



The Power of Pet Therapy

— By Derek Jones

Having owned her own company since 2002, Judy Love Rondeau has never been one to sit still for long. Upon retirement, she found the adjustment difficult. "I really wanted a part-time job just to keep me busy," she relayed. "However, I found no one wanted to hire a 65-year-old retiree, and I became very frustrated."

Not being one to give up, Judy began looking for a way to integrate her passion for volunteering into her new life. Judy explained, "I was busy volunteering at DFW Airport as an ambassador when I discovered there was a need for pet therapy dogs. I knew this would be a perfect fit for me and my West Highland White Terrier, Mr. McDuff."

Excited about this discovery, Judy registered herself and Mr. McDuff in The Alliance of Pet Therapy Dogs program in North Dallas. They finished the certification

process in January and now volunteer at Methodist Mansfield Medical Center. Mr. McDuff can be found cheering people up at the hospital every Monday. Judy smiled, "People at the hospital are, many times, going through unimaginable hardships, and it is amazing to see their faces light up when they see Mr. McDuff and are able to pet him for a few minutes."

One of Mr. McDuff's most important contributions is the joy he brings to children in the hospital. "I have these cards with Mr. McDuff's picture on them and biographical information on the back," Judy shared. "Kids are overjoyed to pet him and get a card from Mr. McDuff."

It is not just the patients and visitors of the hospital who enjoy the company of Mr. McDuff. "The staff absolutely loves and adores him," Judy stated. "They are all so supportive of the therapy dog program."

Judy is quick to point out she is not the only one spreading joy with a pet at the hospital. "Every day of the week there is a different dog and handler volunteering at the hospital and giving a little love and joy to others," she said.