



**ORANGE VILLA**  
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## Support Pets: Therapy dogs

To most of us, a dog is a family companion, helps on the farm, or works to help enforce our laws. But some dogs also work to help those with special needs. Most people know about assistance dogs, dogs that help the blind or assist with the disabled. These dogs require special training from puppyhood. But did you know that your own dog can also help brighten the days of people who are in need of some love and cheer that only a furry friend can provide?

PAWS (Pets Are Wonderful Support) is a program through the Orange County SPCA that helps people by training dogs to go and visit hospitals, nursing homes, and children's homes in the county. These dogs which has known nothing but love and kindness from their families at home can share their love with strangers who really need some extra brightness to their days. These dogs are not trained from birth, but rather are normal family pets, that with a little extra training, can go with you to these places of care and with a lick and a wag can really make people's day a lot happier. There have been numerous studies done on the benefits of pets in aiding recovery from illness and injury and extending life. Since you all have pets, you know how much they enrich your lives.

Our pets of the month are therapy dogs. They spend part of their precious nap and play time to go to hospitals and nursing homes and help those who need some comfort. Your dog could do the same. To be therapy dogs, they must be over a year old, with handlers over 18 years of age. They should also be obedience trained and relatively calm, as those they visit are commonly recovering from an illness or injury.

There is an orientation and workshop on Saturday February 9th from 10am to 1 pm at the Fountain Valley Regional Hospital Senior Mental Health Building. The address is 11250 Warner Ave. Fountain Valley 714-513-5551. The meeting is for people only, no dogs at the meeting. There is an enrollment fee of \$25.00 and a materials fee of \$5.00. There are training sessions on Feb. 16th or 20th for people as well. The pet evaluation is Saturday March 2nd. If you are interesting in going with your pet to help, please go to the orientation meeting. If you would like more information, contact PAWS director Elaine at (714)-779-1596 or e-mail at [dognoses2@aol.com](mailto:dognoses2@aol.com).