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THE GOLDEN GATES AFFECT

BY BRENDA C. MCCASKILL (BRENDA@ABOUTGREATERCINCINNATI.COM)

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY DEBI TYLER

He's an attention getter. He's motivating. He's "paw'pular". He's golden. When he enters a room, things happen that you just might not expect.

"He has the perfect personality to do this job." Debi Tyler, Cedar Village Director of Rehabilitation, tells AboutGreaterCincinnati.com. "He's so intuitive to people..."

Tyler is talking about Gates, a five year old, 80 pound, gentle, and loveable Golden Retriever who enjoys his work at Cedar Village, a nonprofit continuing care retirement community whose goal is to make aging an enriching experience.

That's right. Gates, who works five days a week, eight hours a day, has a job as a therapy "facility" dog in the rehabilitation unit at Cedar Village in Mason (OH). He's a motivator. He assists therapists in their work. He has a way of influencing patients to do things that may be challenging or outside of a patient's comfort zone. He enjoys his work. He unconditionally loves and wants to help everyone which makes him good at what he does!



As a therapy "facility" dog at Cedar Village in Mason (OH), Gates' influence is impacting lives with his unconditional love.

Photo | Debi Tyler/Cedar Village

As a therapy dog, a dog that works for its' handler to make other people's day better (i.e. people in hospice, hospitals, schools, retirement centers, at the site of a disaster, etc) and has no public access rights, Gates motivates patients to do some remarkable and challenging things to improve a patient's medical condition.

Dorothy Rednour Andersen of Mason (OH) can attest to that. Since suffering a stroke, she had not walked. With a little help and motivation from Gates, that all changed.

Imagine this. At one end of a

room, Andersen sits in a wheelchair. At the other end - 25 feet away - stands Gates. With a Cedar Village therapist at her side, the 89-year-old woman rises, grasps a walker and heads toward Gates. When she reaches him, she pets and hugs him. Then, she repeats the exercise but from farther away.

That indeed happened! Since that encounter, Andersen has been walking every day, even when Gates isn't around.

Anderson is not the only one to experience the allure of Gates:

- A resident with dementia who didn't want to get out of bed

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THE GOLDEN GATES AFFECT (CONT'D)



Gates helps out at a physical therapy session at Cedar Village Mason (OH).

Photo | Debi Tyler/Cedar Village

did so after an occupational therapist brought Gates to her bedside. Then, the resident took Gates' leash and walked him to breakfast;

- Some residents interact and speak to Gates, even though ordinary conversation is difficult because of dementia;
- Some rehab patients brush Gates' fur or throw a toy for him to fetch, with a hand that may be weak from illness or injury; and
- Residents chuckle as they watch Gates roll in the snow outside their windows or carry a large stuffed animal in his mouth.

"Every day, therapy dogs impact people's mental and physical

health in a positive fashion." Marlys Staley, Executive Director, Circle Tail, Inc., shares with AboutGreaterCincinnati.com.

Gates, a rescue dog, was trained as a therapy dog by Circle Tail, Inc., a nonprofit organization in Pleasant Plain, Ohio, that trains service and hearing dogs for people with disabilities at no charge to the individual, and strengthens the human-canine bond through the agency's dog adoption program, educational programs, dog training, behavior management, boarding and grooming services. Since 1997, Circle Tail has partnered over 165 service/hearing and in home companion dogs to people with disabilities and has

adopted out over 3,000 dogs as family pets.

After successfully completing his therapy training, Tyler adopted Gates who not only works as a facility dog at Cedar Village, but is also a Tyler family pet. Gates, who has been working as a facility dog at Cedar Village since June of 2012, has settled in nicely, enjoys going to work often wearing a blue scarf with the Cedar Village logo, and loves his new life.

A gentle and sweet dog with blond fur, Gates goes to work with Tyler every day. When he goes to work, Gates not only lifts the spirits of Cedar Village's residents and patients, but also garners affection from staff and visitors too. When they see him, they can't help but pet, hug, and kiss him.

"He has a lot of friends and fans." Tyler said.

One of his biggest Cedar Village fans is Ms. Andersen, who is also a published poet. She is so fond of Gates that she penned this poem about him:

"Blonde is beautiful, the slogan goes. Just add loveable and kind. Gates is walking proof of that. He is gentle on your mind."

He's the amazing Golden Gates!

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