



**Furry
Friends**
Pet
Assisted
Therapy
Services

Furry Friends Pet Assisted Therapy Services' mission is to consistently facilitate the delivery of the love and affection of our volunteers and their pets. We enhance the lives and reopen the closed emotional doors of people with special needs.

We're Licking Loneliness!

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers

How effective is pet assisted therapy?

Anyone who has ever owned a pet knows of the tremendous love and acceptance pets bring. Pets don't care how we look or even how we act; they love us unconditionally. For people who are in difficult life situations, pets can be of special benefit. Petting a dog, for instance, has been shown to lower blood pressure. Animals can often reach people when human relationships may be difficult. Scientific research has shown that interaction with animals can significantly improve humans' physical and emotional health. Put as simply as possible, pets make people feel good and they help healing happen. The people our pets and we visit have minimal positive experiences in their lives and our pet visits brighten their days.

How do we operate as an organization?

Pet Assisted Therapy Services, a registered Nonprofit California Corporation, is governed by its Board of Directors. All board meetings are open to the public. We are a 100% volunteer organization that basically facilitates the delivery of the love and affection of our volunteers and their pets. We enhance the lives and reopen the closed emotional doors of people with special needs. We provide umbrella insurance coverage, access to a trained Animal Behaviorist, and vitally needed support and encouragement to our volunteers.

How did Furry Friends get started?

Furry Friends was begun in 1983 by Judy Kell whose nine year-old daughter came down with a rare and aggressive form of cancer which eventually took her life. Judy had noticed that one of the very few things that lifted her daughter's spirits was the interaction with her cat.

So kell, a veterinarian technician by profession, consulted Dr. John Quick, a veterinarian in Morgan Hill and together with the support of Dr. Cecil Agee, a pediatrics physician, founded Pet Assisted Therapy Services. Pet Assisted Therapy is an independent Non-Profit Organization that is based on the principles of pet facilitated therapy, a recognized and researched therapeutic technique.

Who supports Furry Friends?

We have received contributions from over 400 local donors and have received grants from a few major foundations and corporations, including Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Network General, the Community Foundation, the Valley Foundation, and others. In order for any nonprofit organization to survive, its primary source of support must be its individual donors. We do not receive any city, county, state or federal funding.

Furry Friends Pet Assisted Therapy Services

A California non-profit organization

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What can you do to support Furry Friends?

We need new volunteers as we have more sites waiting for pet visits than volunteers to fill the requests. We also are looking for qualified professionals that are interested in becoming Directors on the Board of Directors. Please fill out our volunteer registration form if you would like to help. We look to you, your friends, and your company for support.

What types of pets can become Furry Friends?

The answer to this question depends on the site team that you wish to be on. All of our therapy sites accept dogs, cats, and bunny rabbits. However some sites will allow or not allow animals like pigs, goats, llamas, and various reptiles. Please ask our office for detailed answers to this question. Unfortunately, California law will not allow us to allow ferrets on any of our therapy teams.

Do I perform the visits on my own?

No. At the beginning of each visit, you will meet together as a team. You must check in with your Team Captain who is responsible and in charge of your visit. Depending on the therapy team that you are on, you will either stay together as a team or visit with patients one-on-one.

How much of a time commitment must I make?

Each of the more than 50 Furry Friends teams visit each site once a month for approximately 1 hour. The time you commit to depends on the number of sites you volunteer for. PATS is an all volunteer organization, so from time to time we have special events that we may ask you to volunteer for. For example we participate in special events like San Jose's Bark in the Park Festival, new volunteer tables at local pet stores, and many types of fundraisers. However, these events are totally optional to our volunteers.

What exactly is the volunteer screening process?

First, you must complete the attached paperwork and send it to our office. You will have to have your pet evaluated by a licensed Veterinarian to determine the health (must be current on all Furry Friends required vaccinations) and temperament of your pet to be confident that your pet is suitable for this type of activity. Secondly, you and your pet will have to attend a 90 minute Pet Behavior Etiquette class with a Furry Friends approved Class Administrator. Our Etiquette Class is designed and managed by Furry Friends' Animal Behaviorist. In this class, you will learn what is appropriate and not appropriate animal behavior and how to control it. Additionally, you will learn tips in teaching your pet to be more loving to you as well as the patients that you will be helping.

What are the benefits of joining Furry Friends?

You will become closer to your pet in ways that may be difficult to see before joining our organization. Your furry friend will become socialized with people as well as other furry friends. He/She will become more comfortable in public places and you will feel great about the good work that you will be doing. Additionally, Furry Friends will provide access to a trained Animal Behaviorist that can assist you in reaching out to your pet to make your living together better for both of you.

Does my pet have to have a GGC (Canine Good Citizenship) certification?

No. Furry Friends relies on both a veterinary and Animal Behaviorist evaluation of your pet. GGC certification is great to have but is not needed for Furry Friends