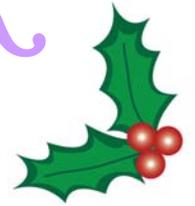


December 2016

Volume 3: Edition 2



All Paws On Deck



SCI Dallas

A hero is never alone thanks to



America's VetDogs mission is to help those who have served our country honorably live with dignity and independence.

The service dog programs of America's VetDogs® were created to provide enhanced mobility and renewed independence to veterans and active-duty service members with disabilities, allowing them to once again live with pride and self-reliance. Not only does a service dog provide support with daily activities, it provides the motivation to tackle new challenges.

VetDogs trains and places guide dogs for individuals who are blind or have low vision; PTSD service dogs to help mitigate the effects of post-traumatic stress disorder; hearing dogs for those who have lost their hearing later in life; service dogs for those with other physical disabilities and facility dogs as part of the rehabilitation process in military and VA hospitals.

It costs over \$50,000 to breed, raise, train and place one assistance dog; however, all of VetDogs' services are provided at no charge to the veteran. Funding comes from the generosity of individuals, corporations, foundations, businesses and service and fraternal clubs.

Once they make the decision to get a service dog, applicants become part of VetDogs' open and welcoming community. They are supported with an uncompromised commitment to excellence, from highly empathetic and certified trainers to a meticulously constructed curriculum. VetDogs teams each student with the dog that's right for them – and the power of their bond makes ordinary moments extraordinary. Crossing the street independently becomes a moment of liberation. Traveling alone becomes a welcome adventure. Embracing new experiences becomes an everyday occurrence.

With an assistance dog from America's VetDogs by their side, a hero is never alone. With their courage and determination, these remarkable teams reconnect us all to the highest form of freedom there is: the freedom to experience the world around us in any way we choose and to live without boundaries.

Superintendent Mahally has graciously allowed America's Vetdogs program at SCI Dallas. Not only will the dogs change the life of disabled veterans, they will change the lives of the veteran's loved ones, the inmates and staff.

On Sept. 20, 2016, selected inmates were interviewed by Vetdogs staff. Of those inmates, three were selected to be primary handlers and three as secondary handlers. We anticipate the first three puppies to arrive in November 2016.

Thank you Superintendent Mahally!



Michael Goyne
CCPM

SCI Houtzdale

The S.C.I. Houtzdale R.U.F.F. Program was established when it partnered with the United Disability Service (UDS) Foundation. The UDS Foundation is a non-profit organization based in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, committed to helping people with disabilities, including veterans and the elderly, lead more independent and fulfilling lives. For over 50 years, UDS has developed a wide variety of services and programs that improve quality of life and expand boundaries – including Accessible Home Modifications, Home Medical Equipment, Service Dogs, Custom Wheelchair Seating and more.

Following a stringent screening process which identified 12 inmate handlers, S.C.I. Houtzdale received its first four canines, Abel, Brodey, Murray and Renner on Dec. 9, 2015. The four dogs are English Labrador retrievers which came to UDS from two breeders located within the Commonwealth. Following their reception to S.C.I. Houtzdale both staff assigned to the program and the inmate handlers alike went to work. Their initial focus was geared towards housetraining while building a basic foundation for the pups to progress in not only their training but also their acclimation to a new setting. This transition has been both challenging as well as rewarding for those involved with the program. The program has provided the inmate handlers with the opportunity to give back to the community by providing a service that will ultimately enrich and aid in the daily lives of Pennsylvania Citizens in need of service dog assistance.



Abel

All four dogs came to S.C.I. Houtzdale when they were eight to nine weeks old. Abel, a yellow English Labrador retriever, initially was afraid of staircases as well as heights. His behavior was nothing short of being deemed “hyper.” Over time, the inmate handlers worked diligently to help Abel overcome his fears and as well taught him how to “bark” or “speak” in program terms. As Abel progressed through the program, he gained confidence, self-control and discipline while becoming the star of the S.C.I. Houtzdale Inmate Visiting Room. Abel understands and reacts to all commands given but at times can be “stubborn” when acting on given commands. That said, the inmate handlers have done an excellent job of addressing these issues thus making Abel a more better rounded dog. Inmate handler Mark K. adds that Abel is consistently at his side. Abel’s inmate handlers have noted that he consistently seeks praise and will go as far as performing commands without being instructed to do so with the intent of gaining that recognition. Abel is currently 14 months old. His progress in the program is noted by staff and inmates alike. Those involved with the program believe that he is well on his way to becoming a highly successful service dog.

