

How to Get Started

Congratulations! The red heart-shaped TDInc. tag is hanging proudly on your dog's collar and your ID card is safe in your wallet. In your car is a copy of your dog's rabies certificate, proof of his negative fecal test, and your copy of the Member Handbook for quick reference to rules in case of need.

Now what do you do?

It's easy to call a local assisted living or elder care facility and ask for an appointment with the activities director. Armed with a copy of the insurance letter from your current Member Handbook, and perhaps a TDInc. brochure, you and your calm, friendly dog arrive promptly to describe your service and answer questions. Offer to greet the staff and a few residents.

Impressed and charmed by both of you, the director will give you permission to visit. The two of you will choose a date and time and you will be placed on the regular activities calendar. You might even be invited to come over anytime.

Some other venues for you and your special dog:

Hospitals--contact the Director of Volunteers at the medical facilities and let them know you are now registered and insured. You may need to be patient as many hospitals require orientations and/or formal permission from departments and administration before allowing pet therapy visits.

Libraries/schools --contact the activity person at your local library to start a reading program, or the principal, librarian, or guidance counselor at a school.

Special needs--contact the guidance counselor at a school, added comma and ask for the special needs teacher.

There are unlimited opportunities for therapy. You can always find a place for you and your wonderful dog. Our members go to mental health facilities, abuse shelters for women and children and various camps that deal with children with specific conditions such as cancer, autism and MS, to name a few.

If you need materials to help you approach any of these, contact the national office for brochures, newsmagazines, DVDs, handbooks or info packets or advice. Some facilities may require formal proof of insurance which is also available from the office. Some registered TDInc. teams form a group and choose a name. It can be fun to do visits with other therapy friends, but remember that Therapy Dogs Inc. does not recognize chapters, and you must ask permission before you use the TDInc. logo or slogan.

If you are interested in doing disaster relief be sure to contact your local Red Cross and let them know that you are available, registered and insured. Do this BEFORE there is a disaster in your area so you can complete any special requirements needed ahead of time.

Thank you for joining TDInc.! We know you will love sharing your dog and helping others as you spread smiles and joy!