



Pets-on-wheels Lick Loneliness

Date:

Dear Potential POW Volunteer:

Thank you for your interest in the Charles County Pets-on-Wheels (POW) Program. Enclosed you will find a volunteer application, program overview, volunteer job description and Pet Health Certificate. Your veterinarian must complete the Pet Health Certificate. If your pet has had the required inoculations and they are current, your vet should be willing to complete this form free of charge. Your next step is to come to the group orientation. Pet screenings are held at 6:30 PM on the second Tuesday of each month at Genesis Elder Care, 1 Magnolia Drive, La Plata, Maryland and on the second Thursday of each month at Bayside Care Center, 21412 Great Mills Road, Lexington Park, Maryland.

Pet screening that includes temperament evaluation is FREE. All pets -- dogs, cats, bunnies, hamsters, ferrets, birds, etc., must have an evaluation to join the volunteer program.

You must bring your completed Pet Health Certificate to the orientation at which time the temperament evaluation will be done. The pet health certificate and temperament evaluation will be given to the POW program director by the pet screener. If your pet is accepted into the program, this information will also be sent to the facility your pet will be visiting, which is required by the State of Maryland Health Department.

Your pet's evaluation will be based on the suitability of your pet to visit the population of the residents/clients/patients our program serves. Pets-on-Wheels must adhere to the guidelines set forth by the program for pet visiting.

Upon acceptance in to the program, you will be assigned a POW mentor who will go with you on your first and second visit. On the third visit, you may begin visiting on your own. Pet visitation can be flexible -- any time during the facility's visiting hours; weekdays, evenings, or weekends.

In addition to pet visitation, our program needs volunteers to help with fundraising, recruiting, publicity, etc. This is an all-volunteer, non-profit organization.

We are pleased you chose this important and rewarding program to volunteer your time. Over 50% of residents you will visit are without regular or meaningful visitation. Our goal is to provide these folks with friendship and support. POW asks for a one-year commitment. When you decide to leave the program, we request that you let us know immediately in order that we may find someone to take your place.

We all know that pets love unconditionally and that is one reason why pet visitation works in the facilities our program serves. We request that all of our volunteers visit residents regardless of their race, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation or religious beliefs. You will bring comfort and joy to the folks you visit, and possibly even make a few friends. We look forward to meeting you and your pet, and welcome you to the Pets-on-Wheels program.

Sincerely,

Michael L. Capps
Program Director
Charles County Pets-on-Wheels
9274 Rollingwood Dr
Pomfret, Maryland 20675
(301) 392-0155
CCPetsOnWheels@aol.com
www.CCPetsOnWheels.com



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 Pomfret, Maryland 20675
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VOLUNTEER APPLICATION FORM

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

E-mail: _____

Daytime Phone: _____ Evening Phone: _____

Employer: _____ Position: _____

Emergency Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Birth date: ____/____/____ How did you hear about POW? _____

Previous Volunteer Experience (if any): _____

ABOUT YOUR PET

Name: _____ Breed: _____

Age: _____ Weight: _____ Sex: _____ Neutered: YES NO

Name of Veterinarian: _____ Phone: _____

Provide brief history of training your pet has had (if any) and information about his/her sociability and special abilities or characteristics. Has your pet ever bitten or attacked anyone? (Use back if necessary)

Date Screened:	Screened by:	Assigned Facility:
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FACTS ABOUT THE CHARLES COUNTY PETS-ON-WHEELS

The goal of the Charles County Pets-on-Wheels is to arrange for volunteers and their pets to visit residents of nursing homes and provide “pet facility therapy.” Our emphasis is on serving patients who have been unresponsive to ongoing activities. Many of these patients have impaired cognitive abilities due to senility or Alzheimer’s disease and react to animals with more awareness than to people around them. For instance, repetitive speech behavior or annoying mannerisms may cease while a patient is petting an animal. Pets love unconditionally even when a person is no longer beautiful, even-tempered, wealthy or agile.

The program began in Charles County in June 1996. Heather Abul-Hawa was the Charles County founder. She had been a volunteer with Prince George’s program for three years before beginning the program in Charles County. In December 2002, Heather relocated to San Francisco, California and Michael Capps became the Program Director.

