



# Partnerships Between Dog Trainers & Therapy/Facility Dog Handlers

## Building Bridges



# mary margaret callahan

- Pet Partners Chief Mission Officer
- AAAIP Director of Education, Standards and Certification
- Educator, pet parent and hobby farmer



**AAAIP**

Association of Animal-Assisted  
Intervention Professionals



**Pet  
Partners™**

# Dr. Gina Fisher Caldwell

- 25+ years of experience in animal training, behavior, and welfare
- Adjunct professor curator at a private zoo, overseeing 80+ species
- Therapy dog handler, evaluator, and subject matter expert for Pet Partners and AAAIP -



# The Role of Dog Trainers in the AAI Journey

- Often the starting point for handlers
- Facilitate the relationship between handler and animal
- Teach appropriate behaviors and cues
- Model respect and welfare for animal



# Therapy Dog Prep Courses



- Focus on the skills and aptitudes specific to this work
- Require a trainer with awareness of the field
- Prepare the handler to be an advocate for their dog
- Often include introduction to novel stimuli encountered in AAI

# When Dog Trainers are Essential

- These are sometimes the only experts AAI handlers turn to
- Might be called in for consultation of behaviors encountered during AAI
- Serve as team evaluators
- Help with retirement planning



# Selecting a Trainer for AAI



- Education and certifications
- Ask about AAI knowledge
- Inquire about equipment
- Ask theoretical questions: *What would you suggest if...?*
- Call previous clients

# AAAIP's Services for Dog Trainers

- We've realized that getting trainers onboard and aware of AAI best practices is essential to the field
- Trainers could be some of our most impactful allies in affecting welfare
- Trainers as referral sources for teams with potential
- Trainers as evaluators



# Coming Soon: AAAIP's New Course

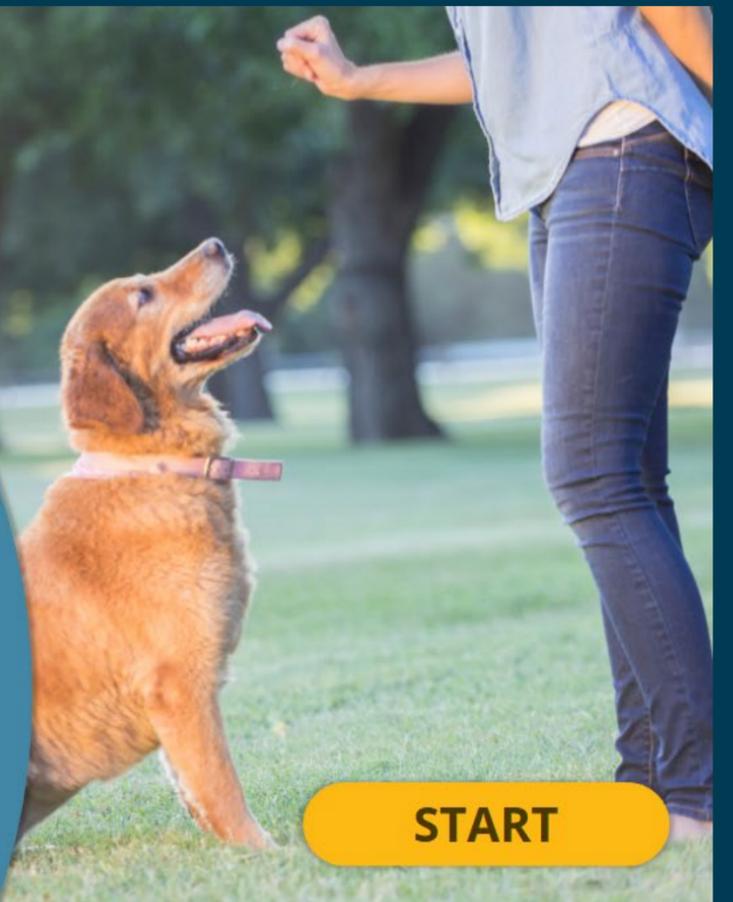
- Animal Aptitude
- Handler Responsibilities
- Animal Agency
- Essential Skills
- Working Environments
- Program Outline
- AAI Terminology



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**Therapy and Facility  
Dog Training for  
Dog Trainers**

**START**





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# Certificate of Completion

Is awarded to

**Barky McTrainerson**

For completing the course

**Therapy & Facility Dog Training for Dog Trainers**

Issued on

**Coming Soon!**

# Performing Therapy Animal Team Evaluations

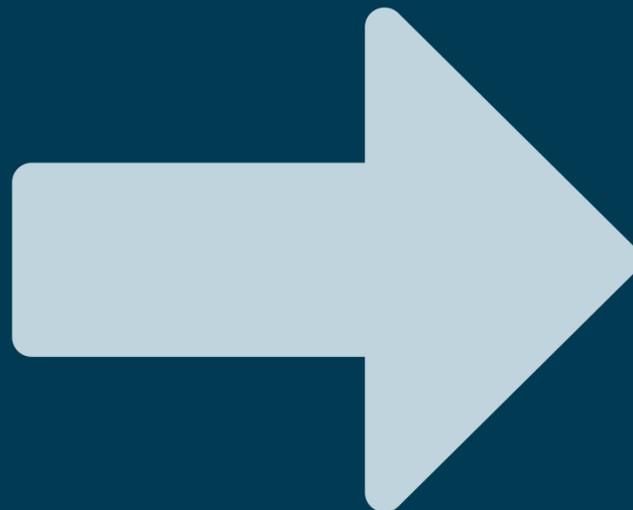
- Based on *The Competencies for the Ethical Inclusion of Therapy and Facility Animals*
- Occurs in the professional's workspace to reflect real world context for team's work
- Includes checklists for both handler and animal skills
- Looking for how you direct interactions, your ability to read signs of stress, how you advocate for your animal
- Currently available to AAAIP members with their C-AAIS

# AAAIP RESOURCES

- Monthly educational events
- Self-paced online coursework
- AAI Specialist Certification (C-AAIS)
- Team Evaluation for Professionals
- Liability Insurance
- Professional Community
- Subject Matter Expert Opportunities

# Never Miss a AAAIP Announcement

Sign up to  
Receive our  
Monthly  
Newsletter





# QUESTIONS? DISCUSSION

Let's Stay in Touch!

**Dr. Gina Caldwell**  
[ginacaldwellphd@gmail.com](mailto:ginacaldwellphd@gmail.com)

**Mary Margaret Callahan**  
[mmcallahan@aaaiponline.org](mailto:mmcallahan@aaaiponline.org)

THANK YOU!