



WHAT IS PETS AS THERAPY?

It's all about enriching lives through animal companionship!

Pets As Therapy (PAT) was launched in South Africa in 2001. PAT organises therapeutic visits by pet owners, who volunteer to take their friendly animals (mainly dogs, and also cats) to visit people in hospitals, hospices, retirement homes, frail care units, special needs schools, group homes, and numerous other venues. PAT visits bring company, support, comfort, pleasure, stress relief and stimulation to those either permanently or temporarily incapacitated.

The PAT visiting scheme is provided free of charge; all volunteers pay is a small annual membership fee. This subsidises the cost of registering the pet, and provides the owner and pet with identification badges, registration certificates, public liability insurance cover and official handbooks containing helpful notes on how to start visiting and the benefits to all involved.

PAT volunteers are on the increase in Cape Town, with teams doing regular visits across the city and beyond!

For any further information contact:
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Pets As Therapy



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Enriching lives through animal companionship



Red Cross Children's Hospital enjoy Benji's visit



We are always looking for caring people with friendly pets, who would like to become involved as PAT volunteers.

All potential volunteers, and their pets, undergo a formal assessment by a trained assessor, before being accepted as PAT volunteers.

Should your pet not prove suitable, or should you not be interested in becoming a volunteer, we would love you to become a Friend of PAT. We need all the support we can get!

WALKING INTO A ROOM WITH A PAT DOG OR CAT IS LIKE WAVING A MAGIC WAND!

What are the benefits?

- ✓ *In a study of severe dementia, after a 30-minute visit by a PAT dog, it was found*

that there was an improvement in mood, alertness and reality orientation.

- ✓ *Visits to Alzheimer patients stimulate long-term memory, leading to social interaction and discussion of other topics.*
- ✓ *Patients who find communication difficult are able to communicate easier with animals.*
- ✓ *When stroking an animal, there is a voluntary increase in the use of hands and limbs, which may be atrophying due to arthritis or other debilitating conditions.*
- ✓ *Stroke victims receive companionship and unconditional love without the need to talk.*
- ✓ *Elderly people, and those who are mentally ill, are very lonely and PAT dogs and cats have the ability to break through this barrier of loneliness.*
- ✓ *Children in hospital having treatment or awaiting operations are distracted, entertained and relaxed by a visiting PAT dog or cat.*

- PAT Cape Town
- PAT Stellenbosch/Helderberg
- PAT Gauteng
- PAT East London
- PAT Polokwane
- PAT Hermanus
- More to come!

For further information contact:

www.pat.org.za

E-Mail: info@pat.org.za

WHY DO WE DO IT?

The benefits to PAT volunteers, and their pets, are also profound. The owners reap great satisfaction from bringing warmth and happiness into the lives of another human being, and the animals enjoy being loved, fussed over and making a positive difference!

Extract from "Loneliness: A Health Hazard of Modern Times" by Susan L. Duncan, RN:

"What about people who are unable to care for a pet, but still wish to have contact with pets? Or people who are in hospitals, rehab facilities, extended care and nursing homes? Procedures are performed; medication is given; caregivers ask many specific questions and come and go at all hours through the client's room. This is a very lonely and stressful experience unless the client is supported in using his or her coping skills. For those who wish to interact with a pet, controlled animal visits can provide that therapeutic contact."

