

## Carb counting and diabetes

Find out how carb-restricting diets can lead to kidney disease and more in diabetics.

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## Revolutionary machine

With the help of a donation from The North Lincoln Hospital Foundation, SNLH lands a cutting-edge piece of equipment.

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# For Your Health

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## Samaritan

### North Lincoln Hospital

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## Paws with a cause

Hospital welcomes Amber the golden retriever to the team

The benefits of human-animal interactions for patients and staff in a variety of care facilities have been well documented and Samaritan North Lincoln Hospital has begun to reap some of those benefits by involving Amber, a 15-month-old golden retriever and social therapy dog in training, into the daily routines of some of its patients.

According to certified Assistance dog trainer and Director of Pawsitive Perspectives

als assisting them in managing traumatic events they encounter in their work.

As an assistance dog, Amber has been trained to perform a variety of tasks such as pulling a wheelchair, opening doors, retrieving dropped objects and turning light switches off and on. She has also learned to brace so that if a person should

fall, Amber will use her body as a brace so the person can regain position.

"Many times people with disabilities are

**"Amber is a special dog. She is extremely aware of her surroundings and the subtle changes that occur"**



Assistance Dogs  
Linda Ball, a dog's  
acceptance is non-  
judgmental, forgiv-  
ing, and uncompl-

**Subtle changes that occur  
in a situation."**

— Kate Becker

icated no matter how sick a person may be. Much has been written about the correlation between touch and health. In hospitals, where touch can be painful or invasive, the touch of an animal is safe, enjoyable, and pleasant.

At SNLH, many patients are more relaxed when Amber is present and research shows that people with dogs have been found to have lower cholesterol and triglyceride levels when compared to people who do not.

Amber, who began her positive-based training when she was nine weeks old, is Animal Assistance Crisis Response certified and a certified member of the Central Coast Critical Incident Stress Management (CC ISM) team. Her duties in crisis situations, like Hurricane Katrina and Rita, is to provide emotional support for first responders and rescue workers. As a member of CC ISM, Amber is integral in the critical incident debriefings for emergency service and health profession-

ance," said Ball.

Ball has worked in Honduras, Bosnia, Kosovo and Mongolia and has rescued dogs from each country. When she and her husband moved to Lincoln City three and one half years ago she merged her love of dogs with her need to give back to the community and founded Pawsitive Perspectives.

Amber's partner, Kate Becker, serves as CPR, First Aid and Automated External Defibrillator instructor for Samaritan Health Services at SNLH. Her decision to train Amber as a social therapy dog was based in her awareness of how animals can facilitate a channel of emotionally safe, non-threatening communication between people.

"Amber is a special dog. She is extremely aware of her surroundings and the subtle changes that occur in a situation. I am fortunate to be able to be a part of the interactions between our patients, the staff and Amber," Becker said.

overlooked, but as soon as they have a dog to help them, people take notice. It is heartwarming to see that accept-



Kate Becker, Amber and Linda Ball



A visit from Amber and her partner, Kate Becker, provides a welcome change from the hospital routine for Robert Whisler of Lincoln City.