



The love for a dog is a near-universal experience, and how could it not be? There's something energetic about their wagging tails, a healing power in their forgiving eyes and a sense of unconditional love when they nuzzle their heads into an outstretched hand. What's more, they seem to support you when you need it the most.

For Oklahoma State University students, faculty and staff, this type of friendship is always available on campus. Since 2013, Pete's Pet Posse and its nearly 60 dog-and-owner teams have become deeply woven into the culture of OSU. Together, they have been

combating homesickness, reducing stress, promoting good mental health, responding to students in crisis and providing additional benefits to campus — laughter and happiness chiefly among them.

If you've ever seen a member of Pete's Pet Posse on campus, you understand why people have come to love this program. No matter how busy, people stop to pet the animals, and almost always engage in conversation with those around them. Whether department head or first-year student, **loving a pet is something that binds people together.**



“ It's amazing to watch students positively change and blossom after spending time with Pete's Pet Posse. Our dogs have the incredible sense to know who needs their help in a crowd of eager students, staff and faculty.”

ANN HARGIS, *OSU First Cowgirl and Scruff's owner/handler*



“What Otis and his P3 partners do is beyond explanation. It’s magic. Whether it’s cuddling with a homesick student or sitting on the foot of someone having a stressful day, the dogs somehow always know what they need to do. **When students, faculty, staff and even parents see Otis looking at them, they visibly relax. That’s the P3 magic!”**

CAROL JONES, *Otis’ owner/handler*

HELP US GROW PETE’S PET POSSE

Pete’s Pet Posse quickly grew after the pilot program introduced eight dogs and their handlers to campus in 2013. It has garnered national attention as an innovative pet therapy program with a successful formula that can be adapted for other institutions.

Today, there are nearly 60 active pet therapy teams on the Stillwater, Tulsa and OSU Center for Health Sciences campuses, and more teams are in training. These teams are all volunteers who give their time to make a difference in the lives of others. Each owner-and-pet team completes a rigorous special training schedule, including national testing and certifications. Upon completion, they are given Pete’s Pet Posse gear to easily identify the team. In 2016, a student volunteer group called the **Ruff Riders** was formed to help with visits and program promotion, oftentimes handing out trading cards and fielding questions.

Volunteers conduct nearly 1,000 special appearances each year at places like the Edmon Low Library, the Student Union, residence halls, staff departments and offices, new student orientations and special visits following crisis situations and tragedies.

Private donations sustain the program, as it is not funded by the university. Donations provide materials such as custom OSU tartan plaid vests, collars, leashes, team gear and trading cards that people have come to expect when they meet one of the Pete’s Pet Posse dogs.



“When Hera and I walk across campus, it never fails that we leave a lot of smiles. It always makes my day to know just seeing a dog walking across campus can brighten someone’s day.”

RUSSELL SIMKINS, *Hera’s owner/handler*

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