



Therapy Animals of San Antonio

- **Therapy Teams Visiting Health Care Facilities**
- **StoryTails Reading Program in Local Schools**
- **Human-Animal Bond Educational Presentations**

P.O. Box 690221 • San Antonio, Texas 78269 • 210-614-6734

<http://www.therapyanimalssa.org>

[email: animal@therapyanimalssa.org](mailto:animal@therapyanimalssa.org)

Therapy Team Program

Bringing People and Animals Together for Healing

Thank you for your interest in Therapy Animals of San Antonio and our community service programs. Attached are the materials you requested. If you would like more information, please call Therapy Animals of San Antonio at 210-614-6734 or email us at: animal@therapyanimalssa.org.

Procedures for Becoming a Therapy Team Volunteer

The procedures to become a registered Therapy Team with Therapy Animals of San Antonio (TASA) are as follows:

1. Go to: <http://www.therapyanimalssa.org/membership/join.html> and JOIN by selecting the Therapy Team option and pay the \$60 fee. This fee includes a one-year membership, a team training class for the individual, and one team evaluation during the membership period. All volunteers renew membership on an annual basis.
2. Determine your registration type – either Local or Pet Partners. Options are described beginning on page 4.
3. Complete the ‘class requirements for evaluation’ for the appropriate registration type.

The **Local** class registration option consists of the following steps:

- 1) read the therapy team manual and other materials sent electronically to your email address after joining;
- 2) complete the Pre-Class questions and submit your answers to edu@therapyanimalssa.org no later than 8:00 pm on the Thursday before the Saturday class.
- 3) attend a 4-hour course at the TASA office after completing the online course and submitting the pre-class questions.

The **Local** class is conducted by TASA instructors. There is no charge for the class. You may print a copy of the manual for your own use. The volunteer attends the class without his/her animal.

The **Pet Partners** class registration option also consists of several steps:

- 1) go to <https://petpartners.org/volunteer/become-a-handler/>, read the materials and then follow the steps of a first-time registration beginning with creating an account in the ‘Volunteer Center’.
- 2) enroll in the Pet Partners Online course. The cost of this course is \$70 (paid directly to Pet Partners).
- 3) submit a copy of the course completion certificate to train@therapyanimalssa.org no later than 8:00 pm on the Thursday before the Saturday class.
- 4) attend a 2-3 hour TASA orientation class after completing the online course. The volunteer attends the class without his/her animal.

Please note also that Pet Partners requires the course certificate be presented by the volunteer to the evaluators at time of the evaluation.

Individuals are scheduled for class when they submit the certificate of completion for the required online course (Local or Pet Partners). Individuals are scheduled on a first-come, first-served basis. When a class is full, the individual will be notified and placed on a waiting list should a cancellation occur.

4. Complete the appropriate Therapy Team Evaluation form for registration type. For the Local registration option, the form is an appendix to the online manual. For Pet Partners registration, the volunteer obtains the registration form online at their website.

While there are some differences in the evaluation forms, both include a health screening exam form to be completed by the volunteer’s veterinarian. All Therapy Animals of San Antonio volunteers – irrespective of registration type – complete a background check which is paid for by the organization.

5. Schedule a team evaluation for your chosen registration type. The Local registration option is scheduled by Team Evaluation Chair. Pet Partners will schedule online at the Pet Partners website and then be scheduled for an evaluation time by a Therapy Animals of San Antonio volunteer. The content of the evaluation is fully described in the respective manuals.

Skills and aptitude are evaluated. (**All animals must have the specified skills**). Be sure that your animal can complete all skills in a variety of locations with distractions. If not, attend additional training first to ensure success.

6. Attend the evaluation. As evaluation slots are limited, please prioritize your commitment to the date and time of your evaluation and ensure you have all necessary forms completed and available to give to the evaluator. During the first year's membership period, the cost of the evaluation is included in your \$60 fee. If a second evaluation is needed, the cost is \$30.