Brodey, is a 13-month-old chocolate English Labrador retriever. Upon arrival to S.C.I. Houtzdale he experienced issues related to his diet. Specifically, the transition from one brand of dog food to another was a difficult for him. In time Brodey overcame this issue and adjusted to the new food while not looking back. From a behavior/demeanor standpoint, Brodey was initially a “handful” for the inmate handlers. Early on, he consistently pulled at the leash, barked at all hours of the day and was considered a scavenger in regards to chewing any items he could gather from the ground on his daily walks. As Brodey has progressed in the program he has demonstrated a willingness to curb his negative behaviors while growing into a fine young pup. Inmate handler, Bill S. describes Brodey as having a big heart while referring to him as the “jokester” of the group. Bill S. also adds that Brodey is the most playful dog of group and loves to play hide and seek with his treats. Brodey’s strong grasp of program commands in conjunction with the strides he has made from a behavior standpoint also serve as reason to believe he will be a fine service dog.



Brodey



Murray

Murray is a 14-month-old yellow English Labrador retriever. Upon his arrival at S.C.I. Houtzdale he was a highly energetic, unfocused pup. Murray initially had issues traversing staircases as well demonstrated a phobia of heights. Those involved with program noted that it was very difficult to gain and maintain the attention of Murray through the early stages of the program. As he progressed within the program, his ability to focus became a primary area of work with the inmate handlers. Inmate handler Daniel P. describes Murray as a smart energetic, fun-loving dog who excels at solving problems especially when retrieving items. Additionally, Murray will actively work at solving problems until he accomplishes success and praised for his actions. Murray is loyal and considered to be an “awesome companion” by his inmate handlers. Unlike some of the other pups involved in the S.C.I. Houtzdale R.U.F.F. Program, Murray has not experienced any health set-backs during the 11 months he has been training at the facility.

During his stay here at S.C.I. Houtzdale, Murray has earned the nickname, “Murray the Mooch”. His nickname stems from his uncanny ability to win over his audience and in turn gain praise for doing so.

SCI Houtzdale cont.



Renner

Renner came to S.C.I. Houtzdale as an eight-week-old. Renner experienced a set-back upon reception to the facility in the form of urinary tract infection and a "droopy" eye. Renner was treated for these issues and has successfully overcome these problems. Inmate handler Shawn F. reports that Renner initially had an issue with pulling on the leash, walking very slowly and chasing birds. During his training Renner corrected issues related to pulling on the leash. His inmate handler's state the harness has aided greatly in regards to pulling on the leash. Those affiliated with the program report that Renner is very intelligent and acquires new commands/tasks quickly. As is the case with all of the pups, Renner has a thorough knowledge of all program commands. Renner is deemed an easy-going dog and loves his independence when given the opportunity to demonstrate it. His love for exploring new sights and sounds has been noted by many involved with the program. His laid-back attitude and strong desire to please will make him a great service dog and companion. During his time at S.C.I. Houtzdale, he has earned the nickname, "Mr. Wiggles" due to the way he moves

when greeting new people as well as when he meets older inmates housed at S.C.I. Houtzdale.

Following their reception to S.C.I. Houtzdale, the pups immediately began the process of socialization within the facility. Each week the R.U.F.F. Program Coordinator with the assistance of the inmate handlers, develops a weekly schedule which serves as a formal itinerary for the pups and their handlers. Areas visited weekly within the facility are as follows: RTU, DTU, Inmate Visiting Room, Infirmary, Education, Activities, Maintenance, Laundry, Commissary, Inmate Housing Units as well as the various recreational areas located throughout the facility. Though not every area listed above is visited weekly, areas of focus include the specialized housing units to include the RTU, DTU and VSU. It should also be noted that in May 2016 the S.C.I. Houtzdale R.U.F.F. Program moved from I Unit to then G Unit. G Unit is a custody level 2

housing unit that also plays host to the Veterans Service Unit. Those affiliated with the program as well as many of the incarcerated veterans participating in VSU programming has remarked on the importance of the daily interactions with the pups on the unit. Additionally, inmates housed on the specialized units to include the RTU and DTU consistently look forward to sometimes daily visits from the pups. It should also be noted that during their stay at S.C.I. Houtzdale, the pups participated in the 2016 S.C.I. Houtzdale Memorial Day Service.



