

Paws for a Cause

**Central Arizona Valley Institute of Technology
National Technical Honor Society Chapter
Silver Star of Excellence**

Paws for a Cause Introduction



CAVIT NTHS Members partnered with CAVIT Veterinary Science Program to develop a program that helps both pets and people!



Created the **Canine Ambassador Program** to help provide emotional health support for students and to alleviate kennel stress symptoms in shelter dogs.



Presented to the CAVIT student body through in-person visits with a Canine Ambassador present!

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Identifying Community Need



Many students struggle with stress, anxiety and depression.



Shelter dogs have an increased risk of behavioral problems from being in confinement and lacking social connection/enrichment.



The connection between people and dogs has long been known to help alleviate symptoms of emotional distress and promote health overall.

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Identifying Community Need



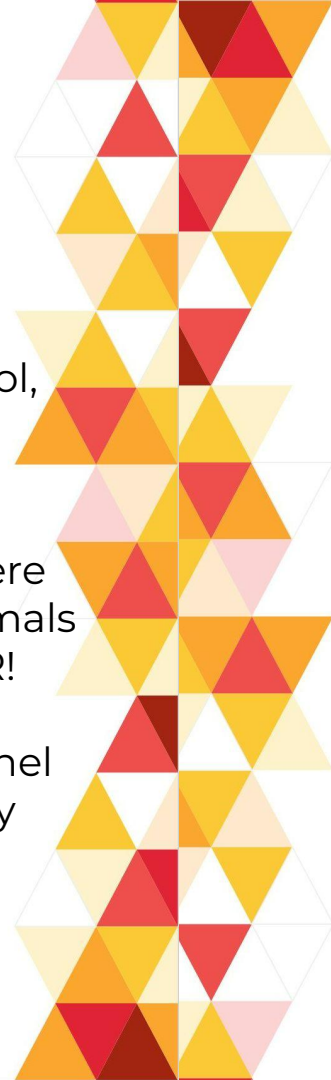
3,000-5,000 yearly intake for Pinal County Animal Care and Control, with approx. 150-300 animals in their care at any given moment.



The average length of stay is anywhere from 3-6 months with the some animals staying in the shelter for over a YEAR!



The majority of dogs will exhibit kennel stress at some point during their stay and if it is not address will become much worse!



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Identifying Community Need

In the past ten years, feelings of anxiety and depression have increased by about 40% among young people, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a worsened mental health crisis as declared by the United States surgeon general just over a year ago.



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Canine Ambassador Program Objectives



Alleviate student stress/anxiety/depression through targeted experiences with a Canine Ambassador.



Select shelter dogs that will benefit from the enrichment/social experiences of being a Canine Ambassador.



Help students identify appropriate coping strategies and skills and work with students to ensure that they understand how to support their own mental health.

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Identifying Community Need

Paws for Thought: A Controlled Study Investigating the Benefits of Interacting with a House-Trained Dog on University Students Mood and Anxiety

[Emily L R Thelwell](#)

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Abstract

Go to: ►

Simple Summary

This study investigates whether interacting with a dog would have a positive effect on university students' mood and anxiety. Students were assigned to either watch videos of a dog or interact directly with a dog. Several measures were collected both before and after their assigned conditions to evaluate their mood and anxiety levels and to assess for possible changes. The results indicated that participants in both conditions experienced a reduction in their anxiety and an improvement in their mood across time, however those who directly interacted with a dog experienced a greater decline in anxiety and improved mood scores.



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Identifying Community Need

Effects of exercise and human contact on animal welfare in a dog shelter

D J Menor-Campos ¹, J M Molleda-Carbonell, R López-Rodríguez

Affiliations + expand

PMID: 21862471 DOI: [10.1136/vr.d4757](https://doi.org/10.1136/vr.d4757)

Abstract

The aim of the study is to investigate the reduction of stress in dogs in municipal shelters through easy-to-implement activities, ie, 25-minute sessions of exercise and human contact, that do not require a significant investment in terms of funding, staff or time. The results demonstrate that the dogs taking part in these sessions have lower salivary cortisol levels ($F=121.42$; $P<0.05$) and achieve better scores on a behaviour test ($t(17)=4.27$; $P=0.001$). It can therefore be affirmed that the exercise and human contact protocol proposed in the present study diminishes stress and improves the welfare of dogs housed in shelters.



