Current and Best Practices of Dog Training Programs for Youth At Risk

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The Humane Society of the United States
Current and Best Practices of Dog Training Programs for Youth-At-Risk

As a part of its Dogs Helping People Helping Dogs project with the Laura J. Niles Foundation, the Humane Society of the United States conducted a Survey of Best Practices of Dog Training Programs for Youth At Risk. The 57-item questionnaire sought to illuminate program goals and objectives, program staff management and training, participant selection, program content and structure, dog selection and care, community partnerships, program funding, and program evaluation. (See Appendix A.) The survey asked respondents to identify current and best practices in these areas. The survey instrument was based on the Questionnaire of Violence Prevention/Intervention Programs Involving Animals, which was designed by Deborah Duel and Randy Lockwood (2000). Additional items were added to this instrument to measure specific aspects of dog training programs. The Survey of Best Practices of Dog Training Programs for Youth At Risk also drew from findings in Animal Assisted Activities for At-risk and Incarcerated Children and Young Adults: An Introductory Ethnography of Five Programs by Arnold Arluke (2006).

HSUS identified 24 dog training programs for youth at risk in the United States. Surveys were distributed by e-mail and mail. Fifteen programs responded to the survey. Fourteen completed the survey; one organization reported that it no longer runs a dog training program for at-risk youth. In addition to completing the survey, organizations submitted brochures, training materials, DVDs, articles, and some evaluation instruments.

These fourteen programs reflect a range of dog training projects for at-risk youth. (See Table 1.) Half of the respondent programs involve animal shelters. Of the programs, four are run by animal shelters (LEAP, Project Click, TLC and PAL). An animal shelter, YWCA, and university-based research center collaboratively administer a fifth program (SHIP). Two other programs train shelter dogs, but the shelters are not involved in program administration (Project Pooch and Paws and Think). Seven of the programs are not connected with shelters (HS A-DOGS, ADW, SF, and ECAD at CV, GC, JB, and MF). Six of these programs (HS A-DOGS, ADW and ECAD programs) train assistance dogs. Living Friends has youth work with therapy dogs on agility exercises.

Table 1. Dog Training for Youth At Risk Program Survey Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Date Established</th>
<th>Sponsor(s)</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Total Youth Participants In Program History</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People and Animals Learning (PAI)</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Wisconsin Humane Society</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Milwaukee, WI</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Pooch (PP)</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Project Pooch/ Oregon Youth Authority</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Lake Oswego, OR</td>
<td>300+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Schooled Assistance Dogs (HS A-DOGS)</td>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Assistance Dog Institute</td>
<td>Bergin</td>
<td>Santa Rosa, CA</td>
<td>300+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Assistance Dog Program and Working Dogs Program (ADW)</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Assistance Dogs of the West</td>
<td>Bergin/ADI</td>
<td>Santa Fe, NM</td>
<td>950</td>
</tr>
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<td>--------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/Green Chimneys (GC)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Green Chimneys</td>
<td>ECAD</td>
<td>Putnam, NY</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/Children's Village (CV)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Children's Village</td>
<td>ECAD</td>
<td>Dobbs Ferry, NY</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/Mercy First Children and Family Services (MF)</td>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Mercy First Children and Family services</td>
<td>ECAD</td>
<td>Syosset, NY</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love, Empathy, Acceptance and Partnership (LEAP)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Southern Oregon Humane Society</td>
<td>TLC/SPCALA</td>
<td>Medford, OR</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Love and Compassion (TLC)</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>SPCA of Erie County</td>
<td>TLC/SPCALA</td>
<td>Tonawanda, NY</td>
<td>342</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/Jewish Board of Children and Families (JB)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Jewish Board of Children and Families</td>
<td>ECAD</td>
<td>Hawthorn, NY</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pawsibilities, Pregnant Paws, Pawsitive Corrections (PAWS)</td>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Paws and Think</td>
<td>Bergin/ADI</td>
<td>Indianapolis, IN</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Humane Interventions Program (SHIP)</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>The Childhood Trust, Cincinnati SPCA, and Cincinnati YWCA</td>
<td>Loar</td>
<td>Cincinnati, OH</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Come, Follow Me! (SF)</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Soul Friends</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>Wallingford, CT</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Click (PC)</td>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Humane Society for Southwest Washington</td>
<td>Loar/Boat</td>
<td>Vancouver, WA</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondent programs are spread throughout the country. Together, these programs have worked with some 5000 youth. The programs are run in collaboration with schools, detention facilities, mental health treatment centers, and other social service agencies. Youth in these programs include adjudicated offenders, victims of abuse and neglect, economically disadvantaged children, and children who have cognitive, emotional, or behavioral problems.

In most cases, these programs were developed based on models, materials, and advice from one of three sources: spcaLA's Teaching Love and Compassion, Dr. Lynn Loar,
or Dr. Bonnie Bergin's Assistance Dogs Institute (ADI). The SPCA of Erie County (TLC) and Southern Oregon Humane Society (LEAP) relied on spcaLA’s manual for development of their TLC programs, although Southern Oregon Humane Society's modifications to TLC prompted the organization to rename their program LEAP in 2006. Strategic Humane Interventions Program (SHIP) and Project Click (PC) used Dr. Lynn Loar's programs as a model. Dr. Bonnie Bergin founded Assistance Dog Institute (ADI), which sponsors High Schooled Assistance Dogs (HS A-DOGS) and runs bachelor and masters degree courses that train students in how to establish and run assistance dog programs. Assistance Dogs of the West (ADW) and Paws and Think (PAWS) were established by graduates of ADI’s college, who, in turn, based their programs on Bergin's work. One of ECAD’s co-founders also trained at Assistance Dog Institute. ECAD developed its own curriculum and established programs at Green Chimneys, Children's Village, Jewish Board of Children and Families, and Mercy First Children's and Family Services. Project Pooch (PP), Come Follow Me! (SF), and People and Animals Learning (PAL) were established without prior models.

Program Goals and Objectives

While these programs draw from different models and train dogs for different purposes, they share fundamental assumptions related to at-risk youth and dogs. In their articulation of goals, most programs link youth participation in dog training to development of psychological, social and physical competencies that can be transferred to family, school, community, and work settings. As the SPCA of Erie County (TLC) describes it, the dog training program “utilizes the powerful natural affinity towards animals that most children experience” as the basis for encouraging compassion, empathy, caring, respect and responsibility to break the cycle of violence.

For shelter-based programs and other programs that train shelter dogs, the anticipated benefits for youth and dogs are inextricable. For example, SHIP’s goals are “helping homeless dogs become more adoptable through clicker training and helping caregivers and their children learn positive interaction skills.” The goals include identifying positive behaviors in dogs and people, reading positive cues in dogs and people, breaking down behaviors into small steps to ensure success, reacting positively and immediately to each step toward a goal, transferring skills to home and community settings, and behaving safely around dogs. PAL’s goals include teaching children the importance and benefits of being kind to animals, building empathy for animals and people, and giving children the opportunity to develop self-esteem, self-confidence, and nurturance. The programs also seek to empower youth by giving them confidence that they can make a difference when they help dogs secure permanent homes.

While the assistance dog programs (with the exception of PAWS) place dogs that have been bred to be service animals, they also incorporate animal welfare and animal care into their goals and their youth-at-risk curriculum. The dog assistance programs have an additional goal of helping people with disabilities, which also has benefits for youth. According to ADW, “Students gain knowledge, build responsibility and a compassionate awareness of people with different abilities, and make a concrete contribution to their community.” These programs also allow customization of dog training for disabled clients and increase the number of assistance dogs available for placement (ECAD).
Program Content and Structure

Most of the dog training programs for youth at risk entail multiple, structured sessions in which youth are taught about dog training techniques, animal behavior, and animal care. These lessons are often encoded with parallels between human and dog communication, behavior, learning styles, and group interactions. Through positive reinforcement techniques and exercises, youth train dogs in basic obedience and, in the case of the assistance dog programs, service commands. Many programs also include a broader range of lessons on animal welfare topics, less formal interactions with dogs, field trips, and other activities related to the care of dogs and other animals.

Of the programs, Soul Friends, Project Pooch, HS A-DOGS, SPCA of Erie County, Assistance Dogs West, ECAD, and Paws and Think have developed manuals that outline training methods and curriculum. (See Table 2.) Some manuals are based on previously published books, model programs, and curriculum. Curriculum developed by Lynn Loar, Bonnie Bergin, and spcaLA are most frequently cited. However, few programs exactly replicate their predecessors. For example, while PAWS is based on ADI, the organization trains dogs from shelters and rescue groups rather than purpose-bred dogs and involves students in caring for animals at shelters and wildlife rehabilitation facilities. As mentioned earlier, Southern Oregon Humane Society's TLC program has evolved into LEAP.

The structure of programs varies. Most programs offer sessions several times a year. In each session, classes are held between one and five times each week. Excluding Project Pooch in which the dog training programs are year-round, sessions range in length from 3 weeks to one academic year. Total program hours range from 5 hours to 180 hours. ECAD's four programs in which two cohorts of students spend a full school year training dogs in class for four days a week provides the most program hours for students.

Table 2. Characteristics of Dog Training Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th># participants per session</th>
<th># sessions per year</th>
<th>Length, frequency and scheduling of sessions</th>
<th>Total Hours</th>
<th>Manual</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>Cincinnati SPCA</td>
<td>10-20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7 weeks, one 2.5 hour class per week in evening</td>
<td>17.5 hours</td>
<td>no, but use Loar materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>Wisconsin Humane Society</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 weeks, 5 days per week, three hours each, 9am-12pm in summer</td>
<td>45 hours</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>SPCA of Erie County</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5 weeks, 5 days a week, 2 hours, after school</td>
<td>50 hours</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>Participating Schools</td>
<td>12-14</td>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>4-6 weeks, 2-3 hours a day, during school</td>
<td>60 hours</td>
<td>no</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Click</td>
<td>At shelter and community center</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4 weeks, 3 hours per day, four days</td>
<td>48 hours</td>
<td>no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Kennel Education Center at MacLaren School</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>ongoing</td>
<td>5 days a week during day</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAWS</td>
<td>At facility, sometimes at a shelter</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>School year, summers, 6 classes plus interview, 1 hour each</td>
<td>7 hours</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS A-DOGS</td>
<td>ADI, School, detention facilities</td>
<td>5-7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Semester, 5 days per week, 1 hour per day, during and after school</td>
<td>60 hours</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADW</td>
<td>Schools, detention facilities, community center, therapy clinic, boys and girls clubs</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/CV</td>
<td>Children's Village</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 classes per day, 4 days a week throughout the school year, 90 minute classes</td>
<td>180 hours</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/GC</td>
<td>Green Chimneys</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 classes per day, 4 days a week throughout the school year, 90 minute classes</td>
<td>180 hours</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/MF</td>
<td>Mercy First Children and Family Services</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 classes per day, 4 days a week throughout the school year, 90 minute classes</td>
<td>180 hours</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/ JB</td>
<td>Jewish Board of Children and Families</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>2 classes per day, 4 days a week throughout the school year, 90 minute classes</td>
<td>180 hours</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul Friends</td>
<td>Parks and recreation, day care, school</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>6 weeks, one 50 minute class per week outside of school hours</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several programs set or address individualized goals for participants. At Soul Friends, a treatment form, goals, and a behavioral plan with parental consultation are completed for each student. In the ECAD/Green Chimney's program, children's school counselors and therapists set goals for the children's participation such as staying on task, communicating with peers, and responsibilities for others. In HS A-DOGS programs, individual goals are set for students. In some cases, HS A-DOGS staff works with students on individualized attitude, behavioral, or skill issues. At PAWS, counselors specify why individual students will benefit from a program before the session begins. In the first week of the session, TLC staff meet with students to establish personal goals and goals for the dogs. At LEAP, in the last session, program leaders meet with students to set individualized post-program goals, which often include addressing behavioral issues. Other programs do not set individual goals, but do respond to individual needs over the course of the sessions.

