



# SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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## New Pet Assisted Therapy Program

The Sheriff's Office is proud to announce Pet Assisted Therapy, a new program aimed at helping those in custody with mental illnesses. Pet Assisted Therapy started at our Maple Street Correctional Center in June 2017. This program is a collaboration between the Peninsula Humane Society/SPCA and the San Mateo County Sheriff's Office.

Once a week, Pet Assisted Therapy teams visit with the women in a specialized jail housing unit that is dedicated to the treatment of mental illness. Therapists bring two specially trained dogs: Molly (Labrador) and Sadie (German Shepherd). During the visit, Molly and Sadie interact with the women in a group setting. This group therapy helps the women learn coping and social skills and allows them to express themselves in positive ways reducing stress, anxiety and depression.

Since the start of the program, Sheriff's Office jail staff have noticed the positive effects the program is having on the women and their sense of well-being.

San Mateo County Sheriff Carlos G. Bolanos stated, *"We have a great partnership with the Peninsula Humane Society and I am excited about bringing the Pet Assisted Therapy Program to our facility. Mental illness is a very important topic that impacts many of the people we care for in our custody. This program is just another example of how the Sheriff's Office is changing the way we do corrections to help those in need."*

For more information about this program please contact:

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**Peninsula Humane Society/SPCA, Pet Assisted Therapy Coordinator**

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