Mural located on the VSU/R.U.F.F. Unit



Renner, Murray, Ms. Cates, Abel and Brodey

On Oct. 20, 2016, S.C.I. Houtzdale did a three-week "pup swap" with the Moshannon Valley Correctional Facility. On this date we switched our four dogs with the four pups currently being trained at that respective facility. The four dogs received from the Moshannon Valley Correctional Facility are also English Labrador retrievers (3 yellow, 1 chocolate). Their names are as follows: Carson, Finn, Journey and Link. All four pups are roughly nine months in age. In general the pups are well-trained and active. Discipline issues have been noted and the R.U.F.F. Program inmate handlers have actively worked to resolve some of the behavior related issues they have encountered. Specifically, all four dogs have demonstrated boundary issues. Those associated with the program believe the difference in layout from their sending facility to their current location in conjunction with the anxiety associated with the switch may have led to the issues the inmate handlers have encountered. It is also noted that the four pups received from the Moshannon Valley Correctional Fa-

ility do not appear to interact with staff in the same manner as the four pups that were trained at S.C.I. Houtzdale. That said, the inmate handlers have viewed the experience as positive in nature. The switch has allowed the inmate handlers to put their skills to the test as well serve as a barometer from a training standpoint.

Craig Petulla
Unit Manager

SCI Laurel Highlands



On Thursday, Oct. 13, 2016, the SCI Laurel Highlands pups completed their 12 month evaluations with Canine Partners For Life (CPL). We are pleased to announce that all pups passed! They were handled by unfamiliar people during the evaluation test, (a CPL requirement). We are proud of our outstanding handlers and pups.

We are getting more staff volunteers participating in training. We are continuing to expose the pups to as many new situations as possible while we have the chance. They can't be fearful of new environments, strangers, other dogs, loud noises, scary things and make it as a ser-

vice dog.

We had a graduation party prior to our training session on Thursday, Oct. 27, 2016. Handlers and staff enjoyed cake and coffee and Merry, Ditto, Chancey, and Gretchen enjoyed pupcakes.



Graduation, however, doesn't mean we are finished with training. We are continuing to work on more advanced skills, consistent review of the basics, and future socialization. We are spending time now with our pups before they are off to CPL for year two of training.

SCI Somerset

The Canine Partners for Life (CPL) dog program at SCI Somerset has surpassed all expectations since its inception in May 2015. Our first five dogs have all moved on to their next stages in training. We currently have 20 inmate handlers and four beautiful Labrador retrievers in our program ranging in age from four months to 15 months old, at various stages of their training. Our current crew of pups are Bosco, Peaches, Nana and Louise. Over the next three months we anticipate receiving four additional pups into our training program.

We are excited to report that Canine Partners for Life has recently approached SCI Somerset about expanding their program in our facility. We have agreed to their proposal and are currently preparing to expand by offering a weaning program, in addition to our training program. Through this weaning program we will house, train, socialize, and care for a mother from the CPL Breeding Program and her litter of pups from the age of two weeks to eight weeks. This will be a very different process than what we currently do with the pups that we receive at eight weeks or older. We are very excited about this new endeavor and all the learning and challenges that will come with it.

The inmate mural painting crew at SCI Somerset has been busy making our institution a more colorful place to be. Before our "First Five" pups to complete our program moved on to the CPL Kennel the mural crew made sure that they would leave a lasting mark on the housing unit they were raised on, by painting them each into the dayroom décor of the unit. They did a beautiful job depicting each of the pups and their individual personalities into the paintings! Five of the inmates on the mural painting crew are also inmate dog handlers within our program, which made this project something that they were very vested in.