Among the fourteen programs, the number of students in each session ranges from 4 to 20. The average class includes 8 students. Occasionally, programs face some attrition over the course of a session. The main reasons for attrition are psychiatric hospitalization, runaways, illness, and expulsion or dropout from school. Some programs also have lost students who could not get along with peers or have other behavioral problems. Rather than attrition, LEAP has experienced the problem of students who enter the program session midway in alternative school classes. LEAP reports that the addition of a new student after the start of the program reduces the benefits of participation for the student and interferes with group dynamics.

Most programs utilize dog trainers as full or part-time staff or as volunteers. For many programs, the program leader works with a dog trainer and volunteers. ECAD instructors are trained in ECAD’s curriculum and dog training techniques, and are assisted by a volunteer.

The average ratio of adults (program leaders, trainers, and volunteers) to students is 1:3. Soul Friends, PAWS, ADW and SHIP have the most adult supervision for students at approximately one adult for every two youths. Project Pooch has the lowest ratio of adults to students at one adult for seven participants. (See Table 3.)
Table 3. Program Ratios of Students to Adults and Dogs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Adults*: Students</th>
<th>Dogs: Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>1 : 2-3</td>
<td>1 : 4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>1 : 3</td>
<td>1 : 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>1 : 3</td>
<td>1 : 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>4 : 10-14</td>
<td>1 : 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Click</td>
<td>1 : 3</td>
<td>1 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>1 : 7</td>
<td>1 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAWS</td>
<td>3 : 5</td>
<td>1 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS A-DOGS</td>
<td>1 : 5</td>
<td>1 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADW</td>
<td>3 : 5-10</td>
<td>1 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/CV</td>
<td>2 : 7</td>
<td>1 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/GC</td>
<td>2 : 7</td>
<td>1 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/MF</td>
<td>1 : 6</td>
<td>1 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/JB</td>
<td>1 : 6</td>
<td>1 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul Friends</td>
<td>1 : 2</td>
<td>1 : 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Program leaders, trainers, staff and volunteers

Programs differ in the extent to which students work with one or more dogs over the course of their involvement in the session. In some programs, students are paired with one dog for the duration of the program. In other programs, a group of students work with a single dog. In still other cases, students work with a variety of dogs over the course of the program. In the service dog programs, dogs may have a succession of trainers. At ADI, dogs receive two years of training before their permanent placement. They may have 3-4 trainers over this time. The Children’s Village students do “finishing training” with dogs who have completed basic obedience training with students at Green Chimneys. ECAD programs also have students train different dogs during the year in order to improve the dog’s training and to make separation from specific dogs easier at the end of the year.

For programs in which specific dogs are assigned to individuals or a team, a variety of factors enter into the matches. In some cases, participants can choose or give preferences for the dogs with which they would like to work. Some programs match youth and dogs based on personality traits or commonality of problems. For example, at HS A-DOGS, a dog with attention deficits might be matched with a trainer who is diagnosed with ADHD. PAWS puts rowdy dogs with rowdy students, and shy dogs with shy students. Experience is also an issue. At Project Pooch, the tougher dogs are assigned to the more experienced youth. At ECAD/JB, the dogs are rotated among students for the first couple of weeks to assist the pairing of dogs and students based on temperament.
All of the programs use positive reinforcement training techniques. Positive reinforcement training methods stress "patience, love, and understanding of the dog's individual issues and histories" (LEAP). SHIP, Project Click, Soul Friends, and Project Pooch use the clicker training technique. At ECAD/JB, the program teaches students to "influence the dog's behavior by making changes in their own energy level (movement, vocal level, and intonation) and body language (physical cues, positioning, posture, breath, tension, relaxation, and facial expressions)." ECAD uses cause/effect training in which markers are used for correct, wrong, keep trying, and moving on for a task. The programs that train dogs for adoption teach the basic commands such as sit, down, stay, walk on leash, and come. Assistance dog programs teach 80-90 specialized commands.

While dog training is a significant part of the curriculum, most programs also include a broader range of topics. Many programs teach students about dog safety, dog behavior, animal laws, animal welfare, dog anatomy, dog health, spay and neuter, and animal relinquishment issues. The HS A-DOGS program covers human psychology, parenting education, behavior management for dogs and people, and video production skills. PAL includes wildlife rehabilitation and cat behavior and socialization components. Project Pooch teaches students job skills including work ethic, working with the public, and accountability. LEAP addresses issues such as anger management, environmental concerns, conflict resolution, bullying, gangs, violence, history, geography, and journaling. SHIP provides clicker training homework that involves praising and improving interactions with family members. Several programs also train students in public speaking.

Education about disabilities is a component of the curriculum for assistance dog programs. ECAD includes lectures, hands on exercises, face-to-face interactions, and videos regarding disabilities. Both ECAD and HS-A DOGS engage students in simulation exercises where they pretend to be disabled and have to rely on wheel chairs.

Although students often assist with the adoption process in shelter dog programs, they only have limited interactions with the future owners of shelter dogs after training is complete. At Project Pooch, participants play an active role in the adoption process by showing potential adopters the dogs and telling them about the dogs' characteristics. Since Project Click students spend a substantial amount of time at the shelter, they often interact with potential adopters. At TLC, potential adopters are invited to observe the training class, which facilitates some interactions with dogs and children.

The service dog training programs allow more interaction between students and clients who will receive the dogs. At HS A-DOGS, students are invited to watch client
training and to demonstrate commands. At the graduation ceremony, student trainers are seated with clients at the dinner. Letters between students and clients are also encouraged. Students are included in client interviews for dog placements (ECAD, ADW). Student trainers work with the dog’s future owner to demonstrate commands (ECAD).

Parent and guardian involvement in programs varies widely. Most commonly, parents and guardians are only involved to the extent that they sign permission forms for the children and attend graduation ceremonies. The only program in which a parent or guardian is required to attend sessions is SHIP. Soul Friends involves parents or guardians in formulation of goals for the student before the program begins.

Most programs mark the end of the session with a graduation ceremony. At most graduation ceremonies, students demonstrate the commands that their dogs have learned, receive certificates, and have a party. Many events include family members, community representatives, and organizational donors. Along with the certificate, program staff often give students photos of the dogs and other memorabilia. Since at Project Pooch students do not leave the program at the same time, ceremonies are held for the dogs at which certificates are presented. For some of the assistance dog training programs, the graduation ceremony also includes handing their dogs over to client recipients.

After the conclusion of a session, some programs seek to continue to involve youth in their work. At ADW, students are invited to help the program with public education through presentations to community groups. SHIP has begun to recruit students and family members to return as “ship mates” or mentors for future classes. Project Click graduates sometimes become regular shelter volunteers.

Best Practices for Program Content and Structure

The success of the programs depends upon positive and flexible learning environments. Positive reinforcement is at the core of all programs. Not only are positive interactions and training techniques important to learning success for both dogs and youth, they model behavior for youth. Along with dog training exercises, programs identify several additional types of learning activities of particular value to programs: touching dogs, puppy socialization, field trips, teaching dogs to read, homework, videos, role play, and graduation ceremonies. For school-based programs, the integration of teachers and school administrators can benefit further student development.

Food and Welcoming Environment
Food and candy – in abundance. Nurture, nurture, nurture families that are highly stressed with carbs! We meet at 6:30 PM, families are hungry and tired so first we eat. We give people time to sit and talk dog talk or whatever. The atmosphere is relaxed and welcoming, thanks to all the support from the SPCA that provides tables and chairs and storage space and anything else we might need. Even during renovations, the SPCA has said “We will always find a space for you.” (SHIP)

A lot of smiling and laughing! (SHIP)
We play the training game every day and this provides an opportunity for peer relationships to develop in safe and positive way. (PC)

Personalized items: Each participant has a name tag, a waiter’s apron (which they personalize with drawings) and a clicker. Everyone puts on an apron and name tag on arrival and we keep these during the week. (SHIP)

Positive Reinforcement
Emphasis on the positive in interactions with both animals and people. Rewarding skill acquisition with labeled praises: “I really like how you held your hand down low so the dog won’t jump”. “Great job clicking right when the dog looked at you.”; “That was a wonderful way to let your learner know that she was near the target you chose by clicking her hand movement” (during the training game). “Thank you so much for helping us clean up.” “You are so patient with the dog. That is a wonderful skill.” (SHIP)

“The goal is not just to get the dogs trained, but to teach the children how to train, using positive motivation and not force, fear or violence. No animal should be handled in an aggressive or inhumane manner. Rewards-based training is the goal of this program. Corrections and compulsion-based techniques should be kept to a minimum. “ (HS A-DOGS)

The implementation of TAGTeach I the 2nd year made a significant difference in the way staff relate to the students. It created a structure for how to deal with problem behaviors without using punishment. (Project Click)

TAGTeaching to assist in the integration of positive reinforcement. (Soul Friends)

The integration of clicker training and positive interactions with therapy dogs to provide motivation, reinforcement and an experience in positive touch. (Soul Friends)

Clicker training gave students a way to communicate with the animals that was safe and positive. (Project Click)
Measures of Success for Students
Curriculum Training Levels program provides measurable goals instantly to students (ADW)

Respecting that the youths are young adults and giving them the opportunities to solve problems rather than just getting answers. (Project Pooch)

Our teen trainers are taught all aspects of service dog training and given the responsibility and opportunity to succeed in even the most difficult training tasks. (HS A-DOGS)

Draw Comparisons Between Dog Training and Other Relationships
The comparisons of dog psychology and pack behavior to human social psychology and group interactions is a key topic that is used to address issues that the teens are struggling to overcome. This provides a non-threatening technique to discuss difficult issues and also develop insight in our teen trainers. (HS A-DOGS)

We emphasize the role of the teen trainer as one of a teacher and parent. By drawing these analogies, we are able to build empathy toward teachers and parents as well as provide tools that will help the teens should they become parents or teachers. This experiential learning of critical parenting skills has the potential to help multiple generations of the future as these tools benefit the next generations. (HS A-DOGS)

Involve Youth with Clients
Involving our teen trainers in the client training and graduation activities gives them a greater level of empathy and understanding of the lives of people with severe physical disabilities. We place many of our dogs with people experiencing quadriplegia so our students see a perspective of different challenges sometimes even greater than their own challenges. This also heightens the experience of a positive sense of purpose for our teen trainers. (HS A-DOGS)

The final act of placing the service dog with the person they will serve is a celebration of hard work, dedication and extreme sacrifice. Our teen trainers are invited to hand over the leash to a person with a disability during a graduation ceremony. The teens achievements are duly acknowledged by the hundreds of attendees giving the community the chance to see our “at-risk” teens in a different light. (HS A-DOGS)

We strive to have our teens meet and interact with the physically disabled recipients of the dogs. We value our teen trainers’ abilities and involve them in our client trainings when possible. (HS A-DOGS)

Youth participate in interviews and team training with clients. (ECAD)

Flexibility
Modify training protocol to meet treatment plan objectives. (ADW)

Curriculum Development and assessment- trainer discussion, flexible teaching styles. (ADW)
Because of fluidity of the field of humane education, LEAP has been designed to allow for new information and techniques to be integrated into the program as they become available. (LEAP)

LEAP is flexible program that allows for spontaneity. It is designed to adapt to the needs of the students who often do not have basic needs met. It is designed to be a positive in lives of students who often feel they have little to be positive about. (LEAP)

Incorporated into LEAP are a variety of experiences for the students honoring multiple learning styles. The curriculum is presented using techniques that allow visual, verbal, kinesthetic, spatial, interpersonal, and interpersonal learning. (LEAP)

Support of Classroom Teachers/Integration into Classroom
LEAP is fully integrated into the classroom with the support of the classroom teacher. The classroom teacher provides stability and continuity in the classroom, assumes responsibility for discipline, and can carry the experience forward with the students throughout the rest of the year.

