

Franklin-Simpson Educational Excellence Foundation

Grant Application: Jessica Johnson, FSHS

Simpson County Schools implemented a therapy dog program at Franklin-Simpson High School. In 2021, Simpson County Schools acquired a medium sized goldendoodle named Maple, born July 29, 2021. At 4 months old, she began obedience training and specialized therapeutic skills. The school originally decided to purchase a puppy in order to try and start a program in the most economical way possible. Upon extensive evaluation from a canine behavior specialist, it was determined that Maple missed the early socialization period from 8 weeks to 16 weeks which resulted in behavior issues that disqualify her from being a therapy dog candidate. This was during the time paperwork and approval was being granted to acquire her before she came into our Wildcat family.

We are requesting a partnership with Educational Excellence Foundation that would allow us to continue our vision of implementing a therapeutic canine program in our schools by acquiring a therapy dog that has already met all the benchmarks and is fully trained and ready to work in our schools. The extensive training and temperament testing certification comes with a greater cost as opposed to purchasing a dog and training ourselves. However, the dog is guaranteed to be qualified and is ready to work with students, staff and community members. The canine would be approximately 6-8 months old and would be well past the age of being capable of demonstrating therapeutic skills. We have been in discussion with Deer Creek Labradoodles, a reputable and experienced therapy dog organization. They have provided — therapy dogs for many schools and organizations, including a current partnership with Warren County Schools that has a very successful therapy dog program.

If approved the new canine will reside in the home of our school social worker, Jessica Johnson, who will also be the daily handler for the dog at Franklin-Simpson High School. The canine would be working at FSHS daily for up to 8 years beginning in the 2023 school year. The dog will attend school every day and provide services for the students at FSHS. The canine that was purchased originally will be rehomed as a family dog with another family so that the therapy canine will be the only dog residing in the home at the suggestion of the therapy training organization. The trained therapy dog would be ready to begin work as soon as approval and paperwork is processed.

Research shows that suicide is the second leading cause of death among adolescents and that at least 1 in 6 youth experience a mental health disorder each year. The pandemic has created additional emotional traumas for students. A 2019 study published by the National Institutes of Health found that a dog present in school promotes positive mood and provides significant anti-stress effects on the body. Simpson County Schools is excited to provide a valuable resource to our students that will assist them in addressing emotional needs which ultimately helps students be academically successful.

Franklin-Simpson High School's mission is to empower students to be college and/or career ready. We know that in order for students to reach their maximum potential academically, they

must be emotionally stable to learn. According to the National Institutes of Health, the simple act of petting a dog has the effect of lowering blood pressure and heart rate. Pet therapy also lowers stress hormones, like cortisol, and increases oxytocin. Just being in contact with a therapy dog calms kids down when they're upset and helps keep their anxiety at bay. And reducing feelings of anxiety and depression enables them to focus on learning.

Franklin-Simpson High School serves approximately 900 students. The primary role as a therapy dog will be to assist individual students who are experiencing emotional distress (anxiety, depression, grief, etc) when they come to the office to meet with Mrs. Johnson privately. The therapy dog will also visit classrooms and common areas to support students. Additional benefits of the therapy dog program will include improving staff well being. Studies have shown that therapy dogs in schools not only promote positive mental health benefits but also improve memory, problem solving skills and executive functioning skills.

Simpson County Schools will provide financial support for the therapy dog as the cost for a fully trained dog is approximately \$10,000. Other agencies in the community have generously volunteered services and goods. Crocker Animal Clinic is providing reduced cost veterinary services. Tractor Supply Company committed to provide dog food for daily dietary needs. We hope The Franklin-Simpson Educational Excellence Foundation Inc. would be willing to partner with Simpson County Schools as well to assist in providing a valuable therapy dog program to the students. Thank you for your consideration.

BUDGET

Therapy Certified Canine Dog	\$8000.00
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Canine Good Citizen/Therapy Dog Certification

- AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy
- Generalization of Skills
- AKC Canine Good Citizen Classes
- Boot Camp Refresh
- Testing for Therapy Certification

Therapy Skills Certification

- Say High
- Hug (lay in lap, especially beneficial for special needs students)
- Reading Buddy

Total	\$8000.00
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RESOURCES

Deer Creek Labradoodles: www.deercreeklabradoodles.com



SEVERE WEATHER

⚠ [Special Weather Statement \(Moderate\) - Kentucky: Ballard, Caldwell, Calloway, Carlisle, Christian, 17 more](#) (https://www.wnky.com/?p=21315&alert=964781&alert_type=banner) 3/3

Warren County Schools welcomes two therapy dogs

July 24, 2020 by [Krista Garrison](https://www.wnky.com/bios/krista-garrison/) (<https://www.wnky.com/bios/krista-garrison/>)

BOWLING GREEN, Ky. – A local school district has a surprise for students when they return to the classroom.

This surprise has four fuzzy legs and a furry wagging tail, and she can't wait to meet the students.

Meet Rhys, a therapy dog for the Warren County School District.

The district is excited to announce the arrival of the 6-month-old pup.

Melissa Stephanski, is not only Rhys's caregiver, but the chief academic officer for Warren County Public Schools.

"These dogs can go in and can be in classrooms, they can be at events. If we have a student in crisis or a staff member then we would certainly be able to have our dogs on hand if we need them. Sometimes we have situations where a social worker may come and see a child and a staff member is not able to go in with them because that is their protocol; the dogs can," said Stephanski.

Rhys is a labradoodle.

She was donated to the school district along with another dog, by Deer Creek Labradoodles of Louisville.

A grant is funding training for the therapy dog.

