

## The Dog Days of Summer Get A Little Brighter

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The Joy In Childhood Foundation's Dogs For Joy Program Grants In-Residence Service Dogs to Nine U.S. Pediatric Hospitals

Powered by Dunkin' and Baskin-Robbins, the Joy in Childhood Foundation brightens up the "dog days of summer" by increasing the number of dogs who work full-time in children's hospitals and bring joy to kids battling illnesses.

BOSTON, Mass. (July 22, 2019) — For children battling illnesses, the "dog days of summer" just got a little brighter thanks to the Dunkin' and Baskin-Robbins Dogs for Joy program. Starting this July, the \$2M grant program will provide 11 trained in-residence service dogs to nine premiere pediatric hospitals nationwide, bringing joy and animal-assisted therapy to nearly 150,000 pediatric patients and family members.

Formally launched in 2018, the Joy in Childhood Foundation's Dogs for Joy program places highly specialized in-residence service dogs as full-time members of children's hospital care teams. These dogs are critical parts of patients' treatment plans, trained to do tasks like teach kids how to take a pill, keep a child calm during a medical intervention, provide incentives for a child to get out of bed for a walk, and much more. Each hospital partner submitted a proposal to the Joy in Childhood Foundation earlier this year.

The prevalence of animal-assisted therapy as part of treatment is rising as dogs demonstrate beneficial effects on pediatric patients and staff. According to Kari McHugh, Executive Director of the Joy in Childhood Foundation, "When kids face serious illness, it robs them of the simple joys of childhood. The Joy in Childhood Foundation is always seeking new ways to help kids feel like kids, even on their most difficult days. Working with the best pediatric staff in the nation, we are proud to partner with these facilities to bring joy to pediatric patients with animal-assisted therapy as part of their treatment."

Hospital partners receiving grants include:

- Children's Healthcare of Atlanta (Atlanta, GA)
- Children's Hospital Colorado (Aurora, CO)
- Medical University of South Carolina Foundation (Charleston, SC)
- Cleveland Clinic Children's (Cleveland, OH)
- Golisano Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida (Ft. Myers, FL)
- Yale New Haven Children's Hospital (New Haven, CT)
- The Children's Hospital at OU Medicine (Oklahoma City, OK)
- CHOC Children's Hospital (Orange, CA)
- Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (Philadelphia, PA)

Grant amounts vary but typically range between \$50,000-150,000. To be eligible, applicants must be a children's hospital or general hospital with a dedicated pediatric department and be within geographic proximity to Dunkin' or Baskin-Robbins locations. Hospitals interested in future Dogs for Joy grants may learn more at [www.joyinchildhoodfoundation.org/dogsforjoy](http://www.joyinchildhoodfoundation.org/dogsforjoy) and inquire about eligibility and participation at [foundation@dunkinbrands.com](mailto:foundation@dunkinbrands.com).

The Dogs for Joy program will help to place a total of 11 dogs this year. These newly granted service dogs will provide assistance and support to patients and family members. In partnership with their designated trained handlers, these dogs are trained to have a positive impact in the healing process and are therapeutic.

"In-residence dogs can be a critical part of a child's treatment team, serve as constant "therapeutic agents" and help children maintain a positive outlook during a hospital stay," said Kizzy Marco, Medical Dog Program coordinator at Children's Hospital Colorado. "In addition to playing an important clinical role, the presence of a dog initiates a relaxation response, releases calming endorphins, lowers blood pressure, and can even help ease the experience of physical pain. Dogs bring joy to all and help the healing process."

For more information about the Dogs for Joy program, visit <https://www.joyinchildhoodfoundation.org/dogsforjoy>.

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About the Joy in Childhood Foundation

The <http://www.bringjoy.org/> 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 when they need it most. In 2019 the Joy in Childhood Foundation will grant more than \$5 million and has granted over \$20 million since its inception. For more information and to learn about our Dogs for Joy program, please visit <http://www.bringjoy.org/>

#BringJoy #DogsForJoy #Dunkin #BaskinRobbins #JoyInChildhoodFoundation #ServiceDogs

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