

Therapy dogs abound at Glens Falls Hospital

STANDING, from left: Erin Glock with picture of Charlie, Betsy Moynahan & Magic, Dr. Nancy Wade Leary & Abby, Lois Hammond & Dash, Susan McCoy & Cricket, Kim Sicard & Ellie Mae, Maureen Kramer & Otter.



FRONT ROW: Elizabeth Strader & Beatrix, Tom Lyons & Walter, Charlene Hewlett & Cruz, Louisa Redman & Chewy, Doug Neely & Mocha, Mary DeSantis & Bryn, Sue O'Brien & Colden. *Chronicle photo/Cathy DeDe*

30 volunteer dog & owner teams: '10,000 moments of joy'

By Cathy DeDe

Chronicle Managing Editor

While therapy dogs have long been a presence at Glens Falls Hospital, the program has grown since 2023 from a few occasional visits to a robust program with approximately 30 certified therapy dog and owner

teams regularly visiting patients, visitors and staff.

"There's nothing quite like watching someone's expression change when a therapy dog walks down the hall or into the room, says **Tom Lyons**, Director of Volunteer Services, who oversees the program

He said dogs and their owners contributed **more than 900 volunteer hours** this year, "nearly **3,000 hours since 2023.**"

"More than hours," Mr. Lyons says, "a team may interact with 10 or more people during a single hospital visit. We estimate

that translates into more than 10,000 moments of joy, comfort and compassion each year.

"We track hours, but I think the moments behind those hours really tell the story."

Here is some of that story, from therapy dog owners who spoke with *The Chronicle*.

Erin Glock's dog Charlie, who passed away unexpectedly in July, kicked off the hospital's push for a concentrated program. The pair were already a therapy team, and Ms. Glock says Mr. Lyons, a family friend, asked her to come aboard.

"I've always been involved in

boards and volunteering, and it was just nice to do it with my best friend, and to see how much he could change someone's situation," Ms. Glock said.

"We've walked into rooms where people are in extreme pain, and then they see Charlie, and they completely stop. They just feel good and calm."

"We've had situations in the ER where we helped calm down a young adolescent who was having a mental health crisis. That was really powerful....

"We were welcomed with open

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