



It's about you

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MARSHALL SOCIAL MEDIA DRIVE COMBINES CHARITABLE GIVING, ANIMAL INSTINCTS

Feb. 9, 2017 — The internet pays regular tribute to our beloved pets. Just as dog memes and cat videos inspire laughs, Marshall Medical Center hopes an animal-themed social media campaign sparks generosity.

Starting today, the Marshall Foundation for Community Health wants visitors to its [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) sites to post pictures of their pets – and make a donation in their name to Marshall's pet therapy program. Contributors to the Give2theMax campaign can use a [GoFundMe](#) page to replenish the Max Fund. The namesake for it all is "Max," a cuddly 3-year-old Labradoodle who has spent the last two years lifting patient spirits at the Marshall Cancer Center in Cameron Park.

Wells Fargo provided the Max Fund's initial funding in 2015. The Foundation now wants a younger generation to donate and promote. Spearheading the drive are the Marshall Junior Volunteers, a force of nearly 60 high school students who assist hospital visitors and provide clerical help at various Marshall departments.

After asking the young volunteers how to best reach potential millennial donors, the Foundation joined Instagram last year.

The Junior Volunteers have pledged to post a picture of their pet and ask five friends to do the same. There is no minimum donation for the Give 2theMax online drive, whose dual purpose is to both raise money for Marshall and bring awareness to the benefits of pet therapy.

"We're trying to get a younger set involved," Foundation executive assistant Tanya Moran said. "We sat down with the Junior Volunteers and asked for their feedback, and our methods reflect what they told us. It's very exciting."

The Marshall Foundation for Community Health serves as the hospital's charitable function. Since 1974, it has funded local health-related programs and altruistic missions. Marshall's addition of Max reflects a broader trend: health care providers embracing a non-traditional (but effective) form of therapy.

Animal-assisted therapy (AAT) has been medically proven to improve stress, mood and energy levels while reducing pain and anxiety. The first recorded use of pet therapy in a medical setting occurred at England's York Retreat, a pioneering mental health facility, during the 1790's. In recent years, major providers – from Cancer Treatment Centers of America to UC Davis Medical Center – nationwide have made use of it.

“At our Cancer Center, it helps tremendously for patients, their families and the staff,” Foundation Director Karen Good said. “We’ve seen results on veterans PTSD and with developmentally disabled adults. It’s being used for so much more, and we want to grow with it.”

Marshall Medical Center is an independent, nonprofit community healthcare provider located in the heart of the Sierra Foothills. Marshall Medical Center includes Marshall Hospital, a fully accredited acute care facility with 125 beds in Placerville; several outpatient facilities in Cameron Park, El Dorado Hills and Georgetown; and many community health and education programs. Marshall has more than 200 physicians and 1,500 employees providing quality healthcare services to more than 180,000 residents of El Dorado County.