There is a belief, held by all who support this program, that LEAP makes a difference in the lives of our youth. (LEAP)

Have developed relationship with teachers through classroom presentations and WHS publications. (PAL)

Additional Activities to Engage Students
As a college, we are always reaching out to improve our program and expand its potential to help others. We have begun to teach our teens to train their dogs to read as a method to foster their interest in reading as well. The teens have taught as many as 12 commands to their dog via having the dog respond to a command on a flashcard. (HS A-DOGS)

We place high value on early puppy socialization and training. The teens begin with the new pups at birth, gaining an understanding of the importance of touch in early neurological development. Many attachment and bonding issues facing our teens can be addressed in a non-threatening and insight building method using the newborn pup as a teaching tool. (HS A-DOGS)

Touching animals is encouraged. Many students are not exposed to
good touch at this age. They are able to spend time petting, brushing and massaging their
dogs. Studies show that this touch decrease the production of stress hormones in both
species, creating calming effect. (LEAP)

Emphasis on doing the homework and sharing outcomes with the group. (SHIP)

Most days are started with a small cleaning project (kennels, organizing laundry/grooming
room) and the students seem to really enjoy this structure since the day can get more
hectic in the afternoon. (PC)

Ending each week with a field trip gave the students a much deserved break and served
as an important bonding time for everyone. (Project Click)

Having the graduation ceremony at the school increases the interest level as well. (SPCA
of Erie County)

Annual ADW Graduation attendance. (ADW)

Student simulation of disabilities, where do not have ability to use arms or legs. (ECAD)

Education/Training for Staff
Continuing education in dog training, teaching, and disabilities (ADW)

Humane educator and the CPDT actively research to find resources and information to
keep LEAP content current. (LEAP)

Principles of applied behavioral analysis to help with goals and treatment objectives. (Soul
Friends)
Specialized training for ECAD staff by ECAD program. (ECAD)

Materials
Dog communication handouts are helpful in reinforcing importance of communication and
relationship. (PAWS)

Handouts from Karen Pryor’s clicker training and the book, Positive Perspectives, by Pat
Miller provide the content for animal behavior. Having minimal resources help keep the
students from feeling overwhelmed by too much paperwork. (PC)

Videos of clients and dogs working together. (ECAD/GC)

Preparation for Employment
Using standards that employers will value such as good attendance record and working
while at the kennel. We also encourage being self-directed and seeking what needs to be
done and then doing it. (Project Pooch)

Staff hold youth accountable for all work that needs to be done. We do not enable youth.
We maintain performance appraisals and observational data (Project Pooch)
Program Staff, Management and Training

A combination of full-time and part-time staff and volunteers run most programs. (See Table 3.) ADW and HS A-DOGS have the largest staff size and volunteer core. The shelter-based programs rely heavily on humane education staff and, in several cases, the shelter’s executive director. With the exception of ECAD’s institutionally-based programs, few programs involve psychologists or other clinical staff. Clinical staff from Children’s Village, Green Chimneys, Jewish Board of Families and Children, and Mercy First Children and Family Services frequently confer with ECAD staff at these institutions about the progress of individual students in these programs. All programs have experienced dog trainers and managers.

Table 3. Program Staffing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>FT Staff</th>
<th>PT Staff</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>Staff Background</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ph.D. Psychologist, YWCA staff, shelter staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Education Manager (graduate degree), Education Specialist (BA), Dog Trainer (graduate degree and 10 years training)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>4-5</td>
<td>Exec Dir, humane educators, van driver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>varies</td>
<td>Education coordinator, certified dog trainer, teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Click</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>Humane Education Coordinator, probation officer from juvenile court, student intern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAWS</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>20-30</td>
<td>Exec Director, Canine Trainers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS A-DOGS</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>Ed.D., DVM, MS, LSW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADW</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>Dog trainers, occupational therapist, client placement trainer, student teaching assistants, curriculum developers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/ CV</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>MS in special education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/ GC</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Co-founder of ECAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/ JB</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Trained by ECAD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/ MF</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>M.Ed specializing in behavioral and emotional disorders of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul Friends</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>LCSW, Occupational Therapist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most programs provide training to their volunteers. Trainings range from 2 hours to 3 days. They include presentations, videos, and written materials. Volunteers are often briefed by staff who play different roles in the project. For example, correctional facility as well as Project Pooch staff brief Project Pooch volunteers. At Project Click, volunteers receive mentor training from the juvenile court. For shelter-based programs, volunteers are briefed both on the shelter's work and the specific youth dog training program. In several programs, on-the-job training is provided rather than prior training. Most volunteers have some experience handling dogs. The larger number of volunteers at ADW and HS A-DOGS reflect the role of volunteers in raising puppies for the programs.

Institutionally-based programs confront particular management challenges. Clinical staff and dog training program staff may have different visions of the program and criteria for participant selection. As one instructor describes, "The faculty and staff (at the institution) really [did] not understand why kids are training dogs. They thought we were just playing with puppies all day. I had frequent problems with staff trying to pull kids out of the program for behavioral infractions during or after school, e.g. the staff wanted to use the program as a way to give or take away from students. I also had problems recruiting kids because staff thought many of the kids did not deserve it." With videos, demonstrations, graduation ceremonies, and networking with school and clinical staff, the program was able to win the cooperation and support of the institution.

Best Practices for Staff, Management, and Training

Dog training programs for youth at risk bring together organizations and individuals with a diversity of interests and skills, ranging from animal shelters, detention centers, schools, and service dog providers to dog trainers, humane educators, teachers, social workers, probation counselors, parents, and the youth and dogs whom the programs serve. Shared commitments to youth and dogs animate the programs. Collaboration, communication, and continuing education for staff and volunteers are central to program success.

Close collaboration and Communication
Close collaboration among participating institutions that enables us to adapt and change our program. We are a three-legged stool and could not do SHIP without each other. Next Fall we are going to embed SHIP in the Adolescent AMEND program at the YWCA. AMEND-SHIP will be a 15 week program with the same families attending both programs instead of families participating in Adolescent-AMEND as an open group. An AMEND
group leader will be our designated contact and hopefully, join our SHIP portion which will be a 7 week program embedded in the middle of the 15 weeks. This approach will enable families and their group leader to have continuity as well as better utilize the skills taught in SHIP. It also will offer additional program evaluation options. (SHIP)

Regular staff meetings/case studies (ADW)
Quarterly meetings/program review (Children’s Village)

Daily wrap ups & review at end of each day to discuss issues and strategies (PAL)

A collaborative approach with parents to help identify individual specific goals within the group setting. (Soul Friends)

Collaboration (ADW)

Work with the entire shelter staff to add to and shape our curriculum (SPCA of Erie County)
Training & Brainstorming session/Orientation prior to the sessions starting (SPCA of Erie County)

LEAP is fully supported by both the executive board and the executive director of the So. Oregon Humane Society. (LEAP)

All staff attend extra programs the agencies offer related to working with the teens. (ECAD)

Every year we do a demonstration for the entire agency to show what the dogs have learned. People who don’t see us on a daily basis are always amazed at how well behaved and skilled the dogs are, thanks to the student trainers. (ECAD/Mercy First)

Make self available to anyone who has concerns about a students trainer and work with them to resolve it. (ECAD/Mercy First)

Every year I talk to the clinical staff, particularly new interns, about the benefits of AAA/AAT. (ECAD/Mercy First)

Flexibility to Incorporate Feedback
Ongoing input into the program and flexibility. SHIP is evolving based on the creative ideas and feedback we receive from volunteers and families. (SHIP)

Investment in getting initial information from participants, outcome data and a willingness to help collect this information. All volunteers are involved in this process as well as helping with “homework” projects. (SHIP)

Well-Trained, Multi-skilled Team
The staff is well-qualified to teach the program. The CPDT has additional graduate level
training as an animal behavioralist. She is a nationally known speaker, writer, and researcher. The education coordinator has experience as a trauma and emergency room RN. She also has experience as a trauma coordinator responsible for developing and teaching injury prevention programs. She also worked as an RN at a community clinic that had a contract with a boarding school for troubled teens. (LEAP)

A multidisciplinary team of clinicians knowledgeable in the benefits of AAT including: social workers, counselors, occupational therapists and special education teachers – and clinicians well versed in the principles of applied behavioral analysis. (Soul Friends)

Realistic time demands on “staff”. Everyone is a volunteer and everyone has a busy schedule plus crises and unexpected events in their lives. Everyone trains to fill all the roles in SHIP so that we are interchangeable (except for the dog trainers who are indispensable) allowing us to cover the program when a volunteer is unable to make it and do so without inducing guilt feelings. I generally miss 1-2 SHIP meetings due to being out-of-town, etc. and everything goes smoothly. (SHIP)

One-on-one training with volunteers (PAL)

Hands-on involvement with every aspect of the program (PAL)

All instructors are required to learn the ECADemy curriculum thoroughly and buy into it (ECAD).

Staff, instructors, kennel help, and management participate in team training and when possible participate as a disabled person. (ECAD/CV)

All instructors participate in therapeutic intervention classes (TCI) twice a year. (ECAD)

The Humane Education Coordinator and the CPDT, continually research and read information regarding teaching and working with youth-at-risk. Both attend humane education and dog training conferences and participate in organizations to increase their knowledge and skills to meet the goals of the program (LEAP)

We offer an annual workshop or seminar with experts in the field, participate in several networks, take online training courses, and review several journals. (PAWS)

Ongoing Staff Training (Children’s Village)
Humane Education Conferences (SPCA of Erie County)

Team training/teaching (ADW)
Consistency in our instructors of what, how, and why we teach. (ECAD)

Mutual Focus on Animals and Youth
A mutual focus on helping animals is essential – but those are the people who self-recruit to SHIP. Sometimes we have to remind our “People-People” volunteers to focus on the human participants more so that they do not monopolize the dogs or the dog trainers. (SHIP)

Positive Environment
Maintaining an upbeat and exciting environment (PAL)

Case Management Model
Case management model is implemented by staff (Project Pooch)

Participant Selection

While all programs target at-risk youth, these at-risk populations range from victims of abuse and neglect, adjudicated offenders, and youth with cognitive, emotional and behavioral problems to students who are economically disadvantaged or have problems with social skills, low self-esteem, or depression. (See Table 4.) Some youth are referred to the programs by school administrators, teachers and counselors. In the case of LEAP, trainings may include an entire class from an alternative school, where all students are deemed at-risk. Child welfare and mental health agencies refer other students to the dog training programs.

Other youth have become a part of the criminal justice system. They are referred by probation officers and social workers connected with juvenile courts. Students in Project Click are completing court-mandated community service. SHIP youth have been remanded by courts to the AMEND Program. Participants in Project Pooch are incarcerated. HS A-DOGS and ADW conduct trainings at youth correctional facilities. Most participants already have been through multiple placements within child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice systems before they enter ECAD programs.

Table 4. Characteristics of Program Participation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Participant Population</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Sex</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>Victims of Abuse/Neglect, Adjudicated</td>
<td>12 yrs to adult parents</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>Schools, victims of abuse/neglect, at-risk, in-need of service</td>
<td>10-13 years</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>Schools, at-risk, economically disadvantaged with accompanying educational and emotional problems</td>
<td>11-13 years</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>Schools, victims of abuse/neglect, at-risk</td>
<td>12-18 years</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Click</td>
<td>Adjudicated, at-risk</td>
<td>13-18 year olds</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Incarcerated, victims of abuse/neglect, at-risk</td>
<td>18-24 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAWS</td>
<td>General population, schools, victims of abuse/neglect, adjudicated, at-risk</td>
<td>12-18 years</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS A-DOGS</td>
<td>Victims of abuse/neglect, at-risk, adjudicated, incarcerated, alternative high schools</td>
<td>12-18 years</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADW</td>
<td>General population, schools, victims of abuse/neglect, adjudicated, physical and developmental disabilities</td>
<td>8-18 years</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/CV</td>
<td>At risk or in need of service. Impoverished, inner city youth who are referred through child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice system</td>
<td>14-18 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/GC</td>
<td>At risk or in need of service. Impoverished, inner city youth who are referred through child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice system</td>
<td>10-16 years</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/MF</td>
<td>At risk or in need of service. Impoverished, inner city youth who are referred through child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice system</td>
<td>13-18 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/JB</td>
<td>At risk or in need of service. Impoverished, inner city youth who are referred through child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice system</td>
<td>13-18 years</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul Friends</td>
<td>Autism Spectrum, ADHD, Cognitive-Emotionally Challenged</td>
<td>11-14 years</td>
<td>Male, Female</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The majority of programs target adolescents and early teens, with several programs including older teens through the age of 18 (PAWS, Project Click, ADW, and HS A-DOGS). Project Pooch serves 18-24 year olds. Most programs have both male and female participants, with the exception of Project Pooch and Children’s Village, which are based at male correctional and treatment facilities, respectively.