Charles County Pets-on-Wheels has four nursing homes, one adult day care center, and 26 Assisted Living Facility Group Homes with which we would like to place volunteers. In addition, we also place volunteers at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home, Morningside Assisted Living Facility, and the Civista Hospital Transitional Care Unit. Monthly, we also visit the Regional Institute for Children and Adolescents (RICA) in Cheltenham, Maryland. Quarterly, we visit St Mary’s City Medical Adult Day – V. Ripple Center in Hollywood, Maryland. In addition to individual visitations at the above facilities, there is a ‘Pet Parade’ scheduled each month wherein we visit the selected facility as a group. Attendance at any, or all of the events, is completely voluntary and is over and above the visits you make to your assigned facility. There are many residents at each facility who do not receive visits from family or friends. With several volunteers, we could serve every resident who does not receive any outside visits.

More than half of all nursing home residents have no relationship with their relatives and 40% receive visits fewer than once a week. The pets act as intermediaries and they assist in “breaking the ice” when strangers from different generations meet. Ideally, a close three-way bond forms between the resident, the pet and the volunteer.

Trainers who serve as volunteer advisors in the program screen all visiting pets to ensure they are temperamentally suited for such visits. Guidelines are given to the volunteers to assist them in preparing their pets for a visit. The trainer also gives the volunteers ideas on how to encourage the pet to become a better therapist. All animals are examined annually by their own veterinarian to ensure that inoculations are up-to-date and that the animals are free of internal and external parasites.

The techniques used during friendly visiting are offered in a training program, which acquaints the volunteer with the nursing home environment, the aging process and communication with the elderly.

Eager volunteers and nursing home staff have come to the conclusion that even the most depressed and withdrawn residents will eventually respond to an animal’s attention. Some residents are waiting for the pet to appear at the appointed time and are extremely disappointed if, for some reason, the team is not able to visit. A visit by a pet team relieves the boredom, which many residents face each day, particularly those who are unable to leave their beds or rooms to participate in other activities. Nursing home staffs report that many depressed and uncommunicative residents have become enthusiastic and talkative in the presence of an animal.

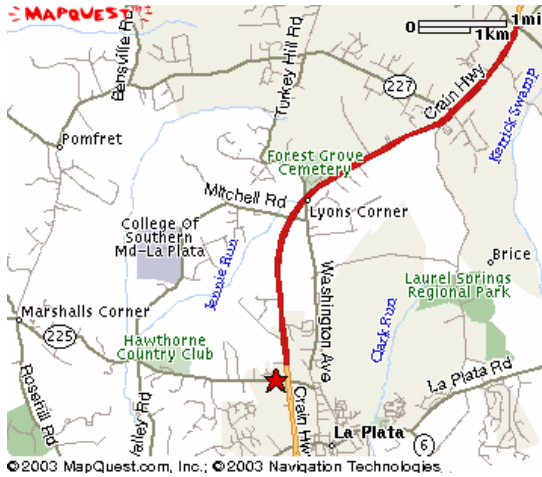
We all know that pets love unconditionally and that is one reason pet visitation works in the facilities we visit. We welcome you to this most rewarding volunteer opportunity.



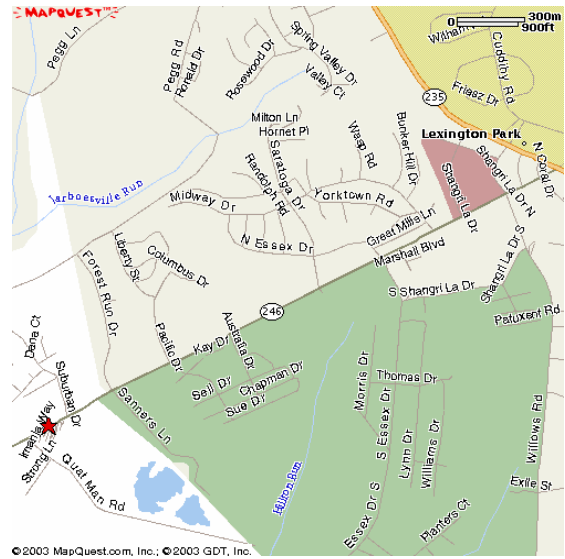
STEPS TO BECOMING A PETS-ON-WHEELS VOLUNTEER