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Canine Ambassador Program Implementation



Students completed a short survey to assess their stress levels and current emotional state.



Reviewed a presentation on the mutual benefit of helping shelter dogs through enrichment/socialization in order to alleviate their symptoms and the emotional benefits that people experience interacting with dogs.



Group discussion on coping skills and how students can choose healthy skills and identify their own emotional state.

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Canine Ambassador Program Implementation



Provided students with a handout on the Canine Ambassador program, healthy coping skills and helped them choose their own healthy coping skills.



Targeted experience with a Canine Ambassador for every class and focused on each individual student.



Post survey to evaluate the emotional state and feelings at the end of the Canine Ambassador visits.

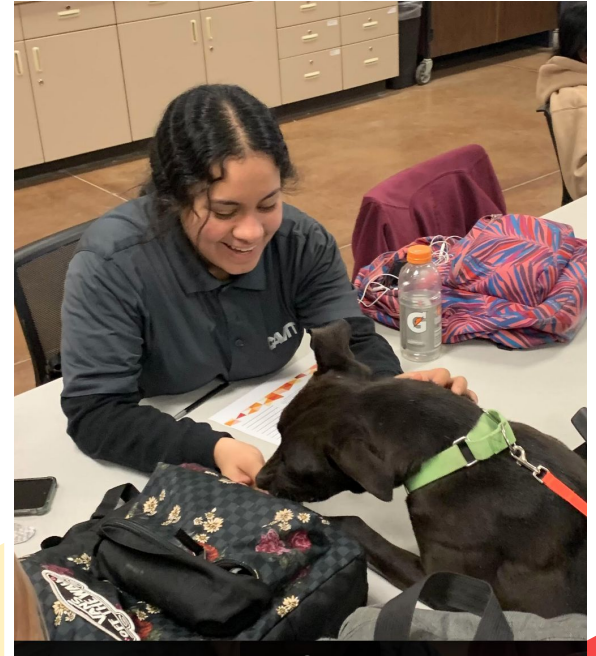
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Presentations to Various CAVIT Classrooms



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Canine Ambassador Visits



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Community Impact



Over the course of the *Canine Ambassador Program* and CAVIT Enrichment Clinics for shelter dogs, more than 100 shelter dogs have had positive experiences.



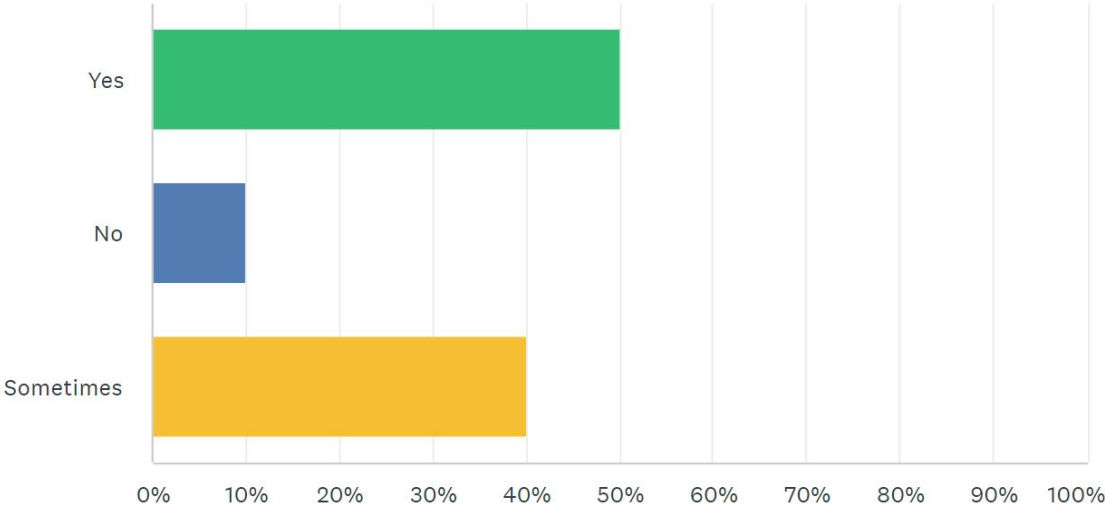
Students reported higher satisfaction/happiness and decreased stress and anxiety post visits with *Canine Ambassadors*.



