



By Carolyn Lee

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Happiness is a warm puppy. That old Peanuts comic strip quote has come to life at Imperial Manor this Christmas season.

Recently, the Manor has added dogs and a cat to its long-time menagerie of birds and fish. It all began when an employee became the owner of a litter of kittens. One, Callie, was introduced to the Manor residents. They love to watch her bat her paw against the glass separating the birds from the living area at the Manor.

"I think Callie can sense when a resident is not feeling well," Manor Administrator Melissa Larson stated.

One resident wants to go outside all the time, Larson said, and becomes agitated when she can't. "We give her Callie and it changes her focus," she said.

After the cat became comfortable at the Manor, residents began requesting that dogs be allowed to visit, also.

Several employees began bringing their dogs to work, as well as some visitors.

Diego, a Chihuahua owned by Adrienne Baumfalk, struts from room to room, greeting enthusiastic residents. Elmer Hessman gives Diego a big smile.

Copper, a Chawapeke, is a mellow male owned by Kristy Simeon. He patrols the hallways, greeting residents with his large, soulful eyes.

The animals must have all their shots, and owners should be prepared to provide shot records, Larson said.



Visitors to the Manor may also bring in their dogs to mingle with residents, Larson said.

There is no set schedule for visitation. Callie resides full time at the Manor.

The pets are calming to the residents, Larson said. They "treat" anxiety, depression and are soothing, she noted. "I think the pets provide a homelike environment like we're trying to provide," Larson said.

When you think of it, the administrator added, most homes have pets.

Having a cat and dogs at the Manor gives residents something to focus on, Larson said.

Although some residents don't like them, "We think it's beneficial. A lot of residents really enjoy the pets.

"Callie has been a wonderful addition to our family," Larson enthused, admitting she's a cat person herself.