*Melanie Pyle
Unit Manager*

SCI Retreat

For those of you who are unaware or have not had the pleasure to visit, SCI Retreat is nestled at the bottom of a picturesque mountainside directly along the Susquehanna River. With the river and the mountains literally hugging the institution, one can imagine the variety of wildlife that we come in contact with on a daily basis; herds of deer, turkeys, raccoons, skunks, black bears, snakes, frogs, the 17 year cicadas, egrets, herons and nesting bald eagles. Unfortunately, however, flocks of Canadian geese have been calling the Retreat grounds home for many years and though quite regal and beautiful, their presence creates problems due to their droppings.



With the approval of Superintendent Vince Mooney, our goose dogs entered the lives and hearts of Retreat staff and inmates in the spring of 2016. Sisters from the same litter who are part border collie and boxer, they were adopted from Ruff Rescue in northeast PA after being saved from euthanasia down south. Shortly after their arrival, staff were encouraged to provide suggestions for names and a highly competitive contest was begun. The winning names were chosen by majority vote and could not be more appropriate in a place where in the past there may not have been, Hope and Joy now exist.



With four handlers assigned to them, the "girls", as we all call them, live on B Unit. They venture into nearly all areas of the institution including the Residential Treatment Units and yard, the Diversionary Treatment Unit, Restricted Housing Unit and the Secure Residential Treatment Unit with great response and feedback. In fact, a huge mural of them was the first to decorate the walls of one of our RTU's. They make appearances for public visitors and are available for snapshots if requested by inmates with picture tickets. They have been trained to sit, roll over, shake hands, stay and carry their toys and brushes for themselves. They don't particularly like to take baths (and Joy had a mandatory one recently when she got slightly sprayed by a skunk along the fence), but they love attention, treats, playing with each other and running.

From an inmate handler standpoint, we are told that collectively, there is a change in the atmosphere due to the puppies' presence. Many in our population admit that they look out their windows just to watch Hope and Joy walk about the institution. One of the handlers relayed that an inmate recently asked to pet the pups and then said he had not petted a dog in over 20 years, since he was young, and told him how much it meant. I believe that a statement from one of the handlers sums up the positivity from an individual perspective: "We are all in prison for something. Having been convicted of any crime, we have already been judged. It is nice that Joy doesn't judge me. She is like most humans in the sense that we all want to love someone and to be loved. Joy has certainly fulfilled her part."

As you have read, Hope and Joy's presence at Retreat has been nothing short of a blessing for all, that is...except for the geese who now stay along the river line, far away from our awesome goose dogs who patrol and protect their new home.

Stacy Miller
CCPM



SCI Mahanoy



The P.U.P. program that started at SCI Mahanoy on July 5, 2016, has proven to be a welcomed addition to the institution, bringing smiles to both inmates and staff. In six short months, 14 Inmate handlers have had the opportunity to work with the puppies from Brierwood Kennels. They have learned everything from basic grooming and commands to life saving PET CPR. With the help and assistance from Brierwood Kennel owners, Amy and Steven Eckert, the inmate handlers and puppies participate in two training sessions a week. They learn commands and basic grooming for the animals and then are asked to practice their new skills between the classes, working with their assigned dogs. The canines are then adopted out to those in the community and our SCI staff alike. Since inception, the P.U.P. Program has had 19 dogs successfully adopted to their "forever" homes.

On Sept. 26, 2016, a special training class was arranged by Brierwood Kennels through BOWWOWBEAUTY.COM AND PET SUPPLIES PLUS. Trainers, Morrell and Lisa Devlin accompanied by their dogs Shiloh and Bane spent the afternoon with 16 of our Inmate Handlers teaching them Canine CPR. Each Handler received a Certificate of Completion and found the class to be informative and educational. In addition to training the dogs, the handlers are asked to take their dogs to various other areas of the institution to visit with other inmates and staff. Most meaningful, are the visits the handlers make with their dogs to the infirmary, where there are inmates receiving medical care who cannot leave that area. The inmate handlers cannot believe the difference the dog's visits make. "They are a great source of comfort for those inmates in the infirmary who are sick or gravely ill." (Inmate Handler)

The inmates were asked what impact the program has had on them and how they feel the program is benefiting the facility. Several of the handlers mentioned that they have learned a new sense of responsibility caring for their dogs and have gained more self-worth. They felt that, like themselves, the dogs are being given a second chance and helping the dogs become more adoptable is a huge accomplishment to experience. One handler mentioned "I noticed a total change in the atmosphere when the pups arrived. People were happy, people who normally would not associate began talking and new friendships were made. Relationships between both staff and inmates has improved due to the common agenda we both have." (Inmate Handler) There is no doubt that both the handlers and the staff have seen the difference the puppies have made throughout the facility, from the Infirmary, DTU, to the regular housing units. A difference we hope is here to stay!

