

June 2016

Volume 3: Edition 1

All Paws On Deck



Central Office Has Gone to the Dogs!

As the puppy programs continue to grow within the PA Department of Corrections, the Central Office Empowerment Committee (COEC) hosted Canine Partners for Life (CPL) for May's "Lunch and Learn" symposium. Held on Monday, May 9, 2016, CPL shared their message with Central Office staff.

Jennifer Swank, puppy program coordinator from Canine Partners for Life, gave an in-depth look at CPL and the prison programs, including a short video which not only gave an organizational overview of the program but highlighted several canine recipients whose lives have drastically changed in a positive manner with the assistance of their service dogs. This video can be found on Youtube titled "Canine Partners for Life – Organization Overview."

Ms. Swank discussed the rigorous training the puppies have to go through in order to complete the program. CPL provides highly-trained service dogs for individuals with physical, cognitive and developmental disabilities. Nationally recognized, CPL is one of the first service dog programs in the world to be accredited by Assistance Dogs International (ADI).

CPL trains each dog over a two-year training program to meet the specific needs of each canine recipient. Not only does CPL train traditional service dogs, but it also trains seizure, cardiac and diabetes alert dogs. A dog utilized in these areas has a special ability to warn his recipient of an imminent seizure, changes in blood pressure, and finally to recognize low or high blood sugar levels.

Dogs that are not successful in completing the training program are still able to find meaning and purpose as companion dogs, providing emotional support for those with neurological and cognitive impairment and being partnered with children with autism.

Currently, Canine Partners for Life is partnered with eight prisons in the PA DOC, with the years the programs began being noted below:



Even though Sukka was taking a nap, Ms. Swank's presentation was a real treat!

1. Cambridge Springs – 2001
2. Muncy – 2003
3. Albion – 2005
4. Smithfield – 2007
5. Greene – 2014
6. Somerset – 2015
7. Laurel Highlands – 2016
8. Huntingdon – 2016

Ms. Swank concluded her presentation with a demonstration for the staff to witness the hard work the inmates took into training Sukka!

For further information, please visit Canine Partners for Life's website at <http://k94life.org/>.

Daniel Lorditch
Activities Coordinator, AOII



Canine Partners *for* Life

SCI Camp Hill

Each month the HOPE program tries to schedule some "pet therapy" time by taking HOPE dogs to the H & O Block Residential Treatment Units as well as to the infirmary and SOU. Below is a letter from a HOPE handler that has had the opportunity to take his dog on the visits:

Accompanied by block staff and H.O.P.E volunteers, I've been given the opportunity to go on therapeutic field trips around the institution with some of the H.O.P.E. dogs in the program. About once a month, we'll spend a few hours walking around to visit the infirmary and the special needs housing units to provide therapy for those who could use it. The guys we see in the wards of the infirmary are coping with some sort of ailment or illness which, in a few unfortunate cases, is terminal. Needless to say, their circumstances have them feeling down and out, but even if it's only for the time we're there, their spirits are immediately lifted and morale is visibly boosted for one reason and one reason only, the dog's presence. The dog's therapeutic impact isn't just limited to those in the infirmary though. They have the same effect on the housing units too. As soon as we walk in with the dogs, people get excited and come to us to pet them or have them perform their tricks. It makes their day. Having a dog around makes everyone feel better. Being an inmate handler who's fortunate enough to live with and work with the dogs every day, even I took for granted just how great of an impact dogs can have on a person, especially in this environment. They're therapeutic and it's great that the H.O.P.E. program exists and that the prison staff and H.O.P.E. Volunteers go out of their way to organize and allow these field trips to take place.

Scott Whalen, Unit Manager

SCI Houtzdale

The service dog program at SCI Houtzdale has been up and running for six months. United Disabilities Services provided RUFF with four beautiful and lively puppies in December 2015 to raise and train to be service dogs for individuals with mobility impairments. Our four boys, Brodey, Renner, Murray and Abel, have been eager to learn commands that will help them to assist their eventual owners. The nine inmates who are the dog handlers have had to overcome many obstacles such as freezing temperatures, cleaning up the "accidents," calcium on the walks, keeping the dogs busy



over the winter and various unpredictable situations. In spite of these obstacles, the dogs are all housebroken and know over 30 commands. Many staff have pitched in to assist in the socialization process by taking the dogs during lockdowns, taking them to the vet, taking them out for walks at lunch-time, welcoming them to groups/classes and training with the handlers in order to learn the commands themselves. We are currently working on pairing the dogs with staff so they can get more real world experiences outside of the institution. Brodey has gone on two home visits and was a perfect gentleman even with the cats after they let him know they were the bosses. Introducing a canine program to HOU has been a win/win for this institution. The CHCA commented, "What a positive impact puppies have on the infirmed." And a terminally ill inmate said that he liked the dogs but liked watching the staff interact with the dogs even more. The dogs participated in the Memorial Day Service at SCI Houtzdale and were so well behaved that you would have thought they were adults. During Corrections Employees week there was an open house at HOU ,and Brodey was a big hit with the families of staff who attended. Brodey, Renner, Murray and Abel go to the visiting room on a rotating schedule for an hour at a time with their handlers. The visitors enjoy interacting with the dogs, the dogs are learning how to be appropriate with children and the elderly, and it is another great training opportunity for the pups and handlers. As you can see in the accompanying photograph, our pups are growing by leaps and bounds (left to right: Murray, Brodey, Renner, Abel).

Joan Bailey, Unit Manager

SCI Retreat



On April 12th, 2016, SCI Retreat gained two new staff members...meet Hope and Joy! Here is our happy story...

Superintendent Vincent Mooney was given permission to get a dog that will be able to chase geese from the grounds at SCI Retreat. Those who have ever visited Retreat know that the geese flock to areas inside the enclosure leaving behind their feces. Hope and Joy are five-month-old border collies/boxers mix. Hope and Joy are twin sisters and are rescue dogs that the "staff" purchased (through staff donations) from the Ruff Dog Rescue North East. Tere Morris, co-founder and president of Ruff Rescue, was more than happy to help SCI Retreat with our mission – she was so helpful that she greatly discounted the adoption price. Ms. Morris, being that she is also a certified trainer, even helped teach the inmate handlers how to properly train the dogs to chase geese and to perform other commands.

Their names, Hope and Joy, were chosen by staff. A special contest was open to all staff to help name our soon-to-be new staff members. Activities Specialist Charles Maculloch originally submitted those names and through a voting process, majority ruled - Hope and Joy won!

Hope and Joy have only been here a short time, but they are fast learners. The inmate handlers are so upbeat with them; they already learned so much. They have a temporary dog run where there is so much room to run, they feel like they are in doggie heaven – wait until their permanent one is built!



Their personalities are remarkable. They are very friendly and love to give kisses. They also love to be scratched behind their ears and under their chins. They didn't even bark yet!

The atmosphere of SCI Retreat changed in a very positive way. The inmates smile when they see the dogs and they ask to pet them. Some inmates even made the comment that this is the first time in years that they pet a dog! An inmate, who will be graduating an educational program, recently asked his teacher if he can write a paper on the dogs and the handlers. Being that more than 50% of the population at Retreat receives some sort of mental health service, this is also very therapeutic. When the dogs are not in training, staff are able to take the dogs to their departments.



