Role Play Exercises

Exercise A: Seth is an 80-year old man who suffers from dementia and has been at the XYZ Nursing Home for two years. He has a heart condition and confined to a wheel chair because of a recent broken hip. He is generally unresponsive to questions beyond simple “yes/no” answers, when in fact, he does answer. Having seen a brochure on the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program at the facility on a recent visit, a family member confirmed that he loved dogs and had many over his lifetime. The suggestion was made that he would be a good candidate for visits by a Four-Footed Ministerial Team that might lift his spirits.

Exercise B: Anna is a professional woman who held a CEO’s position in a large medical supply firm until she suffered a severe stroke to her right side two months ago. Anna came to the nursing home after her release from the hospital and it was noted that she seemed sullen and withdrawn. Though she had worked with several speech therapists in the hospital and treatment was continuing at the nursing home, no one could make progress with her because she became easily frustrated over her lack of communication skills.

The nursing staff, in conjunction with the chaplain thought that a visit from a Four-Footed Ministerial Team might help her to connect in a non-verbal manner. It was determined that she had no medical reason to prevent her from a visit nor was she afraid of dogs for she prominently displayed pictures of her own beloved pet (recently deceased) and other family pets in her room. Because of the seriousness of her ever-increasing withdrawal, both the chaplain and the Four-Footed Ministers Pastoral-Care Program Coordinator scheduled a Four-Footed Ministerial Team to visit her.

Exercise C: Abigail is a 95-year old woman who has entered hospice as her health declines. She is a delightful caring woman who retains full use of her faculties and loves all animals. She has been visited by Four-Footed Ministerial Teams over the past year and eagerly awaits their visits that occur once a week. Though she loves cats, she appreciates the happy faces that greet her when the dogs come in for a visit, for the Four-Footed Ministers usually come in pairs (two owners/two dogs). Over the course of these visits, she has begun to appreciate the fact that the Four-Footed Ministerial Team members talk and pray with her sharing her love for both dogs and cats. Though she realizes that she is declining, having the dog to pet has been her joy and she eagerly awaits the current visit.