



OUR GOAL-DIRECTED THERAPY DOG PROGRAMS

The foundation of these programs is a partnership between Pawsitive Teams and San Diego County professionals who set goals for their clients. Pawsitive Teams-certified therapy dog handlers are then challenged to find creative ways to use their dogs as motivators to help accomplish these goals.

THE PROGRAMS AND POPULATIONS WE SERVE

COURT SUPPORT

In courthouses throughout San Diego County

Under the direction of the San Diego District Attorney and Victim Advocate Offices, our therapy dog teams meet with child and elderly witnesses who testify in court. The dogs are a valuable tool to relieve tension prior to and during testimony and often enable these victims to give more effective testimonies, thus resulting in more convictions. **Limited opportunities based on DA Office request, always weekdays.**

MILITARY

At multiple locations in the City of San Diego

These programs are designed to help injured inpatient or outpatient active-duty military as well as veterans. Since most our clients are recovering from PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury, our primary goal is to help them re-enter the community by establishing a greater sense of trust and less hyper-vigilance in public settings. Our therapy dog teams volunteer at either Naval Medical Center San Diego or at various community locations. Typically, each service member is assigned a therapy dog to handle during a series of either three-week or six-week sessions. **Opportunities on weekdays and weekends.**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

At several schools in San Diego County

Therapy teams work with elementary students from low-income families in underserved communities. **Volunteers meet once a week for six weeks.**

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

At several schools in San Diego County

Volunteers work in two classrooms of severe special needs elementary students. Each class has 8-10 students and about half of the students are nonverbal. Some students may have quick physical movements and verbal outbursts, so this volunteer site requires a calm, nonreactive dog. **Frequency varies—some volunteers assist twice a month while others volunteer weekly.**

TEEN ENRICHMENT

At several locations in San Diego County

Our six-week Teen Enrichment Programs give us the opportunity to work one-on-one with teens from residential facilities, alternative school settings, low-income families, underserved populations, and specialized counseling programs. We use our therapy dog teams to explore life skill themes such as Trust, Teamwork, and Communication in partnership with the therapists and counselors who work directly with the teens. **Each teen is assigned a therapy dog to handle during the six-week session.**

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AND YOUNG ADULTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

At several schools in San Diego County

Students with communication challenges work in a fun, supportive environment with our therapy dogs and handlers. Students' disabilities include autism spectrum disorder, speech impairments, and developmental delays. Therapy dog teams work directly under the supervision of the Speech and Language Pathologist who sets the goals for each student. **Frequency of volunteer involvement is a minimum of twice a month.**

Therapy dog teams work one-on-one with students selected by the special education teachers. These Transition Students (ages 18-22) have developmental and/or physical disabilities. Some of the students are working on verbal skills such as learning to speak more clearly, while others work to develop a greater range of physical motion. The special education teachers set individual goals for each student—often the goals are written directly into the IEP for the student. **Frequency varies—some volunteers assist twice a month while others volunteer weekly.**

MEDICALLY FRAGILE STUDENTS

At several schools in San Diego County

Therapy dog teams work with middle and high school students with a range of disabilities—most are low-functioning and non-ambulatory. The dogs assist in meeting the teacher's goals for the students, which generally include motivation to get the student to reach out, roll over, smile, or relax. The primary goal of the program is to provide comfort and stimulation to this very special population that benefits greatly from the presence of a calm dog. **Frequency varies; meet weekdays during the academic year.**