



St. Paul's PACE
featured in A Pet's Life magazine

PACE Participants Love Their Pet Time!

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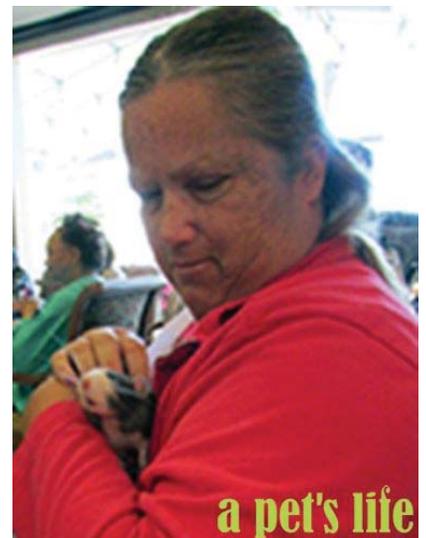


Pets make a wonderful difference throughout our lives, from our earliest days to our golden years. For the seniors at St. Paul's PACE, pet therapy, provided through the San Diego Humane Society, is a wonderful way for frail seniors to cope with depression and chronic illness. The PACE program is a health plan for seniors age 55 and older who prefer not to move into a nursing home, but whose medical problems make it impossible for them to stay at home without help from doctors, nurses, social workers and other caregivers. PACE is designed specifically to offer an alternative to institutional living for seniors who live in San Diego and are eligible for nursing home level of care as certified by the California Department of Health Care Services.

Research has shown how beneficial pet therapy can be to the elderly. Regular visits with pets can have positive physical, emotional and mental benefits. Physical benefits include lowering blood pressure, lowering heart rate and reducing overall stress. Emotional benefits include reducing anxiety and decreasing loneliness. Consistent interaction with a pet has been shown to cause an increased release of serotonin and dopamine in the brain which can help calm and soothe a person's body. There are also mental benefits that are a result of increased mental stimulation, whether it's talking to the pet directly, asking questions to the dog's owner or talking with other residents about the dog. All of these activities help keep the brain active.

The PACE program has found that when dogs come to visit, it helps raise the spirits of PACE participants. Day-center Manager, Katrina Soto tells a pet's life, "It can help them forget any pain that they are experiencing, any sadness that they have or how much they miss their home." Pet therapy helps improve overall mood, which can lead to increased motivation and increased ability to maintain independence.

St. Paul's PACE is located at 630 L Street



Chula Vista (619) 271-7100 and 111 Elm Street, San Diego (619) 677-3800. www.stpaulspace.org.