



October 19, 2020

Dear Lincoln Community:

The purpose of my communication today is to inform you that we will be welcoming a new staff member to our family. His name is Tiller and I just know that our students will be excited to meet him! Tiller is an 8-year-old Golden Retriever and a certified professional therapy dog through Freedom Service Dogs! Tiller will be working with Ms. Campbell, our School Social Worker. Ms. Campbell adopted Tiller during her second year of graduate school. The pair were matched while Ms. Campbell was pursuing her Animal-Assisted Social Work certificate from the Institute of Human-Animal Connection at the University of Denver. Together they completed a rigorous training program targeting canine obedience, safe socialization practices, and therapeutic response to people of all ages with a variety of emotional and behavioral needs.

As a seasoned therapy dog, Tiller has come to love and appreciate working with youth. He is food and movement motivated, meaning he LOVES to work for his treats and take plenty of walks and hikes throughout his days. He excels in helping youth regulate their emotions, develop a sense of self-efficacy, and support stress and mood management. His time at Lincoln will be part-time and committed almost exclusively to our special education program. He and Ms. Campbell will also be available to offer crisis assistance and grief/loss support to students and staff in need. All participating students will complete a parent permission form prior to joining any animal-assisted therapy activities.

While having animals in schools can be a positive experience for many, it does not come without the need for thoughtful integration and strict protocols for practice. This includes minding staff/student allergies, canine aversions, and phobias. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Ms. Campbell directly at (970) 567-3117.

Please welcome me in joining Tiller to our family!

Warm Regards,

Penny Stires

Principal

Lincoln Middle, an IB World School

970-488-5700



