

## Rooster to the Rescue

*Hi Stef. We met at your talk in San Diego. I was the one with the new tripod rescue puppy. You mentioned doing therapy with your dog. What does that entail? I want to do something meaningful with Rooster. He had such a rough start and is so sweet. I think he can help people. I'd love to hear what you did and what you recommend.*

### Hi Rooster's Mom!

Kudos and congratulations for rescuing a special needs dog. It will take time and training, but if his personality is easygoing and non-aggressive, then you and he together can bring joy to many people.

Years ago, I worked on staff with my Labrador, Jazzmin, at Helen Woodward Animal Center in San Diego. Their "Pet Encounter" therapy program is still active. At that time, the program included loading a handful of trained and certified human-animal teams into a van and visiting nursing homes and psychiatric hospitals for people of all ages. It was an extremely rewarding (but emotionally taxing) experience for humans and animals alike. We both absolutely loved it and quickly learned that those days required a little extra downtime and self-care afterwards.

Many pet therapy organizations offer courses to prepare interested people and their pets to be of service. I suggest searching online for programs near you. In the meantime, continue to bond with and socialize Rooster.

Some quiet contemplative time will help you get clear about what it is you hope to give and receive by becoming a therapy team with your dog. Whether you decide to serve children, the elderly or work in medical or psychological situations, it is a big commitment of time, energy and emotion. And it is so worth it for all involved. Nothing fills up my own heart like seeing the light of unconditional love spread from an animal to a person in need. Dogs are masters at intuitive, energetic connection and are huge blessings to humanity. I send all my love, encouragement and blessings to you and Rooster on behalf of all those who will be blessed by your partnership. ❀



**STEF SWINK, RScP**, has been a practitioner since 1999. As a protégé and assistant to Louise Hay, she was a frequent ghostwriter for the "Dear Louise" column. Through speaking, spiritual counseling and workshops, she inspires others to create fulfilling lives they love. Connect with her online at [StefSwink.com/Ask-Stef-Submission](http://StefSwink.com/Ask-Stef-Submission).