



**Monticello**  
MONTESSORI  
Developing critical thinkers and motivated learners

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### **Therapy Animals at Monticello**

*Jake and Daisy are the two service dogs at Monticello Montessori. They help many students in distress and are part of the school routine, interacting with all children.*

February, 2020 - Monticello Montessori has two perfect-attendance special workers who have been helping several students. Meet Jake, the Australian Shepherd, and Daisy, the Bichon Frisé. They are the ones who can calm down any child in distress. Students with specific disorders such as autism spectrum, ADHD, or suffering a trauma at home (divorce, death in the family, foster placement, etc) find comfort and love in those animals.

It is known that an increasing number of doctors are recommending pets as part of illness treatments. According to a study conducted by the Baker Medical Research Institute in Australia, those who have pets had lower blood pressure and cholesterol levels. In addition, people who have pets can manage stressful situations better compared to the ones without a pet.

According to Taylor Wilhem, Monticello school counselor, “Veterans suffering from PTSD, inmates with a history of violent crimes, and individuals suffering from anxiety or depression have all found great relief from this type of animal companionship.” Wilhem confirms the emotional improvement in students' behavior, “It is remarkable to witness the change that can occur, almost instantly, as a child in distress wraps their arms around one of the two certified animals we have here at Monticello; there is an emotional calming within these students that allows them to recover and return to work, often without any other intervention,” explains the counselor.

Both animals. Jake and Daisy, are certified service animals and have all vaccinations up to date. Erica Kemery, the school administrator, is very favorable to therapy animals, however she makes sure they are certified to be in the school among students.

Some students can handle a full day of school when they are in distress because they can spend some calming time with Jake or Daisy. Montessori schools typically include classroom pet care as part of the curriculum for science learning and social emotional growth, as students develop responsibility, self-confidence, empathy and character by caring for them. From fish to geckos, Monticello has classroom pets, plants and the two therapy animals to support emotional development in students.

Monticello Montessori, a public charter school in Bonneville County, welcomes all students in Bonneville County and the surrounding area to apply. The school provides a high-quality Montessori education, tuition-free, to children ages 5 through 12 (grades Kindergarten through 6th). The Idaho Public Charter School Commission approved the Monticello charter July 22, 2009. In 2017 Monticello added grades 7 and 8 where the focus is project based learning for middle schoolers.