1. Orientation and Pet Screening is held the 2nd Tuesday of each month at Genesis Elder Care, 1 Magnolia Drive, La Plata, Maryland, and on the 2nd Thursday of each month at the Bayside Care Center, 21412 Great Mills Road, Lexington Park, Maryland. (See insert below for directions to Genesis and Bayside.) Pet screenings are held at 6:30 PM. We include a temperament test for your pet and provide you with guidelines for visiting in a nursing home. Have your Pet Health Certificate and Volunteer Application completed and bring them to the orientation with you.
2. Have your pet checked by your veterinarian. Be sure that the distemper and rabies inoculations are current and that a fecal test (stool sample check for internal parasites) has been done within the past year. This form **MUST** be completed before your pet can go into the nursing home.
3. Pick the facility you would like to visit. If you are flexible about where you would like to visit, check with the Director to see which nursing home needs visitation the most. Otherwise, choose the nursing home closest to your home. You can visit any day of the week during normal visiting hours (usually 11:00 AM until 8:00 PM).
4. We will call you and arrange your first visit with the mentor of the particular facility so you can decide if you like the nursing home and if you can deal with the problems of visiting frail, elderly people. ***Do not bring your own pet on your first visit.*** If you decide it is the facility you would like to visit on a regular basis, your second visit will be with the mentor, you and your pet.
5. Remember that we may be able to find another type of placement for you if you feel you cannot visit a nursing home (e.g. Civista Transitional Care Facility, Morningside Assisted Living, RICA). If you cannot visit, perhaps you can participate in some of our other activities.
6. Once you become a volunteer, the mentor of your facility will contact you on a monthly basis to record the total hours you visited that month. It is important that you use the Sign In/Out Register at your facility each time you visit.
7. Do not hesitate to call the Michael Capps, Program Director, (301) 392-0155 or your facility mentor any time that you have a problem or a question.

Directions to
GENESIS ELDER CARE
 and
BAYSIDE CARE CENTER



Genesis Elder Care
 1 Magnolia Drive
 La Plata, Maryland 20646
 (301) 870-3125



Bayside Care Center
 21412 Great Mills Road
 Lexington Park, Maryland 20653
 (301) 863-7244



CHARLES COUNTY PETS-ON-WHEELS



GUIDELINES FOR PET TEAMS VISITING IN NURSING HOMES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

WHAT KIND OF ANIMALS AND PEOPLE ARE INVOLVED WITH PETS -ON-WHEELS?

People and animals that seek human attention will enjoy visiting in nursing homes. Some animals respond well both to body language and spoken language, but animals who just enjoy affection will probably find visiting pleasurable. People who love their own animals and see how their pet loves to love, often want to share this love with others.

WHAT DO YOU AND YOUR PET DO THERAPEUTICALLY?

The pet team tries to involve the resident by telling them about the animal, by seeing the animal, by touching it. We encourage residents to talk about animals they have owned and loved and all the experiences, which involved these animals. (Did you have a pet when you were a child? Did your children take care of the pet or did that fall to you?)

TIPS ON VISITING WITH YOUR PET

- I. MAKE SURE YOUR ANIMAL IS A PLEASURE TO BE AROUND**
- A. Prepare your pet as if you are headed for a show, a class, or your mother-in-law's house.
1. Be sure your pet is clean and free from unpleasant odors (this does not mean a bath every week!) Brush well and perhaps add powder or spray when necessary.
 2. TRIM NAILS and file rough edges. (Elderly people have sensitive and fragile skin; more accidents can occur because of nails than any other reason.)
 3. Brush out loose hair. If shedding is a terrible problem, spray or mist with a little water or pat lightly and sparingly with a little oil to keep the hair from flying around.
 4. Pack a supply bag for use when visiting. Keep it handy in the car or by the door so you don't have to think about re-packing every visit.
 - a. Brush (If your pet enjoys being brushed, see if you can get the resident to brush it; it's great exercise!)
 - b. Toys (something that doesn't roll is better than a ball, which may get out of hand.)
 - c. Special treats for your pet. Make sure that the residents feed your pet from a flattened palm rather than between the thumb and forefinger. Use small pieces.
 - d. Small plastic bowl for water. (Make sure the floor and pat's mouth are dry after use; take no chances on someone slipping on a wet floor.)
 - e. Towel or rag for feet, especially when it is wet outside.
 - f. Another towel or bathmat or lightweight rug to put under the animal when placing him on beds, laps, or Gerry-chair tables.
 - g. Paper towels and plastic bag in case your animal has an accident. (If your pet uses the front lawn, please clean up after your pets!)
- B. It is probably a good idea to feed your pet at least 4 hours before visiting to avoid accidents in the car or in the institution.