Shelter staff reported an increase in the quality of life and lessening of the symptoms of kennel stress in the *Canine Ambassadors* who participated, which helped alleviate their own stress in their daily job duties.

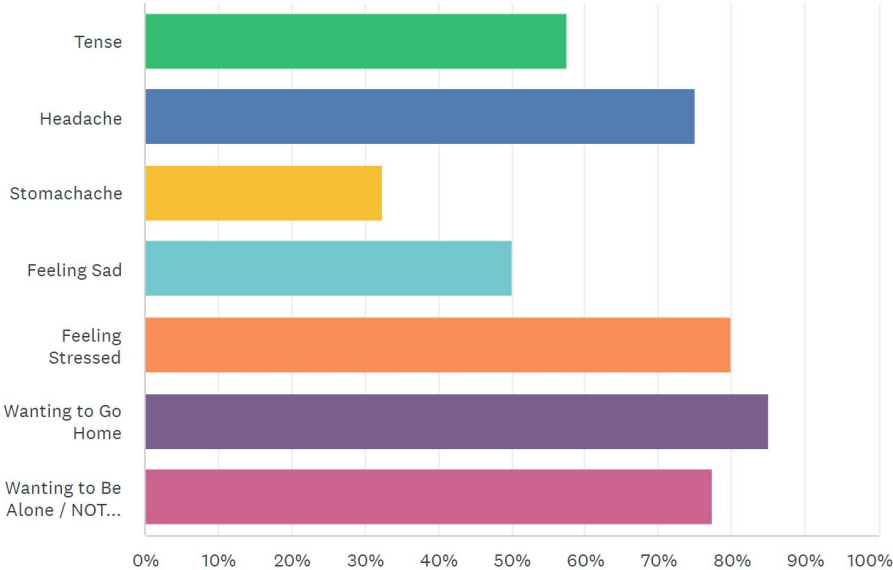
Paws for a Cause PRE-SURVEY

Do you find school to be stressful?



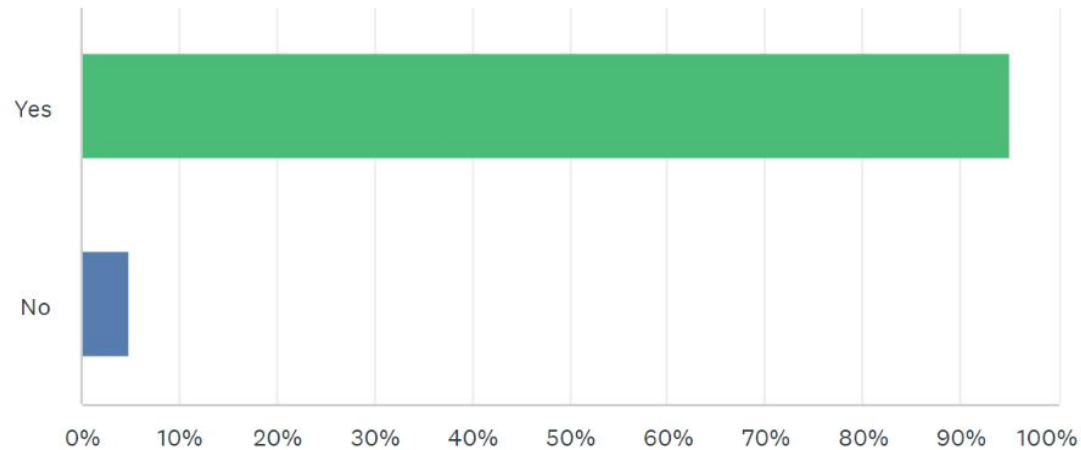
Paws for a Cause PRE-SURVEY

If you are having a stressful day at school, what are some things that you might notice?



