

THERAPY DOGS

Brodie plays an instrumental role in encouraging certain individuals to come out of their shells, the Wallers said.

"Patients will start talking to Brodie. Later, the nurse will say to us, 'But they haven't talked in two weeks,'" Claire Waller said.

As Brodie's handlers, the Wallers also underwent certification. They assist a patient care team that includes doctors, social

workers and nurses. After each visit, they write up a report of how a patient reacted with Brodie.

Of course, the library visits are more about fun. According to the PAWS for People organization, pet therapy also releases endorphins that produce a calming effect, improve cardiovascular health and even possibly reduce the amount of medication some people need.

Usually, the lobby of the library wafts of croissants and tea,

with people greeting each other in passing. But on dog therapy days, the crowd tends to stop, drawn in by the wagging tails.

According to the PAWS for People website, pet therapy increases socialization and encourages communication.

The Wallers said they enjoy meeting people during these therapy sessions.

"Brodie does too. He wears a little therapy jacket. As soon as we

put that on him, he can hardly wait to go," Claire Waller said. "When it's time to leave the child development center, he will lay down in the hallway and not want to go."

The Wallers spend just as much time interacting with everyone they visit as Brodie does.

"See. You're smiling now. It's gotta be okay, right?" Waller said.