- C. Exercise at home before visiting. (It may also be necessary to take a break while visiting.)

II. PREPARE YOURSELF

- A. Your clothing should be neat, but suitable for kneeling and bending. Some nursing homes are very warm. Dress in layers so that you can peel off a layer to be more comfortable. Even in winter, a short-sleeved T-shirt may be warm enough for you.
- B. Wear comfortable shoes with non-slip soles.
- C. Before you visit the first time, call your Mentor to be sure they have your list of residents, your sign-in sheet, and your health certificate.

III. WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- A. Check your pet and make sure he has a drink, if needed. Check feet for dryness. Exercise once more if necessary.
- B. Visitation is not permitted when the facility is "Quarantined" due to illness and/or infectious disease.
- C. You are encouraged to visit the same residents during each of your visits, but it is almost impossible to by-pass some residents. Make sure you don't take too many residents at first, because each time you visit you are likely to visit longer with each resident. If you find that you can't limit your visit to one hour, your pet may become exhausted. Those who visit longer than one hour usually spend the time with one or two special friends while their pet takes a nap.

IV. WHILE YOU VISIT

- A. ***ALL PETS MUST BE ON A LEASH AT ALL TIMES DURING YOUR VISIT.***
- B. Avoid problems before they happen. Keep one eye on the resident and one eye on your pet. Anticipate, if you can, what each will do next.
- C. Give your pet time to get familiar with the surroundings and the people. You may not be able to see everyone on your list the first few times. Do not push your animal into a situation where he is uncomfortable.
- D. Watch your animal for fear or anxiety (ears back, cowering, tail down, hackles up, reluctance to go into an area), discomfort (due to slippery floors, heavy hands, heat, thirst, boxed-in situations), weariness or boredom (looking for the door or avoiding people).
- E. Change the environment with any strange behaviors or cut the visit short. Visits at the beginning might be only 15 to 30 minutes in length.
- F. Your pet picks up on your mood. If you are relaxed, they will be too.
- G. Your response is important. Show people how the animal likes to be petted and/or held. When the animal is loving and responsive, reward immediately, perhaps with a special treat given only at the nursing home.

- H. You are GUESTS. Correct misbehavior quietly, but firmly, within 3 to 5 seconds. It is, of course, preferable to anticipate and avoid problems.
- I. Make the visit a positive experience for you and your pet. The pets and owners who have been in the program a long time enjoy it as much or more than those they visit, but usually the first three months are very difficult.
- J. Be ready to hear the same stories about their pets every time you visit. Listen to them as if you are hearing them for the first time. We encourage residents to reminisce about the happy times in their lives.
- K. Pace yourself. Try to satisfy patients, but tactfully continue on to others who are waiting. More alert residents might be seen in small groups. Those with severe physical handicaps or mental disabilities should get more of your time, as should those who never get other visitors. Often residents will be so happy to see the animal they won't want to let you go. Promise to return; tell them you will come back every _____ (if it is possible for you to do so), because this helps them remember the day of the week!

- L. Some residents will say a verbal "NO" to meeting your animal.
 1. Some think you want them to keep the pet. Explain that you have just come to visit.
 2. If they say they don't feel well enough for a visit, wish them well from your animal and watch their response, respect their privacy; encourage, but don't demand.
 3. Many will follow their verbal "no" with body language that means "yes" or "maybe you should give me another chance." They may put out their hand, crane their neck, and follow with their eyes. Encourage them to look at the animal and see what happens.
 4. Some residents are so depressed that they express anger. They don't trust you to be there for them. Give them a long time to get used to you both and to convince them that you will not abandon them.

M. SLEEPING OR DOZING RESIDENTS SHOULD BE GENTLY AWAKENED IF THEY ANTICIPATE YOUR VISIT. They have lots of time to sleep, and may only be doing so because there is nothing else to do.