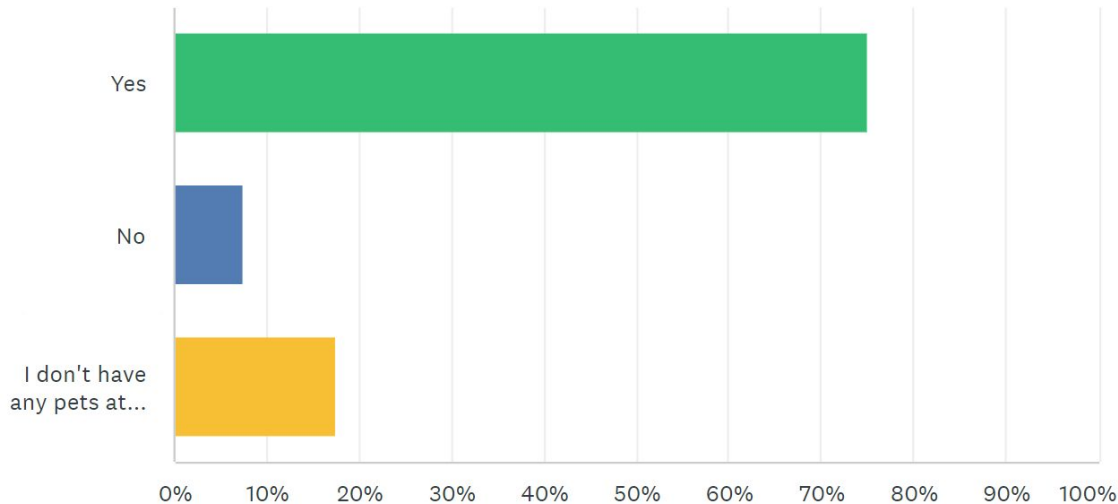
Paws for a Cause PRE-SURVEY

Do you sometimes feel anxious or sad?



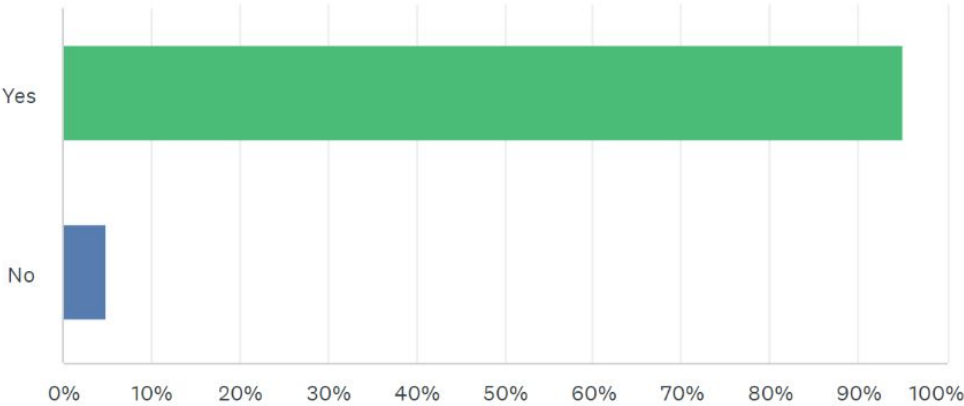
Paws for a Cause PRE-SURVEY

If you are feeling stressed, anxious or sad, do you seek out your own pets when you get home?



