



February 5, 2021

To Whom It May Concern,

As the Executive Director of Kennedy Children's Center, an NYCDOE-contracted preschool program for children with developmental disabilities with locations in New York City's East Harlem and The Bronx, I have witnessed the developmental skill-building opportunities, renewed focus and engagement, and innumerable smiles and laughter made possible by the kind and compassionate volunteer therapy animals and handlers of New York Therapy Animals.

It is always a joy to see how our preschoolers' faces light up when they meet these kind and gentle companions. The rich and unique developmental skill-building opportunities that interacting with these animals provides truly cannot be mimicked or replaced. As educators of preschoolers with developmental disabilities, our partnership with New York Therapy Animals has only further assured us that these special animals can make a world of difference in a child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development.

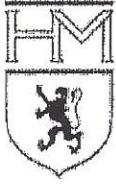
During these visits, students learn how to safely approach and interact with the animals, and practice their speech, language, and conversational skills by asking and answering questions about their new furry friends. Activities like clipping and unclipping the dog's leash and collar and taking turns brushing the animal's fur help students practice their grip and other fine motor skills. Gross motor skills come into play in a fun and engaging way when students take turns "walking" the dog with the help of their teacher and the animal's handler. These activities also help students learn to give and follow commands, thereby increasing their confidence and aiding in social skill-building and emotional well-being.

Interacting with the dogs helps students learn how to recognize feelings through body language, while simultaneously teaching them the importance of treating living creatures with care and compassion. Dogs like Mumford, Bernie, and Bobby have brought joy to countless students throughout their therapy sessions, and their presence keeps children active and engaged in their learning and development. Allowing therapy animals into our special education program has provided a unique opportunity for students to access the comfort and emotional enrichment that interacting with a trained therapy animal provides, all while making progress towards key developmental milestones.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the educational benefits of programs like Nancy George-Michalson's New York Therapy Animals.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne Alter".

Jeanne Alter
Executive Director



HORACE MANN SCHOOL

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February 5, 2021

To Whom it May Concern:

We were happy to learn that Nancy George-Michalson, the Executive Director of New York Therapy Animals, has been offered the opportunity to testify before the House of Representatives about the importance of having therapy dogs in NYC schools. Throughout our time working with Ms. George-Michalson, Horace Mann School has both learned and benefitted from the many services and supports that her organization provides.

Since 2017, Ms. George-Michalson has been coming to the Upper Division (high school) of our school with her various trained volunteer therapy dog teams to participate in the school's yearly Wellness Week. Wellness Week is a combination of student and faculty run workshops featuring guest speakers and visitors, with the goal of addressing all issues surrounding physical, social, and emotional health. It is no small understatement to say that the visit of NY Therapy dogs has been a much enjoyed and highly anticipated part of our Wellness Week program. In fact, it is among the offerings that has regularly generated the most interest among our students. Prior to Covid-19, the dog visit consisted of about three to four therapy dog teams set up in a large room with students having the opportunity to go around to each team, one at a time, to meet and greet the dogs. Ms. George-Michalson's knowledgeable guidance in how to structure the visits for maximum benefit proved to be professional and skilled each year, resulting in a highly enjoyable visit to our students. Just as importantly, she provided education to our students about the benefits of therapy animals across multiple settings.

We wish the best for Ms. Michalson's New York Therapy Animals organization and hope others have the opportunity to share in the positive merits of interactions with therapy dogs.

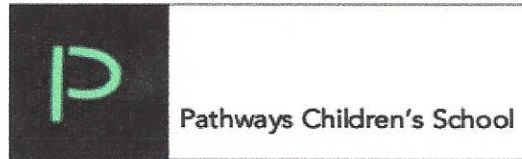
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'I. Pervil'.

Ian Pervil, Ph.D.
Psychologist, Upper Division

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Christine Uhrowczik'.

Christine Uhrowczik, M.S.
Administrative Assistant, Upper Division



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Phone Number: 9172620120

August 9, 2018

To Whom It May Concern:

We have been in partnership with New York Therapy Animals since 2016 and have continued to benefit from their excellent therapy dog teams. We are a special education program for non-verbal and non-ambulatory, medically complex students and have seen tremendous emotional and physical progress with our students due to the presence of therapy teams that come and embed themselves in our community.

Our most recent experience with the organization is with the team Melinda and Woody. They had left such a positive impression on our students that they wrote letters to the team specifically letting them know how much they will miss them for the rest of the Summer, what they had learned by having them around and spending literacy time with them, and hope that they come back to visit in the Fall. The level of professionalism is consistent, and the teams are knowledgeable, sensitive to the student and staff needs, and above all the empathy to share their time tirelessly to wait for student responses and appreciate what other therapy teams miss with students of our population.

We intend to continue our partnership with the organization as they are, based on our experience, one of the best therapy dog team organizations we have worked with. I would be happy to discuss in detail how our program has grown with the help of New York Therapy Animals at your convenience.

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Dechantal Montano, OTR/L
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EXPLORE THROUGH LEARNING!

Dear Ms. George-Michalson,

February 3, 2021

The New York Therapy Animals and the Reading Education Assistance Dogs® therapy program has been extraordinarily effective by encouraging and inspiring students to read and develop social emotional health at Jacques Cartier (P.S. 102, in Manhattan).

Even in this difficult time of Covid when the children are working remotely they still share about positive comforting feelings that they still carry with them from their experiences with our therapy dog. This has been especially helpful throughout this difficult time. The children also share about how much they are looking forward to returning to the school building and interacting with the therapy dog once again, It brings them much comfort and joy.

The therapy animal program encourages children to practice reading so that they can meet with the therapy dog and read. The program is also an incentive for developing social emotional skills and staying on task between sessions.

Our experience with the therapy animal program is that it has a very positive impact with the children not only academically and I feel it's really important to continue with the program and hopefully be able to expand it to other schools some more children can benefit.

Sincerely,

Patricia Foley, Social Worker P.S. 102