If you have a chance, visit SCI Retreat and meet Hope and Joy. They certainly will bring you - Hope and Joy...!

Tina Shaup, Superintendent's Assistant

Every dog starts life with a blank canvas. His destiny etched by the hands of the painter, and each one an artist's original. The portrait painted depends on how the brush is held. Paint with hostility, and a dog learns to fight. Paint with cruelty, and a dog learns fear. Paint with anger, and a dog learns aggression. Paint with praise, and a dog learns confidence. Paint with boundaries, and a dog learns respect. Paint with tenderness, and dog learns to bond. Paint with affection, and a dog learns to love. Every dog is a product of its environment. Bad dogs are not born, they are created. If the portrait is flawed, look to the artist. Stop blaming the dogs!



SCI Muncy

As we enter the warmer months of spring and summer, our dogs continue to grow and enjoy playing outside more. Our facility is lucky enough to have abundant outside spaces for the dogs to play, train and sometimes sleep. The CPL dogs can often be seen in front of G Unit, accompanying the unit details as they garden and perform other outdoor tasks. The dogs also have a large fenced-in yard that has a "Cracker Dust" — crushed stone base in the play area and a separate sand box area for digging. It would be hard to even estimate the number of hours that the dogs spend in the yard over the summer, but it is safe to say that it is one of the more lively spots in the facility. On most days the sounds of dogs playfully barking and growling starts in the early morning and continues through the day, interrupted only by count and nap times for the dogs.

At home, a barking dog can be a nuisance, but in the institution it is often a welcome respite from the other noises one might hear. A barking dog is certainly more enjoyable than ringing phones, crackling radios and the general din of inmates. The presence of the CPL dogs has many benefits for our institution and white noise is not the least of them. Usually when you hear loud noises within a prison it is cause for alarm, but being able to witness the dogs and their rambunctious actions is in some ways an antidote to the drudgery of institutionalized behaviors and routines.



It sounds counterintuitive, but the dogs have a humanizing factor in an institutional setting. Their presence alone is enjoyable, but it is also interesting to see staff members and inmates working together to train dogs and be invested in the program. As a staff member you are taught to be firm, fair and consistent with the inmate population and while this is a sound approach it can also lead us to begin to see inmates as numbers. However, when staff and inmates work together in the program toward a common goal it becomes apparent that despite the necessary separation of staff and inmate roles, both groups are human beings who have similar motivations, thinking processes, learning, etc. This helps the CPL program be successful, but it also helps us become better corrections professionals by understanding the importance of respectful communication between both groups.

Elias Stevens, Unit Manager

SCI Somerset



The past year has went by so quickly! We recently celebrated our pups' first birthdays. They have grown so much and learned even more since they got here in May 2015. We are coming to the end of our first cycle of dogs as we prepare for them to be transferred to the Canine Partners for Life (CPL) kennel where they will receive their 2nd year of the training curriculum. They have passed their 12-month evaluations and are currently working to refine their skills. We will anticipate receiving the puppies that will make up our next training class in August.

We are very proud of all that the dogs and their handlers have accomplished since they arrived! They have exceeded all expectations. We cannot wait to see what the next class holds for us and to watch as this class progresses through their training and moves on to be service dogs. They are so smart and pick up skills so quickly.

Pictured are our five current pups at their first birthday party. (From left to right: Madge, Whitney, Donut, Flower and Mino).

Melanie Pyle, Unit Manager



SCI Frackville



Our puppies arrived on Tuesday, April 12, 2016. From left to right, they are Bri, our lab mix; Stella, our ridgeback mix and our sister puppies, Lily and Feye, Rottweiler mix.



The program pairs carefully-screened inmates with needy dogs for a period of several weeks. The inmates work together with a professional trainer and prison staff to provide the dogs with basic obedience training, socialization, behavior modification and one-on-one attention.



The dogs involved in the program graduate with a wealth of valuable skills that help give them a paw up on finding a home.



The inmates and the dogs live together in the cells and attend weekly training sessions. They follow a strict training regimen which provides the dogs with the structure they need to adapt into a traditional home. By the time they are paroled, the dogs have become more confident, better behaved and are looking forward to starting a new life on the outside.



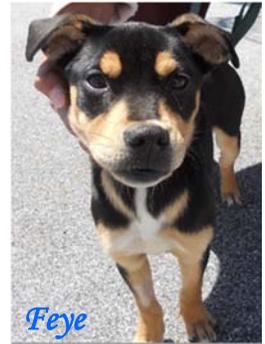
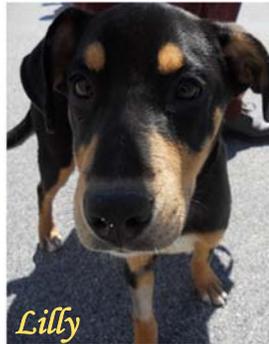
It is amazing the difference that a few pups can make in the demeanor of an institution. Staff and inmates alike have grown to love these girls and look forward to seeing them around the jail. They really do become like the mascots of the institution! They travel throughout the institution with the inmate handlers or staff handlers.



We are so proud of them and how quickly they pick-up on the training commands.



Beth Lazusky
Supt. Secretary



The Farmer's Dog



Many years ago, an elderly woman in rural Missouri was the victim of a home invasion and serious assault. She was severely injured and left for dead in a farmers field. It was late fall so if her injuries wouldn't kill her, the low temps during the night on an already fragile body, likely would have. The farmer's dog found her and laid with her through the night keeping her warm and probably being a source of comfort and hope. When morning came he went for help and got the farmer to the injured woman, saving her life. The dog KNEW life was to be protected even though he did not know her. He was a canine hero.



Erin Ireland
CCPM
SCI Forest



SCI Smithfield

There are four puppies at Smithfield. Sargent, Harper and Trapper are black labs, and Rafter is a golden retriever. We temporarily housed Valor, Harper and Trapper's brother, until he was placed in the program at SCI Huntingdon.

Cindi and Buck have settled in nicely as our trainers from Canine Partners for Life. The inmates like working with both of them. On May 4, 2016, at training, Cindi and Buck hosted a 1st birthday party for Rafter. He was lucky enough to be the guest of honor at two parties that day, as one also was held at SCI Huntingdon.



In January, the SCI Smithfield Canine Partners for Life program was the headline of the *Huntingdon Daily News*. A reporter visited the institution during a training and interviewed inmate handlers, trainers and staff about the program and personal experiences.



On March 2, 2016, Smithfield held its 2016 CPL Puppy Program Banquet. Darlene Sullivan, executive director/founder of CPL, was a featured speaker and provided much insight and motivation to the handlers and volunteers. Three of the inmate handlers spoke regarding their experiences with the program. Also, Dan Lorditch from the DOC Bureau of Treatment Services spoke. Regional Deputy Secretary Tabb Bickell also attended the banquet.

SCI Smithfield held an open house to family members of staff on May 4, 2016. The puppies were available by staff handlers to visit during the open house and demonstrate their skills and provided information about Canine Partners for Life.

Kammy Laird, School Principal

SCI Benner Township



Logan

As we round the corner headed toward our second year, we have seen many dogs adopted out to their new families. While all the dogs are available to the public for adoption, many have gone home with our very own staff members.