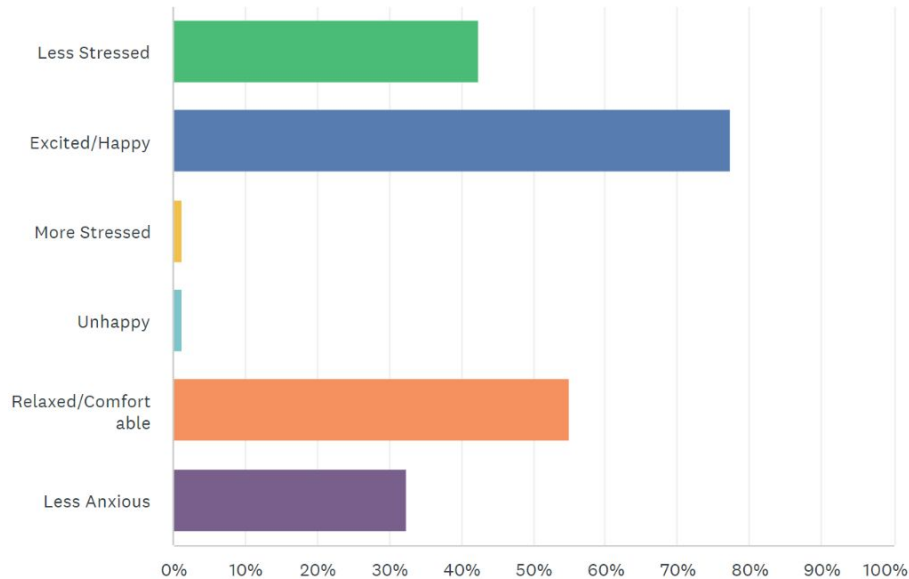
Paws for a Cause PRE-SURVEY

Are you excited to have a dog visit your classroom today?



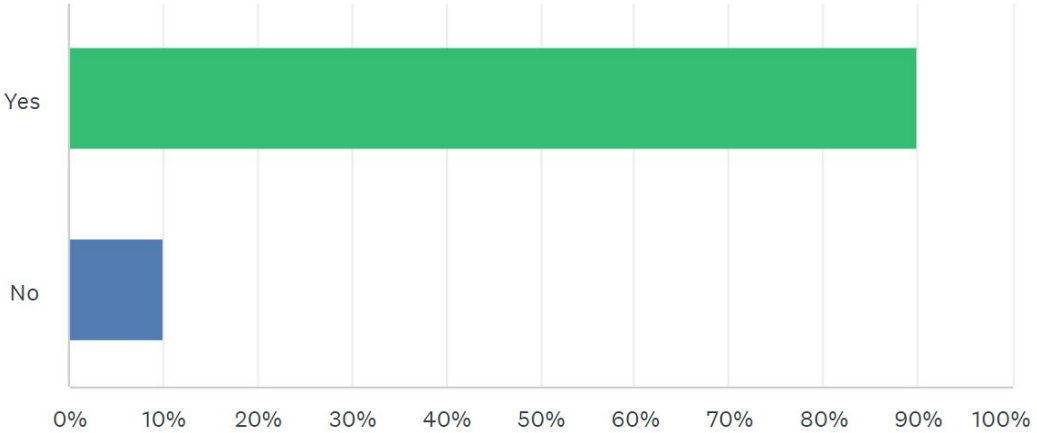
Paws for a Cause POST-SURVEY

Choose the answer(s) that best fit how meeting a Canine Ambassador made you feel today.



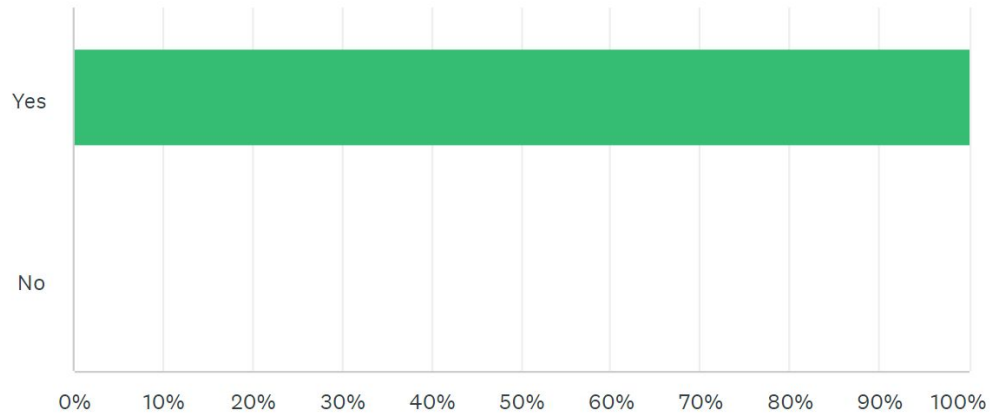
Paws for a Cause POST-SURVEY

Did you find the Canine Ambassador to be helpful to your emotional state from their visit today?



