



## **CERTIFICATION PROCESS**

### **What do therapy dogs do?**

Therapy dogs offer comfort and companionship to people during visits to a wide range of facilities, including seniors' residences, hospitals, colleges and universities, libraries, elementary and high schools, companies, homeless and women's shelters as well as other locations. Accompanied by their handlers, they are there to be petted and enjoyed.

### **What kind of dog can be a therapy dog?**

Therapy dogs must be confident, friendly, patient, and gentle in all situations. They may have calm or exuberant personalities. Individual dogs of many breeds can do the work. However, for reasons of safety, Imagine Therapy Dogs does not accept purebred or mixed breed dogs with guarding or fighting heritage or history (for example, pit bulls).

### **What training is required?**

All volunteer teams with Imagine Therapy Dogs must have successfully completed two levels of training. Our Life Skills class is designed to positively educate the handler and dog in essential, polite canine behaviour. In some cases, equivalent training to this class may be accepted. The Therapy Team class addresses specific requirements for therapy visits (such as familiarity with medical equipment) and covers commonly encountered situations. Advanced classes for visits with children or other special visits may also be required.

### **What about the handler? Does the handler require special training?**

Handlers are not required to have prior training or experience. You will be asked to undergo a criminal records check. Some venues do require volunteers to attend their own orientation and training classes in addition to ours. Many health care facilities require proof of flu or Covid 19 vaccination.



**HERE ARE THE STEPS FOR CERTIFYING YOUR DOG:**

1. Contact Imagine Therapy Dogs by email ([imaginetherapydogs@gmail.com](mailto:imaginetherapydogs@gmail.com)) or by phone (514-778-2783) to arrange an appointment for an initial interview and evaluation of your dog.
2. Register for and complete the required course(s) and provide the required health check information for yourself and your dog.
3. Register for and successfully pass a Therapy Dog evaluation. An application for a criminal records check will be completed at this time. You will be asked for three personal references as well.
4. Complete a minimum of 3 supervised visits with an experienced Imagine Therapy Dogs volunteer.
5. Arrange for regular visits to the venues of your choice.

**We look forward to hearing from you.**