Admission policies vary. (See Table 5.) Some programs have formal application processes (Project Pooch, ECAD). Several programs interview students as a part of selection or orientation process. Interviews also can identify students who don’t like dogs, have histories of animal abuse, or display other attitudes, characteristics, or behaviors that might hinder successful program participation. At the same time, interviews can allow students to hone their interviewing skills, help set individual goals for students, and inform youth of what to expect from the program.

**Table 5. Participant Selection Process and Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Source of Youth</th>
<th>Selection Process</th>
<th>Selection Criteria</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>Adolescent AMEND Teens are adjudicated and remanded to AMEND</td>
<td>Youth and Parent/Guardian remanded to AMEND can choose SHIP.</td>
<td>Self-select from AMEND</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Teacher or social worker nominates student</td>
<td>Target children who like animals, at-risk in dangerous neighborhoods, self-esteem issues, problems in classroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Assistant Principal and school aid select students with input from teachers and guidance counselors.</td>
<td>Student need. Violence in home, poor grades, poor social skills, violence towards animals may be inclusion factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>Schools, particularly alternative schools</td>
<td>School select participants. In alternative schools, enrolled in class. In mainstream schools, selected by teachers and counselors.</td>
<td>Students must agree to respect dogs, peers and teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Click</td>
<td>Community Service</td>
<td>Probation counselors refer students.</td>
<td>As referred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Correctional Institution</td>
<td>Apply. Treatment managers, counselors, and administrators select youth. Interviewed by peers. Criminal records checked for past animal abuse.</td>
<td>No animal abuse. Have had 1.5-2 years treatment. Participate in activities in unit. Show self-awareness, not security risks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAWS</td>
<td>Schools, Correctional Programs</td>
<td>Referred by teachers, counselors, correction officers. Interviewed by Program Coordinator.</td>
<td>As referred.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS A-DOGS</td>
<td>Schools, institutions</td>
<td>Collaborate with staff from school/program to select. Interview.</td>
<td>Low self-esteem, depression, social skill deficits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADW</td>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>Referred by state, care managers, therapists, schools, peers. Interview.</td>
<td>Like dogs. No repetitive animal abuse. Desire to self-improve. Acceptable mental acuity and cognitive ability. Ability to work with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/CV</td>
<td>Youth in CV school</td>
<td>Application and review. Interview approved students</td>
<td>Only exclude if shown dangerous, uncontrollable, or AWOL behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/GC</td>
<td>Youth in GC school</td>
<td>Application and review. Interview approved students</td>
<td>Only exclude if shown dangerous, uncontrollable, or AWOL behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/MF</td>
<td>Referred by child welfare, mental health, and juvenile justice agencies</td>
<td>Application and review. Interview approved students</td>
<td>Only exclude if shown dangerous, uncontrollable, or AWOL behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/JB</td>
<td></td>
<td>Application and review. Interview approved students</td>
<td>Only exclude if shown dangerous, uncontrollable, or AWOL behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul Friends</td>
<td>Special education programs through parks and recreation, child guidance clinics, Dept. of Children and Families, Individual Therapists</td>
<td>Program manager screens</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Policies towards participation of youth who are known to have abused animals in the past differ among the programs. PAL, Project Pooch, and PC exclude youth from their programs if they have a history of animal abuse. In the case of Project Pooch and Project Click, these youth are excluded because the programs are concerned that they cannot monitor youth behavior at all times. Both of these programs have multi-faceted contact with dogs that goes beyond the training sessions. PAL does not accept youth with a history of animal abuse because it defines itself as a prevention rather than treatment program.

SHIP, SF, HS A-DOGS, TLC, ADW, ECAD, and LEAP do not exclude youth who have engaged in acts of animal cruelty. SHIP, LEAP, and HS A-DOGS do not review past criminal histories. They view their programs as representing a clean slate for youth. For trainings at detention centers and developmental centers, ADW requires initial counseling on animal cruelty in which individuals discuss their involvement in animal cruelty acts, why the act was wrong, how they felt, and what they hope to gain from the programs. All programs that allow the participation of youth who have committed animal cruelty acts monitor youth closely.

Best Practices for Participant Selection

Programs employ several types of screening mechanisms to aid in identification and selection of students, including applications, interviews, parents, and referrals from schools and other partner agencies. These mechanisms also help to determine individual youth needs and to orient youth to the program. Close collaboration with parents/guardians and school/agency personnel is also recommended for participant selection. Programs differ on policies regarding admission of youth with histories of animal abuse.

Admission Screening
Pre-screening for sensory sensitivities, behavioral and social challenges. (Soul Friends)

Questionnaire completed by the student to gain a commitment from the child (PAL)
We interview the students, giving them the opportunity to learn interviewing skills (HS A-DOGS)

We interview participants prior to selection to set expectations and to provide an experience with interviewing (PAWS)

Commitment to helping homeless dogs become more adoptable. (SHIP)

Must love dogs and be willing to learn proper care and training techniques. Can't have animal abuse issue. Living unit treatment managers often find out about animal abuse not in criminal records and help screen. (Project Pooch)

Interviewing tool sets expectations (PAWS)

We do not have student files, although do ask referring staff if there are any alerts that I should know about. I would rather start with a clear slate and meet every students with a positive expectation. (ECAD/JB)

Hands on interviews with students. (ECAD/GC)
Take the time when recruiting to get everyone on board – clinicians, cottage staff, and teachers. If they approve a student now, they will continue to be supportive throughout the year. (ECAD/JB)

Guide staff in making good referrals. That is, many staff want kids to join the program because “it would be good for him” or “he loves dogs.” They will tell me a boy is not a good candidate because he is hyper or controlling or manipulative, but those kids make good trainers! I have to make sure they understand that training is difficult and can be very frustrating. We need kids who are physically, cognitively, and emotionally capable of training a future service dog. We really want to set kids up to succeed from the start.” (ECAD/JB)

Once I get the referrals from staff, I interview each kid individually or in small groups. I try to weed out the ones who think it is an easy class or only do it to go on field trips. I will also ask former trainers – subtly – if they think the candidate is appropriate to the program. They truly understand what it takes, they know their peers well, and are brutally honest. (ECAD/JB)

Parental Involvement
Parental input in the identification of goals. (Soul Friends)

Thorough packet of information mailed to parents/guardians. (PAL)

We incorporate parental input. (PAWS)

Concise description of SHIP for teens and their caregivers and being available to answer questions about SHIP (SHIP)

Relationships with Schools/Agency Personnel
Have developed relationship with teachers through classroom presentations and WHS A-DOGS publications. (PAL)

Collaborate with school and probation staff to determine which teens have the greatest need of program benefits. (HS A-DOGS)

Recommendation by a teacher/social worker stating why the student would benefit. (PAL)

Having an aid (vice principal as well) that works with the students on a daily basis (someone they look up to) helps as far as recruitment. (SPCA of Erie County)

The Humane Society works in conjunction with our community’s alternative schools. They are our conduit to the at-risk youth population. (LEAP)

There is buy-in from both administration and classroom teacher. (LEAP)

Allowing school personnel to select the students as they know the individual student needs
reaches students who are more likely to benefit from the program. (LEAP)

We talk with the administrators of at-risk populations and have them identify their primary at-risk populations. (PAWS)

School/detention center counselors/teachers/program managers. (ADW)

Recommendation by a teacher/social worker stating why the student would benefit. (PAL)

We spend time with the facility talking about goals and who might benefit. (PAWS)

We rely heavily on counselor and PO recruitment. The detention center staff know the program well and do a great job of recruiting participants that they feel will benefit the most. (Project Click)

Close coordination with Adolescent – AMEND (SHIP)

Orient Students, Establish Rules of Conduct, and Set Goals
Our teens attend an orientation that explains the importance of training service dogs and the responsibilities involved. We immediately draw the parallels of dog training to that of being a teacher and also a parent. The teens are shown a video of a service dog helping a person with a disability. (HS A-DOGS)

Students agree to the rules of conduct. We are experimenting with having students generate their own rules of conduct and signing a contract to follow these rules. (LEAP) Questionnaire completed by the student to gain a commitment from the child. (PAL)

A multidisciplinary approach in the development of goals and objectives for each child.. (Soul Friends)

Instructors being very clear and specific with expectations of students. (ECAD)

Involve Graduates As Mentors
A new plan to use graduates of SHIP (both teens and their caregivers) as SHIPMATES to help recruit appropriate families to the program by meeting with them at the AMEND program. (SHIP)

Postgraduates help as well as they want to be mentors for the program (there is a lengthy list of students that want to return as mentors and it has become a popular program). (SPCA of Erie County)

Past students talking to new students. (ECAD/CV)
Dog Selection and Dog Care

Most of the programs train dogs in order to enhance their prospects for long-term adoption (SHIP, PAL, PP, HS A-DOGS, PC, LEAP). One program (PAWS) trains shelter and rescue dogs to be assistance dogs. Three programs train purpose-bred dogs to be assistance dogs who will be placed with clients with disabilities (HS A-DOGS, ADW, and CV). Soul Friends uses therapy dogs in its programs that are owned by staff and volunteers. (See Table 6.)

Table 6. Sources of Dogs for Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Source of Dogs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Click</td>
<td>Shelter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>Shelters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAWS</td>
<td>Shelters and rescue groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS A-DOGS</td>
<td>Breeders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADW</td>
<td>Breeders, other service dog organizations, and occasionally shelters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/CV</td>
<td>Own breeding program, other service dog orgs., breeder donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/GC</td>
<td>Own breeding program, other service dog orgs., breeder donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/MF</td>
<td>Own breeding program, other service dog orgs., breeder donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/JB</td>
<td>Own breeding program, other service dog orgs., breeder donations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul Friends</td>
<td>Staff and volunteers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shelter dogs are temperament-tested and receive health clearance before they are included in the programs. Most programs use the SAFER dog evaluation method along with staff observations. Dogs must show an interest in treats, not demonstrate aggressive posturing, be healthy, and be willing to be on a leash. LEAP chooses dogs for whom “basic obedience and social skills [will] improve their chances for a lasting adoption.” TLC selects dogs that are in need of manners or enrichment. Project Pooch gives preference to dogs that have been at shelters the longest, are large, are most in need of training, and are most at risk of euthanasia.

Some attrition of dogs occurs over the course of programs. Occasionally, dogs are removed from the program for medical or behavioral reasons. More frequently, dogs are adopted during the course of training. Shelter dogs that are trained in the programs have a high rate of adoption. PAL reports an adoption rate of 100%. Most dogs are kept until they can be placed.
Golden retrievers and Labrador/Golden Retriever crosses are the breeds most often selected to be service dogs. According to HS A-DOGS, these dogs are chosen based on temperament, lack of prey drive, lack of arousal, and good health. However, not all of the dogs will be trained successfully as service dogs. HS A-DOGS reports that 50% of their dogs are placed as service dogs, 30% as facility or social therapy dogs, and the remainder may be released as pets. Similarly, of the dogs in the ADW program, 90% are placed in working environments and 10% become pets or therapy dogs. Some dogs remain in the training program. ECAD/GC also has a 90% placement rate for assistance dogs.