Rhys isn't the only local school therapy dog.

Western Kentucky University's counseling and testing center has a poodle mix named Star.

Dogs brighten people's day and can provide a sense of comfort that humans cannot always provide according to Betsy Pierce, a therapist at WKU.

"I think dogs read our body language and our emotions because they're tuned in," Pierce said. "As people, we can read each other but we've usually got 14 other things on our mind at the time, and we are analyzing the awkwardness and 'what should I say and do,' and dogs are just there. They are just going to be with you. If you are sad or mad or whatever it is, they are just going to be with you."

A second therapy dog, Beau, will make its way to the Warren County schools sometime in the next few months.



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Church services mark one month after tornadoes

LOCAL

Somerset SRO hopes new comfort dog will be 'valuable resource' to schools in district

Melissa Santos Correspondent

Published 5:02 a.m. ET Feb. 26, 2021

SOMERSET — American humorist Josh Billings once wrote: “A dog is the only thing on earth that loves you more than he loves himself.” Thanks to the efforts of Jeffrey Schoonover, Superintendent of Somerset Public Schools and Somerset Berkley Regional High School and School Resource Officer Brendan Hague, the students at Somerset schools will soon understand just what Billings meant.

Hague first learned of the benefits of comfort dogs through a news article he encountered back in 2019, which highlighted the emergence of this resource throughout Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

More: Augie, a therapy dog in training, will assist stressed students at Dartmouth High School

Boonefield Labradors, located in New Hampshire, has donated 11 dogs to police departments throughout New England, according to its website. It is this breeder that will donate a young Labrador retriever to Hague and the Somerset Police Department.

While conducting research on the benefits of comfort dogs, Hague also recently began researching the mental impact COVID-19 has had on students. “I felt that a comfort dog would be great asset to help kids that are experiencing some sort of crisis or mental health breakdown,” Hague said.

Hague said he could not help but think about the loss in 2020 of four Somerset Berkley students and graduates — Noah Messier, Kyla McGarry, Christian Couto, and Devyn

Crosby — and how, perhaps, having that comfort dog “could have been a valuable resource” for those mourning those deaths.

According to Paws for People, the mental health benefits of pet therapy range from decreasing anxiety and reducing feelings of loneliness, to encouraging communication and helping children overcome speech and emotional disorders.

Schoonover had equally been interested in learning more about the benefits of comfort dogs for a couple of years, especially after speaking with other local superintendents who have introduced the resource into their own schools. Like Hague, Schoonover is fully aware of the benefits these dogs could have for the students.

“Not only have we created several different therapeutic programs over recent years in which a comfort/therapy dog would have a positive impact, we also know that students may experience more social emotional needs next year due to COVID,” Schoonover said.

In fact, the American Psychological Association has warned that the “negative and mental health effects of the coronavirus will be serious and long-lasting.”

Once Hague had learned of another SRO, from Bristol, R.I., who had obtained a comfort dog in the spring of 2020 from Boonefield Labradors, he set to work. He created a PowerPoint presentation which he first showed to Schoonover, who, given his own interest, immediately expressed his support.

Hague then met with Capt. William Tedford and Lt. Matt Reis. They, in turn, forwarded the proposal to Chief George M. McNeil, who then approved the program, acknowledging the invaluable resource it could be to the department, said Hague.

As an SRO, Hague visits each of the four schools within the district, so, as superintendent stated, “it makes sense that [Hague] is the dog’s handler so that all the students in the Somerset Public Schools have these experiences.” According to Hague, he expects that the young canine will be available to him by the end of summer or by early fall, just in time for the start of the 2021 school year.



PROFILE

Yogi is a dedicated people pleaser and talented therapy dog looking to apply his skills to a future career in changing peoples' lives. His certifications and love of snuggles would make him an asset in any school system or program working with children and/or those with special needs. As a qualified reading buddy and expert in deep pressure therapy, Yogi seeks to utilize his specialized skills in improving literacy and instill a deep love of learning as well as aid in the emotional and behavioral development of others.

CONTACT

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HOBBIES

Snuggling
Reading
Selfies
Eating
Being extra floofy



DEER CREEK
LABRADOODLES

YOGI

Certified Therapy Dog

EDUCATION

Deer Creek Academy
2/28/2023

Gifted Therapy Program – Certified Therapy Dog

Deer Creek Academy
12/28/2022

Puppy Graduate Program – Canine Good Citizen Graduate

WORK EXPERIENCE

Owenton Manor Nursing Home

2022 – Present

- Responsible for maintaining gentlemanly behavior in a hospital setting among medical equipment and food
- Demonstrates therapy skills with staff and residents. "Saying Hi" to new friends
- Provides cuddles and hugs to residents in a gentle manner
- Works as a team with his handler to enhance the lives of Manor faculty and residents
- Humbly accepts all compliments about how cute and cuddly he is

Grant County School System

2022 – Present

- Responsible for "Saying Hi" to individuals and groups of children and adults
- Demonstrates the ability to love and cuddle everyone he meets while controlling his flicker
- Maintains appropriate gentlemanly behavior in a school setting
- Provides deep pressure therapy to students and faculty members for extra support on a ruff day
- Assists with teaching students to read by being a good listener
- Assists his therapy partner in group demonstrations and discussions as a therapy dog ambassador
- Teaches students compassion and care of self and others

SKILLS

- Greeting new friends with "Say Hi"
- Reading buddy learning assistant
- Deep Pressure Therapy
- Face hugs
- Basic and Advanced Obedience commands
- Interpersonal skills
- Teamwork
- Group demonstrations
- Helping others
- Stress alleviation
- Character building

