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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Public and Private Partnership Benefits At-risk Children in Riverside County *Introduction of K9 Therapy/Support Dog Augie***

**Riverside, July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022** – SAFE Family Justice Centers (SAFE FJC) and the Riverside County District Attorney's Office's Crime Prevention Unit have brought on K9 Support Dog Augie to serve at-risk children in Riverside County.

The use of therapy/support canines with children who are experiencing high levels of toxic stress or trauma is on the rise across the United States. Now, Riverside County has a new four-legged partner here to help children receive the support that they need. K9 Augie is a 5-year-old standard poodle trained by Guide Dogs of the Desert and Dr. Coby Webb.

In 2021, SAFE Family Justice Centers provided support services to 1,017 children accounting for 25 percent of the agency's total client service population. "Many of these children lack trust for adults in their lives because of what they have experienced," said Kate Perry, Supervising Family Specialist K9 Augie's handler. "Having the support of K9 Augie to come in and help rebuild that sense of trust will be instrumental in helping the children that SAFE FJC works with develop positive coping skills, address their trauma, rebuild their sense of confidence and safety."

Every child who is struggling has a story. K9 Augie will be used to support the children and youth who interface within the DA's Crime Prevention Unit and through advocacy services provided by the SAFE Family Justice Center.

Donations can be made to support the K9 Augie's therapy/support program for children here: <https://safefjc.org/donate/>

**About SAFE Family Justice Centers:**

The SAFE Family Justice Centers are a safe place for victims of abuse to get help. SAFE Family Justice Centers provide advocacy and support services to individuals who have experienced domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, child/elder abuse, and services for youth who are at risk.



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