

introducing **MACK** the CAC therapy dog

Mack, an Old English Sheepdog puppy, is the newest member of the Children's Assessment Center (CAC) team. He is in special training to be a certified therapy dog onsite. Our goal is to have him provide comfort and affection to clients at the center, whether it be in therapy sessions, during forensic interviews, or even simply interacting with him around our facility. Research shows that interacting with therapy dogs can temporarily affect neurotransmitters in the brain, raising levels of oxytocin and dopamine (feel-good hormones) while suppressing those linked with stress. Therapy dogs can also help with self-confidence, brighten the day, lift spirits and motivate people.

Mack was very carefully chosen for his calm demeanor, friendly manner, obedient nature and charm. Contrary to popular belief, Mack does not shed much or drool. He loves to fetch, be brushed, play in the Healing Garden and just be around people, especially children. He has adapted extremely well to the office environment, seemingly unbothered by the amount of business going on and people he sees and meets on a regular basis. He is affectionate and playful, but calm when he needs to be.

The choice of a sheepdog puppy was deliberate as well. Mack is a tribute to San Bernardino County Deputy Jeremiah MacKay and to all law enforcement who lay it on the line for us every day. We are very excited about this unique opportunity to enhance our equally unique center. Mack has not only enriched clients lives, but those of everyone around him as well!

