

# Pet-A-Pet time is special event for senior citizens

BY KATHLEEN MOORADIAN  
SPECIAL WRITER

The first Saturday of each month is a special day for the residents at Presbyterian Village in Redford thanks to several volunteers from the Pet-A-Pet Organization.

The volunteers and their pets spend a couple hours at the Village visiting with senior citizens and providing them an opportunity to interact with a family pet.

This visit is planned and directed by Danielle Manning, a bright, energetic 16-year-old who has been a Pet-A-Pet volunteer since she was 9.

For the first four years, she visited the village with her family dog, and for the last two years she has been coordinator of the Presbyterian Village Chapter of the Pet-A-Pet organization.

She credits Ruth Curry, the organization founder, and Natal-



**Canine time:** Pet-A-Pet volunteers and their pets visit Presbyterian Village seniors once a month.

is Hansen, former coordinator, for encouraging her to continue her work. Although being a coordinator is time consuming, it's well worth it, said Manning.

"It's fun," said Manning. "It feels good to do this for the senior citizens. They really enjoy spending time with the animals."

**"I look forward to this every month. I really enjoy these dogs, especially little dogs that can sit on my lap."**

**Ruth May Nagle**  
—Presbyterian Village resident

It takes a couple hours a month to contact the volunteers to remind them of the visit, and she also has to keep the paperwork in order.

All of the pets are required to be in good health and have current shots.

As the coordinator, Manning must review the records and notify the volunteers when it's time for their pet's shots.

"This is really good for the senior citizens and it's also good for our pets," said Kay Mills,

who has been volunteering with her white shepherd "Maverick" for several years.

Volunteer Patty Riggio and her daughter Roxanne agree.

"It socializes our pets and teaches them good manners too" said Patty. "Big Dog" her peck-a-poo and "Vino," her Rhodesian ridgeback eagerly lapped up the attention.

For the senior citizens, it's a unique pleasure.

"I can't have a pet of my own now, so I really enjoy other people's pets," said resident Dorothy Smith.

"Oh, this is a great joy" said Ruth May Nagle, another Village resident. "I look forward to this every month. I really enjoy these dogs, especially little dogs that can sit on my lap."

The Pet-A-Pet Organization was founded 13 years ago by Ruth Curry. With her father in a nursing home, she wanted to find something to bring to the

seniors, some of whom don't get out of their rooms.

After hearing about the positive effects of "pet therapy," she launched Pet-A-Pet.

The organization has grown to include more nursing homes and children's hospitals in several communities throughout southeastern Michigan.

According to Curry, they are expanding the program to include a school chapter.

The benefit of pet therapy is evident in the genuine enthusiasm of the residents in Presbyterian Village as they scratch the head of "man's best friend," a simple pleasure that many of us take for granted but one that these senior citizens relish.

Pet-A-Pet has more than 550 volunteers, is still growing and needs more volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Pet-A-Pet Organization, contact Ruth Curry at (313) 535-0410.

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