January 2014

PRAYER GUIDE FOR LWML MISSION GRANTS

In this month's Prayer Guide you will notice that we have not put monetary amounts for each day. However, we hope that, as you use this guide, you will remember to generously give mite offerings on a regular basis.

PRAYER #1

Dear Lord, Thank You for the compassionate care the K-9 Comfort Dogs give to those who are caught in stressful situations. You made these Golden Retrievers to be gentle with those who are upset. May their gentleness continue to bring comfort to those in need. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PRAYER #2

Lord Jesus, You know all of our hurts and pains. We give You glory for the establishment of the K-9 Comfort Dogs through Lutheran Church Charities. Bless those who work with this organization as they work to connect people with resources. Thank You for Reverend Mark Hein who, as a fire department Chaplain, has brought attention to the work the K-9 Comfort Dogs are doing. In Your Name, we pray, Amen.

PRAYER #3

Heavenly Father, We praise You for the compassion You instill in the Golden Retriever breed of dogs. Even touching the soft fur of the animals seems to have a calming effect on those who are grieving and just need the assurance of a touch and a non-judgmental ear. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

PRAYER #4

Gracious Lord, Thank You for those who have come forward with the desire and knowledge to take in Golden Retriever puppies to train them to be service dogs ready to spring into action in times of disasters. And thank You, Lord, for those chaplains and others who are willing and able to serve as handlers for these Comfort Dogs. Give them Your peace and endurance for the times when they are called out to provide the dogs' comfort for others. In our Savior's name, Amen.

www.lwml.org/missions

MISSION GRANT STORY

TRAINING K-9 COMFORT DOGS FOR LCMS CHAPLAINS $30,000

K-9 Comfort Dogs is one of the ministries of Lutheran Church Charities. The charity alerts the faithful when a person, or a church, or a community is suffering and in need. Lutheran Church Charities responded to the Katrina disaster in 2005 making contact in the devastated areas through the use of service dogs. There they saw how utilizing dogs to comfort those who experience disaster had great effect on those in the area. Shootings on the campus of Northern Illinois University in February of 2008 prompted the Lutheran Church Charities to extend an invitation for Pastor Buckhorn and his service dogs to provide comfort to the university students. Since that time, the ministry and demand for the dogs has grown very quickly. K-9 Comfort Dogs, as of the fall of 2012, have been placed in churches, schools, and institutions in six states with more waiting for K-9 Comfort Dogs to finish training. Lutheran Church Charities is able to train each dog for $10,000. Once the dogs are trained, the LCMS chaplains, or organizations they serve, are responsible for the continued maintenance and financial support for the dogs.

The ministry is nationally utilizing the unique skills of dogs, specifically Golden Retrievers, to open opportunities to touch people with mercy and compassion. They are trained to interact with people in ways that provide a bridge for compassionate ministry to take place. Some of the benefits of the K-9 Comfort Dogs include:

- Calming a hyperactive child or stimulate a withdrawn patient;
- Bring comfort to individuals and families suffering pain and loss;
- Create bridges for compassionate care when disaster strikes; and
- Facilitate conversation and interaction.

The dogs are trained with a protocol similar to that used for service dogs, except these dogs' only job is to listen to people in time of need. Some of the other places the K-9 Comfort Dogs have been used are: the shoreline of New Jersey and New York that was devastated by Hurricane Sandy, the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School (Newtown, Connecticut), and the Boston area after the Boston Marathon bombing.

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