



Pawsabilities

Making dreams Pawsable!



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Program Description:

Pawsabilities is a portable enrichment program for at-risk youth. We use animals as a means to engage students in academically enriching activities and to better their social behaviors. Classes are offered as after-school or weekend programs.

Program Goals:

- Raise academic achievement
- Promote personal development and strengthen moral construct
- Provide vocational guidance and exposure to career opportunities
- Raise self esteem

Program Design:

A Pawsabilities team visits each program site for one hour per week. Students first interact with the animal guest, and then engage in curriculum inspired by that particular species. Though each lesson plan is unique, they all incorporate the program's dual objectives of academic achievement and social development. "Paws" members have various other enrichment tools available to them such as class journals, computers, books and videos. Periodically, the kids have visits from an animal industry professional (such as a veterinarian); and each semester culminates with a field trip (i.e. whale watching or zoo).



Who Can Participate?

Any at-risk or special needs middle school student within the LAUSD, as well as from various other resources such as churches, Boys & Girls Clubs and Foster Care programs. Pawsabilities is a flexible program designed to accommodate as many students as might benefit from it, including ESL and Special Education participants, with an emphasis in Autism.

What are the expected outcomes?

- Increased attendance
- Lower crime rates
- Improved proficiency in Language Arts, Math and Science
- Decreased violence
- Curbed drop out rates
- Decreased pet overpopulation
- Better high school preparedness
- Increased English fluency
- Gang prevention

Who sees the “Pawsabilities”?

“This is teaching with purpose and vision. With core academic and social values, Pawsabilities also provides insight and opportunity in a unique way. And its portable! Kudos to Aretha.”

Virgil Roberts, Esq.

Managing Partner, Bobbit & Roberts

Board of Directors – Public Education Network and The Alliance for College-Ready Public Schools

“Most juvenile crimes occur (in the after school hours) between 3:00 and 7:00p.m. Pawsabilities offers a positive alternative to crime by enhancing self-esteem and teaching valuable skills to our at-risk youth.”

Capri Maddox

LA City Deputy City Attorney

Neighborhood Prosecutor

“The TREACH foundation (Therapies Reaching & Educating Autistic CHildren) supports therapeutic and recreational services for children with autism from underserved communities. The simple, yet brilliant concept of introducing animals to a population rarely, if ever, exposed to it, creates innumerable opportunities and potential for success in areas of social development, communication skills, sensory exploration, empathy, responsibility - all the while having fun! These attributes make Pawsabilities an easy and logical partner for the TREACH foundation, as our goals are to identify and support programs deemed productive and successful by the parents, caretakers and professionals most familiar with the individual child with autism, and to identify the highly variable methods by which social, sensory and academic goals can be achieved. Pawsabilities is a creative and viable outreach not only for children with special needs, but for typically developing children with emotional, economical and educational challenges as well.”

Pepper Russell and Karen Lee

Co-Founders, The TREACH Foundation

“I see the magical relationship between kids and animals daily. Pawsabilities combines social responsibility and fun which is potent in and of itself. Adding education is a master stroke.”

Jim Haubert, DVM

Valley Animal Hospital

“Brilliant. This program is precisely the kind of innovation that’s needed to reach those students who aren’t responding to more traditional education approaches. The bi-lingual facet makes it a home run.”

Michele Lewis

Director, Learning Assistance Programs

Mount St. Mary’s College

