1. What is Maggie’s essential role?

Maggie is a Facility Dog for Jefferson College of Nursing and is partnered with her trained handler, Dean Marino.

As a Facility Dog, Maggie’s essential role is to encourage feelings of calmness and security for JCN faculty, staff and students in addition to TJUH and JCN academic and community partners. Our goal is for Maggie to help mitigate moral injury, compassion fatigue and improve general mental health through companionship and affection. She will enable the JCN Team to develop innovative wellbeing programs that benefit faculty, staff, students and partners.

2. What is Maggie’s official title?

Chief Compassion Officer, Jefferson College of Nursing

Maggie is our youngest JCN team member at 16-months-old!

3. What inspired you to “hire” a service dog for JCN?

We were introduced to the benefits of Service Dogs through our relationship with Leashes of Valor, an organization that trains rescue dogs to become Service Dogs then partners them with military veterans diagnosed with PTSD and TBI. We hosted our first Veteran’s event with the Leashes of Valor founders through a panel discussion to educate the Jefferson enterprise on the benefits of Service Dogs to veterans with PTSD and TBI. That panel discussion led to a pilot research study that is in progress with JCN faculty and staff and Leashes of Valor called, “The Use of Service Dogs in Veterans Diagnosed with PTSD or TBI”.

The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the need for an innovative tool to help the JCN family in unprecedented times of uncertainty. During the early stages of working remotely in March 2020, Dean Marino read an intriguing article published in UVA Today, “Kenny, The School Of Nursing’s Endearing Therapy Dog, Gives Online Sessions”. The article detailed the work of Kenny, the UVA School of Nursing’s resident therapy dog, along with his handler, Edie Barbero, PhD, RN, PMHNP-BC, Assistant Professor, School of Nursing, Family, Community & Mental Health Systems. The article described Kenny and Edie’s efforts in hosting a Zoom videoconference with upwards of 36 attendees, including children. After speaking with Edie on the benefits that Kenny brings to UVA, Dean Marino thought of the Leashes of Valor team and made the call.

4. How will she help students?

Maggie will help students in managing the stress associated with daily academic life via classroom visits, events and group meetings along with special visits during exams. In addition,
nursing students will learn about the benefits and various uses of the human-animal bond in healthcare from Maggie.

5. Will there be a schedule she follows in terms of days she will be at each campus?

Maggie will have a “work” schedule so that she maintains work-life balance. The schedule is in development as we plan our return to campus.

6. What would an interaction between students and her look like? Are there individual or group sessions?

Maggie will interact with students on an individual and group basis depending on the setting and needs. She is extremely versatile and has been trained for both settings.

7. Will Maggie make any virtual class appearances before classes resume on campus this fall?

Unfortunately, Maggie is not permitted to return to campus until the JCN team is authorized. We anticipate returning to campus by the end of August.