

AHVRP congratulates the 2014 Traditional Excellence Program Award Winner:

**Joy Parker, Director, Volunteer Services
Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters
Norfolk, Va.
Buddy Brigade Pet Therapy Program**

The Buddy Brigade Pet Therapy program provides emotional support, comfort and diversion to patients facing difficult situations and supports the Children's Hospital of The King's Daughters (CHKD) mission to provide the highest level and quality of pediatric care in the region.

The Buddy Brigade Pet Therapy Program at CHKD was launched in 2005 with seven dogs. Today, 52 teams (owners and certified dogs) participate in over 60 monthly openings.

In 2013, handlers documented 9,600 interactions with children, visitors and staff, logging 825 volunteer hours. Dog teams visit inpatients, the outpatient cancer clinic, physical therapy patients and the Child Abuse Center.

Trading cards are an innovative addition to the Buddy Brigade program. Each dog has an individual photo card, similar to a baseball card, with his picture, name, breed, birth date, interests and hobbies and favorite treats. Visits let the patient see the dog in the doorway and leave a trading card.

In 2010 the Adopt a Buddy online donation program was created to allow donors to sponsor dogs through an online donation process. To date, Adopt a Buddy has generated over \$11,500 and gives families and community members a creative way to support the program.

CHKD shares campus space with Eastern Virginia Medical School, and since 2013, the Buddy Brigade dogs have provided stress relief for medical school students during exam weeks. Multiple dogs are available on the lawn for the students to play with during a particularly stressful time.

CHKD on Tour is a mobile program that travels to the region's elementary schools to educate students about what to expect should they be hospitalized or transported to the emergency department. The program features a transport unit, nursing and radiology information and a Buddy Brigade dog. Students learn from the handler about the benefits of pet therapy and volunteering.