The inmate handlers continue to learn new tricks of the trade as they continue to teach their dogs new tricks as well. Some of the comments from our handlers have been that they wish they had some of the skills when we first opened our cells and hearts to the dogs as what they do now.

Seeing the new dogs having similar quirks and habits that some of the past dogs did, has made the handlers better at catching some of those earlier and correcting the behavior faster. The handlers' confidence is evident in how they interact with the dogs and with our trainer. For the first year, most were worried about making a mistake while showing her what the dogs have been working on, have accomplished, or need to improve upon. Now, they are anxious to be the ones that show off what they've done in the past week. And it shows in the dogs as well!

We are very excited to be able to continue having the handlers' hard work allow these shelter dogs to find a home they deserve!

Billie Rupert, Unit Manager



Fritz



Picture drawn by one of our handlers of Soda Pop, one of our dogs that was adopted

SCI Cambridge Springs

The four-legged guys of SCI Cambridge Springs are making their mark, (no not marking) and stealing the hearts of residents and staff alike. Staff are so supportive and many have volunteered to help raise these pups so that they can reach their full potential. Stand for roll call boys!

Harvey is now 10 months old and has been at SCI Cambridge Springs since September 2015. He is a fluffy pup who looks like a little bear.

Harvey is fun-loving and playful but has a few quirks. He enjoys playing with anything that squeaks. He loves all types of toys, but the toy "bin" itself is probably his favorite. He plays with all the pups, but Quincy, "Big Q," is his favorite play pal; Hawkeye being a close second.

Harvey loves bath time. Unfortunately, he gets so excited, everyone gets a bath. He's a sweetheart and love bug. When he gets an invite, he loves to snuggle close to your head. He's also great in clock for count. He works hard and does very well at all his work sites. All in all, Harvey is a great pup.

Quincy is now 17 months and has graduated from the "Baby Eeyore" status to the "elder statesman" of the puppy pound. He is the self-appointed "King Quincy" of SCI Cambridge Springs and reigns supreme over his territory anywhere inside of the fence. He wears many hats including "Nanny" for all the pups, schooling them on a daily basis on the finer points of proper rough and tumble play and work behavior. He is the chief tour guide demonstrating his skills for several visiting college groups, main office officials as well as inmates in program and education classes. He thinks he is campus security guard very loudly alerting us to all unusual and covert activities anywhere near the fence or new, unauthorized individuals entering the front door.

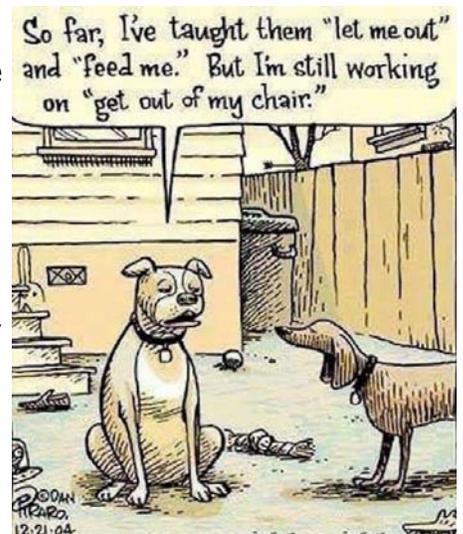
He's developed a knack for opening latches on closet doors, drawers and his kennel. He doesn't take anything. He just opens them and smugly walks away. Finally he is resident task master; time to eat, stares at his bowl; time to train, stares at the treat jar; time to play, puts his head in the middle of your book, etc.; time to go out, stares at the leash.

Quincy is always just our sweet, loving pup with the expressive eyes who's favorite pastime is chewing bones, especially at 6 a.m.!

On Jan. 4, 2016, we got a new member in our puppy family, **Hawkeye**, aka toasted marshmallow! The nickname is because of his color not his attitude! He is a beautiful cream colored pup full of energy and confidence. He loves squeaky toys! He will stop everything — even eating — when he hears a squeak! He is a smart, sweet lil guy, and we are glad to have him. He is going to make a wonderful partner for somebody!

We were fortunate to receive **Barkus** into our care on Jan. 20, 2016. He is a black lab who charms everyone. With his two different colored eyes, he is easily recognized and has many fans on campus. Barkus wags his tail when he eats and when he trains. He enjoys eating dandelions and chewing on bones. For kicks, he raises a ruckus among the other pups during play and then he retires in a corner, relishing the chaos of his creation, chewing on a toy. For a short period of time, Barkus lived up to his name by barking at us when he wasn't receiving attention on a matter of great importance to him. He would like everyone to know he has evolved in the last two months and will be leaving this phase in the past. Barkus has long legs and ears that hang low (he can tie them in a knot). We suspect he will be evolving for quite some time!

From the day **Grayson** arrived at SCI Cambridge Springs and was put in his handler's arms, she knew he as special! His name is Grayson, just like nine other names on her visitor's list. This dear boy is family. As he shivered from the cold, she tucked him into her coat to keep him warm and he stopped yelping and looked at her with loving eyes and a thankful grin. This boy hated the cold. Unfortunately, he had to do his business outside. After a while he couldn't pee without a pile of snow.



SCI Cambridge Springs (cont.)

From the very beginning he loved his kennel and all his wonderful friends, Clarice the pretty pink cow, Gator Claws (Santa's hat on the gator), the creepy guy in the corner (a green dog with huge teeth) and his beloved lion (the lion is bigger than him but he would drag him around to lay on him). Oh, how sweet! Then came play time. He quickly became known as DD for Life (Demon Dog) later renamed TD for Life for the Tasmanian devil, for how he acts when he plays. As he continues to grow he is more plotting and stalks the other dogs, but mainly barks at them and is not wild. He is very selective of who he will allow to pet him, to the dismay of all the girls who want to pet him. He is very smart and is excelling with his commands. He wants to please. The vet he goes to saw his big feet and said he would be huge. His paw is as big as a hand. And he is only six months old at 50 pounds, everyone can't wait to see how big he will get. His half brother, Barkus, came with him and is even bigger than Grayson. You would think they would be best buds, but instead he picked Hawkeye, the marshmallow colored lab who is not a brother.

On May 16, 2016, all the pups participated in the Victim's Awareness Walk. The dogs wore purple scarves and walked to do their parts in raising money for the Meadville Women's Shelter.

On June 4, 2016, they will also participate in a 5k walk to raise money for the Liberty House – a homeless shelter for vets located in Erie, PA. They will be wearing scarves that are red, white and blue!

Jamie Rodriguez, Unit Manager

SCI Huntingdon

SCI Huntingdon began its journey into the world of "PAWSabilities" on March 31, 2016, with its partnership with Canine Partners for Life (CPL). CPL provides dogs to individuals with physical disabilities. The institution received its first four puppies (Nate, Sailor, Rafter and Draco).

Inmates from the institution will be tasked with training the puppies in basic obedience and the mastery of over 30 commands while they are here. Staff volunteers are instrumental to the success of the program as they provide socialization opportunities for the dogs outside the Institutional setting. The dogs remain at the institution for approximately 14 months, at which time they return to CPL to complete their training as a service dog.



Left to right: Nate, Rafter, Sailor and Draco



Left to right: Nate, Draco, Valor and Sailor

As of May 4, 2016, Rafter has moved on to SCI Smithfield, and Valor has joined the team.

