



2050 Overland Ave.
Billings, MT 59102

www.yellowstonefoundation.org



Emmy Lou and Cooper are both Golden Retrievers and certified Therapy Dogs through the Delta Society and Pet Partners.

At nine, Emmy Lou (above) is the veteran and has provided countless hours of play, comfort, and love to YBGR's kids.

Cooper, (below) who just turned one this spring, was certified at the end of March 2021 and has just started his time as a Therapy Dog.



It Sure Makes A Difference When You Know Somebody Cares

YBGR Pet Therapy Program

"Dogs are the most amazing creatures; they give unconditional love. For me, they are the role model for being alive." - Gilda Radner

For most people, dogs can brighten an otherwise gloomy day with their devotion and unconditional love. *This is especially true for children in the residential treatment program who are dealing with severe emotional trauma.*

For over twenty years, Pet Therapy has been an integral part of YBGR's Recreational Therapy Department whose goals are to enhance a child's ability to cooperate with others, problem solve, reduce stress, improve coordination, and improve overall physical well-being.

The benefits of Pet Therapy for a child's mental and physical health are many: decreasing feelings of isolation and depression, bridging communication gaps, providing comfort, lowering anxiety and agitation, stabilizing blood pressure, and stimulating feelings of joy and belonging.

When youth walk into the Uihlein Recreation Center and see Emmy Lou and Cooper, their faces just light up. The simple act of petting dogs produces an automatic relaxation response, and when dogs are used in therapy sessions, children feel more comfortable and tend to be more open in expressing their thoughts and feelings.

On occasion, the dogs have also been used in the clinic with youth who are anxious about getting blood draws or shots. During such times, the dogs have a calming effect, and the kids focus their attention on the dog rather than what the nurse is doing.

Finally, the act of playing with dogs increases movement and motor skill functions, helping children get the exercise they need to be healthy.



To learn more about supporting the Pet Therapy Program at YBGR, please contact Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch Foundation at 406-656-8772.