For the shelter-based programs, dogs remain at the shelter for the duration of training sessions. However, there are some differences in dog housing among the service dog training programs. At the ADI, dogs are housed with caregivers who raised them and spend time in ADI offices. ECAD dogs are kenneled near classroom sites on weekdays and at volunteer homes on weekends. For some correctional institution training programs, participants are allowed to have dogs stay with them occasionally as a reward for good behavior. At ECAD/Children’s Village, dogs are kenneled away from the facility out of a concern that students will become attached to individual animals.

Veterinary care is provided to all dogs. Most of the shelter-based programs have on-site clinics, veterinary technicians or veterinarians. Project Pooch and ADW take their dogs to local veterinary clinics. HS A-DOGS employs a part-time veterinarian. Owners provide veterinary care for Soul Friends’ dogs. In its four programs, ECAD or volunteers who house dogs on the weekends handle the veterinary needs of dogs.

The programs vary in the extent to which students have responsibility for the dogs. In all programs, participants provide general training and stroke the dogs. (See Table 7.) Most programs also include play, grooming, and walking dogs. Some programs involve more extensive responsibilities for and activities with the dogs. Project Pooch participants help run the kennel, and are responsible for meeting all day-to-day needs of the dogs. ECAD/Children’s Village students also help run the onsite kennel where dogs are housed on weekdays. The HS A-DOGS program includes early puppy petting and training, teaching dogs to read, and therapy dog visits. At Project Click, students clean kennels and learn basic veterinary techniques. Some programs such as ADW have student trainers take their dogs on field trips. In the LEAP program, dogs also stay with students in the classroom for quiet socialization.
Table 7. Youth Responsibilities for Care and Training of Dogs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>General Training</th>
<th>Service Training</th>
<th>Stroking</th>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Grooming</th>
<th>Walks</th>
<th>Cleaning Kennel</th>
<th>Feeding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Click</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAWS</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS A-DOGS</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADW</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/CV</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/GC</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/MF</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/JB</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul Friends</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best Practices for Dog Selection and Care

Selection and care of dogs are priorities for programs. The welfare of both youth and dogs is enhanced by temperament-testing, staff involvement in dog selection, monitoring of dogs and youth, and, in the case of the assistance dog programs, breed and breeder selection. Dog welfare benefits from positive reinforcement training techniques, socialization, and veterinary care. Dog variety can improve learning opportunities for youth and adoption opportunities for dogs. Involvement of youth in various aspects of dog care in addition to training may enhance youth development, teach youth about appropriate care for their own current or future pets, and enhance relationships with the dogs.

Evaluation of Dog
Suitability and temperament testing by qualified dog trainers. (SHIP)

Temperament tested. (Soul Friends)

Registered therapy dogs. (Soul Friends)

Safer Evaluation and Match Maker Program. (PAL)
Our SAFER Team Leader, dog trainer and other shelter staff as a group effort have chosen
dogs that are selected. (SPCA of Erie County)

Temperament testing done by skilled trainers. (ADW)

Temperament testing. (PAWS)

The animals are temperament tested twice before participating in the program. (LEAP)

Work closely with WHS A-DOGS animal behavior department to select dogs. (PAL)

The staff at the Oregon Humane Society is very hands-on with the animals. They are
aware of what qualities are desirable in the dogs selected for the program. (LEAP)

Shelter make records of dogs they'd like to incorporate into the program. (PAWS)

Consistency in what acceptable skill levels the dog must have to be placed. (ECAD/GC)

Have multiple handlers for each dog to enforce consistency. (ECAD/GC)

Positive Reinforcement Techniques
Gentle, positive and fun learning through clicker training. (SHIP)

Lot's of good treats. (SHIP)

Monitor Dogs
Ongoing careful observation by dog trainers to spot stress and monitor the dog's adjustment
to the program. (SHIP)

The dogs receive excellent medical care. Because of staff and volunteer involvement with
the dogs, problems are identified and addressed early (LEAP)

Every dog is neutered/spayed, vaccinated micro-chipped. (Project Pooch)

Our dogs are in the program from the time they are whelped until they are placed. We see
the dogs every day, and get to know each dog very well. (ECAD/JB)

The dogs are regularly seen by other instructors and volunteers who give feedback on
dog's health, temperament, etc in different situations. (ECAD/JB)

Variety Among Dogs
Select a variety of breeds and mixes. (PAL)

Dog selection includes older dogs, big dogs, death-row dogs. Develop compassion for
dogs that don't fit the small, cute category. Youth feel good about saving dogs from death
row. (Project Pooch)

Due to the nature of our shelter, we do not have specific criteria for dog selection. The
benefit of this is students get to work with a variety of breeds and personalities and are
exposed to different training challenges. (Project Click)
Because we are a full adoption facility and the animals are temperament tested at intake, we have a wide variety of adoptable dogs to choose from. The dogs are closely observed during the program for any chances in disposition or any health concerns which are addressed immediately. (LEAP)

Involving Youths in Care
Youth learn proper care for any dogs they may have in the future (Project Pooch)

When a dog has just been neutered/spayed, the youths spend a lot of time comforting them (Project Pooch)

Socialization
Our dogs are socialized immediately upon birth. Our "puppy petters" make certain that the pups are nurtured during the critical first weeks of their lives. Building trust and a love of people are goals set for our pups that are critical to helping our dogs connect with our teen population. (HS A-DOGS)

We begin formal training of our pups prior to four weeks of age. This early opportunity to learn how to learn creates an increased ability to learn difficult tasks later on in the dog’s life. Our dogs have greater abilities to problem solve later on as a result of their early puppy experiences. (HS A-DOGS)

Southern Oregon Humane Society has a strong volunteer program and each dog enjoys additional one on one time with a volunteer on a daily basis. All animals in the facility get time in the play yards and interaction with other dogs as tolerated. (LEAP)

We believe that our dogs benefit greatly from living in staff offices. Social interactions with other dogs are monitored more efficiently using this method. Our dogs also learn how to behave appropriately in an office setting. Our dogs are provided with recreational opportunities by our staff and college students. Many of our dogs in training enjoy a romp on the beach during weekends. (HS A-DOGS)

Breeding
Internet Research: breed, personalities, traits, experience in the field, etc. (ADW)

Long term working relationships with breeders that understand programs needs and knows their dogs temperament and abilities. (ADW)

Exchange programs with other service dog organizations (ADW)

Our breeding selections are based on Dr. Bergin’s thirty-two years of experience in the service dog field. Our purpose-bred Golden Retrievers and Lab/Golden crosses are intended to be low aroused, loving helpmates with very low prey drive. (HS A-DOGS)

Have our own breeding program with a history of success. (ECAD)
Community Partnerships

The dog training programs have forged a variety of relationships with animal care organizations, social service agencies, correctional facilities, and schools. In most cases, these relationships are ongoing partnerships. For example, SHIP is run as a collaboration between the Childhood Trust, Cincinnati SPCA, and YWCA. PAL, LEAP, and TLC have ongoing relationships with school systems and specific schools. Project Click works closely with the Clark County Juvenile Court since their students are fulfilling court-mandated community service requirements. Project Pooch is administered in partnership with the Oregon Youth Authority. The assistance dog programs – HS A-DOGS, ADW, and PAWS – work with the greatest number and variety of schools, treatment centers, and correctional facilities. The ECAD programs also are collaborations between the dog assistance training program and mental health institutions. These institutions sub-contract with ECAD to operate the dog training programs.

Best Practices for Community Partnerships

All youth at risk dog training programs rely on community partnerships to identify participants, fund programs, recruit volunteers, integrate youth into communities, and create future opportunities for youth. Development and maintenance of these partnerships require outreach, close collaboration, and program feedback mechanisms.

Close Collaboration
All partners are active in the program with specific roles. The Childhood Trust manages the program details and recruiting volunteers; the YWCA is the grant recipient and liaison to Adolescent AMEND and manages expenses. SPCA Cincinnati provides the meeting facility and the shelter dogs. (SHIP)

Collaboration with the Department of Children and Families to assist in program supplementation for children with special needs, and identified as at-risk. (Soul Friends)

We worked with the staff at the court during the development and having strong relationships with them has been critical to our success. Probation officers and counselors are always available to us when we have questions or concerns. (Project Click)

Emphasize cross in-service learning opportunities for/with partnering agencies. (ADW)

Encourage community partners to “market” ADW programs and fund raising objectives. (ADW)

Funding for LEAP is provided by a variety of community members, including private donations, foundations and business/service clubs (LEAP)

Planning meetings with documents – partnership agreements. (PAWS)

Shared goals and resources. (PAWS)
Collaboration with the special needs programming of area park and recreation departments. (Soul Friends)

Feedback from Partners
All partners provide valuable feedback to the program. (SHIP)

Ongoing feedback. (PAWS)
Modify/adapt ADW curricula content to suit the objectives of each partnership (ADW)
All partners celebrate each other. SHIP received the Volunteer of the Year award in 2004 from the YWCA and is also featured in the SPCA Cincinnati ads and brochures. The Childhood Trust at CCHMC collaborated with SPCA Cincinnati on a research project on owners of high-risk dogs. (SHIP)

Outreach to Parents and Students
Outreach to parents of special needs children. (Soul Friends)

Presentations in schools to recruit participants. (PAL)

Academic Animals (WHS A-DOGS humane education publication for teachers). (PAL)

Media. (PAL)
Ongoing positive publicity in media brings money and volunteers. (Project Pooch)

Accessing volunteer match website has brought us virtual volunteers. (Project Pooch)

Youth Presence in Community
Day care center presentation by PAL students. (PAL)

Our teens take part in parades and other community events to help the community see our teens in a positive regard. (HS A-DOGS)

Students are required to do a presentation for a grade school class in the community, sharing information with younger students. (LEAP)

Teens participate in community event, staff information tables, answer questions, and give demonstrations. (ECAD)

Volunteer Involvement
Various volunteer groups help us with office work and getting our newsletter ready for mailing. (Project Pooch)

Volunteers assist you with basic skills, interviewing, and problem solving. (Project Pooch)

Volunteers house dogs on weekends. (ECAD)

Marketing to the local community for volunteers. (ECAD/JB)
Opportunities for Students Beyond Programs
Our college offers post-secondary educational options to the teens in our HS A-DOGS A-Dog program. (HS A-DOGS)

We have partnered with other universities to expose our teen trainers to graduate and undergraduate college students through the Office of Service Learning. (HS A-DOGS)

We involve our teen trainers in helping adults with developmental delays by having the teens teach the adults how to groom and interact with the dogs. (HS A-DOGS)

Because of HS A-DOGS relationship with other rescue agencies, students exposed to a local wild animal rescue by tour or visit from staff. Members of Spay and Neuter Your Pet are available to talk with students and offer resources, including financial assistance for spaying and neutering. (LEAP)

Inviting students to participate in SOHS A-DOGS events to potential donors gives them the opportunity to gain self-confidence and practice respect. (LEAP)

Program Funding

Most programs have very modest budgets. At the low end, PAWS runs its programs for $800. SHIP and Project Click spend less than $5000 a year. At the high end, ADW's multiple training programs at substance abuse treatment centers, detention centers, developmental centers, and schools cost $449,000 per year. (See Table 8.)

Project Pooch, HS A-DOGS, and ADW have larger budgets. In the case of Project Pooch, the organization operates a full-service kennel, providing shelter, food, and veterinary care for dogs who have been brought from shelters. ADW and HS A-DOGS incur expenses related to the acquisition and care of service dogs, higher staffing levels, transportation, and more participants. Since many of the costs of shelter-based programs such as dog care and staff are a part of overall shelter budgets, program budgets may appear lower. Assistance dog programs also are more likely to receive social service agency contractual fees.
Table 8. Program budgets and funding sources.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Budget</th>
<th>General Funds</th>
<th>Grants</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Comm. Orgs.</th>
<th>Corp.</th>
<th>Agency Fees/Contract</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>Less than $5000</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>$22,000</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>$35,000-40,000</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>$20,190</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Click</td>
<td>$5000</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>$150,000</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Fees for film companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAWS</td>
<td>$800</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS A-DOGS</td>
<td>$88,964</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>ADW</td>
<td>$449,500</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Special events; retail sales from website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/CV</td>
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<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/GC</td>
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<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/JB</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Soul Friends</td>
<td>$7,500</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Insurance; participant fees</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All programs rely upon foundation grants. Most also receive contributions from the public and community organizations. Corporations donate to several of the programs (PP, HS A-DOGS, ADW, Project Click, ECAD/CV, and ECAD/GC). With the exception of TLC, the shelter-based programs are in part funded by their shelter’s general budget.

