



**St. John Ambulance  
Community  
Services**

*Trained volunteers  
recognizing and  
responding to the  
community-based  
needs of all people*

Patient Care Services

Community Care  
Services

Youth Services

Auxiliary Services

**DATE:** May 2002  
**TO:** Therapy Dog Coordinators  
**c.** District Chairs, District Commissioners, Branches  
**FROM:** Barbara Graham, Provincial Commissioner  
**RE:** **Therapy Dog Program**

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A number of SJA Therapy Dog Coordinators have been approached recently to join a newly formed regional Therapy Dog group in Ontario.

While competition is both healthy and challenging, we do wish to stress that the St. John Ambulance Therapy Dog Program has developed and matured over the past 10 years to become a nationally recognized authority in therapeutic pet visitation – in no small part due to the countless numbers of trained and dedicated volunteers, staff and pet professionals who have and continue to provide guidance to the program.

The program's policies and procedures have been developed and modified to provide optimum safety and satisfaction to the clients we serve and to the volunteers and pets that serve for us, and many of these processes are reflected in our extensive development and support systems e.g. Therapy Dog Program Manual, Evaluators Guide, Volunteer Liability Insurance, Volunteer Screening and a province-wide Coordinator/Evaluator support network - all provided at little or no cost to the volunteer, and at no cost to the client.

St. John Ambulance brings to its pet visitation program a background in charitable, caring work that has spanned over 900 years and we have every reason to believe St. John will continue to provide caring, charitable work well into the next millennium.

We mention this so that if you are approached by other organizations, you can make informed decisions as to which type of volunteer experience you wish to associate you and your pet with. I would encourage you to share this information with your membership and to feel free to share this with your facility contacts.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me through our provincial office at: Tel. 1-800-268-7581 or by email at:

[bgraham@sympatico.ca](mailto:bgraham@sympatico.ca)

*Barbara M. Graham*

**“We are there to care”**