

Therapy dogs take over Memphis International



MEMPHIS, Tenn. -- When people first see Cricket, they don't know what it is or if she's seeing them.

Chalk it up to her unusual hairdo or her larger than life personality. When Cricket goes calling at the Memphis International Airport, people can't help but notice. "The kids love the dogs. It makes it so much easier to wait," said Erika Hargrave who is picking up family at the airport. You could say it's her job. Cricket is a licensed therapy dog. She and her master, Don Gold, are one of eight canine-human teams that visit the airport periodically to calm stressed out passengers. Lily and her owner Richard Herbert are another team. "I saw one guy who was gonna pass out. He said, 'Well, we're gonna crash because if I don't go on this business trip, they're gonna fire me.' So I said, 'Well, she's like a Valium. Just sit down, put her in your lap' and he calmed right down," said Herbert. Dogs like Eli, a pit bull pedigree, are even getting a new lease on life while shattering some long-held stereotypes. Before he became a therapy dog, Eli was in the care of an accused dog fighter. "They get a bad rap. It's not — the dogs aren't the problem, it's the criminals who raise them," said Ron Hotchkiss, Eli's owner.

No matter which dog is helping out, they're just happy being that perfect travel distraction.



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