Funding for even modest budgets can be problematic. Project Pooch notes the difficulty of donors that want to fund specific projects rather than ongoing salaries. HS A-DOGS reports that its college graduates who establish programs of their own have to underwrite the costs themselves and that valuable programs are sometimes forced to close for lack of funds.
Best Practices for Program Funding

Active and continuing engagement of donors and the larger community lays the groundwork for successful fundraising. Foundations are the primary preferred funding sources. Some programs advocate solicitation of corporate support. Others encourage development of contractual relationships with agencies for fees. Institutional support of board and staff is also identified as critical.

Foundation Grants
We don’t need much money. Just for supplies and food. We can’t even get our volunteers to bill us for gas mileage. We are fortunate to receive a grant from a foundation in Ohio that covers all expenses. The YWCA in the past has funded the program for battered women. We do not charge a fee – nor do we intend to do so. (SHIP)

Grants are requested from local foundations who are dedicated to serving the community. (LEAP)

Those who contribute to LEAP recognize the value and power of the program. We have had continued support from several foundations and businesses. (LEAP)

Writing grants. (ECAD)

Engage Community and Donors
Keeping community and donors informed. (PAL)

Keeping in the media spotlight. (PAL)
Empower students, clients and all volunteers with the message to increased fundraising network. Students have designed fund raising campaigns (small but helpful,) families have become engaged, clients continue to fund raise and do presentations for ADW, etc. (ADW)

Grantors and donors are invited to the graduation. Their presence reinforces the importance of the work that the students did and helps celebrate their success. (LEAP)

Holding events. (ECAD/GC, ECAD/JB)

Publishing quarterly newsletters. (ECAD/CV)

Networking and attending other non-profit events to show support. (ECAD/GC)

Corporations
Corporate sponsorship (Project Pooch)

Fees from Schools and Juvenile Centers
We contract with schools and juvenile centers and receive a fee for service to implement the program. (HS A-DOGS)
Fee based educational and vocational programming. 40% of annual revenue is recognized through these partnerships and the student interaction with the dogs increases dog flexibility and dog ability to focus on “the task” as opposed to “the person”...client’s with disabilities receive quality dogs faster. (ADW)

**Individual Donors**
Individuals support part of the program costs through donations. (HS A-DOGS)

In 2001, Oprah awarded Dr. Bergin the “Use Your Life” award with a $100,000 grant for the program. (HS A-DOGS)

Enclose donor envelopes with newsletter. (Project Pooch)

**Internal Collaboration**
We work very closely with other Humane Educators as well as our own shelter staff and Development Department to secure funding to meet the programs needs. They have been able to find funding sources from many different donors. (SPCA of Erie County)

Active staff grant writing and networking for increased appropriate grant opportunities. (ADW)

**Board of directors. (Project Pooch)**

Board development plan and board support (annual appeal, special mailings, special events, development of major donors, etc). (ADW)

**Involve board of directors (PAWS)**

**Anticipated Outcomes**

Program administrators anticipate that participation in dog training programs will encourage the development of a wide range of cognitive, physical, social/emotional, speech/language, and knowledge competencies in youth. Despite differences in program structure, content, purpose of dog training, staffing levels and budgets, shelter dog and assistance dog training programs expect and report similar outcomes for youth participants.

**Cognitive Skills**

Problem solving is among the cognitive skills that youth are expected to gain from program participation. (See Table 9.) Dog training participants need to “break down learning into small increments of successive steps towards goals” (SHIP). Youth learn to solve problems through positive interactions (SF). Youth need to solve problems when dogs do not respond to commands (LEAP). As PAWS describes, “Youth focus on what their dogs are telling them and problem solve how to motivate them and reinforce good
choices.” Since “no two dogs are alike,” programs that allow youth to work with multiple dogs require individualized problem solving (PAL). The training requires problem solving and conflict resolution involving other students as well as dogs (PP).

Table 9. Cognitive Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem Solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breaking Down Learning Components</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concentration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memorizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Positive Behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task Analysis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizational Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sequencing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following Directions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceptual Processing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Concentration is another cognitive competency that dog training programs seek to improve. In these programs, students need to stay focused on a variety of tasks (PAL). Learning training techniques and safety measures for working with dogs requires concentration (LEAP). “Teen trainers are taught to keep one eye on dogs at all times, anticipate behaviors of their dog and apply split second timing to mark behaviors,” reports HS A-DOGS. Training requires repetition and memorizing by both dogs and students (LEAP).

Several programs anticipate that students will gain organizational skills from their participation. At HS A-DOGS, students are required to maintain training logs on their dogs. Students need to organize the equipment that they use for training (LEAP). Student involvement in shelter functions such as arranging adoptions and operating a kennel with multiple animals further enhance organizational skills (Project Click).

Physical Skills

Dog training is a physical activity that requires youth to use balance, coordination, and motor skills. (See Table 10.) Since many dogs have little training, significant physical effort may be necessary to manage dogs (PAL). PAWS refers to the “different body postures, voices and movements [students use] to motivate and shape behavior.” As SHIP describes,
clicker training requires exact timing to identify, click and reward positive behaviors. Gross and refined motor skills and physical synchronization are involved in training service dogs, which, in turn, develops the motor skills of the dogs. (HS A-DOGS) Both Soul Friends and LEAP mention the physical coordination necessary to walk dogs through agility courses, figure eights, and weaving in and out of other dogs. Use of hand signals to communicate with dogs also requires physical skill (LEAP). Walking dogs, handling cats, grooming, and cleaning kennels are additional physically demanding activities in which students participate at Project Click, Project Pooch, and ECAD/CV.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Competencies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor planning and execution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fine and Gross Motor Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Language</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Synchronization/Timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand Signals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling dogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handling other animals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleaning Kennels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grooming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor planning and execution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range of motion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tactile, olfactory, visual, proprioceptive, vestibular and auditory sensory processing and integration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Social and Emotional Competencies**

Respondents describe a variety of social and emotional skills that dog training programs may foster. (See Table 11.) Empathy is a desired outcome of all dog training programs. As HS A-DOGS describes, “An understanding of the dog’s perspective is required to train effectively and provides another opportunity to build levels of empathy.” LEAP, along with other shelter dog programs, shares the plights of the specific dogs in their care with the students, which causes the students to identify with their dog’s experiences of abandonment or abuse. In addition to general empathy with dogs, program participants
learn to empathize with older dogs and dogs with medical problems (PP), and, in the case of assistance dog training programs, the disabled (CV, HS A-DOGS, ADW). The assistance dog programs seek to teach students to have empathy with the disabled through educational programs and role play (ECAD, HS A-DOGS, ADW).

Table 11. Social/Emotional Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social/Emotional Competencies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Regulation/Anger Management/Self-control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-verbal Communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patience</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognize body language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selflessness</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with peers/Teamwork</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration with dog</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initiate Interactions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-efficacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in Stress/Anxiety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in Aggression</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye Contact</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice modulation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Space</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community philanthropic participation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Dynamics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-improvement</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-sufficiency</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The ability to control anger, frustration, and impulses is another important competency to be gained through dog training programs (SHIP, SF, PAL, HS A-DOGS). As HS A-DOGS describes, “students learn to be dog whisperers, developing the ability to relate through two-way communication with their dogs ... Self-control is fostered by the many opportunities to regulate emotions when training their dogs. The patience required to maintain the respect of the dog for a benevolent leader requires the teens to practice emotional regulation.” According to ECAD/JB, the program teaches students the “cause and effect of their actions, self-control with their dogs and peers, and how their emotions directly affect the animals as well as people around them (positive as well as negative).” One ECAD instructor reports that unlike her classroom teaching experience students in the dog training program never have behavioral incidents in class that escalate out of control.

In addition, participation in these programs is expected to counter depression, aggression and anxiety. According to HS A-DOGS, “A positive sense of purpose knowing that you are successfully helping others in the community is a powerful tool to fight depression. Training a service dog provides that tool.” Programs comment on how the presence of dogs lowers blood pressure and anxiety levels (HS A-DOGS). In the process of training, youth “learn to recognize stress and anxiety in themselves and their animal partners and learn ways to relieve that stress/anxiety for themselves and the animal through positive interactions and reinforcement” (Soul Friends). HS A-DOGS adds that, “Teens with greater degrees of empathy are also less likely to be aggressive with others.” At LEAP, discussions of dog and human aggression are a part of the program. Says LEAP, “aggression is not permitted in either species. Students must treat the dogs, other students, and teachers with respect are removed from the setting. Dogs who show any aggression also are removed from the program.”

Program participation is expected to foster communication. The programs may enhance the ability of youth to “enjoy interactions with people and animals (SHIP).” For example, the canine communication skills that Soul Friends seeks to foster are seen as providing learning experiences regarding animal behavior, a positive tactile experience, a positive experience that focuses on social interaction, an experience in autonomous decision making, and an opportunity for responsibility and care of an animal and enhancement of motor skills. As PC notes, “Students must communicate with the animals on a daily basis in order to train behaviors and attend to their needs. They also interact with staff, peers, and patrons on a daily basis.” Youth learn verbal and non-verbal communication skills in order to train the dogs. Eye contact is another aspect of social interaction that the dog training programs facilitate (Soul Friends). Training requires communication and cooperation with other youth in the program (PAL). Since Project Pooch participants are actively involved in running the kennel and helping with adoptions, they learn how to communicate with visitors and volunteers as well as dogs and classmates (PP). According to ECAD, students learn that “motivation is a better way to teach or get the desired results than intimidation.”

Improving family relationships is another central goal of the programs. Family communication is enhanced by program emphasis on positive reinforcement training techniques (SHIP). In SHIP’s in-class and homework assignments, family members use clickers to facilitate positive interactions with each other. Both PAWS and HS A-DOGS
describe how their programs improve parenting skills. The lessons learned from dog training include "the importance of bonding and attachment, the need for consistency in setting limits and boundaries, the importance of using praise to shape behaviors, the importance of 'catching them doing something right,' the significance of emotional synchronization, an understanding of appropriate normal developmental behaviors, level of empathy and understanding and valuing of needs, valuation of alternatives to corporal punishment, understanding appropriate family roles (parent v. child), and understanding the value of empowering a child or a dog to make choices as part of the learning process" (HS A-DOGS).

For many program participants, training a dog marks the first time in which they have been entrusted with a responsibility. Says PAL, "The children are given a big responsibility to train a shelter dog." With this responsibility comes the possibility for success. According to PAWS, "By preventing their dog's euthanasia, they experience success (also a new experience for many) and pride, knowing they made a difference." Participation also enhances self-efficacy (SHIP). The students also "learn selflessness in being able to train a dog that they know will be adopted by someone else" (LEAP).

Program participation can instill in students a sense of community service. As ECAD relates, "Through this program, students who may have been receiving services for much of their lives learn to provide community service for others, helping people with disabilities to become self-sufficient. Students who have been neglected or abused learn to provide care and nurturing."

**Speech and Language Skills**

Dog training requires students to verbalize and to understand and communicate instructions. According to Soul Friends, participation in these programs "encourages children to practice skills of verbal interactions as they translate the teaching of basic commands they receive to applying them to the therapy dog through positive training techniques. The children learn to take in multiple step directions and then apply them."

