Shelly Hyde, LifeStages Director

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