The dogs have adjusted well to their new surroundings and are doing well in their training. They will be visiting various parts of the institution as part of the ongoing training. Plans are to involve them in the visiting room, RTU, and activities areas.

Michael Swartz, Unit Manager

Inmate Testimonial:

A Life of Saving Lives

By: Gary B.

A tiny yellow Lab named Whitney came to SCI Somerset over a year ago with four other puppies. I instantly applied to be one of the very few chosen to be a handler in the new CPL puppy program. Once chosen I thought it would just be fun to work with dogs, but soon realized the transformation a yellow ball of fur named Whitney would have on me.

At first I was guarded. I spent many years building my own wall to not let anyone or any emotions in. I was calloused and resentful, but that little, adorable ball of fur was persistent. It took only weeks for Whitney to crumble a wall that it took me many years to build, one tail wag and lick to the face at a time. Self-destruction was my answer for stress, now it's production. All the work involved in training a service dog pays for itself with tail wags and dog kisses. Looking at Whitney, I dread the day she leaves. My only consolation is I'm just one person that she will save in her life.



SCI Forest



On March 10, 2016, SCI Forest's PAWS dog program held a graduation ceremony for canines and canine dog handlers. Elk County Humane Society volunteers were in attendance as well as SCI Forest staff. The event was held to recognize the contributions of inmates, staff and Elk County volunteers. Many working hours go into training the dogs and caring for the dogs. Graduates for this particular ceremony were dogs: Butch, Gabe, Abby, Biscuit, Bubba, Rocky, Romeo and Allie.



Gabe greets ECHS Volunteers with doggy kisses and hugs.

The ceremony involved a welcome introduction from Superintendent Michael Overmyer who thanked Elk County Humane Society for taking a chance on working with the facility PAWS program, where inmates and dogs are given a second chance at making a difference. Next, two inmate dog handlers held a Canine Good Citizenship testing demonstration with a black lab mix named Gabe. Gabe was the star of the show, acing all of the skillsets on the test. Upon completion, he remembered the Elk County Humane Society workers and was able to happily greet them.

Next, the remaining seven dogs were able to do a doggy freestyle show where they displayed various tricks that they had learned above and beyond their basic training. Butch had progressed much in his training to the point where he was able to mingle among the public. He was an exceptionally anxious dog. Despite this, he was able to demonstrate some of his skills. Rocky, a three time parole violator, was a natural in the maintenance stage of all of his skills and was still able to play dead, spin and bow. Bubba, Abby and Romeo were all able to demonstrate basic skill sets. The audience, particularly the Elk County staff, were amazed at how far the dogs had come and how great the inmate handlers had trained them. Biscuit, with his hound dog antics, made the audience laugh with his belly up antics.



Biscuit belly up!

The closing ceremony involved a certificate presentation to inmate handlers and the Elk County Humane Society. Some dogs were returning to the shelter, so the fact that they could go with a certificate noting completion of basic training skillsets was helpful for increasing adoptability. The Elk County volunteers were extremely happy to see the dogs that they had rescued or taken in being trained, loved and cared for so well.

Sometimes we think that we save the dogs, but in reality, they save us.

Yvette Perrin, Unit Manager



Romeo and his handler received their certificates.

SCI Greene

We hope you are enjoying the warm springtime temperatures as we are here at Greene. The puppies are certainly loving longer playtimes in the warm sun and the green grass.

Currently on K unit we have five pups, four of which have just passed 12-month evaluations. They are Lucee, Dusty, Jett and Rene. Bingo is our newest arrival. Bingo is the daughter of our Amee who graduated last July and returned to CPL. Due to Amee's excellent test results she was chosen as a breeder.

Bingo was born in October 2015 and arrived at Greene on Jan. 1, 2016. She is currently seven months old. She easily passed her four month evaluation and is getting ready for her eight month evaluation in June. All four of the girls tested with the Pen Hip test and passed with flying colors. Bingo will be tested when she reaches eight months.

We currently have 13 volunteer inmate dog handlers with several new candidates currently being considered.

We are currently planning graduation and return to the CPL kennels for our second set of pups. Rene is slated to return in late June, and at this time it appears that the remaining pups will be departing in the fall.

Recent events:

In March, several CPL staff volunteers from Greene and Somerset attended the Read Across America event at a local Elementary school and spoke to students about service dogs. The kids really enjoyed the visit with all the dogs.



On April 14, 2016, CPL Coordinator Tina Staley, Trainer Erica Seaver-Engle, as well as several other volunteers, attended dog training at SCI Somerset. It was a great opportunity for an exchange of ideas with other staff and inmates, as well as an opportunity to observe training. In addition, we were also graciously given a tour of the institution while we were on grounds. We sincerely thank the superintendents of Greene and Somerset for this chance to exchange ideas. We all look forward to continuing to work together to make both of our programs bigger and better.



In March 2014, SCI Greene opened its doors to five yellow Labrador retrievers from Canine Partners for Life to begin their journeys as service dogs-in-training. It was through a staff member that Erica began her service as a puppy trainer. Somewhat apprehensive about volunteering in a maximum security prison, Erica approached the opportunity to serve in her new role with an open-mind and strong desire to lead.

Erica began volunteering in May 2014 as SCI Greene's trainer and prison puppy program liaison for Canine Partners for Life. Twice a month, she facilitates trainings with inmate and staff handlers working with puppies-in-training to reach full service dog status. Her creative training techniques, years of experience working with dogs and leadership have provided the inmate handlers with the opportunity to challenge themselves as trainers and grow personally with each new experience. When Erica is not facilitating training, she makes time to take puppies out of the institution and socialize them at public events. Additionally, Erica has also developed a strong relationship with the puppy program liaisons at both SCIs Somerset and Laurel Highlands and continues to assist both institutions with training classes.

Erica has found meaning in working with the men in prison. She is inspired by the quote from Father Gregory Boyle, "Here is what we seek: a compassion that can stand in awe at what fellow humans have to carry rather than stand in judgment at how they carry it." She stated with passion, "I get to witness the connection between handler and puppy, as well the professionalism of each person involved with the program. Furthermore, I get to share with the community the life-changing things these men, volunteers and staff are doing. We are a team of dog trainers making a difference in the world, one person and puppy at a time."

SCI Greene (cont.)

With each training Erica continues to inspire and encourage the men to reach new goals personally and professionally. Chris said, "Seeing her continue to put so much positive energy into a program like ours encourages me to put forth more effort into other programs and situations I put myself in." Paul expressed that "her dedication to us and our program is inspiring and her patience just reminds me that some people really do care." The staff involved in the puppy program at Greene are truly grateful for her ongoing commitment and continued enthusiasm she brings to the program. She is the definition of a team player and truly passionate about her volunteer duties.

Erica lives in Uniontown with her husband, Jim, and two beautiful dogs, Baxter and Tortilla. She graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University with a BS in mathematics, and Ohio University with a MA in outdoor education and recreation. She currently serves as the program coordinator for the Phoenix Arts Center, a mission of The Uniontown Arts Fellowship. Erica was the driving force behind Lafayette Community recently receiving a \$10,000 Seeds of Change grant to re-enliven the community garden for the well-being and education of students at Lafayette Elementary and the local neighborhood.

Additionally, she is currently training to become a yoga instructor, a strong passion she shares with many.