N. Many residents have hearing impairments. Be sure that the room is quiet when you begin your visit. Ask if you can turn off the radio or TV, and promise to turn it back on again when you leave.

O. Be sure the residents who are blind know that the pet is there. Spend a lot of time describing the animal to them.

P. Acknowledge the feelings of dislike or fear of animals from staff and residents who do not like animals. Be polite and leave. Long time visitors usually convince even these animal haters to love your pet.

V. CHECK OUT

- A. When your time is up or when you or your pet is tired, check out by signing the Visitor Log.
 1. Your pet is tired if he is restless or always lying down, if he heads towards the door, or if he stops listening to you.
- B. The Visitor Log is important to us, because it is the one way we can keep in touch with everyone each month. Each sheet has a place for your name and the times you visited. Use it each time you visit. If there are no sheets, please call the Program Director at (301) 392-0155.
- C. If you haven't been able to visit regularly, be sure to let your residents know why and in advance if possible.

D. If you had a good or bad experience that you want to relate, you can write it on the Visitor Log (even on the back). We read the sheets and can quote your story in the newsletter. You can also e-mail the Director at: CCPetsOnWheels@aol.com.

E. If you find a situation that is difficult, talk first with the Program Director. If the situation continues, the Program Director will contact the Activity Director at the facility. No problem is too small for our attention (we'll try to help you tackle the big problems, too!)

A WORD ABOUT CATS

Cats can be much more difficult and demand much patience. It may be easier to congregate a few residents and the cat in one room, where the cat can have time to adjust to its surroundings. While the cat is exploring, try putting him on the resident's lap.

It may be more comfortable for your cat to be carried in a carrier or a box when you walk through the halls. When a cat is carried in your arms and then sits on laps, it may become too hot. Watch your cat carefully to see that it does not become overheated.

EMOTIONAL RESIDENTS

If residents become too emotional about a situation, they may begin to cry and that might make you feel very uncomfortable. Try to be a good listener and allow them to talk about what is distressing. If they talk about wanting to go home, ask them what they miss most about home. Perhaps you can turn it into a good reminiscing experience.

Pets-on-Wheels is a non-profit organization receiving support from the community. If you are not able to visit with your pet, perhaps you can support the program in other ways. Call us to talk about your options in working with Pets-on-Wheels at (301) 392-0155 or e-mail the Director at: CCPetsOnWheels@aol.com.

WORKING WITH THE HANDICAPPED ELDERLY

Aging is not a well-understood process. This is due, in part, to the fact that gerontology, the study of aging, is a relatively new field. There is also the problem of separating the actual aging process from the effects of diseases most often associated with growing older. Aging occurs at varying rates in different people, and the various aspects and systems of one person progress at various rates. Normal aging, therefore, is difficult to describe. However, there are several factors, which do seem common among the aged. Most of these are physical changes involving sensory loss. Such sensory deterioration has a serious impact on psychological and social behavior as the older person attempts to cope with these changes.

PHYSICAL CHANGES

HEARING: Although few older people are totally deaf, many have a hearing impairment serious enough to cause communication difficulties. Older people can hear lower sounds better than higher ones, vowels better than consonants. Background noise interferes with hearing. Such changes are frequently more severe in one ear than the other. Since this loss occurs gradually, the older person may not be fully aware of it, but begins to compensate, learning to read lips or leaning closer to the speaker. To communicate effectively with a hearing-impaired person:

- Always carry on a face-to-face conversation
- Sit as near as is socially and physically comfortable
- Speak in well-lighted places
- Don't shout
- Allow time for the person to hear and process your words
- Rephrase rather than repeat; use simpler sentences
- Try to minimize background noise.

VISION: Several changes occur in visual abilities, some as a result of aging, others as a consequence of disease. Colors (especially blues and greens) are more difficult to distinguish. It becomes harder to distinguish between objects as they appear out of focus; letters and words blend together. More light is required in order to see, while optimum distance for focusing may change, perhaps to an arm's length away. Distance judgment becomes limited, and the ability to adjust to dark/light changes diminishes. As visual losses increase, an older person may become withdrawn, feeling unable to cope with a confusing environment. Paranoia can develop (particularly if substantial hearing loss is involved) as the older person realizes that not everything is perceived that is going on around the person. Some tips for communicating with a vision-impaired person:

- Always identify yourself when you enter the room
- It is probably not necessary to raise your voice
- Use your normal language, including words like "see" and "look". Always talk directly to the person, not through a third party
- Give clear directions, using left, right, front, back from the person's perspective (not yours)
- Touching is very important
- Encourage independence

TASTE AND SMELL: Both of these senses tend to deteriorate gradually over the years with two basic implications: a reduced enjoyment of eating and a diminished ability to detect dangerous odors, most notable, natural gas. Many residents in nursing homes are not aware of the strong smell of urine present on themselves or in their surroundings.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CHANGES

There are many myths about the psychological aspect of aging, ranging from the existence of “senility” to an inability to learn. Some changes do tend to occur, but many of these are based on the older person’s efforts to adapt to limitations resulting from disease or age.

There may be a gradual loss of memory regarding recent events. Information may take longer to process; thus, decisions or actions may take longer. However, the ability to learn remains, though the rate of learning is slower.

A determination of normal or abnormal behavior depends in large part upon the observer. A relative or friend usually knows what is normal behavior for an older person, while an unfamiliar observer may find the person’s actions quite unusual. Personality changes attributable solely to aging appear to be minimal and are mostly exaggerations of previous traits. The elderly person may like to keep the same schedule or room arrangement because he or she is less likely to make mistakes in a familiar routine or environment.

- Be aware that many people in nursing homes do not want to be there, may not understand how they got there, and may be extremely depressed. This depression does not always mean that the person will become quiet and withdrawn. Sometimes depression is displayed with anger and aggression.
- If you meet an elderly person displaying either aspect of depression, remember that it will take a long time before the person will trust himself to be drawn to you.

In old age, we are what we were as younger people, only more so.

SOME GUIDELINES FOR VISITING

1. If possible, make your visit the same time and day of the week. The residents will then look forward to your visit and may remember that day of the week.
2. If you say you’ll be there, keep your promise. When you can’t keep an appointment, call in advance and suggest another time. To avoid disappointing the residents, don’t promise more than you can realistically deliver.
3. Concentrate on the quality of your visit. Make it a pleasant break in a somewhat routine existence. Be sure your visit doesn’t interfere with mealtimes, treatment, or rest.
4. Give some thought to what you will do during the visit. Plans will depend on the mental and physical status of the resident, but some might be able to go outside for a walk with you and your pet. If the resident cannot respond, spend some quality time with your pet, groom him or pet him or teach him tricks. The resident will pick up more of this than you can imagine.
5. **FIND A PLACE TO SIT DOWN. DON’T TRY TO STAY ON YOUR FEET FOR THE ENTIRE VISIT; YOU’LL BE EXHAUSTED.**
6. Some volunteers invite residents to a meal, a holiday or a baseball game. Give the nursing home adequate notice to make sure this would be possible.
7. Any friend or child can feel free to visit regularly. Teenagers and older children may need some assistance in adjusting to the nursing home atmosphere, but younger children rarely react negatively to older or sick individuals. If we had all been introduced to nursing homes when we were very young, it wouldn’t be so hard for us now to deal with people who are sick, handicapped, or dying.

REMEMBER TO RELAX AND HAVE A GOOD TIME.



Pets-on-Wheels Health Certificate



Owner's Name	Telephone Number	Animal's Name
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Address	City/State	ZIP Code	Predominant Breed	Color(s)
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SPECIES	SEX	AGE	SIZE
CANINE:	MALE:	3 - 12 months	Under 20 lbs
FELINE:	FEMALE:	Over 12 months	20 - 50 lbs
OTHER:	NEUTERED: YES NO	Age:	Over 50 lbs

At the time this animal was examined by me on _____ it appeared to be free of contagious skin disease and parasites.

The result of the fecal test was: NEGATIVE POSITIVE. If POSITIVE, it was treated with _____.

CANINE			FELINE			AVIAN
VACCINATIONS	Date Given	Expires	VACCINATIONS	Date Given	Expires	Antibiotic Treatment
Distemper/Hepatitis			Pneumonitis			Date Conducted:
Leptospirosis			Calicivirus			
Parainfluenza			Panleukopenia			
Parvovirus			Rhinotracheitis			
Rabies			Rabies			
Other:			Other:			

Veterinarian's Signature	Date	MD License Number	Telephone Number
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