At Project Pooch, shy youths are often charged with giving kennel tours to allow them to practice conversational skills. Dog training requires the students to initiate communication with the dog (SF). At HS A-DOGS, parents report that their children have initiated more dialogue as a result of their participation (HS A-DOGS). Programs in which more experienced children assist less experienced children also facilitate communication and learning. Several programs require that students make presentations. For example, at LEAP, each student is required to make a presentation to a grade school class. Preparation for these presentations is extensive. Presentations, along with demonstrations, also are a part of graduation ceremonies. SHIP seeks to teach family member to communicate with each other clearly in speech and in writing. Journal writing is included in several programs.
Knowledge and Attitudes

Programs facilitate acquisition and retention of various types of knowledge. (See Table 12.) Most fundamentally, students gain knowledge about dog training and dog care. Youth are taught anywhere from 8 to 80 commands, which they, in turn, teach to the dogs. Youth learn how to shape dog behaviors through praise and rewards. In addition, according to HS A-DOGS, “a deeper appreciation of animals is developed as the teens see the incredible abilities of trained service dogs.” Students also demonstrate their knowledge when they speak with members of the public, make presentations, and play games such as Humane Society Jeopardy (LEAP).

Table 12. Knowledge and Attitudes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge and Attitudes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pet Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Animal Welfare, including anti-cruelty laws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group Interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Skills (working with public, attendance)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Training Commands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dog Safety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disabilities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Students learn how to interact with dogs. According to SHIP, they “learn how to approach dogs safely, how to read a dog’s signals, and how to calm and soothe a dog.” They are taught how to care for animals. At HS A-DOGS, they learn to brush teeth and coats, clean ears, and trim nails. The programs also provide an opportunity for students to ask questions about their own pets (SHIP).

In most programs, students are exposed to animal shelters and gain knowledge about animal welfare, animal cruelty, animal relinquishment, laws regarding animal abuse, and animal safety. When programs are housed at shelters, students have regular interactions with a wide range of shelter animals and staff (PC). In other programs, students visit shelters and wildlife rehabilitation centers (PAWS). Staff at these facilities provide tours and teach children about the animals and the facility’s work.

Youth also learn about group interactions. As PAWS describes, the “first class is about pack theory, leadership and caretaking.” They learn life lessons such as how to make appropriate decision-making and don’t compare yourself to others (PAWS). Youth are taught how to be leaders and how to play support roles.

Vocational and workplace skills are another type of knowledge acquired through program participation (PP, ADW, ECAD). Project Pooch participants are given a “New
Hire Packet” when they enter the program that sets the stage for lessons in work ethic and contractual relationships. For all programs, regular attendance can establish patterns replicated in school, work, and therapeutic settings. Programs also seek to improve academic performance. Knowledge of animal care can produce concrete employment opportunities. For example, after they are released, some Project Pooch participants have gained employment in dog grooming or other animal care professions. ECAD/Mercy First students receive vocational educational credit for their participation in the program.

Program Evaluation

While these fourteen dog training programs for youth at risk share expectations for the psychological, social, and physical benefits of program participation to youth, assessment of these outcomes through program evaluation remains a major challenge. Most programs have attempted multiple forms of evaluation to measure outcomes and improve future sessions. (See Table 13.) However, most program administrators and researchers are dissatisfied with methodologies employed thus far. For example, SHIP believes the length of programs is “too short to engender change” that can be measured in attitudinal surveys.
Table 13. Evaluation at Dog Training Programs for Youth At Risk

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SHIP</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Interview with family on video</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAL</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TLC</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAP</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Click</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>recidivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAWS</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>Attendance, grades, incidents of suspension, behavioral conduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HS A-DOGS</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GPA, school attendance records, Parenting Skills Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADW</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>recidivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/ CV</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Test scores on student and dog skills and student interactions with peers and disabled clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/ GC</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Test scores on student and dog skills and student interactions with peers and disabled clients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECAD/ MF</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>ECAD/ JB</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soul Friends</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td></td>
<td>yes</td>
<td>TAGTEACH</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evaluation most often comes in the form of both formal and informal reports from staff, teachers, or supervisors. This feedback is often in the form of staff debriefings that are held before and/or after training sessions. Children’s Village has conducted surveys of staff perspectives on animal assisted interventions.

Student self-assessment measures include interviews, surveys, and focus groups. Several programs also conduct formal or informal behavioral assessments of student progress. Some programs use pre-test and post-test measures to assess changes in attitudes, knowledge and skills. At both LEAP and TLC, students complete surveys at the beginning and end of sessions to evaluate their knowledge of animal care, attitudes and conflict resolution skills. HS A-DOGS administers a pre- and post-test parenting skills inventory. ECAD evaluates students based on skills tests with dogs, demonstration of the dogs skills, and interaction with peers and disabled clients.

Some programs try to elicit parental perspectives on change that has occurred during the session. Soul Friends measures the extent to which goals set in conjunction with parents were achieved for each child. PC, PAWS, SHIP, and ADW also attempt to get feedback from parents or guardians. SHIP videotapes interviews with family members as well as students at their graduation events.

Staff in partner institutions such as schools and detention centers are a source of assessments. Probation counselors provide feedback to PC. School administrators and teachers report on changes in student behavior to LEAP and TLC. In ECAD programs, program staff and clinical and school staff are in frequent communication about individual students.

Programs also rely on institutional records. Project Pooch and ADW track recidivism of participants. PAWS and HS A-DOGS review school attendance records, grades, and suspensions. PAWS and PP monitor behavioral conduct incidents.

Few programs have been evaluated formally by outside researchers. Project Pooch, Soul Friends, and TLC have worked with university researchers on preliminary evaluation studies. ADW will soon be working with an occupational therapist at the University of New Mexico on program evaluation. Some programs such as HS A-DOGS and SHIP also have in-house researchers.

Most programs do not systematically follow up with students to measure long-term change. LEAP is an exception. In addition to remaining in contact with teachers to provide updates on dog adoptions, LEAP attempts to return to schools for interviews 3-6 weeks after the program. In some cases, they also complete 6 month and 1 year follow-up interviews.

Follow up with dog placements is also limited. At Project Pooch, adopters are encouraged to return to the facility with their dogs for additional training. LEAP asks adoptive families for permission to call for updates on the dog and to encourage them to send photos or stories about the dog. They also offer free follow up training sessions.
Two of the assistance dog programs, however, do monitor their placements closely. ADW staff makes contacts with client at 30, 60, 90, 180, 360, and 520 days to assess effectiveness of the client/dog team. HS A-DOGS has monthly contact for the first six months after placement and conducts annual updates thereafter. For six weeks after placement, ECAD has weekly contact with the client. ECAD also has a 3-5 year follow up program for its dog placements.

Many of the programs cite a need for assistance in developing evaluation methods. LEAP has faced difficulties in its ability to track students for long-term follow-up. The need for more quantitative data are noted. According to HS A-DOGS, “There is an urgent need to provide increased quantitative support to demonstrate the impact of these programs on the parenting abilities of teen participants” in order to secure more support and funding for these programs. PAL concurs with the need for development of more effective methods of program evaluation and attitude assessment. ADW also notes the need to alleviate the burden of record keeping through standardization, which could improve both program operation and evaluation.

**Best Practices for Program Evaluation**

Program evaluation is essential to documentation of outcomes, program improvement, and future support. Research objectives should be incorporated into programs. Evaluation data sources should include youth, family of participants, staff, and peers. Follow up of participants is necessary to measure long-term change.

*Family Evaluations*
Debriefing the families on video provides feedback on the program and what they liked and suggested changes. (SHIP)

*Parental evaluations. (Soul Friends)*

*Staff Evaluations*
Staff debriefing also results in very useful suggestions to be incorporated in the next SHIP program. (SHIP)

Ongoing conference with program “teachers” determine what is working and what needs attention. (Project Pooch)

*Instructor/Trainer interviews and observations. (ADW)*

*Instructor/Trainer surveys. (ADW)*

*Talk with all staff including custodian, school nurse. (PAWS)*

Utilize ADW organizational learning for continuing improvement of curricula. (ADW)

*Incorporate Research Into Program*
Research objectives and plans for publication and presentations. (Soul Friends)
Measurement, goals and documentation for activities with people and dogs. (ADW)

A commitment to research and demonstrating the benefits of AAT. (Soul Friends)

**Peer Evaluation**  
Peer evaluation through daily acknowledgements. (PAL)

**Peer feedback.** (Children’s Village)

**Participant Self-Assessment**

Youth have opportunities to evaluate the program (Project Pooch)

**Written Student and Client Tests.** (ADW)

Pre and post testing. (Soul Friends)

Survey attitudes of participants. (Children’s Village)

The post surveys are designed to encourage critical thinking. (LEAP)

The final evaluation provides us with important feedback. The students take it seriously and seem to enjoy helping develop future sessions for other students. (Project Click)

We have a licensed therapist give the pre- and post-test questionnaires to assess parenting attitudes. This is done in a way that the participants do not link the program with taking the test. We don’t want the students to answer the pre- or post-test questions with the intention of getting into the program. (HS A-DOGS)

**Daily journal writing.** (PAL)

Lecture and test teens weekly (raters and recorded). (ECAD/GC)

**Use of Existing Instruments/Expertise**  
Formal evaluation done by program staff (Project Pooch)

We used a validated and normed assessment tool to measure a unique aspect of our program, i.e., impact of the program on parenting attitudes. (HS A-DOGS)

We have consulted with the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development (NICHD) to design research projects related to our program. (HS A-DOGS)

We have consulted with a pediatric neuropsychologist to assist in developing project evaluations. (HS A-DOGS)

We are in the process of trying to develop a new written evaluation as well as a more thorough tracking systems. (TLC)
Public Access Test. (ADW)

Solo Handler and Client Tests. (ADW)

Feedback from Community.
Informal feedback from employers. (Project Pooch)

Post-program Follow up
Continued follow up with the classroom teacher and keeping the students informed about the dogs’ progress enables the students to feel connected. It reinforces the sense of accomplishment, especially when the dogs are adopted. It also reinforces the idea of being interconnected with the animals, the shelter and each other. (LEAP)

Following the students at 3 month, 6 months, and one year helps to evaluate the programs effectiveness. The surveys are used to adapt program to student needs. (LEAP)

Dog Evaluation
Utilize a practical worksheet (number rated and recorded) that measures the dogs’ skills monthly. (ECAD/GC)

Have volunteers who take dogs on weekends give reports (ECAD/GV).

Conclusions

Youth At Risk dog training programs share a common approach to dog training, expectations for the benefits to youth, dogs, and society, and, for the most part, views of best practices. All of the programs use positive reinforcement training techniques. Positive reinforcement is viewed as the best technique for training dogs and for teaching youth the value of positive interactions. Programs identify a wide range of cognitive, physical, social/emotional, speech/language, and knowledge competencies that youth may gain from participation. None of the programs are diagnosis-specific in their participant selection. For most programs, sessions include a range of students who are deemed at risk due to situational, experiential, or psychological, emotional, or behavioral attributes.

Community partnerships are essential to the establishment and maintenance of all youth-at-risk dog training programs that participated in the surveys. Through these programs, organizations have developed working relationships with schools, correctional facilities, juvenile courts, and other agencies that work to help, treat, or rehabilitate youth. Staff from these agencies may help program administrators select and set goals for participants, report on the effects of the program on individual students, attend sessions, train volunteers, and provide fees for service or other funding.

The programs in this survey do offer different models. While differences among programs exist in the length, curriculum, training locations, sponsorship, and composition of participants, a major distinction is whether programs train shelter dogs or assistance dogs. Differences in dog training purposes shape many aspects of programs and potentially youth experience. At the most basic level, the types of dogs that participate in
the programs are very different. While assistance dogs clearly have individual personalities and temperaments, there is little diversity in their breeds or backgrounds. They do not have individual stories of abandonment and abuse — as shelter dogs do — to which students can relate.