SCI GREENE CPL COMMITTEE

Superintendent Robert Gilmore
Tina Staley - Program Director
Kayla Shaner- Program Administrator
Lt. Eric Grego- Security Liaison
Lt. Bill Schamp - Security Liaison

Marvin Cumberledge - Volunteer Coordinator
Michael Smith - Committee Chairman
Lou Giachetti
Jamie Reader
Mindy Andretti

CPL Trainer Erica Seaver-Engle



SCI Coal Township



During the month of March, staff from SCI Mahanoy visited SCI Coal Township to deliver donated items for Coal Township's FIDOS Program. Mahanoy's PCSOA, CERT, HNT, PRIDE and staff members donated toys, treats, baby wipes, food and a gift card for use in purchasing other items needed for FIDOS.

The collection was coordinated by Sally Dreher and Terra Gordner. Terra and Sally delivered the items to Coal along with Loki, a graduate from FIDOS. Loki was adopted by Terra and Sergeant Derek Nejedly. Layla was happy to see Loki again and more than happy to inspect the treats and toys that were donated by SCI Mahanoy staff. Thank you SCI Mahanoy!

Trisha Kelley, Superintendent's Assistant

Tips for Taking Your Dog to the Beach

- 1. Protect those paw pads:** If you are wearing shoes you may not realize how hot the sand actually is. To help protect your pup's paws apply *Musher's Secret* before going on the beach.
- 2. Find out if your dog likes to swim and consider using a life vest:** Not all dogs can or like to swim and those who do swim can become overwhelmed with strong currents.
- 3. Don't forget your dog's sunscreen and provide shade:** Dogs can get sunburns! Sunscreens made for dogs, babies or sensitive skin are typically safe as long as they don't contain zinc oxide. If you have concerns consult your veterinarian.
- 4. Pack plenty of water in the cooler:** Dogs can suffer from heat stroke and can easily get dehydrated. Using a lightweight, collapsible bowl is sometimes better and easier than allowing your pup to drink from a water bottle.
- 5. Take several leashes:** Some beaches permit long leashes while others do not. Also, some beaches permit dogs to be left off-leash, so it is best to check with local ordinances for leash rules and to have back ups if necessary. On a side note, if your dog is permitted to be off-leash make sure he/she is wearing a collar with updated ID tags.
- 6. Handling the beach poop:** Take several poop bags with you! No one wants to find buried dog poop when building sand castles. You may also want to have Ziploc bags in case there are no trash cans nearby.
- 7. Handling the sand-covered face:** Keep an extra bottle of cool water for those pups who like to dive and dig in the sand. A moistened towel with clean water may work best to remove sand away from eyes and muzzle area.
- 8. Avoid hidden dangers in the water:** It is not uncommon for dogs to cut their paws on sharp objects like shells. Also try to avoid areas around fishing piers where there could be hooks or cut fishing line remaining in the water.
- 9. Give your dog a clean rinse or bath:** Sand and salt can irritate your dog's skin. It is best to rinse off your pup with clean water each time you return from the beach. If you are unable to bathe your dog, a soft brush can help to remove excess sand from short-haired dogs.
- 10. Don't forget the toys:** The best toy choices are Frisbees and toys that float. While dogs love tennis balls they can get sandy and your dog may not enjoy sand in their mouth.

Dog Friendly Beaches in New Jersey:

- Lower Township (Delaware Bay Beaches)** – Dogs are permitted year-round and must be leashed.
- Stone Harbor** – Dogs are permitted between 80th and 84th street and must be leashed. Dogs can be on the beaches from sunrise to 9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. to sunset.
- Barneget Light** – Dogs are permitted at the dog park on W. 10th Street and must be on a leash.
- Island Beach State Park** – Dogs are permitted on the beach except lifeguard swimming areas. Dogs must be on a leash no longer than 6".
- Mantoloking** – Dogs are permitted on a leash between sunrise – 8:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. – sunset, except at the Lyman Street Beach.
- Asbury Park (8th Avenue Dog Beach)** – Dogs are permitted at 8th Avenue and Ocean Avenue before 9:00 A.M.
- Manasquan (Fisherman's Cove)** – Dogs are permitted on 3rd Avenue and must be leashed.
- Somers Point (Longport Dog Beach)** – Dogs are permitted on Route 152 and Ocean Drive Bridge from sunrise to sunset. It is also an "off-leash" beach where the dogs can run around and play in the water.
- Sandy Hook (Gateway National Park)** – Dogs are permitted with a \$15 cost on the bay-side beaches and must be leashed.
- Wildwood (Wildwood Dog Beach)** – Dogs are permitted between Poplar Avenue and Magnolia Avenue.

SCI Rockview



On March 7, 2016, SCI Rockview welcomed four superheroes!! Black Widow, aka Natalia, a labradoodle; The Hulk, aka Bruce, a pit mix; Captain America, aka Steve, a pit mix; and Bruce's brother, Iron Man, aka Tony, a lab mix. Partnering with New Leash on Life USA, these pups were rescued from kill shelters. This is a first for SCI Rockview that we hope will blossom into a long-term, service oriented program. The ultimate goal is to have these dogs become true "superheroes" for veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. The trainer, from New Leash On Life, comes to the facility once a week to conduct training classes, provide written material and discuss the progress and/or concerns that may exist. Each dog has two inmate handlers that work very hard at maintaining a training regimen. Currently they know come, sit, stay, down, touch and leave it commands. The training program is about a year long. The inmate handlers, the general population of inmates and staff have gotten attached to these adorable dogs. However, we know they will be welcomed into a home where they will be needed by true superheroes ... our veterans!

The puppy program at SCI Rockview has been a win on all levels. The inmates love them, the staff love them and ultimately a veteran with PTSD will love them and get a lot of love in return. This program has dramatically changed the dynamic of our facility and we are pleased to continue to support it every day.

Ted Williams, CHCA

I would have to say that the dog program is a benefit to many here at SCI Rockview: it aids in rehabilitation of the inmate; trains a puppy to provide a loving service as a PTSD companion to our veterans; and allows staff members to get some puppy love while they are at work (which does wonders for the mental status). This is a fantastic program and I am so glad to be able to share in the success!

Jamie Ficks, CRNP

The pups and young dogs will be saved from death or otherwise uncertain futures by being in the program, and the inmate trainers learn an invaluable skill that will increase their chance in the job market while also giving them an opportunity to engage in something positive and beneficial to society.

Inmate Trainer

Heather Haldeman, Major of Unit Management

For inmates at SCI-Mercer, dog-training program has mutual benefits

Inmates at SCI-Mercer have trained 122 mostly hard to place shelter dogs with an almost 100-percent adoption rate

Copyright ©, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, 2016, all rights reserved. Reprinted with permission.

May 16, 2016 12:00 AM



Tonka, a white Lab-terrier mix, is part of a program at State Correctional Institution at Mercer in which inmates train dogs from a no-kill animal shelter.

By Diana Nelson Jones / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Joe has trained 21 dogs during his stay at the State Correctional Institution at Mercer. This week, he is saying goodbye to the latest one, Tonka, a wiggly white Lab-terrier mix with a pink nose.

Every eight weeks, six dogs enter the minimum-security prison and are assigned to two inmates who are trained to prepare them for successful adoption.

