

Best Friends 4-H Club 4-H Leader's Year-Round Canine Therapy Projects

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BEST FRIENDS CANINE THERAPY PROJECTS FOR LEADERS is not just volunteering for the 4-H'ers Summer Dog Project. Oh heavens, no! B.F. has evolved into an enjoyable year-round community canine therapy and service program in which we



1. Share our REGISTERED TEMPERAMENT TESTED CANINES with the community by visiting Nursing Homes, Schools, Churches, Libraries, Hospitals and Senior Centers thus earning our American Kennel Club (AKC) Canine Therapy titles!
2. Continuing our canine education and practice by attending classes in Basic Dog Obedience, Agility, Jr. Showmanship, Rally and Scent Work offered by Best Friends 4-H Club, Mutterly Love and the Berrien Kennel Club. **CLASSES ARE FREE TO 4H REGISTERED LEADERS.** (Please note: "Registered" is defined as you have completed your 4-H and Best Friends 4-H Club's yearly membership applications and have paid your yearly club dues of \$10.00.)
3. Try and meet once every three months to keep ourselves and our dogs up to date and in practice for when we add a Non-Traditional 4H'er to our team for the Dog Summer Project.
4. Work on earning our AKC's Canine Therapy titles, Canine Good Citizen titles, Dog Obedience titles and Trick Dog titles through the club's services.
5. Assisting when B.F. sponsors an AKC Canine Good Citizen Test for leaders and 4H'ers.
6. 4-H leaders and registered canines are covered under the 4-H liability insurance umbrella when attending and completing an approved canine therapy visit.

BEST FRIENDS 4-H LEADER'S YEAR-ROUND CANINE THERAPY PROJECTS BEING OFFERED:

- **4-H Leader's Continuing Canine Education** – Free continuing canine education in dog training classes at Mutterly Love.
- **4-H Team Instructor Class** – Team Instructor Class will be schedule in May of each year to assist the new and renewing 4-H Team Instructor in updating and understanding the 4-H Summer Dog Class Projects training and goals for the 4H'ers.
- **AKC Canine Good Citizen Titles** – Leaders and canines participate in CGC Testing which allow the leader and 4H'er to earn his or her CGC titles.
- **AKC Trick Dog Titles** - Leaders and canines participate in CGC Testing which allow the leader and 4H'er to earn his or her Trick Dog titles.
- **Andrews University Seminars** – Best Friends leaders and canines are invited into the Nursing Department once a year to educate and demonstrate the advantages of Canine Therapy to the future nurses. In bringing the canine into the classroom as a visual aid we are demonstrating the practicality of how the canine assists in the knowledge that alternative nursing does have their benefits.
- **Berrien County Youth Fair Dog Events** – At the culmination of the Summer Dog Project training the non-traditional (NTR) 4-H'er, his or her Team Instructor (*you*) and their team canine enter the Berrien County Youth Fair's dog events in Rally, Dog Costume, Dog Obedience, Jr. Showmanship and Dog Agility, obtaining the Summer Dog Project training goals.
- **Blossomland Learning Center and Logan's Autism Learning Center** – During the months of September through April, BF leaders bring their temperament tested dogs into the school's gymnasium and encourage the NTR (*life-challenge, handicapped, etc.*) student to interact with the dog by walking the dog, assist the dog through some low impact agility obstacles, or just petting the dog promoting the use of the child's

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cognitive thinking process, communication and tactile skills in a positive manner. Tools for this event are one to two leashes. **Canine's Harness / Vest:** If your dog needs a harness or vest, please make sure the dog is wearing this item before you enter the school.

- **Book Hounds** – By invitation, BF leaders will bring his or her canine into the library and have a child read a book to their dog in fifteen-to-twenty-minute sessions. Many children feel more at ease when they read to a pet, who is simply there to listen and not to judge how well the child is communicating the words. FYI ... Studies have shown that children who read to dogs achieve higher end of year reading scores. Three of BF top 4H leaders and their canines, Colleen Melendy (*Blossom and Teddy*), Janet Cooper (*Journey and Ahvee*) and Mary Jo Canaday (*Lacy*) assisted in two videos on Canine Reading Programs. You can see these videos at
 - Colleen Melendy - [Education Counts Michiana - Read to a Therapy Dog \(youtube.com\)](#)
 - Janet Cooper and Mary Jo Canaday [Education Counts Michiana - Pages and Paws | PBS Michiana - WNIT](#)
- **Canine Education in Schools** – With the school's invitation and depending upon the goal of the educational program, and using the dog as a canine therapy tool, BF leaders and dogs will visit a classroom and assist with teaching
 - **Canine Reading Program** (*Have the student read to the dog*)
 - **Canine Safety Program** (*Ask permission first before petting someone's dog, what to do if a strange dog approach you, etc.*)
 - **Canine Ownership and Responsibility Program** (*Teaching what is involved with owning a dog*)
 - **Career Day** (*assisting students in finding careers in the dog world*)
- **Canine Therapy for Hospitals** – BF works with the Berrien County hospitals in bringing their dogs into the hospital for patient and staff destressing.
- **Canine Therapy for Nursing Homes** – BF works with the Berrien County nursing homes in bringing their dogs into the home for patient and staff de-stressing and enjoyment.
- **Canine Therapy for Retirement Homes** – BF works with the Berrien County retirement homes in bringing their dogs into the home for elderly and staff de-stressing and enjoyment.
- **Canine Therapy for Schools** – BF works with the Berrien County schools in bringing their dogs into the school for student and staff de-stressing and enjoyment.

BEST FRIENDS 4-H CLUB COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS – Leaders and 4H'ers join together and contribute to these community service events ...

- **Berrien County Michigan's 4-H "Thanks-4-Giving" Project** – Every November, Berrien County 4-H clubs along with MSU Extension Office and the Farm Bureau, join together to purchase and collect groceries, put the groceries together in a food basket for a Thanksgiving Dinner, and donate to families that are having financial difficulties.
- **Berrien County Animal Control Raffle** – Held on the same date as BF's Annual Christmas Dinner Meeting, 4H'ers, Leaders and family members purchase dog food and related items for the Berrien County Animal Control. These items can then be traded for raffle tickets on items to be raffled off at the dinner.
- **AKC Canine Good Citizen Testing** – Each year BF Coordinators and members sponsor and participate in the American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizen Test giving 4H'ers, leaders and the public an opportunity to temperament test their dog and earn one of the many AKC titles being offered.

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- **AKC Trick Dog Event** – Leaders can now assist and participate in the American Kennel Club Trick Dog Event for the public allowing the leader and 4H'er to earn AKC Trick Dog titles.