

Joy in Childhood Foundation® Unleashes “Dogs for Joy”

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Pediatric in-residence dog program to increase the number of full-time service dogs in children's hospitals. This first-of-its-scale program will bring joy to children in hospitals through service dogs specially trained to work full-time in pediatric hospitals.

CANTON, Mass. (December 12, 2018) – For children in hospitals, sometimes the best medicine and moments of joy can come with four paws, a wet nose, and a wagging tail. Today the [Joy in Childhood Foundation](https://www.joyinchildhoodfoundation.org/), the independent charitable foundation powered by Dunkin' and Baskin-Robbins, is launching its “Dogs for Joy” program to bring in-residence dogs to children's hospitals nationwide. Dogs in this program are bred and trained as service dogs but “work” full-time in children's hospitals. Through more than \$2M in initial grants the program will dramatically increase the number of in-residence dog programs in pediatric healthcare settings around the country and the prevalence of animal-assisted therapy as part of treatment.

In-residence dogs, also known as facility dogs, offer distraction, motivation and joy to patients and families. They can help lower stress and anxiety for pediatric patients and encourage them to complete their health care goals. In-residence dogs can be trained to do incredible things like keep kids calm during medical interventions, teach them how to take a pill or model how to put on a hospital gown. Despite their tremendous potential, in-residence dog programs are relatively new and out of more than 220 children's hospitals in the United States, few have in-residence dog programs. This initiative, the first of its scale, will provide grants to children's hospitals across the country to launch a new in-residence dog program or expand an existing program.

At Children's Healthcare of Atlanta in Atlanta, GA, 16 full-time facility dogs serve as part of the Canines For Kids program, which aids the clinical teams in their daily mission to serve patients and provides unconditional love and acceptance to everyone in the hospital. The Canines For Kids program at Children's was the first of its kind and has been replicated in more than 20 other pediatric or medical institutions across the U.S. to date.

Jana Stockwell, MD, a pediatric critical care physician at Children's, knows firsthand the importance of facility dog programs and the joy they can bring patients, families and staff. Stockwell has been a handler for Tidings, a Goldendoodle that works in the Pediatric Intensive Care Unit, since September 2016.

“I could never have predicted the immense positive impact of Tidings, not only for patients and families but also for our staff,” says Stockwell. “When Tidings lies in bed with a patient or nuzzles up next to a parent, smiles and tail wags follow. Our Children's dogs are full-time employees with a meaningful job to do, and on a daily basis, Tidings helps children be more engaged, encourages them to get out of bed, and even inspires them to tell us about a pet at home that they're missing. Our facility dogs never fail to lift the spirits of kids and adults alike.”

After conducting an extensive assessment within pediatric hospitals around the country, the Joy in Childhood Foundation recognized facility dogs as one of the most impactful programs for both the mental and physical dispositions of children. The Dogs for Joy program aims to fill this unmet need in hospitals around the country, and will help further the Foundation's mission to bring joy to kids battling illness or hunger.

In launching Dogs for Joy, the Joy in Childhood Foundation has adopted its own facility dog, Cooper, who serves as the Foundation's Chief Joy Officer and the Dogs for Joy program ambassador. In this dual role, Cooper will bring joy to kids through special appearances, including visits to children's hospitals nationwide.

“Our mission is to bring joy to kids in truly meaningful ways. We are proud to launch Dogs for Joy to bring the important benefits of in-residence dogs to more doctors, nurses, child life specialists, and most importantly parents and kids,” said Kari McHugh, Executive Director of the Joy in Childhood Foundation. “As a mother who has cared for a child with cancer, my family and I know well the happiness these dogs create on even the worst days, and the powerful, positive impact a relationship with a dog can make. I'm thrilled we can bring that joy to as many facilities and families as possible.”

Funds awarded through the Dogs for Joy program cover costs for launching and maintaining a facility dog program at a hospital which includes adoption of the dog, training of select staff, dog food, dog grooming needs, dog toys, and more. The first Dogs for Joy grantee is Cleveland Clinic Children's in Cleveland, OH, which is receiving \$150,000 from the Joy in Childhood Foundation to launch an in-residence dog program. The grant will fund two dogs over the course of three years.

The Joy in Childhood Foundation invites children's hospitals nationwide to apply for a Dogs for Joy grant if they are interested in launching a new in-residence dog program or expanding an existing program. Applicants can submit via <http://www.joyinchildhoodfoundation.org/dogsforjoy> until March 31, 2019.

To learn more about the Joy in Childhood Foundation, visit <https://www.joyinchildhoodfoundation.org/> or follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/JoyInChildhoodFoundation/ and on Instagram at <https://www.instagram.com/joyinchildhood/>.

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About the Joy in Childhood Foundation

The Joy in Childhood Foundation is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization, powered by Dunkin' and Baskin-Robbins. The Foundation's goal is to provide the simple joys of childhood to kids battling hunger or illness. The Foundation brings together a wide range of stakeholders – including franchisees, crew members, employees, partners and guests – and partners with food banks, children's hospitals, and nonprofit organizations directly committed to serving kids to fund joyful environments and joyful experiences for kids when they need it most. Since launching in 2006, the Joy in Childhood Foundation has granted more than \$18 million to hundreds of national and local charities across the country. For more information, please visit <https://www.joyinchildhoodfoundation.org/>.

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