

FHE Health Awards 3rd Annual First Responder Paws Therapy Dog Award

Learn about the smallest therapy dog working with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and the big award she received from FHE Health.

DEERFIELD BEACH, FL, UNITED STATES, October 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The big award goes to a tiny but fierce contender in 2025. Willowbrook is a 6-pound pup with plenty of therapeutic presence.



The 2025 [First Responder Paws](#) Therapy Dog 1st place award goes to Willowbrook, the smallest therapy dog working with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD). Willowbrook has supported thousands of first responders with nearly 20,000 visits to agencies including the LASD, FBI and CHP. The tiny morale booster also shows up for firefighters and first responders dealing with California wildfires.

The second-place winner chosen in FHE Health's 2025 First Responder Paws contest is Rocket. This pup serves the Kootenai County Sheriff's Office and has supported first responders and firefighters. Rocket also operates as part of a regional network that brings therapy animals to veterans' homes, hospice facilities, schools and dispatch centers.

The now-annual First Responders Paws Therapy Dog Award is a nationwide contest designed to create awareness of the many roles therapy dogs fill and showcase some of the best and brightest. FHE Health recognizes that first responders have high-stress jobs and that their mental health is at risk as they stand in the gap for others. Therapy dogs provide critical morale boosts and support between emergencies, offering a calming and healing presence that asks for little in return other than scratches.

Willowbrook was a top 10 finalist in 2023 and 2024 before finally claiming the top dog slot in 2025. This tiny therapy dog started out with a trauma of her own. She was rescued as a 1-pound puppy that was dealing with parvo, a serious condition. Jennifer Stott, Willowbrook's rescuer and future handler, said she didn't rescue the petite pup

with an eye toward therapy dog work. But after visiting colleagues in another law enforcement unit and meeting a therapy dog team, she was inspired to bring this type of support to the LASD.

Who better to show up for humans in trauma than a tiny champion who'd already faced and overcome her own? Jennifer and Willowbrook started training and quickly stood out due to Willowbrook's lack of fear in the face of situations that involved sirens, flashing lights and personnel in heavy gear.

After completing training, Willowbrook and Jennifer started showing up for first responders, including search and rescue teams, firefighters and National Guard members. When a tiny therapy dog shows up wearing tactical gear and a calm presence, everyone takes notice, and even well-shielded first responders open up, connect with others and let go of some of their mental burdens.

Willowbrook and the other dogs entered in the 2025 First Responders Paws Therapy Dog Award do an important job. But FHE Health notes that more therapy dogs are needed. The hope is that the annual contest brings awareness to this need and inspires other people like Jennifer to take up training with a pup partner.

In 2025, the winner of the First Responders Paws Therapy Dog Award received a check for \$4,000, a gift basket from Chewy, free publicity, an award batch and a \$2,500 donation made in her honor to First Responders Pack Foundation. The second-place winner in 2025 received a check for \$1,000.

FHE Health provides behavioral health treatment options in South Florida. It specializes in treating addiction and mental health disorders in a caring environment that supports holistic healing.

[About FHE Health](#)

FHE Health is a national treatment center for individuals, ages 18 and up, with a wide variety of addiction and mental health needs. From its headquarters in Deerfield Beach, Florida, it provides integrated care, neuro therapies, and specialized treatment programs like Shatterproof FHE Health for first responders.

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