

A&M vet students loan dogs for new 'Pet Pals' program

By MELANIE PERKINS
Reporter

A group of Texas A&M veterinary students and their dogs visited the Crestview Retirement Community Saturday as part of the newly established "Pet Pals" program.

Garry Reece, second year veterinary student and chairman of the program, said the pets are important therapy because they present outside stimulation for the residents, some of whom rarely or never have visitors.

"We use the pets to try to make their life a little more exciting," he said.

To participate in the program, pets must fulfill the necessary health requirements and be registered in Brazos County. The pet must be approved by a committee member before being allowed to participate in visitation. It is not necessary to be a veterinary student or even to own a pet in order to participate, Reece said.

Sarah Cliver, Crestview activity director, said she is pleased with the pet visitation and is seeing results already. People who don't talk much have shown more reaction than they normally do, she said.

"Some people talk because it is their nature, but it is really impressive when someone who can't even feed himself reaches out to touch a dog," she said.

Sally Smith, Crestview resident, seemed extremely interested in the dogs and asked questions about their diets and coats. She wondered if some of the dogs would shed some fur or have it clipped before warm weather set in because she didn't want them to get too hot.

"The dogs are wonderful — I've had pets all my life and I miss not having one," she said.

Dr. William McCulloch, professor of veterinary public health at A&M and sponsor of the "Pet Pals" program, said pets help break the ice and get people to open up because pets are not threatening, but loving.

"The pet in itself is not a cure-all,



Photo by SCOTT SUTHERLAND

Doug Lange and his dog, Ben, visit Saturday with Florence Simon in Bryan's Crestview Retirement Home.

but a social facilitator — the animal is introduced into a setting with the purpose of improving the physical, mental and social health of the individuals involved," McCulloch said.

McCulloch said pets satisfy the basic human need to touch.

"People have the need to nurture and hug something — the need for touch is always there from childhood," McCulloch said.

McCulloch said another reason pets (especially dogs) are important is because they recognize people.

He said the residents enjoy seeing the pets and also talking to the people on the end of the leash.

"The whole package is really significant — the pets as well as the people provide a social kind of interface they really enjoy without the bother of keeping a pet," McCulloch said.

He said the program is a "two-way street" because the students learn to care about their fellow man.

Kelly English was one of several students who brought cameras and

took pictures of residents enjoying the dogs.

"We are planning on putting up the pictures we are taking for the residents here to enjoy," she said.

Residents who could not leave their rooms and wanted to see the dogs were visited by a dog called a "Rover".

A notebook was provided for students to write down their impressions and the reactions of the residents they visited. Reece said this notebook will help in evaluating the progress of the program.

Reece said the visits, conducted on Saturday mornings at 10 o'clock, will continue on a weekly basis. Possible changes include adding cats to the agenda and having the visits outside when the weather permits, he said.

The goals of the program are to improve the quality of life for Crestview residents, to improve the presentation and client relation skills of the participating students, and to promote the image of A&M and the veterinary profession.

UT students gain right to distribute journal

Associated Press

AUSTIN — A spokesman for a conservative student journal said Monday "everybody stands to benefit" from a court order allowing the journal to be distributed on the University of Texas campus.

On Friday, State District Judge Bob Jones granted the Texas Review Society, which publishes the Texas Review, a temporary restraining order against the university.

John Colyandro, president and publisher of the 12-page review, told a press conference Monday that UT bars the unlimited, on-campus dis-

tribution of any publication, which contains advertising, except the student newspaper, The Daily Texan.

"Specifically, we could no longer distribute on the university's West Mall," Colyandro said.

He said 4,600 to 5,000 copies of the journal are printed and distributed free by society members, half of those on the West Mall, and about 50 percent of the society's membership results from mall distribution.

The journal, according to the lawsuit, is published six times a year. Since May, the journal has run advertisements to bring in revenue, Colyandro said.

"Our continued existence hinges on our ability to offset our publishing costs with paid advertising," Colyandro said. "In short, if we cannot distribute on the mall, we cannot educate other students, recruit new members or effectively compete in the marketplace of ideas."

After the society was informed it could only distribute the journal from vending machines in designated areas, Colyandro said. It sought legal aid from the Texas Civil Liberties Union.

Colyandro said the TCLU "will conduct lawsuits free of charge and has done so for us."

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