

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

British Columbia and Yukon Council
BCY.TherapyDog@sja.ca

St. John Ambulance
SAVING LIVES
at work, home and play

Land Acknowledgment

For millennia the kʷikʷəłəm (Kwkwetlem), səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh), xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), qícəy' (Katzie), q'wá:n' ʔən' (Kwantlen), qiqéyt (Qayqayt), and Stó:lō (Sto:lo) people have held their territories on the unceded land we work on today. I am committed to building relationships with the first peoples here, based in honor and respect, and thank them for the opportunity to live, work and play on this territory.

INTRODUCTION

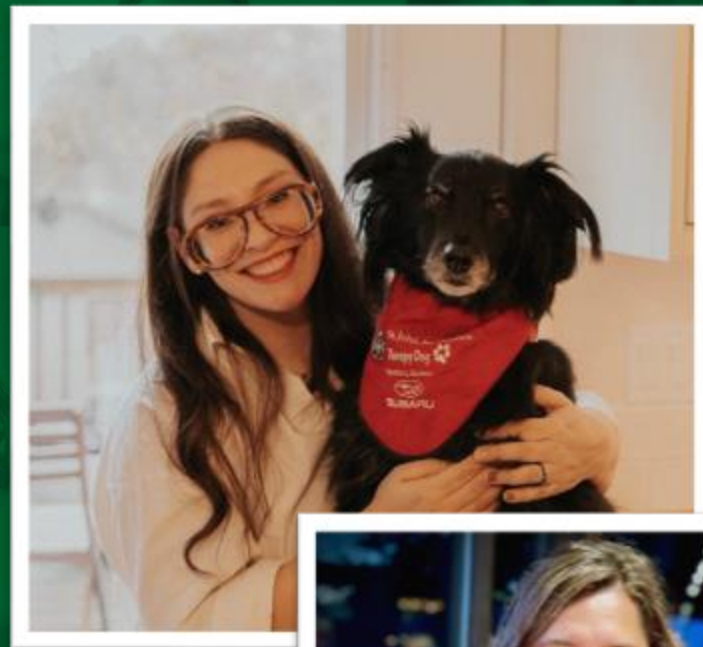
Who We Are: Our Staff

Team

Important Considerations:

- **This is a Safe Space.**
Inclusion matters and all people are welcome.
- **Participate Through Active Listening.**
If possible, please have your camera on and microphones muted when not talking. Thank you!
- **Questions are Encouraged.**
This is your learning. If you have a question, you can put it in the chat or raise your hand.

Ready? Let's Begin!





St. John Ambulance
Therapy Dog 



Learning Outcomes

By the end of this presentation, we hope that you will understand the following:



The Program Mission



Volunteer Eligibility & Requirements



Volunteer Commitment & Benefits



Next Steps & What to Expect at Evaluation



St. John Ambulance
SAVING LIVES
at work, home and play



St. John Ambulance

Therapy Dog 

Unique to Canada,
the St. John Ambulance
Therapy Dog Program
was founded in 1992.



What Do Therapy Dogs Do?



Therapy Dogs provide a moment of joy through **CONNECTION**. This is done through:



TOUCH. Petting and interacting with a dog.



ACTIVE LISTENING. Being present in a conversation with those we visit.



EMOTIONAL VALIDATION. Learning about, understanding, and expressing acceptance of another person's emotional experience.

Where Therapy Dogs Visit

Therapy Dogs visit regularly at partnered facilities across British Columbia and Yukon. They also attend special events, by donation, that help to support the Program.



Healthcare
Settings



Education
Settings



Social Service
Settings



Special Events

Who Do Therapy Dogs Visit

At regular visits at partnered facilities, Therapy Dogs many visit a wide demographic of vulnerable people. This often includes those that are:



