Candoo Service Dog

VFTH

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A new kind of therapy is taking place at the Kelly Autism program and it’s bringing a smile to lots of faces.

Amy Bingham explains in this week’s View from the Hill.

When it comes to relieving stress, what could be better than a 94 pound English Cream Golden Retriever? This lovable, laid back dog is already having a positive impact on those he encounters.

 “He’s kind, he’s playful, he’s lovin.”

This is Candoo. He’s made fast friends with 8 year old Maddy who has Asberger’s syndrome.

 “Candoo offers her sensory and understanding. Something that is a constant.”

Maddy comes to the Kelly Autism Program for therapy twice a week. She responded to Candoo immediately.

 “Maddy used a loud voice almost scared participants. What has happened within the first week we saw a 75% reduction in high voice high pitch.”

The two year old lab is a hit with all the students. He has the perfect temperament for this environment.

 “He very much is subdued and allows the kids to do a variety of things, jump on his feet, and he doesn’t react.”

Candoo starts his day at Military Student Services.

 “I drop Candoo off in the morning and I feel like a mom again dropping my kids off at day care.”

Support from Terry Scariot and John and Linda Kelly allows Candoo to split his time between Military Student Services and the Kelly Autism Program. Handlers from both programs went through a full week of training with Candoo earlier this semester.

 “Basically it’s so we would all us the same procedures because with so many people at some facilities we were all using same commands and instruction.”

And now, just a few weeks later, the benefits are obvious.

When we see smiles coming in, that’s so important to us.

 “It doesn’t push her away or say stop or no, not now. That dog loves her.”

 “I love Candoo.”

Next Thursday night, November 21st, Candoo will be at Diddle Arena when the Hilltoppers take on UNC Wilmington for a special passing of the leash ceremony from his trainers at Smoky Mountain Service dogs.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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