

Dear Trainees,

Please note that a service dog named Tess works at Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School (CMES), a public charter school on the Montessori Center of Minnesota (MCM) campus.

The dog CMES has chosen is a first-generation cross between a white English Golden Retriever and a white Standard Poodle. This breed of dog is especially suited to, and was originally bred for, therapy work and work with children because of its mild temperament, intelligence, and love for children and all people. In addition, these dogs are low to non-shedding and non-allergenic.

“Tess,” named from Montessori, is a working dog while at Cornerstone and does not wander or run around the school site. Tess does not spend time at MCM. Children working with Tess do so in a purposeful way after they have been presented how to do so, with objectives and goals defined, and always with the guidance of the handler. Tess will not approach children. Rather, children who are working with Tess will come to her to work. Tess does special work with the speech therapist and children at Cornerstone as well as work with children on the spectrum and children in crisis.

Religious beliefs concerning dogs and personal preferences will always be respected, and we welcome you letting us know how you feel about dogs.

The research about the positive effects of therapy dogs on children, especially in terms of supporting decreased stress and calm behavior, as well as strengthening reading and test-taking skills, *is extensive and compelling*. Tess has been working hard over the last 18 months and will take her test this summer for her Therapy Dog Certification. CMES is happy to share as much information with you as you are interested in knowing. Please enjoy perusing the web sites below; there are more we can share with you if you would like additional resources.

www.schooltherapydogs.org

www.therapyanimals.org

Sincerely,

Liesl Taylor
Director of Elementary Pedagogy
Cornerstone Montessori Elementary School