



P A W S ' I T I V E A N I M A L A S S I S T E D T H E R A P Y

9225 Chesapeake Dr. San Diego, CA 92123 858-279-7297
www.PawsitiveTeams.org



What is Goal-Directed Therapy?

Goal-Directed therapy is significantly different from the usual “meet and greet” hospital and nursing home type of animal assisted activities. In the Paws'itive Teams' PAAT (Paws'itive Animal Assisted Therapy) program, the dogs are used for a specific purpose to help clients (children and adults) achieve clearly defined therapy goals as set by their therapist or teacher. This is done by working in partnership with trained professionals who direct the sessions and set

specific treatment goals.

For example, a child with limited range of motion might use a brush to groom the dog, in order to help achieve shoulder mobility. Fine hand coordination may be improved by feeding one kibble at a time to an enthusiastic canine partner! Giving commands to a dog can inspire someone with a developmental disability to speak more clearly and develop stronger social skills.

Children who have difficulty walking may walk to (or with) a dog. Sometimes just being with a furry friend will help an autistic child come out of his shell. Dogs can inspire children to do difficult rehabilitation activities that they may have resisted. They can be tremendous mood elevators as well – for both clients and therapists.

Relationship with Facilities

We partner with facilities within San Diego who serve a wide variety of populations that can benefit from interactions with carefully selected dogs. It is essential that our involvement includes a close relationship with health/human service professionals who set goals for their clients, centered around the activities our therapy dog teams provide.

A part of our program includes the requirement of measurement tools developed by the facility staff so that we know that our efforts are truly resulting in goals being met as a result of the activities which include our canine teams.



- At some of our facilities (such as the Escondido Medical Therapy Unit), we work with both physical and occupational therapists whose clients are children. These children meet with their therapist one-on-one. When appropriate, the therapist will request a therapy dog team to assist with the therapy session. With the guidance of the therapy dog handler, the dog becomes a tool.
- Other facilities include Special Education Teachers and specialists for children with special needs (developmental disabilities, autism, medically fragile) in the school system. The range of activities depends on the specific disability of the child. Most are high school age.



Volunteer Commitment

Handlers in Goal-Directed are required to “think on their feet” as they will be requested to come up with activities their dogs can do to help accomplish the goals set by the professionals. This is different from other forms of therapy volunteering and involves far more creative thinking from the handler, who has to be actively involved with designing tasks for each interaction. Dogs working in goal-directed therapy must have a high level of obedience and respond to

the handler’s direction in a calm manner.

Because this program works in partnership with trained professionals, most of the time slots include weekdays rather than evenings or weekends. Initial certification for this program will be for one year and all volunteers will be required to donate a minimum of 24 hours annually. Contribution towards administrative tasks and committee work also counts towards this requirement.

Application Process

Prerequisites: Handler must have completed the Paws’itive Teams Therapy Dog Prep School or have equivalent experiences as evaluated by the Reviewing Panel.

1. Attend a Paws’itive Teams Therapy Dog Program Introduction (scheduled quarterly).
2. Before applying, it is important to review the current sites and identify which facilities work with your individual schedule. (See website for list of sites)
3. Complete PAAT Application Form (available on-line through Paws’itive Teams website).
4. Sign up for the PAAT Team Evaluation which includes an assessment for socialibility, ease of handling, dog reactivity, response to leadership and willingness to work.



Questions?

Send an email to our Volunteer Coordinator at PattieKeller@msn.com

or

call our Center office (858-279-7297) to sign up for the next Therapy Dog Program Introduction meeting

March 9, 2010
May 18, 2010
August 17, 2010
November 16, 2010