Sick



Living with
Cognitive
Decline



Lonely



Stressed



Living with a
Differing
Ability

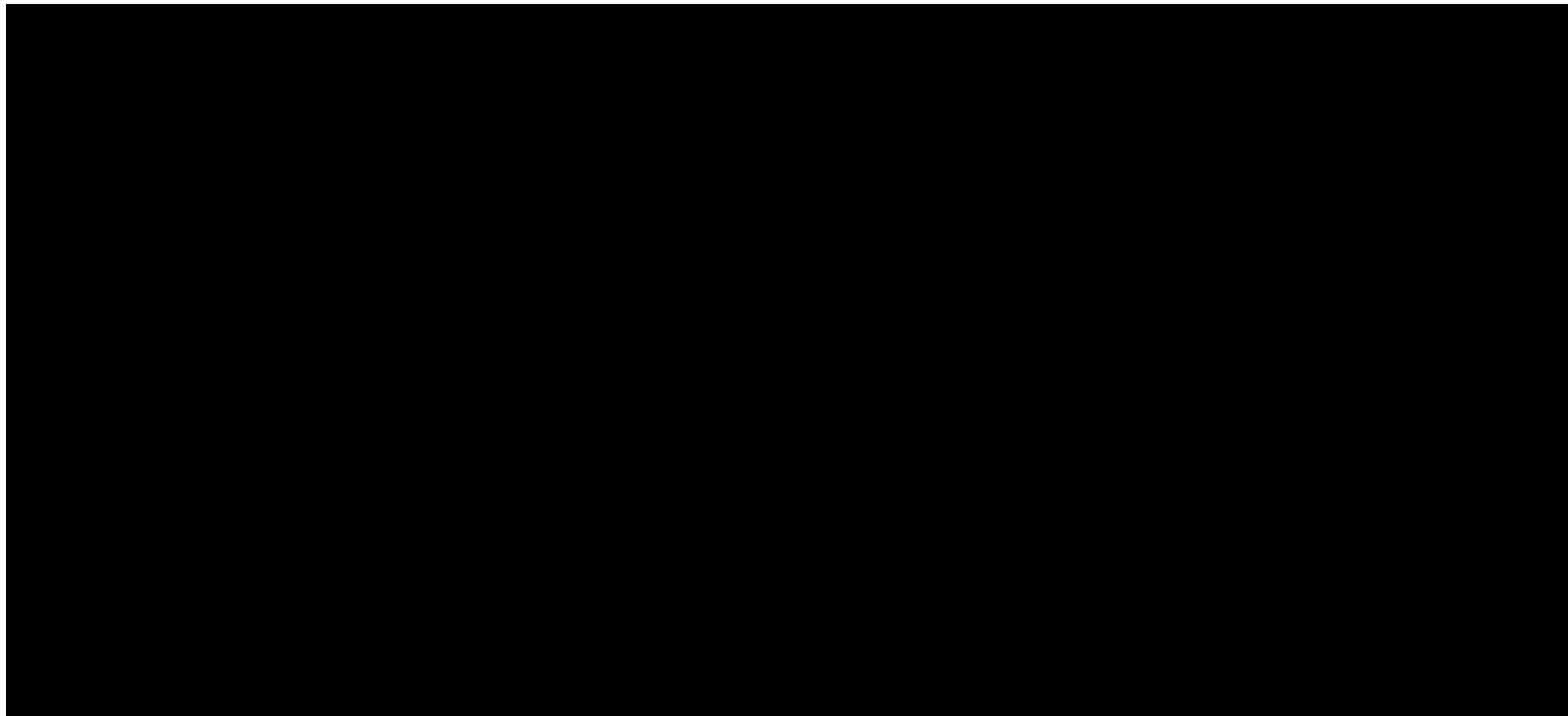


St. John Ambulance

Therapy Dog



The Magic of a Moment of Joy



THERAPY DOG ELIGIBILITY



Dogs must be at least one (1) year of age.



Be in a permanent home for at least six (6) months.



