



Gone To The Dogs: Piloting A Stress Reduction Program During Final Exams

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Pause for Paws

- Registered therapy dogs visit our two libraries
- Held during final exams: Fall, Winter & Spring
- Two hours each night, for 2 nights
- Dogs are from 3 therapy organizations – all volunteers
- Dogs come 1 hour each night, in 2 shifts
- Dogs range from a tiny Terrier to a Great Dane
- Current Pack: 13 dog/handler teams and growing
- Rely on student and other volunteer help

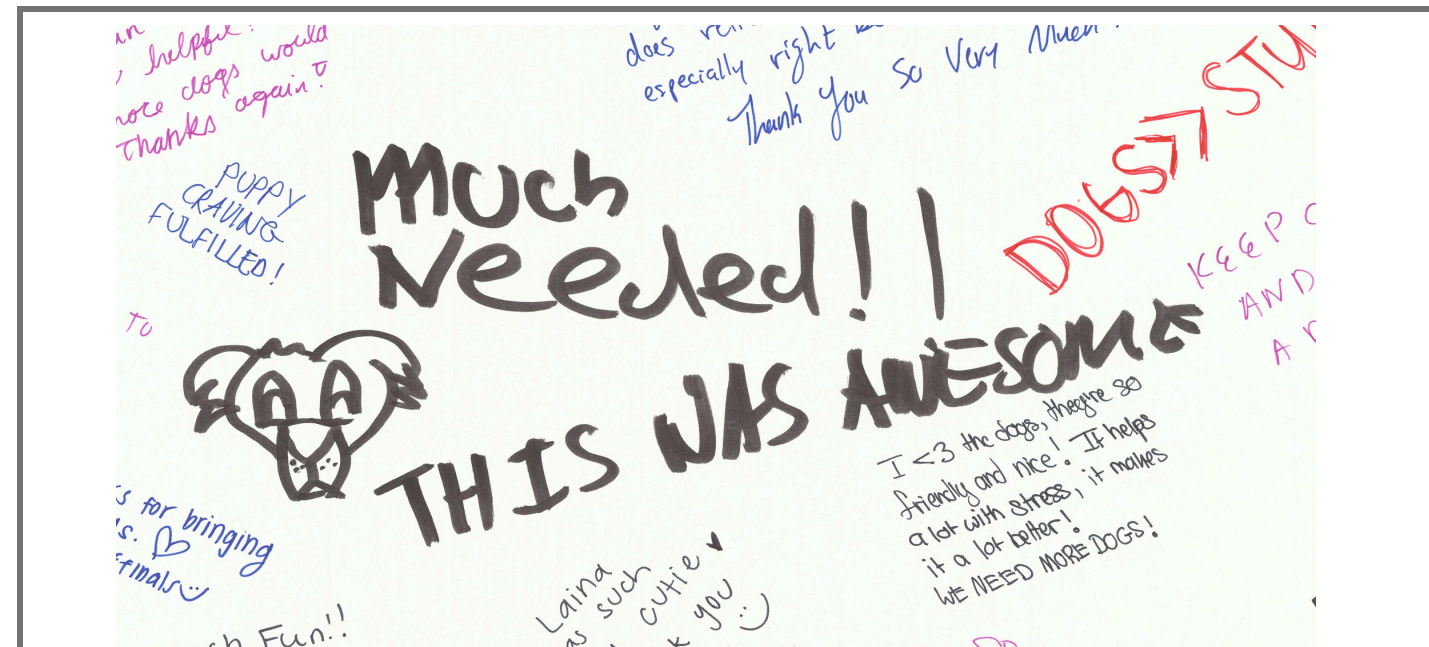
Initial Hurdles

- Strict “No Dogs on Campus” policy
- Never done before
- No Sponsor (Animal Control cut during budget cuts)
- Liability a big campus concern

Getting Started: Pilot

- Researched and contacted other programs
- Wrote proposal for Library Administration
- Met with Campus Risk Management
- Described therapy dog training and insurance coverage
- Risk management requests:
 - Make clear these dogs are special, not pets (LibGuide)
 - Exception permit and laborious paperwork
- One time pilot approved for a single dog – mine!
 - Don't try this with just one dog – too many students!

Success!



- Initial event hugely popular!!!!
- Local newspaper article and campus news
- Fun, smiling students a relief to see during stressful finals
- Great comments & photos
- Event approved for the following year
- Students posted own photos to Instagram using library #hashtag

Lessons Learned

- Block off event area and allow for lots of room
- Assign an area for each handler/dog team
- Traffic flow is crucial so dogs don't get overwhelmed
 - 5 students at a time visiting each dog
- Volunteers/staff needed to direct student traffic
- Most dogs get tired after about an hour
- Dogs must be comfortable around crowds of people & dogs
- Adjust as needed: line to pet dogs the first 90 minutes

Impact

- Students love the program and say it helps them study!
- Off-the-chart Library Facebook ‘Likes’
- Request to co-sponsor:
 - Campus and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- Requests for additional events
 - Campus housing & police department
- Publicity for campus and the library
 - Local newspaper, campus news, local magazine
- New Library development campaign based on this program



Want to Start A Program?

- Work with your campus risk management office
- Contact a therapy organization in your area, local animal shelter or public library dog reading program
- More: (program info, event checklist)
- <http://guides.library.ucsc.edu/petadog>