In a five-year relationship with Strayhaven Animal Shelter in Greenville, Pa., in Mercer County, SCI-Mercer has taken 122 dogs, and all but one have been adopted. Many come in with behavioral issues, but their better personalities emerge during the training.

Bringing together shelter dogs and inmates



In a program at a state prison in Mercer, inmates train dogs from a local no-kill shelter. (Video by Steve Mellon; 5/17/16) Corrections staff members say the same thing about the men — whose last names and crimes are not included in this story in an agreement with prison officials.

“This is definitely a reward for someone who’s locked up,” said Gregory, whose current dog is Ooglie, a 5-year-old shepherd mix. “She was taken to Strayhaven by her family, so she was rejected. A lot of dogs come from broken homes, a lot are abandoned. It’s good to see their personalities come out” when they have a buddy. “Some days, it doesn’t feel like I’m locked up when I’m working with a dog.”

Many prisons, in Pennsylvania and nationwide, pair shelter dogs with inmates. The programs are called by different names and train dogs for different skills, including service to people with special needs, said Lisa Graves, the director of the program at Mercer. Mercer’s program with Strayhaven is called Canine Adoptive Rescue Endeavor, or CARE.

The Mercer partnership relieves the animal shelter of overcrowding and improves its flow of adoptions, said Jennifer McCurdy, manager at Strayhaven. The training the inmates provide is a star on the status of a dog that has been hard to place, she said.

Before their adoptions, the dogs at Mercer are tested for basic discipline like sitting, staying, disposition on leash and anxiety when the owner leaves.

Continued from previous page

During a recent test, training instructor Katie Costello approached Midna, a sleek black hound mix with a brown mask, and Ron, her primary handler. She patted Midna, shook hands with Ron and ran a comb over Midna's back. She summoned Ms. Graves and Randy Rickert, a staff counselor, to walk toward them, like extras in a crowd scene, to test Midna's self-possession.

"Have her stay and walk away," Ms. Costello said, and Ron said "Stay!" and walked away. He hid behind a desk. Time passed and the dog looked at Ms. Costello. She looked around the room. She put the dog's front paws on a chair to look out the window. No Ron there. Then the dog sniffed the clipboard and sat down. When Ron emerged from behind the desk, Midna's tail flipped like the rotor of a helicopter.

Special tricks are the fun accomplishments of having time to do it. Joe gets Tonka to roll over using hand signals and treats. Midna can do an air pirouette, which she demonstrated one day in a fenced play area outside. Juan, Midna's other handler, and Aaron, who co-trained a shepherd-mix named Sky, were playing keep away with the two dogs. As the dogs ran toward Juan, he called out "three sixty!" and Midna leaped and twirled.

"I'm so incredibly impressed with what these guys do," said Ms. Costello. "As we get close to graduation day, you can see their sense of worth. It's definitely a mutual benefit."

Ron was days from his release when Midna took her test. Playing with her beforehand, he placed a liver treat on his knee, his hand in the air, as Midna sat very still, inches away. When he gave the signal, she grabbed the treat and Ron kissed the top of her head.

"This is my third dog and she's been my favorite," he said. "She sleeps with me in my bunk."

He said he would love to adopt her but can't because he is moving into a halfway house.

In his and Juan's cell, the hound spends part of her day in a crate at the foot of the bunk beds. The men have tacked photos of all the dogs they have trained on a bulletin board on the wall.

Star, a 7-year-old shepherd mix, came to the prison needing behavioral correction and has since stopped getting into the garbage and begging, said Paul, her primary handler.

"I like older dogs for the challenge," he said. "I'm here to serve my time, but this gives me another purpose. It also helps with my [post-traumatic stress disorder], so I'm very grateful."

"I've taken her to PTSD sessions and she makes the other guys more relaxed, right baby?" he said, caressing Star's neck and rubbing her head with his forehead.

"This program should be at every jail," said Joe, whose pink-nosed Tonka nuzzled his leg. "It gives the guys a sense of pride, it makes us better people and we're helping these animals."

But there's always the hard part — saying goodbye to a friend who has lived with you, is always crazy to see you and who looks you in the eye the way dogs always do and humans often don't.

"I fall in love with every single one of them," Joe said. "That's the blessing in reverse."

Strayhaven's Facebook page shares stories about its CARE program with Mercer.

Recipe

Bahama Mamma

This tropical treat is sure to delight your pup!

Ingredients:

- 1 cup unsweetened shredded coconut
- 1 cup granola (make sure it doesn't have raisins)
- 1/2 cup pineapple
- 1/2 cup peanut butter



Directions:

1. In a large bowl, mix the dry ingredients together.
2. Add wet ingredients and continue mixing until full incorporated.
3. Mixture can be spooned into kong as is, or rolled to form logs
4. Freeze mixture for a few hours.
5. If formed into logs, insert into kong, serve, and enjoy!
6. Store remaining logs in freezer bag. Can be stored for up to 6 months.

Spring Fever

- 1/2 Cup Plain Yogurt
- 1/2 Cup Kibble
- 1/8 Cup Green Beans
- 1/8 Cup Chopped Strawberries

Mix all ingredients together and stuff into a KONG. Freeze for a longer lasting treat.

*Will fill one to two Large or X-Large KONGs

Fruity Freeze

Ingredients: Banana, a small handful of blueberries, natural yoghurt.

Method: Mash or blend the banana, blueberries and yoghurt together in a bowl. Place the Kong, small end down, in a mug, and spoon in the mix. Place in the freezer and serve when frozen.

Food Fact: Blueberries are high in antioxidants and vitamin C, and can help to support cardiovascular and urinary tract health.

SCI Pine Grove



Dewey (11 months)

In August 2013, SCI Pine Grove partnered with United Disabilities Services (UDS) of Lancaster, Pa., to create a program to educate inmates on how to provide care for and train service dogs. United Disabilities Services is a non-profit organization committed to helping people with disabilities lead more independent lives. UDS currently services over 30 counties in Pennsylvania. In 2014, the journey began with the creation of the TAILS Program at SCI Pine Grove. The acronym TAILS was selected by SCI Pine Grove staff to describe the mission of the



Lewes, Avalon, and Jersey (9 months)

program as it refers to the five elements that the project is designed to foster; namely: Train, Assist, Inspire, Loyal and Serve. In June 2015, SCI Pine Grove's TAILS program successfully completed its inaugural year. The TAILS program canines exceeded the expectations of both the SCI Pine Grove staff, the inmate canine handlers and UDS Staff. In early June 2015, the first round of TAILS canines graduated and returned to United Disabilities Services to participate in secondary training, approximately three months ahead of schedule! Over the next several months, three of the four TAILS canines (Somerset, Milton and Deora) completed all phases of the training and were placed with individuals in Pennsylvania from the UDS Service Dog waiting list, including a disabled veteran.

In May 2016, TAILS canine Somerset was the first of the TAILS graduates to pass the Public Access Test! The purpose of the Public Access Test is to provide a general standard of evaluation regarding the behavior of trained service dogs that assist with disabilities. Somerset received her working vest, and she and her owner are now a certified team.

Dogs in the Community

The TAILS canines have been very busy in the community during the last few months preparing for their lives as service dogs.