7. Complete the registration process.

- The Evaluation chair or designee will upload a copy of the registration packet, evaluation form and team photo to the TASA Volunteer System for the Local registration option.
- The Pet Partner will be emailed an electronic copy of their evaluation in addition to a team photo to upload to the Pet Partners website. The registration packet, evaluation and team photo will be uploaded to the TASA Volunteer system by the TASA evaluation chair. TASA will pay the Pet Partners registration cost.

8. Complete at least two mentoring visits and submit the mentoring form. The individual (without their animal) visits at least two health care facilities with an experienced Therapy Team. These mentoring visits are to reaffirm the volunteer's interest in the program and to determine his or her preference for type of facility.

9. Work with the facility coordinator to select a facility and obtain placement. TASA assists the new Therapy Team in selecting a health care facility from our facility waiting list or supports the Team as needed with a facility the individual identifies. After TASA has linked the volunteer with a facility, the volunteer arranges an initial visit to preview the facility and determine a regular visiting schedule. The animal is not taken on the initial visit. Depending on the site and the volunteer's experience, an experienced Therapy Animals of San Antonio member may accompany the individual on their first Team visit to provide support.

10. Begin regular visits and submit visit reports for each visit to TASA. Actively participate in TASA related activities.

Miscellaneous information

Liability insurance coverage is activated upon official registration either by TASA or Pet Partners depending on which registration option is chosen.

Therapy Teams are required to be re-evaluated and re-registered every two years. This includes another health screening exam from a veterinarian for the animal, background check, and scheduled evaluation of the team (both skills and aptitude are re-evaluated).

Volunteers are required to commit to the program for two years, a minimum of 10 facility visits per year. Volunteering for special events and presentations is encouraged but optional. All volunteers agree to help with our primary fundraiser, the Fiesta® Pooch Parade and are encouraged to participate in other events – such as helping with an evaluation as an actor or other role in the organization.

Re-evaluation of a Therapy Team will be performed if the team is actively visiting and documenting their visits with TASA. Pet Partners registrations will not be subsidized if the Team is not meeting participation commitments.

Registration Options for Therapy Teams

Therapy Animals of San Antonio (TASA) brings people together who share a common interest in offering high quality animal assisted services to our community. We are an inclusive organization that recognizes that there is strength in diversity and that honors the gifts each Therapy Team brings to the collective whole. We welcome you to consider becoming a Therapy Team with us through either one of two options. The potential volunteer can choose to be registered with either a Local option or with the national organization, Pet Partners.

Both options provide the same level of membership and offer equivalent animal assisted services to the community. Our goal is to come together and maximize our energy and talents to focus on the quality animal therapy services we can collectively offer our community.

We need to know which registration option you are interested in pursuing before you sign up for a training course so that we will be best able to provide appropriate information. Below is a comparison of the two options. The major differences are highlighted in yellow.

	Local Registration	Pet Partners Registration
Registration	Local – covers 10 Texas counties surrounding Bexar County	National, portable to other communities
Training Class	<p>Read electronic manual sent to your email.</p> <p>Submit the Pre-Class Assignment and submit to edu@therapyanimalssa.org no later than 8:00 pm on the Thursday before a Saturday class.</p> <p>Attend a 4 hour training class</p>	<p>Complete Pet Partner online course – go to https://petpartners.org/volunteer/become-a-handler/. Read the materials and then follow the steps of a first-time registration beginning with creating an account in the ‘Volunteer Center’.</p> <p>Send certificate of completion to train@therapyanimalssa.org no later than 8:00 pm on the Thursday before a Saturday class.</p> <p>Attend the 2-3 hour orientation class with TASA.</p>
Training Class Fees	None	<p>\$70 Fee for Pet Partners online course</p> <p>No fee for TASA orientation class</p> <p>Manual may be purchased if desired.</p>

