



SAN MATEO POLICE DEPARTMENT

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MEDIA RELEASE / COMMUNITY ALERT

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K9 Rookie: San Mateo Police Department's First Therapy Dog Continues to Make a Lasting Impact

K9 Rookie's positive work within the community has helped pave the way for forward thinking, compassionate policing.

San Mateo, CA – September 24, 2025- Since joining the San Mateo Police Department in 2021, K9 Rookie has become more than just a therapy dog—he has become a trusted partner, a source of comfort, and a beloved member of the San Mateo community.

As the department's first-ever therapy K9, Rookie was selected at just 10 weeks old to launch a new initiative focused on wellness, trauma response, and community engagement. From the beginning, Rookie stood out. While most puppies played and barked, Rookie showed a calm, composed nature—traits that made him a perfect fit for the important work ahead.

Assigned to Youth Services Officer Allison Adle, Rookie's role focuses on supporting children, families, and individuals experiencing trauma. His training began immediately. By four months of age, Rookie attended a specialized board-and-train program with Trident, followed by advanced certification courses through the Franklin County Sheriff's Office in Ohio. There, he earned his AKC Canine Good Citizen and AKC Urban Canine Good Citizen certifications.

As Rookie matured, his list of credentials grew. He obtained certification through the Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) and was part of the first cohort in California to complete the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) program for therapy K9s. Most recently, Rookie and Officer Adle received national recognition as recipients of the **2025 NASRO Safety and Support Companion Award**, honoring outstanding service in school safety and youth support.

A Partner in Every Sense

"Rookie has been by my side since day one," said Officer Adle. "He's more than a partner—he's a vital part of how we connect with our community, especially our youth. Where I go, Rookie goes."

Rookie spends each day working alongside Officer Adle in all public schools across the city of San Mateo. From casual conversations with students to providing critical support during mental health crises and

forensic interviews, Rookie plays an essential role in building trust and reducing barriers between law enforcement and the public.

Innovation in Mental Health Support: Rookie's Room

In partnership with a local high school's wellness team, the San Mateo Police Department launched "**Rookie's Room**," a dedicated space where students can participate in 15-minute wellness check-ins. Designed as a calm, supportive environment, Rookie's Room has become a safe haven for students facing personal, academic, or social challenges.

"The idea was simple—create a space for students to talk," said Officer Adle. "What we found was that Rookie breaks down barriers in a way that no traditional method ever could. Students feel safe, heard, and supported."

Building Bridges in the Community

From standing beside victims in court to comforting students in crisis, Rookie has demonstrated an exceptional ability to provide emotional support in some of the most difficult situations. His natural intuition, friendly demeanor, and unwavering presence make him an invaluable asset in trauma-informed policing.

"We had no idea when we started this program just how impactful it would become," added Officer Adle. "Rookie has a unique gift. He comforts, connects, and brings calm to those who need it most."

A Continuing Commitment

K9 Rookie's impact extends well beyond schools. He assists during Child and Family Services (CFS) calls, participates in community outreach, and helps foster meaningful interactions between law enforcement and residents of all ages.

As San Mateo's first therapy K9, Rookie continues to pave the way for innovative, compassionate policing—offering emotional support, reducing stress, and helping to build bridges throughout the community.

K9 Rookie will continue to play an integral role in both the San Mateo Police Department and the wider community by providing comfort, reducing stress, and fostering positive connections between officers and residents.

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