

# How LAPS Is Different

LAPS maintains the highest standards in testing and training because experience has taught us that solid, well-trained teams are vital to successful client interaction. Over the years, we have enjoyed an exceptionally high team retention rate, superior safety track record and a near-zero number of cancelled program visits. The facilities and clients we serve can count on LAPS teams coming on time, as promised, on a regular schedule, and providing engaging personal contact and activities.

## **LAPS welcomes all types of domestic pets.**

While dogs are the most commonly used, cats, rabbits, guinea pigs, horses, llamas, pot-bellied pigs, and birds have proven very effective. LAPS meets or exceeds the guidelines set forth by [Pet Partners®](#), an international organization with the highest standards of training and performance, so we can offer membership to a variety of animals and their owners.

## **LAPS supports its teams after their initial training.**

Each new LAPS Therapy Team completes a 3-month probationary period and participates in hands-on practice sessions under the guidance of seasoned handlers and trainers. This intensive training helps new teams build skills needed to become effective and safe in a variety of settings and with a variety of clients.

Every two years, each team must re-register with either LAPS or [Pet Partners®](#) thus demonstrating its continued skill and aptitude for therapy work. In addition, we intermittently hold special practice sessions for existing teams to brush up on their skills or learn new ones.

## **LAPS focuses on creating therapy programs where multiple teams work together.**

We have found that where one therapy team can touch a client, simply having different pets at each session may engage clients who otherwise might not connect with a given team. Each team is encouraged to master behaviors and learn special skills that work in concert with other teams, thus building a positive, energetic environment for everyone.

Therapy programs are scheduled regularly at facilities allowing handlers to prepare and practice for each session in advance.

We require our teams to participate in a minimum of TWO programs per month year-round. We encourage regular attendance at our General Membership meetings as a way for all members to exchange ideas and benefit from each other's experiences.

### **LAPS shares knowledge and experience with other animal-assisted therapy groups.**

We communicate and network with other volunteers doing similar work across the country. It is through this collaboration with other quality groups that our volunteers are encouraged toward higher goals and our therapy programs continue to flourish. Other groups wishing to use or adapt our materials for their own use should first contact us for permission by emailing or calling us using our contact information. [our contact information](#)

### **Current Programs**

We currently have programs in Napa, Sonoma and Solano counties serving seniors in assisted-living facilities, teenagers in juvenile detention, elementary school-age children in Special Education classes. Our CAPERS (Children and Pets Enjoy Reading Success) reading program serves elementary schools and public libraries.

Two, three or more teams attend each regularly-schedule program session. Some programs meet once a week; others meet once or twice a month.

### **LAPS reaches out to the community at public venues and holiday events.**

Throughout the year, LAPS teams participate in special events such as

- Holiday party sponsored by ParentsCAN and the Elks Club of Napa
- Bark for Life
- Napa Humane Society Walk for Animals

**We require a high standard of training and commitment from our members and their pets, but in return, LAPS members receive support and encouragement as they improve their skills, gain experience, and enhance the everyday lives of our clients.**