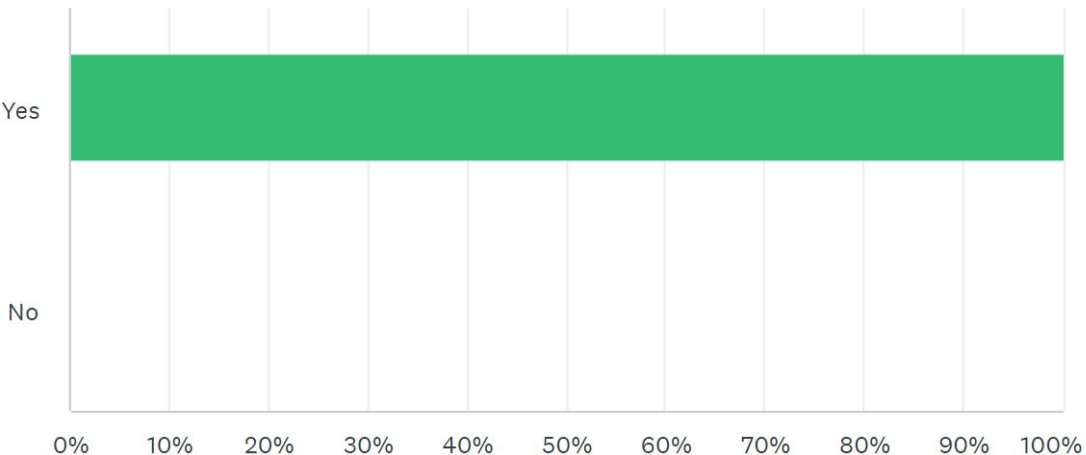
Paws for a Cause POST-SURVEY

Does it make you feel good knowing that you are helping your Canine Ambassador with their own stress?



Paws for a Cause POST-SURVEY

Do you enjoy helping out others including the animals in your community?



POST SURVEY COMMENTS

Prompt: *In your own words, how does having a Canine Ambassador visit make you feel?*



It makes me happy and calm:)

It makes me really happy since I really love dogs.

Focused on the dog. I didn't feel anything but "awww" when I saw the dog.

A lot happier less anxiety less stress.

Having a dog makes me feel comforted!

Makes me feel relaxed, there's no work to be done.

Happy and Joyful.

It made feel more for dogs at shelters, but overall I enjoyed the company.

It gives me joy to see the dog so happy even though he doesn't have a home.

I liked to have the dog visit, it made me feel calm and happy, and also miss my dog!



They are so willing to get attention, it feels nice.

It was exciting and he was cute so I was happy.

I'm more of a cat person, but dogs are so active and full of energy that makes me happy.

Having a dog visit made me feel joyful.

it makes me feel so happy, dogs are good sources of happiness and peace.

It makes me smile.

Happy, it makes me excited to go to school knowing that they'll be a dog there.

Having a dog makes me feel filled with happiness.

It makes me feel really happy.

Paws for Cause Presentation Slides

Paws for a Cause

How you can help dogs and how they can help you!

What is kennel stress?



Kennel stress is used to describe an animal's state of mental or emotional strain during or after staying in a kennel for any period of time, the longer the duration the more likely for chronic kennel stress to occur.

CAUSES OF KENNEL STRESS

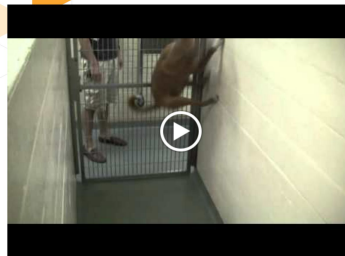


- Lack of Affection
- Environmental Changes
- Crowding/Excessive Noise
- Lack of Social Interaction
- Lack of Choice
- No Enrichment
- Confinement

SYMPTOMS OF KENNEL STRESS



- Lethargy/Depression
- Inappetance/Not Eating
- Repetitive Behaviors - spinning, circling, jumping
- Excessive Vocalization - barking, whining
- Hiding/Shaking
- Destructive Behaviors
- Aggressive/Fearful



