

The **Help Group** because every child deserves a great future

Founded in 1975, The Help Group is dedicated to helping young people with autism and other special needs fully realize their potential. It is the largest, most comprehensive nonprofit of its kind in the United States and is recognized as a leader in the field of autism. The Help Group offers a wide range of innovative autism spectrum disorder programs, and each day, more than 1000 students ages 3 – 22 attend its autism day schools. Other programs include assessment, early identification & intervention, therapeutic services, life skills coaching, transitional programs, residential programs, parent support groups, day camps, after-school enrichment and social skills programs.

The Help Group is widely regarded for its high standards of excellence, unique scope and breadth of services. Through its public awareness and outreach programs, graduate and post-graduate professional training, applied research, conferences and seminars, parent education programs, publications, and efforts at the state and national levels, The Help Group touches the lives of children with special needs and their families throughout the United States and in other parts of the world.

Village Glen School • Bridgeport School  
Bridgeport Vocational Education Center  
Sunrise School • Young Learners Preschool for Autism  
Project Six/The Commons • Advance LA  
The Help Group • UCLA Autism Research Alliance  
The Help Group Center for Autism Spectrum Disorders  
Kids Like Me Recreational Programs & Camps  
club I.a./club I.a. TEEN  
Silverlining Resale Boutique & Vocational Training Center

CULVER CITY | SHERMAN OAKS EAST | SHERMAN OAKS WEST  
VALLEY GLEN | VAN NUYS NORTH | VAN NUYS SOUTH | WEST HILLS

[www.thehelpgroup.org](http://www.thehelpgroup.org)  



## A Volunteer Program of The Help Group



It's so rewarding to see the children light up and smile when they interact with my therapy dog, Baylee  
- Ginny & Baylee

### Volunteer Qualifications

- Certification with Therapy Dogs Inc. Visit [www.therapydogs.com](http://www.therapydogs.com) for details.
- Prior experience volunteering or working with children is preferred.

### For Information

To learn more about the program or how to become a volunteer, please visit or contact:

[www.pawsandpalsforautism.org](http://www.pawsandpalsforautism.org)

**Ann Avidor**  
[aavidor@thehelpgroup.org](mailto:aavidor@thehelpgroup.org)

**Lisa Manafian**  
[lmanafian@thehelpgroup.org](mailto:lmanafian@thehelpgroup.org)

**818.779.5233**



# More About Paws and Pals

## About Autism

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), commonly referred to as autism, is a group of brain-based developmental disabilities characterized by impaired social communication and interaction, and restricted, repetitive behaviors, interests or activities

## Benefits of Paws and Pals Pet Intervention

- Fosters social communication and language development
- Supports friendship and peer relationship-building skills
- Encourages classroom participation
- Positively affects a child's attention and focus
- Supports the development of fine and gross motor skills
- Supports transitioning into a new environment or learning a new task
- Offers a comforting presence that a child will identify as predictable and safe

## Program Details

Paws and Pals volunteers visit weekdays or weekends during school, after-school and evening hours. Locations include The Help Group's Sherman Oaks, Culver City, West Hills and Van Nuys Campuses, in addition to the American Jewish University in Bel Air. All visits are coordinated and supervised by our administration and staff.

## Volunteer Commitment

Paws and Pals volunteers work side-by-side with The Help Group's highly qualified teams of educators, aides and therapists to bring the positive rewards of pet intervention to young people. Volunteers are registered with the nationally-recognized organization, Therapy Dogs Inc. and commit to visiting for two hours, once a week, at one of The Help Group's schools or programs.

*"Dedicated volunteers and their pets encourage social interaction and boost our students' self-esteem and confidence."* - Pamela Clark, MA - Director  
The Help Group Autism Schools



The Help Group's Paws and Pals Program is truly special. I love volunteering with my Dachshund Clyde, and spending time with these amazing kids.  
- Vicky & Clyde

## Paws and Pals

The Help Group is pleased to offer Paws and Pals for Kids with Autism, a volunteer-supported pet intervention program for children enrolled in its autism schools, Kids Like Me recreational camps, teen residential and young adult transitional living programs. Paws and Pals offers a unique way for teachers, therapists and qualified volunteers to support and engage young people with social and communication challenges.