

REGION

Baystate Children's Hospital welcomes Isabela, Facility Dog

SPRINGFIELD – Not all new employees are announced with great fanfare unless they are Isabela, Isa for short, Baystate Children's Hospital's first-ever facility dog, who joined the team thanks to a \$150,000 grant from the Dunkin' Joy in Childhood Foundation.

Baystate's newest employee goes to work every day to provide special animal assisted therapy to pediatric patients, their families and staff members.

The Foundation's Dogs for Joy program seeks to increase the number of in-resident dogs in children's hospitals across the country. Facility dogs like Isa are professionally trained to work in a healthcare setting.

Unlike volunteer dogs that visit a hospital or medical center for a short time, facility dogs are at the hospital every day with their handlers. In most cases they are used exclusively for clinical work. The dogs can physically interact with patients to provide comfort and love. These dogs are trained to help with tasks like teaching children how to take medication, keeping a child calm during medical intervention and providing incentives for children to get out of bed for a walk, these dogs serve as a source of happiness and provide a sense of normalcy for patients.

Research shows that animal-assisted therapy can lower stress and anxiety levels, affect blood pressure, increase patient mobility, and provide an alternative focus from pain. They help patients lower their stress and anxiety and encourage them to complete their health care goals.

"Dogs like Isabela are often described as better than any medicine. They just know when someone needs

comfort, support, and love, and they give it unconditionally without judgement and expect nothing in return," said Dr. Charlotte Boney, chair, Department of Pediatrics at Baystate.

The program is made possible by the Dunkin' Joy in Childhood Foundation, the charitable organization powered by Dunkin' and the generosity of its franchisees, partners, team members and guests. The Foundation's mission is to provide the simple joys of childhood to kids battling hunger or illness, even on their most difficult days. Support for Isabela is also being provided through donations from Universal Electric and the UMass UDance Marathon event held last spring.

"We are thrilled to bring joy to patients and their families at Baystate Children's Hospital through our Dogs for Joy program," said April McGonnigal, Director of the Joy in Childhood Foundation. "We have seen the incredible impact that these special pups bring to children's hospitals throughout the country and look forward to seeing the meaningful impact that Isa has on the patients, staff and families at Baystate."

Isabela, a Golden Retriever, was born and raised at Canine Assistants in Milton, Georgia, a non-profit organization which teaches and provides service dogs for children and adults with physical disabilities or other special needs. In 2009, they partnered with Children's Healthcare of Atlanta to create a new and groundbreaking community service dog program which has now grown nationwide. To date, Canine Assistants have over 80 facility dogs placed around the country. Already a star before arriving at

Baystate Children's Hospital, Isabela, now almost 19 months old, began her education at just seven weeks. She has completed over 1,500 hours of individual instruction and 2,250 hours of group instruction and was the first of her litter to graduate at only 17 months old.

Three certified child life specialists from Baystate Children's Hospital, who provide psychosocial and emotional support to children and families within the hospital, traveled to Georgia for a week-long training camp with Isabela and staff from Canine Assistants. After the training session, the child life specialists, who serve as the dog's three handlers, flew along with Isabela to her new home where she is continuing to learn and grow alongside them in her new role as a part of the Child Life & Healing Arts team.

Isa and her handlers provide goal-oriented interventions such as preparation and support for medical procedures, assistance with physical and occupational therapy, help with meeting ambulation goals, socio-emotional support, and bereavement support. She will be working with pediatric patients across many areas of the children's hospital including inpatient units, the emergency department, radiology, and some outpatient areas. Isa also has some designated time to support hospital staff across the medical center. She has a calm and intuitive demeanor and has been an added support for staff during debriefs following difficult situations, or when rounding on units to help uplift spirits.

There is published evidence that facility dogs reduce stress, relieve pain, decrease anxiety and inertia, not to mention improving everyone's including

patients, families and staff mood and morale, noted Dr. Boney.

