

local news

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Lifestyle: The ladies of Hyde Park attended the Annual Hyde Parker Spring Ladies Luncheon at Arnold Palmer Golf Course Restaurant recently.



Lifestyle: Village of Fernandina neighbors enjoy a driveway party at the home of Marty and Lee Morra.

Hearts of Gold Visits Trinity Springs Residents

Residents spent the afternoon petting golden retrievers from the Hearts of Gold Therapy Team.

By ANNE MOSER
Daily Sun Staff Writer

The lobby of Trinity Springs was full of four-legged friends Tuesday during a visit from a local therapy team.

Residents gathered for an afternoon with golden retrievers from Hearts of Gold, enjoying the peace of mind they got from petting the dogs.

These pups are familiar faces at Trinity Springs, as they visit both the assisted living and memory care areas once a month. The visits are just as exciting for the pups, who get to bask in the spotlight with plenty of hands petting them.

This is something that residents look forward to every month," said Trinity Springs life enrichment director Connie Jones. "They love spending time with the dogs."

The Hearts of Gold



Judy Occhetti-Klohr, of Trinity Springs, pets Laverne, a golden retriever puppy with the Hearts of Gold Therapy Team, in the lobby of Trinity Springs assisted living.

Sophia Lucente,
Daily Sun

Therapy Team is part of the Golden Retriever Rescue of Mid-Florida, a nonprofit organization that has been rescuing, protecting and re-homing golden retrievers in the area since 1997. It is made up of multiple therapy teams. Its members make

trips to schools, libraries and hospitals to bring joy to those who need it. The team in The Villages pays regular visits to nearby assisted living facilities to provide comfort to residents. Trinity Springs residents look forward to seeing the pups each month.

Tails were wagging as some of the pups wandered through the lobby of the facility Tuesday, where a handful of residents gathered. Other members of the canine team made their way to residents' rooms for one-on-one time, or to see the people in

the memory care area. Some residents and staff stopped to pet the pups as they passed by.

"The dogs' tails wag the whole time during every visit," said Bev Sheridan, of the Village of Mallory Square.

Golden retriever sisters Shirley and Laverne were more than happy to get some extra attention. The pups, owned by Sheridan and her husband, Don, have been at their job for two years. The couple learned about the Hearts of Gold therapy team after they joined the Golden Retriever Club and the pups paid them a visit during one of the meetings. Admiring the work the team does, they decided to get their own dogs certified as therapy dogs.

"It's a great program that's very well-organized," Don said. "We take our dogs to memory care and assisted living facilities for their therapy work."

They circled back and forth between everyone for more pets, making sure to spend plenty of time with each person in the lobby.

Residents took the time to chat with each other as they showed the pups some

love. While many appreciate the visits from Hearts of Gold simply because they are therapeutic, for some of them, the pups remind them of their own pets. Petting the golden retrievers brings back positive memories of the dogs they have owned over the years.

"I used to have my own retrievers, so I love when these dogs come to see us," resident Judie Phillips said.

Throughout the afternoon, the rest of the dogs came back to the lobby as they finished their one-on-one visits with residents, happily greeting the people they saw along the way. At the same time, more residents came into the lobby to meet the golden retrievers. Hearts of Gold's frequent visits to Trinity Springs give the pups a chance to befriend the residents, making it even more exciting for them.

"Seeing the looks on residents' faces is the best part," Bev said. "They're always so happy to see our dogs."

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