



The Healing Power of Warm Love and the Cutest Furry Faces

Community champions like you make special programs like Facility Dogs and Pet Pals -- and the joy and improved outcomes they bring -- possible through generous gifts to the I Love Children's Mercy Fund.

Facility Dogs

Our facility dogs, Hunter, Jellybean and Litta, offer much more to patients than snuggles and a cute face. Facility dogs are expert trained members of the health care team. Partnered with their handlers, they help patients through the stresses of treatment.

Recently, facility dog Litta supported patient Charley through an outpatient surgery. Charley has an autoinflammatory disease that has required her to be seen by a variety of specialists within Children's Mercy, and stay in the hospital on occasion.

Prior to the surgery, Litta helped calm Charley as she was prepped for the operating room and provided emotional support and motivation.

Each facility dog works across the hospital as needed, but is also assigned to specific units, like Hematology/Oncology, so that patients can build relationships with their favorite dogs.

Pet Pals

Less well known, but no less impactful, are the "therapy dogs" of the Pet Pal program, the four-legged friends of volunteers who help the facility dogs provide a therapeutic presence for patients, families and staff.

"Pet Pals is a volunteer-based program that has been around for 20+ years," says Melanie Weinrich, CCLS, Facility Dog Program. "They are an important extension of our Facility Dog program. Whether



Charley and Facility Dog Litta worked together so Charley would thrive before, during and after her surgery.

they are serving in inpatient areas or participating in events in common areas, our volunteer therapy dogs help expand the reach of the benefits of canine companionship."

Currently Pet Pals has 14 dogs, but more are being recruited and the staff hopes to have 20 on board soon. Pet Pals are considered 'therapy dogs' and go through a different training from facility dogs. They also undergo a thorough annual temperament testing to ensure they are a great fit for the hospital environment.

Pause with Paws

Patients aren't the only people to enjoy interactions with the dogs.

Facility Dogs and Pet Pals regularly interact with staff providing a therapeutic presence that has been shown to decrease stress and increase resilience in the workplace.

"These buddies are amazing, and so are their handlers! After a session with them we are ready to go back to our duties, full of love, renewed and it's like having a massage for the soul," says Alicia Ponte, Senior Medical Interpreter, Language Services.

More world-class care, hope and healing for kids

Collective Impact

\$153
AVERAGE GIFT SIZE
20,552
GIFTS
\$3,143,611
RAISED

fiscal year 2023

Your gift to the I Love Children's Mercy Fund supported the work of the hospital and a mission for kids.

Together, we transform the health, wellbeing and potential of children, with unwavering compassion for those most vulnerable.

In fiscal year 2023, your gift joined others to create an even bigger impact and ensure every child has access to more leading specialties, more lifesaving innovations and the most compassionate, comprehensive care.

Your mission support touched every corner and made possible

- » A first-of-its kind **Patient Progression Hub** is optimizing care coordination for patients and staff from admission to discharge.
- » A ride share platform, **Circulation**, that is helping families get to follow up appointments and reducing trips to the emergency room.
- » **Financial assistance** for expenses incurred by families including travel, meals and lodging and aid for medical bills help reduce barriers to care and stress on families.
- » **Remote health monitoring solutions** developed at Children's Mercy are saving lives between heart surgeries and allow kids and families to be home.



Easing the financial burden of health care costs on families

For more than 125 years, Children's Mercy has provided care without regard to a family's ability to pay. In fiscal year 2022 (the most current reportable year), the total uncompensated medical care provided by Children's Mercy included:



105,823

individuals receiving free or discounted inpatient and outpatient care

\$109,128,697



in charity care and unreimbursed cost, or shortfalls when providers are reimbursed below the cost of providing services.