	Local Registration	Pet Partners Registration
Team Evaluation	<p>Provided by TASA approved evaluators with criteria equivalent to or surpassing Pet Partners' criteria</p> <p>Approximate 30 minute evaluation</p>	<p>Provided by Pet Partners licensed evaluators using Pet Partners' criteria and processes</p> <p>Approximate 30 minute evaluation</p>
Insurance	<p>Commercial general liability insurance policy provided by TASA - \$2,000,000 per occurrence</p> <p>Medical Expense (any one person) - \$5,000</p>	<p>Commercial general liability insurance policy provided by Pet Partners - \$2,000,000 per occurrence</p> <p>Medical Expense (any one person) - \$20,000</p>
Membership and Team Evaluation Fees	<p>\$60 (includes a Therapy Animals of San Antonio one-year membership and one Local evaluation during the year's membership)</p> <p>Each additional evaluation: \$30</p>	<p>\$60 evaluation (includes a TASA one-year membership and one Pet Partners evaluation during year's membership)</p> <p>Each additional evaluation: \$30</p> <p>Pet Partners registration fees range from \$50-\$95. TASA reimburses the cost of a Pet Partners registration</p>
Identification	<p>TASA badge and dog tag</p> <p>TASA polo shirts, denim shirts, t-shirts and animal vests are available for purchase from TASA</p>	<p>Pet Partners badge and dog tag</p> <p>TASA polo shirts, denim shirts, t-shirts and animal vests are available for purchase from TASA</p> <p>Pet Partners' animal vests available for purchase from Pet Partners</p>
Restrictions	<p>No dietary restrictions</p> <p>Animal costumes can be worn for visitation on special occasions or holidays (with facility approval)</p> <p>Decorative collars, leashes, etc. appropriate to the site can be worn for visitation</p>	<p>Therapy animal and all other animals in home must not be fed any raw food, including raw bones, marrow bones, and pigs ears</p> <p>Animal Costumes are not allowed</p> <p>Decorative collars, scarves and leashes are allowed as long as the collar structure is the same as the collar the team used to evaluate</p>

	Local Registration	Pet Partners Registration
Expectations	Healthy, well-groomed teams that present confident, reliable, consistent behavior in all situations and that interact well with the community	Healthy, well-groomed teams that present confident, reliable, consistent behavior in all situations and that interact well with the community
TASA Organizational Support/Activities	<p>TASA website at www.therapyanimalssa.org and TASA Yahoo group</p> <p>Local access to experts in various animal care, training, therapy and interaction experiences</p> <p>Free local continuing education opportunities arranged by TASA Board</p> <p>Multiple opportunities to connect and participate in group activities</p> <p>Multiple opportunities to serve the community</p> <p>Face to face contact with TASA Board; can volunteer as a Board member and for other administrative activities</p> <p>Personal input on changing TASA rules or policies</p>	<p>TASA website at www.therapyanimalssa.org and TASA Yahoo group</p> <p>Local access to experts in various animal care, training, therapy and interaction experiences</p> <p>Free local continuing education opportunities arranged by TASA Board</p> <p>Multiple opportunities to connect and participate in group activities</p> <p>Multiple opportunities to serve the community</p> <p>Face to face contact with TASA Board; can volunteer as a Board member and for other administrative activities</p> <p>No face to face contact with Pet Partners Board members</p> <p>Limited personal input on changing Pet Partners rules or policies; input on changing TASA rules or policies</p>
National Pet Partners Organizational Support	None	<p>Newsletter and website resources</p> <p>Access to staff via email and phone</p>
Visiting Opportunities	<p>Volunteer at a TASA approved facility that needs or wants services</p> <p>Assistance is provided by the TASA Facility Coordinator</p>	<p>Volunteer at a TASA/Pet Partners approved facility that needs or wants services.</p> <p>Assistance is provided by the TASA Facility Coordinator</p>

	Local Registration	Pet Partners Registration
Programming	Therapy Team StoryTails (schools/libraries)	Therapy Team Read with Me Walk with Me Youth Endorsement
Animal Requirements Regarding Age	Registers dogs and cats. Dogs and cats must be at least one year old and have lived with owner for at least six months	Registers 9 species of animals. Dogs and cats must be at least one year old and have lived with owner for at least six months Rabbits, guinea pigs, rats, etc. must be at least six months old and birds must have lived with owner for at least one year
Handler Requirements Regarding Age	Must be at least 16 years old	Must be at least 10 years old and those younger than 16 must be accompanied by parent or guardian