



## PDT THERAPAW Program Mission and Preparation

PDT's overall mission is to foster the therapy dog movement in the community. My goal is to start a group "THERAPAW's" to provide:

- reading sessions with children in libraries
- assistance "reindeers" with meeting Santa, to calm the children
- a day in the park for abused children
- and other community programs

As part of this mission, PDT seeks to promote the responsible use of access rights in the community. For over 80 years, therapy dogs have worked successfully in public and won the public's acceptance by achieving high behavioral and training standards which set them apart from pets and other animals.

### PREPARATION FOR TESTING

Below is the PREPARATION going forward with your dog to be on the THERAPAW team:

Upon successful completion of the PDT THERAPAW program, dogs and their owners will be certified as a team and registered meeting requirements to introduce your dog in eligible places.

### We'd like you to become part of our team.

1. **Amount of Hours:** A Therapy dog should be given a minimum of One Hundred Twenty(120) hours of training over a period of six months or more. At least Thirty(30) hours should be devoted to outings that will prepare the dog to work obediently and unobtrusively in public places. (*The 120 hours includes the time invested in obedience class sessions from an experienced dog trainer, home training and outings.*)
2. **Obedience Training:** A dog must master the basic obedience skills: "Sit, Stay, Come, Down, Heel" and a dropped leash recall in a store in response to verbal commands and/or hand signals.
3. **Manners:** A dog must acquire proper social behavior skills. It includes at a minimum:
  - No aggressive behavior toward people or other animals - no biting, snapping, snarling, growling or lunging and barking at them when working off your property.
  - No soliciting food from other people while on duty.
  - Dog should stay in place while approached for petting and continue work on command.
  - No sniffing merchandise or people or intruding into another dog's space while on duty.
  - Socialize to tolerate strange sights, sounds, odors etc. in a wide variety of public settings.
  - Ignores food on the floor or dropped in the dog's vicinity while working outside the home.
  - Works calmly on or off leash. No unruly behavior or unnecessary vocalizations in public settings.
  - No urinating or defecating in public unless given a specific command or signal to toilet in an appropriate place.

4. **Disability Related Tasks:** (*Pertains to Service Dogs Only*) The dog must be individually trained to perform identifiable tasks on command or cue for the benefit of the human partner and the public audience. This includes alerting to sounds, medical problems, certain scents like peanuts or situations if training is involved.

5. **Prohibited Training:** Any training that arouses a dog's prey drive or fear to elicit a display of aggression for guard or defense purposes is strictly prohibited. Non-aggressive barking as a trained behavior is permitted in appropriate situations.

6. **A Trainer's Responsibilities:** Trainers function as ambassadors for the therapy dog movement. It also includes a professional dog partner or facilitator to keep up an assistance dog's training.

7. **An Owner's Responsibilities:**

- Know pertinent canine laws (i.e. leash laws and public access laws)
  - Ensure the dog is healthy, flea free and the rabies vaccination is up to date
  - Take time to make sure your dog is well groomed and free of any foul odor
  - Show respect and consideration to other people and property
  - Use humane training methods; monitor the dog's stress level; provide rest breaks
  - Carry clean up materials. Arrange for prompt clean up if a dog eliminates or gets sick
  - Be polite and willing to educate the public about assistance dogs and access rights
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