Example of a Dog Exhibiting Kennel Stress

Prevention & Treatment for Kennel Stress

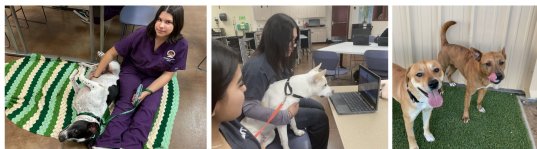


- ❖ Attention/ Affection
- ❖ Extra Time Socializing Outside the Kennel
- ❖ Rewards or Treats
- ❖ Play Groups
- ❖ Field Trips
- ❖ Positive Reinforcement Training/Interactions

** Scientifically proven to reduce cortisol which is a stress hormone. **

Paws for Cause Presentation Slides

CAVIT Enrichment Clinics



- GO TO Pinal County Animal Care and Control!
- Become a Volunteer!
- Walk Dogs at the Shelter
- Provide Enrichment/Attention
- Participate in Play Groups
- Check Out a Dog on a Day Trip/Field Trip
- Foster a Dog or Cat

How can you can help?



BENEFITS TO YOU!



Interacting with dogs and cats can help you be healthier! It has been scientifically proven to:

- Lower Blood Pressure
- Reduce Stress Levels
- Decrease Anxiety
- Promote Feelings of Happiness/Satisfaction
- Improve Heart Health

Kennel Stress Symptoms:

- Lack of Affection
- Environmental Changes
- Crowding/Excessive Noise
- Lack of Social Interaction
- Lack of Choice
- No Enrichment
- Confinement

Prevention/Treatment:

- ❖ Attention/ Affection
- ❖ Extra Time Socializing Outside the Kennel
- ❖ Rewards or Treats
- ❖ Play Groups
- ❖ Field Trips
- ❖ Positive Reinforcement Training/Interactions

How you can help!

- ★ GO TO Pinal County Animal Care and Control!
- ★ Become a Volunteer!
- ★ Public Dog Walks at the Shelter
- ★ Provide Enrichment/Attention
- ★ Participate in Play Groups
- ★ Check Out a Dog on a Day Trip/Field Trip
- ★ Foster a Dog or Cat

GO TO: <https://www.pinal.gov/459/Volunteer>

CAVIT CANINE AMBASSADOR PROGRAM

Please take this survey on your feelings post visit with our canine ambassador today!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/B9RV82Z>



Canine Ambassador Program

Student Handout



Canine Ambassador Visit

Petting dogs has been scientifically proven to alleviate symptoms of stress and anxiety for people.

Did you know that dogs having a social experience with people can also alleviate their anxiety and stress?

Shelter dogs oftentimes develop a behavioral condition called “kennel stress” and have many symptoms of their own stress and anxiety from confinement and lack of social interaction.

Just the experience of interacting with you today will actually decrease the stress and anxiety our *Canine Ambassador* feels and will reduce the production of cortisol (a stress hormone).

If you would like to make a difference to animals in the future, visit Pinal County Animal Care and Control’s website for how to volunteer!

Opportunities include:

- Public Dog Walks at the Shelter
- Provide Enrichment/Attention
- Participate in Play Groups
- Check Out a Dog on a Day Trip/Field Trip
- Foster a Dog or Cat

GO TO: <https://www.pinal.gov/459/Volunteer>

Healthy Coping Skills

Did you know that we all have the ability to develop our own healthy coping skills?

Choosing experiences that help alleviate stress will improve your mental and emotional health overall!

Healthy Coping Skills include the following:

- Interacting with Family and Friends
- Spending Time with your Pets
- Focusing on a Hobby
- Learning a New Skill
- Drawing, Painting or Other Art
- Spending Time in Nature!
- Any Type of Exercise
- Listening to Music
- Reading Books
- Writing or Journaling
- Meditation
- Gardening
- AND MORE!

Part of focusing on mental health will include making sure you get enough sleep every night, eating nutritious foods, drinking plenty of water, exercising a few times a week and being aware of your emotional state!

Write Down YOUR Coping Skills!

PRESENTED BY:



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Brianna Cruz**

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PARTICIPATING STUDENTS INCLUDE:

CAVIT NTHS Students

**Veterinary Science
Program Students**