A 2021 study showed that animal-assisted interventions in hospitalized children on acute care units and pediatric intensive care units (PICU) lowered the stress hormone cortisol and increased mood and activity compared to the control group. Another study from 2022 surveyed 73 healthcare professionals who handled 46 facility dogs in 17 children's hospitals and found that facility dogs decreased stress, improved well-being and job-related morale, and benefited patients by building rapport, providing a comforting presence and normalizing the hospital environment.

For more information on Baystate Children's Hospital, people may visit baystatehealth.org/bch.

To learn more about the Dunkin' Joy in Childhood Foundation's Dogs for Joy program, people may visit www.bringjoy.org and follow on Facebook or Instagram.



Isabela is an almost 19 month old Golden Retriever and Baystate Children's Hospital's first ever facility dog. Submitted photo

Community Newspaper EDITOR WANTED

Turley Publications is looking for a "hands on" energetic candidate who loves telling stories to be the editor for two weekly publications. This position will include managing and coaching a small news staff that will provide the community with a great local newspaper.

The editor will need to cover local government and events while representing the newspaper at public venues.

The successful candidate will have strong community journalism skills and is also expected to gather news and write stories for the two papers as well as for other occasional companywide publications.

This is a job for a self-starter who has a vision for growing and connecting with our valued readers, and who thoroughly enjoys community journalism.

This full-time position with flexible schedule is based in our Palmer office at 24 Water St., this is not a remote position.

Qualifications should include:

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent experience
- Willingness to mentor a staff writer and correspondents
- Editing experience and ability to write clean copy in a fast-paced, deadline-driven environment
- Proficiency in Associated Press style
- Management experience and/or experience managing content for a print publication.

Please send resume and writing examples to:

Eileen Kennedy, Executive Editor
24 Water St., Palmer, MA 01069
or email directly to
ekennedy@turley.com

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PUBLIC NOTICES

Huntington Conservation Commission
The Huntington Conservation Commission will hold a public meeting at **November 15, 2023 at 7:15 pm** at Stanton Hall to review a Notice of Intent submitted by Mark Reed representing Vicky Puza-Allen. The proposed activity is for reconstruction of a three bedroom cottage, the installation of a sewage disposal system and the installation of a drinking well located at 121 Rocky Point Rd Norwich Lake. This hearing is in accordance with M.G. L. Chapter 131 Section 40 of the Wetlands Protection Act.
11/09/2023

Commonwealth of Massachusetts The Trial Court Hampden Probate and Family Court 50 State Street Springfield, MA 01103 (413)748-7758

Docket No. HD23C0320CA
In the matter of:
Heather Galen-Allison Morgan
CITATION ON PETITION TO CHANGE NAME
A Petition to Change Name of Adult has been filed by **Heather Galen-Allison Morgan of Russell, MA** requesting that the court enter a Decree changing their name to:
Heather Allison Morgan
IMPORTANT NOTICE
Any person may appear for purposes of objecting to the petition by filing an appearance at: **Hampden Probate and Family Court before 10:00 a.m. on the return day of 11/24/2023.**
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance if you object to this proceeding.
WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: October 27, 2023

Rosemary A. Saccomani
Register of Probate
11/09/2023

Public Shade Tree Hearing
In accordance with Massachusetts General Laws (MGL), Chapter 87, Public Shade Tree Law, Section 3 (Cutting of Public Shade Trees; Hearing; Damages), the Town of Williamsburg Planning Board will hold a Public Hearing regarding the removal of three public shade trees on **Monday, November 20, at Town Offices, 141 Main Street, Haydenville at 7:00 PM.** Any person interested or wishing to be heard on this matter should appear at the time and place designated. The affected town trees are located at 5 Conway Road and are three 8-inch diameter Hemlock trees and are marked with a blue string.
Stephen Smith,
Planning Board Chair
Thomas Por, Tree Warden
11/09, 11/16/2023

Country Journal OBITUARY POLICY

Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

One is a free, brief **Death Notice** listing the name of deceased, date of death and funeral date and place.

The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$225, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

EARLY DEADLINE

In observance of **THANKSGIVING PUBLIC NOTICES**

WILL HAVE AN EARLY AD DEADLINE
Place your public notice no later than

Thurs., Nov. 16 Noon

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