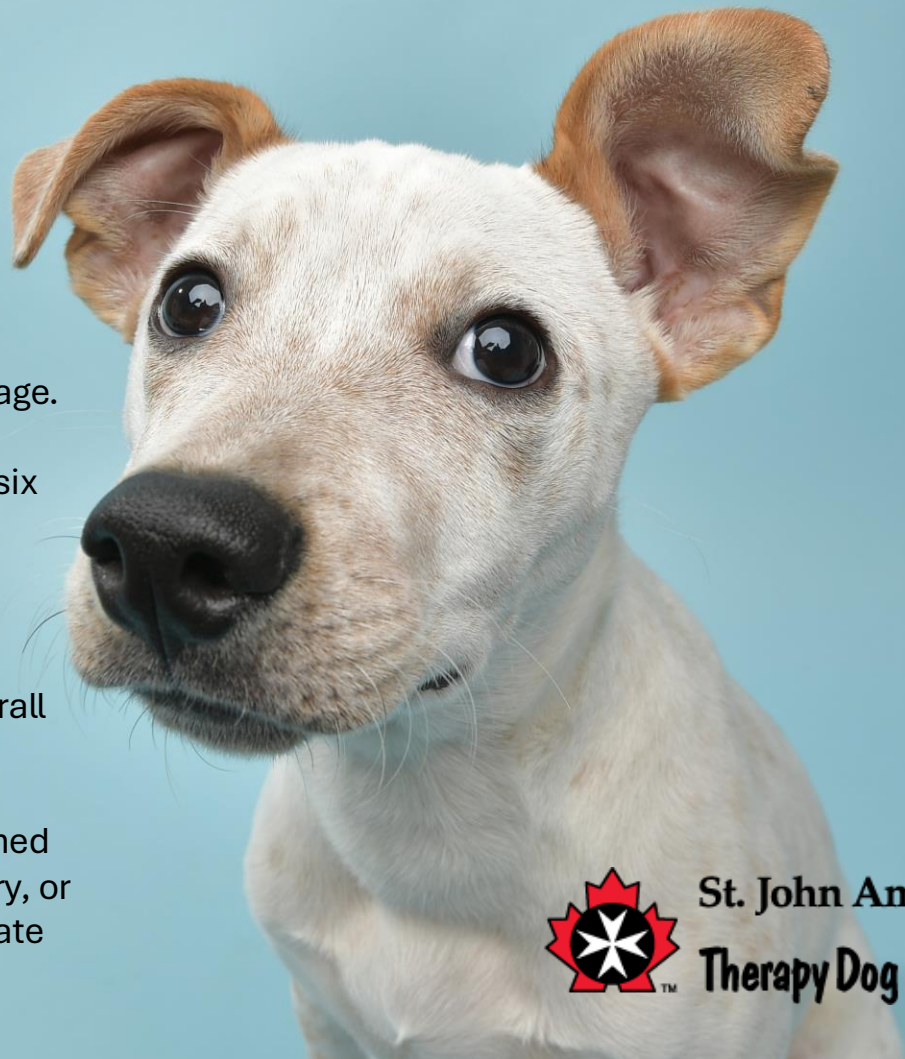
Not consume a raw diet.



Provide proof of vaccination and overall cleanliness and good health.



Cannot be a restricted breed as defined by legislation in the province, territory, or municipality where they will participate in the program.



St. John Ambulance
Therapy Dog 

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS



St. John Ambulance
Therapy Dog 



Must be age 18 or over.



Participate fully in all St. John Ambulance screening processes for volunteers including a Criminal Record Check.



Be in good health and able to perform the volunteer community services activities safely.



Successfully pass the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog evaluation.



Successfully complete a mentored visit as a Therapy Dog handler team.



Your Volunteer Commitment



-  You will aim to visit regularly at a partnered facility placement. Ideally this is once a week.
-  Participate in special event requests as your schedule allows.
-  Participate in workshops, continuing education sessions, and learning opportunities.
-  Be responsive to staff and leadership volunteer communications and requests.
-  Will represent the program by visiting with compassion, care and inclusivity. *Positive and safe interactions for all involved is our priority.*



St. John Ambulance

Therapy Dog 

Volunteer Benefits

-  **Liability Insurance**
-  **Honours and Awards Program**
-  **Continuing Education and Skill Development**
-  **Make New Friends**
-  **Deep Personal Satisfaction**





St. John Ambulance
Therapy Dog 

A Commitment to Community Service

The Therapy Dog Program is a volunteer opportunity to give back to the health, safety, and overall wellness of your community.



The St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog designation is NOT a certification.



Handler and dog teams are evaluated for suitability to participate in our volunteer community service program.

