

When I began taking Otis to one of the local hospitals, UC West Chester, I never imagined how much he'd be loved by everyone there. I was prepared to show up at the hospital and make our rounds and bring smiles to the patients inside. But I never imagined how popular he'd become with all the doctors and nurses as well.

We don't make it much past the front door before I hear, "Otis!!!!" and see someone rushing down the hall to greet us. Or, "Oh my day just got better!" while a group of nurses stop what they are doing in the hallway and rush over to see their, "favorite therapy dog." When I thought about hospital visits, I didn't even think that the doctors and nurses would need the visits just as much as the patients do, and maybe even more. Getting to spend just a few hours with them each week has made my respect for what they do grow so much.

Let me share with you some stories from our hospital visits I think that you will enjoy. One morning, we were making our way through the fourth floor waiting area when Otis spotted the chaplain taking a rest in one of the chairs. He began to approach her, because he's convinced that everyone needs to tell him how handsome and wonderful he is, so I asked if she'd like to say hi to him. She smiled, told me she loved dogs, and she would be happy to pet him, so I let him continue walking up to her. We hadn't been there more than 50 seconds probably when behind me I hear, "Otis!!!!" coming from the floor. Upon hearing his name, Otis whirls around, sees a group of nurses who think he's just the best thing ever and heads straight towards them with me barely staying on my feet trying to keep up. Once we got to the desk, the next 10-15 minutes were spent with Otis plopping himself right in the middle of the group of nurses soaking in every ounce of love he can get with a face that looked like he was saying, "this must be what heaven is like."

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By Sarah Hubbard

When at the hospital, we get to visit several different floors. And be sure, there isn't any floor that will let us forget to make sure that we come by. When we were making our rounds on the ICU floor one Saturday, we had stopped at the end of a hallway to visit one of the PAs. While we were sitting and talking with her, an x-ray technician came up and asked to take a picture of Otis (he is the king of snap chat selfies with nurses at the hospital). After a few minutes she says, "I hate to interrupt, but radiology is requesting Otis' presence ASAP. They've been waiting since noon."

While I'd like to say that all our meetings are happy ones, I'm afraid that I can't do that. We have begun to go through our "firsts" of hard visits. One weekend during our visit, we got to one of the floors and were pulled aside by one of the nurses. She told me that there was a room that she wanted me to go into and visit with the patient. But before I walked off, she told







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While I'd like to say that all of our meetings are happy ones, I'm afraid that I can't do that. We have begun to go through some of our "firsts" of hard visits. One weekend during our visit, we got to one of the floors and were pulled aside by one of the nurses. She told me that there was a room that she wanted me to go into and visit with the patient. But before I walked off, she told me, "But listen, they're nearing the end of their life, and it would benefit both them and the family if you could take Otis to go say hi." I must admit, I wasn't quite prepared to do that so soon. I walked into the room and smiled and said hi to everyone. Otis of course said hi to all the family in the room. But then he did something that made me know that this is really his calling. He looked at the patient, walked up to the bed, and leaned on the side of the bed so that they were able to pet him. My heart melted right in front of me and as soon as we were done, I had



turn around and walk out to the lobby and pull my heart back together.

I can't imagine anything else I'd rather do with Otis. While we do try our hand at other things such as tracking and conformation, they don't even come close to the impact he makes in the lives of the people he visits every week. If Otis never accomplishes anything else, I will not be the least bit disappointed. God has blessed him with the ability to connect with people in a way that most dogs cannot. To me, that is more important than any ribbon or title that we could ever earn.



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