

Community buildings are increasingly looking for ways to support the social-emotional well-being of visitors. Dogs can be one tool to help create and sustain healthy public environments.

Facility Dogs are working dogs specifically trained to help multiple people in facilities like schools, hospitals, and public service buildings. Unlike Assistance Dogs that serve one person, Facility Dogs work with a handler to serve multiple people who need social interaction, recovery motivation, comfort, and/or a feeling of safety. Dogs are at the forefront of these interventions providing a bridge for students and staff who have challenges in difficult emotional situations.

Paws With A Cause has trained Assistance Dogs for people with disabilities for 44 years. Throughout this time, we have provided more than 3,200 Assistance Dogs to people in 33 states. In 1986 PAWS helped create Assistance Dogs International (ADI), a worldwide coalition of organizations that train Assistance Dogs. ADI establishes and promotes standards of excellence in all areas of Assistance Dog acquisition, training, and partnership. Every five years PAWS completes a rigorous, peer-reviewed accreditation process through ADI. The ADI Standards process evaluates the quality of assistance dog programs and determines if a program is meeting all the criteria and requirements that represent these standards. PAWS has maintained this strict accreditation since its inception.

With all this knowledge and experience PAWS is well suited to train and provide Facility Dogs to meet the growing need for them in schools, hospitals, and other community service agencies.

- Paws Facility Dogs are specifically selected based on their temperament and love of working with people. They have a safe and steady personality. They also have the desired suitability for work in public spaces for a variety of applications including, but not limited to therapy and comfort with school counselors and teachers, medical and group home care giving, and police department crisis response teams.
- Following our model for custom placements of dogs, PAWS staff meets with the person who will be the dog's primary handler and other staff to learn about the constituents they serve, the facility's needs, and the specific environment the dog will work in. Using this site visit and information from the application, PAWS custom-selects a dog that will fit the facility and the dog handler. The handler is the person that the dog will work with at the school. In most cases, that handler also takes care of the dog, and it lives with them outside of the school.
- The dog will be approximately 18 to 24 months of age and have completed PAWS' foster puppy obedience and public access training, as well as advanced training in the PAWS Prison Partners Program. Upon returning from prison the dog will be assessed for fit in the Facility Dog program. In addition, it will receive an average of eight additional weeks of assessment and training.

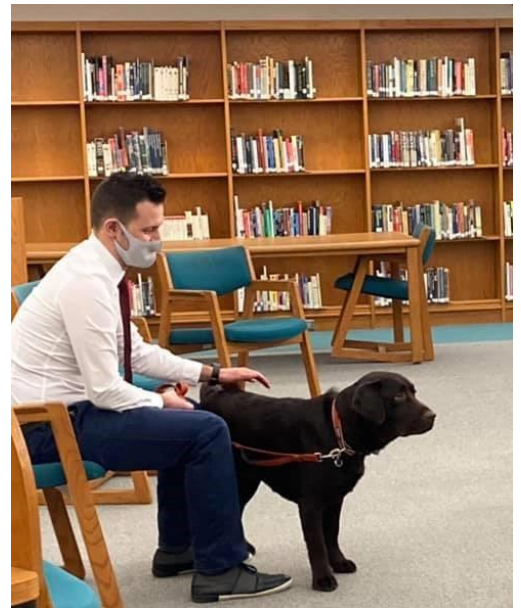


MAPLE and students at an elementary school

- A PAWS Field Representative will then be assigned to support the new team in the facility. Over the course of eight to twelve weeks, the Field Representative will meet with the dog’s handler and the dog both privately and in the facility to provide on-site placement support. The Field Representative helps the handler learn to work with the dog and to integrate the dog into the community. When ready, the team will be tested and certified by PAWS to help ensure the Facility Dog Team has the skills and temperament for this working placement.
- The cost of a Facility Dog is \$6,000. Some facilities have received donations from supporters of their organization to purchase their dog.

PAWS places 30 – 40 Facility Dogs annually and each facility is reporting success. The principal of an elementary school remarked about their PAWS Facility Dog, “MAPLE was the thing our school always needed that we never knew we needed.” A high school student in a different district reported “DUBLIN is kinda there no matter what. He doesn’t care how old you are. Like what your opinions are. He’s just there to listen. It’s easier to deal with the school part. Obviously, the world is still hard. He’s not very much help with that. But the being here is easier.”

Paws With A Cause exists to create opportunities for people to live with dignity, companionship, and confidence. Our Facility Dog program allows us to create this opportunity for hundreds more people with each dog. This program is a natural extension of what our organization already does, and we are extremely proud of the initial success.



DUBLIN and his handler at school

For more information, please contact:
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To apply for a Facility Dog, please go to <https://www.pawswithacause.org/facility-dogs/>.

Sincerely,

Michele Suchovsky
 CEO