

Page: Entry Information
Chapter CAI Bay Area and Central California
Chapter Size Large (511-760)
Category Out of the Box
Program Name Annual Tea's Purposeful Paws
If this was a joint program with another chapter, please list the chapter.
Each question is worth 20 points and will be scored using the following rubric: (1-5) Poor Didn't effectively answer the question (6-1) Fair Answered the question (11-15) Good Answered the question with more detail (16-20) Excellent Went above and beyond with proven results and visible data

Describe the program and why it fits the category. (20pts)

Purposeful Paws was a community-centered engagement program introduced at the Annual Tea to intentionally create a pause—both literally and figuratively—from the energy of music, networking, and programming.

Through a partnership with Under Dog Animal Rescue, a nonprofit animal rescue organization, adoptable dogs were welcomed into the event space. The goal was to offer attendees a moment of calm, comfort, and connection while also supporting a meaningful community cause.

A puppy petting area challenged traditional expectations of a professional association event by prioritizing wellness and human experience without compromising professionalism. The presence of the dogs created a welcoming, relaxed atmosphere that encouraged organic conversation, reduced stress, and provided a sensory break for attendees. Guests were able to step away from the noise, interact with the dogs, and connect with one another in a more personal and grounded way.

The program also had a tangible community impact. Under Dog Animal Rescue participated at no cost, with their space sponsored for the event, and two dogs were adopted as a direct result of their participation. Moving forward, the chapter plans to cover the rescue's participation to continue supporting their nonprofit mission.

With more than 400 attendees, the puppies were widely embraced. Ten percent of survey respondents specifically cited the puppies as the highlight of the event and shared that it would bring them back the following year. Attendees consistently described the experience as joyful, comforting, and memorable.

Purposeful Paws demonstrated that sometimes the most impactful engagement comes from creating space to slow down. By offering a moment of intentional pause within a high-energy event, the chapter strengthened connection, enhanced the member experience, and reinforced its commitment to community, belonging, and thoughtful leadership.

This program fits the Out of the Box category because it challenged traditional assumptions about professional association events. Rather than adding another activation or sponsorship opportunity, we focused on wellness and human experience. Purposeful Paws proved that meaningful engagement doesn't have to be loud or complex—sometimes the most impactful moments come from slowing down and creating space for people to connect in a different way.

How did this program meet the mission and vision of the chapter and CAI as a whole including fostering an inclusive environment that reflects and serves our diverse community? (20pts)

CAI's mission is rooted in community, connection, and education, and Purposeful Paws brought those values to life in a very tangible way. The program created an inclusive environment where attendees could participate without barriers. It offered a sensory break—especially meaningful for individuals who may feel overwhelmed in large, high-energy settings.

Partnering with a nonprofit rescue organization aligned with CAI's commitment to community impact beyond the industry. Under Dog Animal Rescue participated at no cost, and moving forward the chapter will cover their attendance to continue supporting their mission. The program reinforced that CAI values compassion, belonging, and service alongside professional excellence.

What was the impact on the chapter and its members after completing the program? (Growth of membership, financially, public awareness, membership value, better chapter/member relationship, chapter operations, etc.) (20 pts)

The impact was immediate and meaningful. Attendees shared overwhelmingly positive feedback, describing the experience as joyful, comforting, and memorable. The puppy petting area became a natural gathering point, encouraging organic conversation and connection among members who may not have otherwise interacted.

The program also created real-world impact beyond the event itself. Two puppies were adopted as a direct result of their participation, which resonated deeply with attendees and reinforced pride in the chapter. The puppy petting area elevated the Annual Tea experience, strengthened member connection, and enhanced the chapter's reputation as thoughtful, inclusive, and people-centered.

Provide quantifiable data supporting the rationale for success. Include why this data is significant. (20pts)

400+ attendees at the Annual Tea

10% of survey respondents specifically cited the puppies as the highlight of the event and stated it would bring them back the following year

2 puppy adoptions occurred as a direct result of the program

Consistently positive qualitative feedback citing stress relief, joy, comfort, and connection

This data is significant because it demonstrates that puppies directly influenced attendee satisfaction and retention. When a single element stands out as a return-driver for 10% of respondents, it shows that the program created emotional resonance—not just momentary novelty.

What are your plans to maintain the momentum of this program moving forward? (20 pts)

The chapter plans to continue Purposeful Paws as part of future Annual Teas. While the rescue's participation was initially sponsored, the chapter will now cover their attendance directly to ensure continued support of their nonprofit mission.

We will also continue to look for intentional ways to incorporate wellness, inclusion, and human-centered experiences into chapter events—always aligned with professionalism and purpose. Purposeful Paws reinforced that sometimes the most impactful engagement comes from creating space to slow down, and that philosophy will continue to guide our programming decisions.

Supporting documents including flyers, postcards, pictures, videos etc. can be uploaded below. While they aren't required for your submission we certainly encourage it.

Would you like to upload additional documents?

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