Assistance dog and shelter dog programs structure interactions with dogs differently. Students in assistance dog programs are more likely to work on their own with a single dog throughout their session, and less likely to work in groups with other students and to interact with a variety of dogs. In some cases, assistance dog sessions are longer, due in large part to the more extensive training that service dogs require. However, some assistance dog programs do have students work with multiple dogs to ensure consistency of training and reduce student attachment to specific dogs.

While in some shelter dog programs a student is assigned one dog with which to work (PP, PAWS), students in these programs often cycle through the dogs, working individually with most dogs by the end of the program (PC). In still other programs, teams or groups of students work together to train dogs. The adoption of shelter dogs during the program also reduces the amount of time spent with a single dog.

Although the assistance dog programs also promote animal welfare, animal welfare and humane education are a much larger part of the curriculum for programs involving shelter dogs. With increased exposure to shelters, youth learn first-hand the causes and consequences of relinquishment, abandonment, and abuse. However, even among shelter dog programs, there is tremendous variation. All of the shelter dog programs include lessons on animal welfare, animal care, and humane education. All of the programs include tours of shelter facilities. However, the extent to which students are integrated into day-to-day shelter operations varies. Working off community service hours at Project Click, students become well-acquainted in many aspects of shelter work from veterinary care to cleaning kennels. The lesser involvement of students in shelter activities in other programs may reflect the younger participant ages in many of the shelter programs. The LEAP program is taught at schools, which also minimizes student contact with shelters. However, in many shelter programs, students sometimes return as volunteers.

While shelter dog programs provide more insights to students about animal welfare issues, assistance dog programs increase student awareness of and empathy for people with disabilities. In the training exercises, students often have to place themselves in the position of a disabled person. For example, in several programs, students must use wheel chairs. Participants in assistance dog programs often have fairly extensive contact with people who face physical and other challenges. In some cases, students help train clients to work with their dogs.

Overall, in this survey, assistance dog programs appear to have larger budgets, more staff, more volunteers, and run a greater variety of programs with a wide range of community partners. However, there are exceptions in each case. Shelter dog budgets also may appear smaller because many costs such as care of dogs and program staff are already absorbed in shelter budgets. None of the shelters received agency or participant fees.
The many variations among programs create important evaluation challenges. Arguments can be advanced for the advantages and disadvantages to youth of these program differences. However, because of difficulties in evaluation of programs, questions of how program differences affect outcomes for youth remain unaddressed. Most of the programs state a need for additional advice and support in the area of evaluation. While most programs have tried multiple evaluation strategies, few programs express satisfaction with the state of program evaluation.

WORKS CITED

HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE UNITED STATES
Best Practices Survey of Youth-At-Risk Dog Training Programs

1. Title of Program:

2. Organization’s Name:

3. Address:

4. Contact person name and title:

5. Phone Number:

6. E-mail Address:

7. Web Site URL:

8. Origination date of the program:

9. Was this program modeled after any other existing program(s)? □ Yes □ No
If yes, please describe:

PROGRAM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

10. What are the goals and objectives of your program?

11. What types of competencies does your program seek to affect through dog training?

□ Cognitive (e.g. concentration, organizational skills, problem solving skills, memory skills)
Please describe:

□ Physical (e.g. balance, coordination, motor skills)
Please describe:

□ Social/Emotional (e.g. communication, self-control, empathy, depression, anxiety, aggression)
Please describe:

□ Speech/Language (e.g. verbal interaction, initiate conversation, relay instructions)
Please describe:

□ Knowledge and Attitudes (e.g. dog training, pet care, animal welfare)
Please describe:

□ Other:
PROGRAM STAFF, MANAGEMENT, AND TRAINING

12. Program Staffing: # of full-time staff: _____ / # of part-time staff: _____ / # of volunteers: ______

13. List staff positions and the credentials or professional education associated with the staff member filling each position:

14. What training do volunteers working for this program receive?

15. Does a licensed therapist actively participate in the development, operation, or assessment of the program? If yes, briefly describe her/his role.

16. Who teaches the animal training portion of the program? (Check all that apply)
   - Dog trainer
   - Program leader
   - Veterinarian
   - Veterinary technician
   - Kennel staff
   - Volunteer
   - Other ______________

Best Practices for Staff, Management, and Training
Please describe some of the practices in your program related to staff, management, and training that particularly help meet your program’s goals and objectives.

1) 

2) 

3) 

4) 

Please feel free to attach pages with additional best practices.
PARTICIPANT SELECTION

17. What is the general nature of the population served by this program? (Check all that apply)
   □ General population  □ Schools  □ Victims of abuse/neglect  □ Adjudicated offenders
   □ “At-risk” or “in need of service” populations  □ Other: _______________

18. What are the selection criteria for your program?

19. How many participants are selected for each session? ______

20. What is the age of participants reached through this program? ______

21. What is the sex of participants? (Check all that apply.)  □ Male  □ Female

22. How are participants referred to the program?

23. Please describe your policy on exclusion/inclusion of youth with a history of animal cruelty?

24. Are individualized goals set for participants?  □ Yes  □ No
   If yes, please describe:

25. Do you have any attrition of participants during each session?  □ Yes  □ No
   If yes, please describe reasons:

Best Practices for Participant Selection
Please describe some of the practices in your program related to participant selection and recruitment that particularly help meet your program’s goals and objectives.

1)  
2)  
3)  
4)  

Please feel free to attach pages with additional best practices.
PROGRAM CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

26. Does your program have or use a manual?  □ Yes  □ No
If yes, please describe:

27. How many sessions of the dog training program are held each year? ______

28. What is the duration of each session?
□ school year  □ semester  □ 8 weeks  □ 6 weeks  □ 4 weeks  □ other ______

29. How many classes are held per week? ___ How long does each class last?

30. When are the classes conducted?
□ during school  □ afternoon after school  □ evenings  □ weekends  □ other ______

31. Where are classes conducted?

32. Is transportation provided for the participants?  □ Yes  □ No
If yes, who provides the transportation?

33. What is the ratio of teachers/therapists/volunteers to students in these sessions?
    ______  ______

34. What is the ratio of dogs to students (e.g., one dog assigned to two youths)?
    ______

35. Are the parents of the participants required to participate in the program?
□ Yes  □ No
If yes, in what way?:

36. Please describe the primary dog training techniques used and the skills or behaviors that are taught to the dogs:

37. What aspects of interactions with dogs does your program include?
□ Dog training—general  □ Dog training for service work  □ Play
□ Stroking/Touching  □ Grooming  □ Feeding  □ Cleaning kennels
□ Walks  □ Other _______________
38. In addition to dog training, does your program include other curriculum content for the youth? What topics are covered and how is this content delivered? Please describe:

39. How do you mark the end of a session? (Check all that apply.)
☐ graduation ceremony ☐ certificate ☐ party ☐ demonstration with dogs ☐ other ______
Please describe:

40. Do participants meet or interact with the person(s) with whom the dog will be placed? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Please describe:

Best Practices for Program Content and Structure
Please describe some of the practices in your program related to program content and structure that particularly help meet your programs goals and objectives.

1)
2)
3)
4)
Please feel free to attach pages with additional best practices.

DOG SELECTION AND CARE

41. What is the source for the dogs in your program?

42. What criteria are used for selecting dogs for the program?

43. What becomes of the dogs following the completion of the program? What percentage are adopted/placed?

44. Do you have any attrition of dogs during each session? ☐ Yes ☐ No
If yes, for what reasons do animals leave the program?
45. How do you match dogs and participants?

46. Where are dogs housed in between dog training classes?

47. How are the veterinary needs of dogs met?

Best Practices for Dog Selection and Care
Please describe some of the practices in your program related to dog selection and care that particularly help meet your program’s goals and objectives.

1)

2)

3)

4)

Please feel free to attach pages with additional best practices.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

49. Please list and describe your program’s partnerships with schools, police, boys and girls clubs, YMCAs, corporations, agencies, and/or other community organizations?

Best Practices for Community Partnerships
Please describe some of the practices in your program related to community partnerships that particularly help meet your program’s goals and objectives.

1)

2)

3)

4)

Please feel free to attach pages with additional best practices.
PROGRAM FUNDING

50. Program’s annual budget: ________________

51. Is the host organization a: ☐ Nonprofit ☐ For-profit corporation ☐ Government agency ☐ Other

52. Check the following sources from which you receive funds for the program.
(Click all that apply.)
☐ General funds of your organization  ☐ Contributions from the general public
☐ Foundation grants  ☐ Government funds  ☐ Community organizations
☐ Corporate sponsors  ☐ Participants fees
☐ Contracts/fees charged to agencies referring participants  ☐ Other __________

Best Practices for Program Funding
Please describe some of the practices in your program related to funding that particularly help meet your program’s goals and objectives.

1)

2)

3)

Please feel free to attach pages with additional best practices.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

53. How many individuals have participated in the program since it originated? ______

54. What methods of evaluation and measures are used in examining the success of the program?
(Click all that apply) ______________
☐ Reports from clinical staff, teachers, or other supervisors
☐ Self-assessment
☐ Assessment of behavior changes
☐ Peer assessment
☐ Tracking of recidivism
☐ Reports from parents
☐ Other __________________________

Please describe:

55. Is any outside agency, organization, or university involved in the assessment or evaluation of this program?  ☐ Yes  ☐ No
If yes, please describe:
56. Do you have contact with participants after conclusion of the program such as “booster” sessions or follow up evaluation of the long-term effects of the program?  
☐ Yes  ☐ No
If yes, please describe:

57. Do you have contact with new owners of dogs after conclusion of the program?
☐ Yes  ☐ No
If yes, please describe:

**Best Practices for Program Evaluation**
Please describe some of the practices in your program related to program evaluation that particularly help meet your programs goals and objectives.

1)
2)
3)
4)

Please feel free to attach pages with additional best practices.

**OTHER BEST PRACTICES**
Please describe any other best practices related to your program that you would like to identify.

**QUESTIONS/NEEDS**
Please describe any problems that your program has faced or questions you would like to raise concerning best practices.

*Please attach materials, evaluation reports, and manuals related to your program. The survey and all documents should be e-mailed to Jennifer Jackman at jjackman@hsus.org or mailed to Jennifer Jackman, HSUS, 35 Santuit Pond Road, Unit 7D, Mashpee, MA 02649. The deadline is May 15, 2007.*
GUIDE TO PROGRAMS

Additional information on the programs surveyed can be found as follows:
Come, Follow Me!, Soul Friends
http://www.soul-friends.org/

East Coast Assistance Dogs
http://www.ecad1.org/

East Coast Assistance Dog Program Sites:

- Children’s Village
  http://www.childrensvillage.org/programs-dog-more.htm

- Green Chimneys

- Mercy First Children and Family Services
  http://www.mercyfirst.com/ourPrograms.htm

- Jewish Board of Children and Families
  http://www.jbfcso.org/wwa/Dprogram.htm

High Schooled Assistance Dogs, Assistance Dog Institute
http://www.assistancedog.org/

Love, Empathy, Acceptance and Partnership. Southern Oregon Humane Society
http://www.southernoregonhumane.org/SectionIndex.asp?SectionID=44

Pawsibilities, Pregnant Paws, Pawsitive Corrections, Paws and Think
http://www.pawsandthink.org/

People and Animals Learning, Wisconsin Humane Society
http://www.wihumane.org/education/pal.aspx

Project Click, Humane Society for Southwest Washington
http://www.southwesthumane.org/index.php?pr=Humane_Education

Project Pooch
http://www.pooch.org/

School Assistance Dog Program and Working Dogs Program, Assistance Dogs of the West
http://www.assistancedogsofthewest.org/

Strategic Humane Interventions Program, SPCA Cincinnati, YWCA Greater Cincinnati, and The Childhood Trust of Cincinnati Children's Hospital
http://www.ywca.org/site/pp.asp?c=agLGXXNOE&b=3990283

Teaching Love and Compassion, SPCA of Erie County
http://www.yourspca.org/site/PageServer?pagename=dept_humane#TLC