

THE Importance of .

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Caring

my journey into volunteering



Warren Hellbusch and Joyce Kimmel (& Eden)

PET THERAPY

There's nothing more comforting and therapeutic than the smiling eyes and nudging nose of a gentle therapy animal. These are sentiments shared by both Warren Hellbusch and Joyce Kimmel, who are pet therapy volunteers at Columbus Community Hospital (CCH).

Hellbusch and Kimmel are two of the six pet therapy volunteers at CCH; the group also includes Mary Hellbusch, Marcia Janssen, Marlene Olson and Walt Kimmel. CCH started the pet therapy volunteer program in January 2024.

Pet therapy volunteers visit the hospital every three weeks with K-9 comfort dog Eden, a golden retriever — usually on a Wednesday at 2:30 p.m., after CCH has observed quiet time. They also visit the CCH Child Care Center in the morning one or two days every month.

A pet therapy volunteer's main job, said Hellbusch, is to provide comfort for both employees and patients alike.

“We go to many areas of the hospital with Eden to provide relief or joy to those that need it,” he said. **“We have built some really neat relationships with the nurses on site.”**

Kimmel said the volunteers travel to many different areas of the hospital, including

the senior behavioral health unit; acute care and intensive care units; emergency room; quality and cardiopulmonary rehabilitation departments; Columbus Psychiatry Clinic; Hematology & Oncology, PC; and throughout the hallways. She said it's fun greeting patients and staff members.

“Their faces just light up when they see you,” she said.

Both Hellbusch and Kimmel started pet therapy with their church in 2021. They continued on to become pet therapy volunteers for CCH by completing the rigorous Lutheran Church Charities (LCC) K-9 Comfort Dog training. Comfort dog Eden has completed more than 2,000 hours of obedience and service training. Together with Eden, Hellbusch and Kimmel have made visits to hospitals, nursing homes and assisted living facilities, and have responded to traumas and tragedies of all kinds.

Hellbusch said he is a volunteer because he enjoys helping people.

“Eden helps make people comfortable in their surroundings,” he said. **“I like the opportunity to give people hope.”**

Kimmel, who has been a CCH volunteer for more than nine years, said she has

always used her time and talents to benefit others. Prior to being a CCH volunteer, she molded the minds of little ones as an Immanual Lutheran School preschool teacher.

Hellbusch worked in the lumber industry as a Mead lumber manager for 30 years. Prior to that, he was also a school teacher for a short time.

Both Hellbusch and Kimmel agree that volunteering for CCH has been an incredible part of their life. Kimmel said she is sharing “the good word” about all the wonderful volunteering opportunities at the hospital.

“If anyone is thinking about volunteering for the hospital, I say do it,” Kimmel said. **“We need you and it's so rewarding. There are so many different opportunities.”**

To learn more about volunteer opportunities available at the hospital, visit columbushosp.org.