In January 2016, the TAILS service dogs in training visited TUMC Preschool in Scottsdale, Pa., as part of their Community Helpers program. Sixty students between the ages of 3-6 attended the program and were educated about service dogs and proper service dog interaction.



TAILS canine Lewes with CCII Tara Marhefka and TAILS canine Jersey with CCII Tammy Delosh at the TUMC Community Helpers program.



Avalon resting at the UDS Gala

In February 2016, the TAILS services dogs in training visited with residents at a nursing home in Indiana, Pa.

In March 2016, the TAILS service dogs in training attended the 2016 Pennsylvania MATHCOUNTS competition in Harrisburg, Pa.

In May 2016, the TAILS services dogs in training attended the 51st Annual United Disabilities Services Gala "Expanding Horizons" in Strasburg, Pa.

SCI Pine Grove (cont.)

Indiana University of Pennsylvania Certificate Program

SCI Pine Grove also partnered with Indiana University of Pennsylvania’s Adult and Continuing Education program and United Disabilities Services to provide the inmates of SCI Pine Grove with the recognition of a certificate in dog training and care. The program was designed to support inmates in three important ways: (1) by expanding their knowledge of and skills in working with dogs of various types, (2) by giving them an official form of recognition for the specialized expertise that they have acquired and (3) by improving their communication skills and ability to work effectively with community members. In February 2015, SCI Pine Grove staff officially began teaching the course. The program consists of four 30 hour courses for a total of 120 hours of formal education. The program topics include canine wellness, dog training in correctional facilities, animal rescue and rehabilitation, shelters, training different types of service dogs, communication skills, working with the public, etc. In June 2016, SCI Pine Grove staff began teaching the second course with five new inmate handlers.

Tara A. Marhefka, Corrections Counselor II



SCI Graterford

Graterford has made some additions to our goose patrol. We have adopted two dogs from rescues in Pennsylvania, and we are fortunate to have them! Our team consists of the following:



Boomer is our Australian shepherd who is semi-retired but takes care of the helipad area and various other spots near the OSU. She is also part of the team that goes on special details inside the jail.



Cash is Superintendent Link’s dog who reports to work every work day. He is excellent at goose chasing and takes care of the large area near the RHU’s. He brings great happiness to his handler and has really helped him in his transition from being inside for many years and now preparing for life in the real world.



Cocoa is an Australia shepherd that was adopted from the Australian Shepherd Rescue. She is still in training as a goose dog but has done a good job so far. Cocoa has been responsible for running the main and side yards. For anyone who has ever been here, they know that is a huge area but she loves to run!



Luna is an 11 month old Australian shepherd, English setter mix that we recently adopted from the English Setter Rescue. She is already doing very well with her training and loves going inside of the jail. The plan is for her to work as a pair with Cocoa in the main and side yards. Luna is also very people friendly and is being evaluated as a possible support dog for the mental health area of the facility.

Sylvia Pallott, Unit Manager

Where are they now?



The CARE program has a positive effect on the institution, it gives inmates the opportunity to appropriately interact with staff and the dogs' mere presence can brighten someone's day. Rubi is the most amazing dog I have ever had the pleasure of sharing my home with. My advantage was that I could stop in and check on her progress regularly and had the opportunity to bond with her. We work with her regularly to keep her training intact as suggested by the inmate trainers. – Captain Byers



The CARE program is, I think, an amazing program. These guys took these dogs that no one else wanted, for one reason or another, and changed them into well behaved, trained dogs that become loving family member to some lucky people. I should know, my wife and I adopted one a little while back. Allister is a wonderful dog and family member. – CO1 Custer



We adopted Milo in December 2015 and he has been an awesome addition to our family. We got him as a companion for my housebound husband, and he is right with him all the time and makes sure "Dad" is okay when he has issues. Milo brightens our day, greets me at the door and is always ready with love and hugs. – Dental Assistant Rawl



I adopted Banter from the CARE program about two years ago and he has become a friend to my whole family. He has become one of the family. My family and I are very happy that we took Banter in to our house. The inmates that work in the CARE program really did a great job with him. It's hard to believe that nobody wanted him. I would recommend this program to everyone. – CO1 Powell

I AM 
Rescued

You didn't care how I looked
or that I wasn't a pedigree

You showed me I am not disposable
and that I am loved

You brought back the sparkle
in my eye and the shine of my coat

You restored my spirit
so my tail can wag again

You took a chance on me
to see what I can become

You gave me a place to call home
and a family to call my own



Wrangler is believed to be a boxer and lab mix. We adopted him over four years ago. He loves his family but is totally devoted to Josie, whom we adopted about 18 months ago. She is believed to be a St. Bernard and lab mix. They are two gentle giants; they weigh-in at 75 and 90 pounds. They are both fabulous with our grandsons. The training they received at SCI Mercer prepared them to be awesome pets. They definitely complete our family! – FHRO Quimby and RNS Quimby

Where Are They Now (cont.)



Moxie (Mushu) has been a welcomed addition to our household and family. When I saw her spunk and sass (hence the new name), I immediately fell for her and she has weaseled her way into all of our hearts. When I met her for the first time, she jumped up into my lap looking at me as if she was saying, "Yes, I think I shall go home with you!" She was intended to be a companion for my rott/shep mix, which has worked out quite well. We say Moxie is "his" dog. Everyone knows, however, her attachment to me is priority, always having to be at my side. Thanks to her training in the CARE, her inclusion into the family was smooth and trouble free. - CO1 Chapman



We were all happy to add Lyssa to our family. The kids had been asking to get a dog for a long time. She loves to just go out in the back yard and run after her toys. She loves to play with everyone and loves when new people come over to our house to visit. The fact that she came already house trained and knowing all kinds of different commands made life really easy with Lyssa. I know if I was ever going to add another member to the family I would definitely be adopting out of the program again. - CO1 Sydlik



Zoie (aka Fannie) is doing great. Her favorite thing to do is ride in the car. She gets all excited, dancing around and talking, then runs with her brothers to the car and is the first to jump in. Zoie likes her treats and morning breakfast right after her brothers come back from their walk. She jumps right up on the bed to eat. Her brothers love her and she loves them, following them everywhere. We are very happy that she is part of our lives! - UM Combine



Bugsy has been a wonderful addition to the family. She loves to relax in her new home... and she is spoiled! The CARE Program really works at helping to make these dogs more adoptable. - Lt. Williamson



Homer, a two-and-half-year-old yellow Labrador was welcomed with open arms at Paul's Run Retirement Community in Northeast Philadelphia on Monday, January 11, 2016. Homer is their new Residential Companion Dog from Canine Partners for Life and was raised at SCI Smithfield. He will live at the facility and provide therapeutic support to the residents and staff. He has already made several friends, attends facility meetings, joins residents for activities and love. When Homer needs to catch a quick nap he has his own cubicle to relax in. -Kammy Laird, School Principal

Where Are They Now (cont.)



Gracie joined our family the weekend of the historic Harrisburg snow storm in January. Watching her with the snow was quite funny, as she did not know what to do. The snow was taller than her and probably colder than anything she has been in contact with before. We made a couple paths in the yard so she could run around and play fetch.

After a couple weeks of being with us she managed to escape her crate (three times) and would greet us in the kitchen when we got home from work. My husband soon learned his lesson of leaving slippers and flip flops out, as she enjoyed using them as chew toys. Everyone who meets her says how cute and well behaved she is. We are so happy to have her and love to spoil her.

