



## SAN MATEO POLICE DEPARTMENT

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### MEDIA RELEASE / COMMUNITY ALERT

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#### **SMPD Youth Services Officer and her Therapy K9 Receive 2025 National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) Safety and Support Companion Award**

*San Mateo Police Youth Services Officer Allison Adle and her Therapy K9 Rookie receive a national award in Texas today for making a "significant positive and impactful contribution to schools."*

Grapevine, TX – The City of San Mateo Police Department is proud to announce that today, Monday, July 7, 2025, Youth Service Officer Allison Adle and her Therapy K9 partner, Rookie, received the 2025 National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) Safety and Support Companion Award at the NASRO Conference in Texas. Both Officer Adle and Rookie, accompanied by Police Chief Ed Barberini, flew to Texas to receive this prestigious award.

Youth Services Unit (YSU) Sergeant Tracey Unga shared in her nomination of Adle and Rookie for the award "It is with great pride and admiration that I nominate Officer Allison Adle and K9 Rookie for their outstanding contributions to the community of San Mateo. Through their unwavering commitment and innovative initiatives, they have transformed the relationship between law enforcement and the community while making a profound impact on youth within San Mateo."

In 2021, K9 Rookie not only became the first therapy dog in the City of San Mateo, but the County of San Mateo as well. Assigned to Youth Service Officer Allison Adle, Rookie has become an integral part of the public school system, positively influencing approximately 16,000 students. Every day, Officer Adle and Rookie can be found answering calls for service at numerous schools, fostering strong and trusting relationships with students and staff alike.

Recognizing the challenges students faced post-COVID, including mental health struggles and a growing divide between law enforcement and the community, Officer Adle took a proactive approach by creating "Rookie's Room." This program, a partnership between the school wellness center and Officer Adle, allows students to sign up for 15-minute mental health break with K9 Rookie. These sessions offer students a safe and comforting space to decompress, bond with Rookie, and interact with Officer Adle on a personal level, ultimately strengthening the connection between youth and law enforcement. To date, over 2,500 students have participated in Rookie's Room, showcasing its profound impact.

Beyond the schools, Rookie's influence extends into the courtroom. In cases involving juvenile sexual assault victims, Rookie provided invaluable emotional support, enabling three young survivors to testify about the traumatic events they endured. With Rookie by their side, these victims found the courage to express themselves, leading to three guilty convictions totaling over 189 years to life in prison. Rookie's

presence in the courtroom has proven to be a vital tool in delivering justice and empowering victims to find their voice.

Rookie's impact extends beyond the students of San Mateo, as he also plays a crucial role in officer wellness at the San Mateo Police Department. His presence provides a sense of comfort and stress relief to officers, supporting their well-being as they carry out their duties. Additionally, Rookie is an essential part of community policing, as he is present at every major city, police department, and San Mateo Police Activities League (San Mateo PAL) event, bringing joy and fostering positive relationships between law enforcement and residents.

When not in schools, courtrooms, or at community events, Officer Adle and Rookie use the relationships they've developed to assist the SMPD Criminal Investigations Bureau (CIB) and patrol officers working on child abuse cases, in forensics interviews, and interviewing witnesses of traumatic events. Coroner notifications are also one of the frequent requests they receive in San Mateo. Everywhere they go, they bring warmth, reassurance, and a sense of safety to the community. It is a testament to their impact that whenever Officer Adle arrives without Rookie, the first question she hears is, "Where is Rookie?" (We can confirm we love Officer Adle just as much!)

Chief Barberini adds, "I am incredibly proud to congratulate Officer Allison Adle and her partner, Rookie, on receiving this well-earned recognition. Off. Adle's dedication to building positive relationships with the students and the community, alongside Rookie's exceptional work as a therapy canine is a shining example of how compassion, professionalism, and service go hand in hand. Their partnership is truly making a difference in the lives of our youth, and this award highlights their commitment to fostering a safe, supportive, and welcoming environment for everyone. On behalf of the San Mateo Police Department, we commend them for their outstanding service and the invaluable impact they continue to have."

You can follow Rookie's adventures on his Instagram account @TK9\_Rookie, @sanmateopdk9, @sanmateopd, and @sanmateopal. And if you'd like to make a difference in Rookie's honor, join Rookie's Club and donate to our incredible youth through San Mateo PAL. To learn more, visit <https://sanmateopal.org/ways-to-give/rookies-club/>.

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