

“If I could talk to the animals ...”

Students share what they've learned from their four-legged counselors at the Advances School-Based Program in Temple, PA.

Mental Health Professional Kathryn Jean Gress helps children heal emotionally and psychologically by introducing them to her therapy animals and letting nature take its course. During her 12 years of service as a psychiatric nurse therapist at KidsPeace, she has found that even the most withdrawn, troubled child will undergo transformation in the company of her therapy animals. Dogs, cats and pigs, all trained and certified, accompany Gress to the KidsPeace Advances Program in Temple, PA, where kids receive unconditional love from these animals and learn to give love in return. For more information about Animal Assisted therapy, contact Kathryn at x 7820 or email kgress@kidspeace.org.

“Pearl Piggy helps me a lot because sometimes I have an attitude and I don't listen to teachers. So now I know how the teachers feel because Pearl doesn't listen to me sometimes, and she also gets an attitude. She taught me to respect others.” -- Jessica I.

“Animal-assisted therapy helps me ... It also taught me to treat people with respect. The animals that helped me are Rocky, Leroy and Pearl. People need respect from people — that is what I learned. Animals need respect from people too.”
— David S.

“The past two years, especially the past four months, have been really hard for me. I was cutting, spent time in a hospital and spent time in partial hospitalization programs. I found it hard to talk to people about my feelings and was sad all the time. Lately, I've started animal therapy and found that I enjoy being with the animals because they make me feel happy. When I'm with them, I'm relaxed, find talking much easier to do. Being around the animals gives me something to look forward to.” --Nicole R. ☺