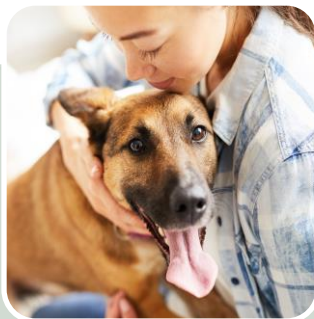




THERAPY DOGS ARE NOT SERVICE DOGS.

*Service Dogs are **NOT** eligible to be a part of the Therapy Dog Program.*

Therapy Dogs are not granted or permitted any increased public access – no facility, organization, business or service is required to accommodate an St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog. This includes transit, housing, or places of work.



Therapy Dogs

St. John Ambulance Therapy Dogs are evaluated for suitability to be volunteers with the Program, interacting with the public.

Service & Assistance Dogs

Are evaluated and licensed by the provincial government and are intended to perform actions and tasks for one individual.

Emotional Support Dogs

Are not recognized in Canada.

Service and Assistance Dog designations include both visible and invisible disabilities, nullifying the need for this designation.



“Oops! I think I am looking for public access rights, not a volunteer opportunity.”

Public Access Resources

That's okay, we can point you in the right direction!

For more information regarding accredited assistance dog organizations or how to get your personal dog certified, please refer to the Guide and Service Dog requirements outlined by the Province of British Columbia or search for:

[Guide Dog & Service Dog Certification Testing - Province of British Columbia \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/age-and-disease/disability-and-accessibility/guide-dog-service-dog-certification-testing)





St. John Ambulance

Therapy Dog 

What to Expect: Next Steps

**Now that you have more information about the program,
do you still want to become a volunteer Therapy Dog handler team?**

Please complete the following:

-  Complete the Volunteer Attestation Form.
-  Complete a Criminal Record Check.
-  Download and submit a St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Veterinary Form.

All these form links, documents, and further instruction will be provided to you directly by email, after this session.





St. John Ambulance

Therapy Dog 

WHAT TO EXPECT AT EVALUATION

WHAT THE EVALUATION TESTS FOR

Handlers and dogs are observed from the moment they enter the area or facility for the evaluation. Evaluators are assessing the dog's temperament and the handler's ability to exercise care and control.



**CALM & POLITELY
MANNERED**



**SEEKS INTERACTION AND
ENJOYS ATTENTION**



CARE AND CONTROL
Advocacy and Handling



St. John Ambulance
Therapy Dog 

COME PREPARED

A well-fitting flat buckle leather or nylon collar and flat leather or nylon leash that does not exceed 6ft.



Flat Buckle Collar



No-Chain Martingale



Choke on D-Ring

Also bring a favourite toy and treats of choice!



St. John Ambulance
SAVING LIVES
at work, home and play

HARNESS EXCEPTION

Due to fit or for health and safety of the dog, St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog staff and volunteer evaluators are permitted to make exceptions that will allow non-corrective harnesses with two-points of connection.



*It is strongly encouraged
that you reach out and gain
permission in advance of
your evaluation.*



BCY.TherapyDog@sj.ca





St. John Ambulance

Therapy Dog 

EVALUATION EXERCISES

Exercise 1: Meeting the Evaluator

Exercise 2: Dog Under Control

Exercise 3: Walking Through a Milling Crowd

Exercise 4: Praise and Interaction

Exercise 5: Dog Meet Dog

Scenario Sequence: Stationary Crowd Scene
Exercises 6, 7 and 8

Scenario Sequence: Wheelchair and Distraction
Exercises 9, 10, 11 and 12



St. John Ambulance
SAVING LIVES
at work, home and play



DISQUALIFICATIONS

Safety is held to a high standard in the Program and an evaluator will stop an evaluation should there be a safety risk at any time. Dogs will be observed during the entire evaluation, not just during formal exercises.

There are three major reasons for a dog to be disqualified from the evaluation:



**RELIEVING ITSELF
IN FACILITY**



**ANY TYPE OF
AGGRESSION**



**SHYNESS OR BOISTEROUS
EXUBERANCE**



St. John Ambulance

Therapy Dog 



QUESTIONS & COMMENTS

THANK YOU!

**We appreciate your interest in volunteering with
St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program.**

