

Nemours and UNF celebrate first animal-assisted therapy program at certification ceremony

Clinic scheduled to begin next year

Jacksonville, Fla. (Sept. 25, 2020) -- Six health practitioners with the Nemours Children's Specialty Clinic [ADAPT program](#), a partnership between University of North Florida and Nemours, were honored for recently earning their Graduate Certificate in Animal-Assisted Therapy in Counseling at a special ceremony on Friday outside the clinic. The ADAPT program is the first of its kind in the U.S. to apply clinical animal-assisted therapy in a multispecialty pediatric medical environment.

Representatives from the UNF Brooks College of Health attended the ceremony, as well as UNF's mascot, Ozzie the Osprey, who extended his wing to hand out program completion certificates and medals to the graduating practitioners and recognize representatives of the ADAPT program's animal partners, Gypsy, an American Miniature Horse, and Asher, a Great Dane.

The graduates are: Jenny Pfeiffer, Erin Pfeffer, Gina-Marie Makejko, Lisa Schilling, Nicole Kahhan and Christine Crews.

The UNF-Nemours partnership will continue as a pilot patient therapy program, integrating registered therapy miniature horses and dogs with clinical providers harnessing the power of the human animal bond to help kids heal from physical, emotional and/or psychological illness or injuries. The pilot program is scheduled to have equine therapy sessions one day per week and canine therapy sessions three days per week beginning in early 2021. The ADAPT program will benefit young patients at the Nemours clinic by expanding the excellent mental and behavioral health services available and augment medical services to improve the patient care experience while helping to implement research studies to advance animal therapy work.

Photos and video clip highlights from the ceremony are available for download.

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Additional assets available online:  [Photos \(1\)](#)  [Video \(1\)](#)

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