Her true personality has finally come out. She loves playing outside and running around the yard chasing squirrels. She also had her first experience with lawn ornaments. She would bark and growl at them to see if they were real. Once she figured out they weren't, she carried them around the yard by whatever piece she could grab.

Gracie still knows all the things that she learned in the HOPE program at Camp Hill. We took her to a basic manners and obedience class to allow **us** to get to know **her** better. She also learned a bunch of new tricks. She did great and graduated in April.

She is a 50 pound lap dog who loves to snuggle. She is so happy to see us when we get home that when we let her out of her crate she grabs her favorite dino, or lizard squeak toy, and runs around like a crazy person. That is how she greets us, so we now refer to her as "Gracie Monster." We know by the way she greets us when we come home that that is the best part of her day. Little does she know that seeing her when we get home is also the best part of our day! —Scott Whalen, Unit Manager

SCI Mercer

Approaching the 5th Anniversary of the inception of the CARE program at SCI Mercer, and nearing a 100% adoption success rate, we continue to strive in our mission to rescue, train and ultimately place our dogs in forever homes.

Recently, we've welcomed a new trainer, Katie Costello. Katie is a licensed veterinary technician and a Certified Professional Dog Trainer-Knowledge Assessed (CPDT-KA). As our guide through the journey of obedience training and conditioning, she has brought with her an amazing passion and love for our furry pals. Accompanied with a wealth of experience and knowledge, she is a great addition to our endeavor.

Over the course of the years, we've had many of our dogs adopted by staff members. It is a unique opportunity to the circumstances and the setting, especially for us handlers, because we are able to have face to face updates on some of our graduates and how they've adjusted into their new homes. It has been beneficial to the staff and the dogs alike, where as we have the ability to communicate and often times brainstorm ideas and solutions to issues that sometimes arise. From heartwarming, funny stories to the sometimes difficult situations, we've been able to continue helping and it's always rewarding when we do so.

We have thrived in our objective to help these dogs, who more times than not come to us out of misfortune. It has been a blessing to all of us, making a difference in their lives and vice versa. So we are forever and always grateful for the opportunity to do what we do and love to do. To all the staff that have given forever homes to the dogs, a special thank you.

**** This article was written and compiled by 2 of the CARE Program handlers: Joe C. & Nate N.****

Lisa Graves, Unit Manager

SCI Laurel Highlands



In January 2016, SCI Laurel Highlands welcomed Gretchen, Ditto, Chancey and Merry, puppies from Canine Partners For Life. Laurel Highlands and CPL have teamed up to give inmates a chance to be a part of a life changing program. This program will change lives on both sides of the fence ,and for those of us that are canine handlers, the change has already started.

We all have made wrong choices in our lives, and for those of us who are incarcerated, our choices made in the past are of all degrees. This program gives us the opportunity to give back to our community and victims. To raise and train a puppy to become a service dog that will assist an individual in the community is a wonderful opportunity to give back.

This program is a powerful reminder to us of the good in the world and the good that is in all of us. We feel as if we have been awakened inside. We have been given hope that we can change for the better. We are more alive inside. We feel the love, joy, pride, trust, confidence, loyalty and importance of this work.

The program brings inmates and staff together. The staff values the program and gives all they can. They help us and the dog sby providing toys, accessories and outside experiences we cannot give them. They encourage us to be better and help us with everything we need.

When sick and terminally ill inmates housed in the medical units see the puppies, it gives them hope, joy and a feeling of comfort. It puts smiles on their faces. Even the toughest man's heart melts. Their voices lighten up when they are petting the puppies, and they become more of a child rather than a big bad criminal.

The Canine Partner For Life prison puppy program benefits all of us in positive way within the prison. Attitudes change, men change, hearts lighten up and mindsets change.

The importance of this program is huge on both sides of the dog training and future services. It brings joy, laughter, pride and hope to inmates. The overall outcome is a huge benefit for the person receiving a well-trained, loving service dog that will help them live life a little easier.

Submitted by the SCI LAU Puppy Handlers
Gretchen – Charles T/Joseph R
Chancey – Shawn P/Wayne C
Merry – Christopher G/Andrew K
Ditto – Jeret H/Thomas T

Ralph DiBridger, Unit Manager

SCI Albion

Currently at SCI Albion, we have five pups.

Banks, a black lab, is 17 months old and will be departing for the next phase of his training at CPL in July.

Chadds, a yellow lab, is 14 months old and will probably be at Albion until the fall of 2016.

Shepp, a yellow lab, is just over six month and is starting to come into his own.

Drew, a black lab, and half-brother to Banks, is 10 months old. Drew came to us from a puppy home and had some catching up to do training wise. Thanks to the diligence of the inmate puppy handlers, Drew is progressing very well now.

Toto, our newest addition, is a yellow lab. He is just over four months old and has acclimated very well. When we received Toto, another one of our pups, Fidget, also a half-brother of Banks, was transferred to CPL for his next phase of training.

We are anticipating some transition in our program. We are adding some inmate handlers; some staff volunteers have moved on from the program due to increasing work load demands; and I will be retiring at the end of May 2016.

As for myself, it has been a pleasure to watch the pups grow and develop, interact with the inmate handlers, the staff and community volunteers. Going to the CPL graduation ceremonies and seeing how the pups/dogs are able to assist their recipients enabled me to see the value of this program. My involvement in the program was definitely a motivating factor in coming to work many days.

So, in closing, I would like to thank SCI Albion, the PA Department of Corrections and CPL for the opportunity to participate in this program. It has been a wonderful journey.

Roderic Showers, Unit Manager



WHY DOES MY DOG BEG WITH HIS EYES?

The pleading gaze of a begging dog can be irresistible. And this is no accident. During his long partnership with man, the dog has perfected cunning methods of exploiting the human neurosis that associates food with affection. In prehistoric times semi-domesticated canines first cultivated human beings as a food provider. As the two species grew closer, dogs modified begging behaviors to maximize results: The more pathetic a dog seemed, the more scraps were tossed his way. Dogs have since refined this approach into a low-risk, high-reward hunting technique.



The Facilities with Puppy Programs:

SCI Albion

SCI Huntingdon

SCI Benner Township

SCI Laurel Highlands

SCI Camp Hill

SCI Mercer

SCI Cambridge Springs

SCI Muncy

SCI Coal Township

SCI Pine Grove

SCI Forest

SCI Retreat

SCI Frackville

SCI Rockview

SCI Graterford

SCI Smithfield

SCI Greene

SCI Somerset

SCI Houtzdale

Chester, Dallas, Fayette, Mahanoy, and Waymart coming soon!!!

If you would like to start your own dog program at your facility contact:
Daniel Lorditch, Activities Coordinator, AOII (dlorditch@pa.gov).

Any materials for publishing should be in word format and submitted to:
Deanna Stager, SCI Graterford (dstager@pa.gov).

This and previous editions of this newsletter can be viewed
on the DOC's website at www.cor.pa.gov

Quiz Answers

1. Greyhound
2. Boxer
3. Beagle
4. Collie
5. Mastiff
6. Pointer
7. Poodle
8. Vizlas
9. Whippet
10. Akita

Fill in blank section:
Dogs love unconditionally and are mans best friend