Star Therapy Dog

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A furry four legged friend is serving as an ambassador of sorts for WKU’s Counseling and Testing Center.

Amy Bingham introduces us to “Star” in this week’s View from the Hill.

Anxiety and depression, relationship difficulties even homesickness. WKU students can seek therapy for these and other issues at the Counseling and Testing Center. For more than a year now, a therapy dog has been around to help ease a difficult situation.

 “We get out on campus two or three times a day for sure and just wander around.”

Staff Therapist Betsy Pierce is the primary caretaker of Star, an Australian Shepherd poodle mix.

 “She certainly is a conversation starter. People say oh can I pet your dog and I explain who the dog is and that she’s not my dog, she’s the center’s dog.”

Since September of 2015, Star, named for the white spot on her chest, has made herself at home at WKU’s Counseling and Testing center.

 “There are toys everywhere. Toys in almost every office here that are Star’s and she has chairs and her spots in each office.”

It’s in these offices that students seeking counseling can interact with Star if they choose to do so.

 “If they want to interact with her it’s just like you see here. She can sit by them or sit at their feet. The goal is they are more comfortable in therapy hour.”

The Aussie Doodle also serves as the Center’s unofficial ambassador.

 “Anytime we can show up whether it’s our staff or with her to get the word out that this is for WKU students please come if you need to.’

So what is it about Star that makes her the perfect pup for this type of position?

 “Her personality for one. She is definitely a people person. She has liked all the students she has come in contact with.”

Star is always game for the next adventure, even dressing up for Halloween last month.

And getting more and more comfortable with her rising profile at WKU.

 “She is becoming well known on campus.”

Any WKU student can use the services offered at the Counseling and Testing Center. The phone number is 745-3159.

With this week’s View from the Hill, I’m Amy Bingham.

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