



**For Immediate Release**

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## **Media Event Advisory**

# **Dogs, Cats Bunnies & More (and their Owners) Attend Pet Therapy Orientation at Hospice of Santa Barbara**

### **Hospice of Santa Barbara Utilizes Unique Method of Therapy**

**June 20, 2008, Santa Barbara, CA**—Hospice of Santa Barbara is hosting a Pet Therapy orientation on Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 to 7:00 pm. The orientation is for current volunteers who are interested in providing the joy of animal companionship and healing for Hospice of Santa Barbara patients. Dogs, cats, bunnies and other friendly animals, along with their owners will be present for this special training on Hospice of Santa Barbara's front lawn.

Therapy animals are trained to allow unfamiliar people to pet them and provide people with a sense of healing and nurture through physical contact. Pets that serve Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc. patients and clients will attend orientation on Thursday June 24<sup>th</sup> and will be available for photos. Studies have shown that a 12-minute visit with these pets improve heart and lung functioning by lowering pressures, diminishing release of harmful hormones and decreasing anxiety among hospitalized heart failure patients – having an overall positive impact on health. Hospice of Santa Barbara's Patient Care Volunteer Training Program is now including Pet-Assisted Therapy (PAT) to further provide affection and comfort to patients in their homes or residing in facilities.

In order to become certified, the volunteer and the pet must go through a certification process through Therapy Dogs (dogs only) or Love on a Leash. The cost for registration is \$20 per year for one pet, and \$10 for each additional pet. The therapy animal must also pass an evaluation, which can be administered by a certified professional dog trainer.

### **Advisory**

**When:** Tuesday, June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2008, 5:30 – 7:00 pm

**What:** Hospice of Santa Barbara Pet Therapy

**Who:** Current Hospice of Santa Barbara Volunteers (ONLY) who want to learn more about Pet-Assisted Therapy, along with their pets

**Where:** Outside Lawn, Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc. 2050 Alameda Padre Serra, Ste. 100, Santa Barbara

The mission of Hospice of Santa Barbara, Inc. is to provide care to anyone experiencing the impact of a life-threatening illness, or grieving the death of a loved one.