*Traci Jacobson
Unit Manager*

SCI Frackville



Who's a good little witch? Why it's Feye, the resident mascot at SCI Frackville, who was all dressed up and ready to do tricks for treats on Halloween, Feye was one of the first puppies to come through FIDO's dog training program when it began at Frackville earlier this year. She was adopted by the institution and now is a K-9 staff member on duty in the Superintendent's Complex. Feye gets rave reviews as a Frackville team member, bringing smiles to the faces of everyone she meets.



*Jennifer Newberry
Superintendent's Assistant*

SCI Smithfield



There are four puppies at Smithfield. Harper, Trapper, Barley (black labs), and Zern (yellow lab). Barley arrived at Smithfield on November 22 as Rafter, our golden retriever advanced to the next level of training at the Canine Partners for Life Training Facility in Cochranville. Sargent left Smithfield to advance to his second phase of service dog training with Canine Partners for Life in June.

Both programs at SCI Smithfield and SCI Huntingdon were featured at Canine Partner's For Life Annual Open House on September 17 in Cochranville. Over 1,000 people visited CPL for their open house and were able to learn about the two prison puppy programs at Smithfield and Huntingdon.

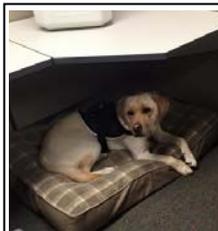


Left to right: Rafter & Zern from SCI Smithfield, and Valor from SCI Huntingdon.

On September 25, the puppies from Smithfield and Huntingdon participated with volunteers Wendy Wilson, MacKenzie Howe and Tracey Spillman at the Bark for Life of Central PA event at the Pennsylvania Military Museum in Boalsburg. The event is hosted by Relay for Life of Bellefonte and Relay for Life of Happy Valley as a fundraising event honoring the relationship between survivors and their companions, be they human or canine. The canines and humans walk to honor the caregiving qualities of their canine "Best Friends" and canine cancer survivors.



Norm, a Smithfield puppy, graduated from his second phase of training at CPL on November 6. Norm now lives and works in the state of Indiana with his recipient Larry.



Homer, a former Smithfield puppy, is now an "employee" of Paul's Run Retirement Community in Northeast Philadelphia as a companion dog to the residents. He settled in nicely, lives at the facility, and provides therapeutic support to the residents and staff. He even has his own cubicle to rest.



*Kammy Laird
School Principal*

"An open letter to the prisoner that trained my service dog.

I never would have imagined I would be writing this letter, but life doesn't always follow the rules. When I fell ill over three years ago, I had no idea that a stranger was going to impact my life in such a HUGE way. Without you, I wouldn't be who I am today. Because of your time, effort, love and compassion, I am forever in your debt.

Every midnight potty break, every time Jasper was stubborn and didn't want to listen, every kiss and every tail wag does not go unnoticed. Your dedication and love for him shines daily through his skills and behavior. Every alert, every time he helps me take a step, I am grateful for you. You are living proof that mistakes do not define who you are. While you may have messed up in the past, you are giving back to humanity and have restored the well-being of a young woman who was so lost before her companion entered her life.

Because of you and your hard work, I am able to live a *somewhat* normal life. I have been able to start college, volunteer daily and even apply for jobs I never imagined I would be able to have. I started a nonprofit when I was only 17 years old because of how much Jasper has helped my quality of life. I finally have independence—something that was stolen from me years ago as I fell unconscious multiple times daily. I never knew someone I have never met could play such an important role in my life. Never ever EVER question your worth, because you have helped change not only my world, but THE world. I know you miss him and I'm sure he misses you too, but when you think of his big brown eyes, his crooked teeth, his moans and groans, his love for water and snow, his paws that are too big for his body, think of me, the 15 year old girl whose life you changed forever."

SCI Greene



Lucee enjoying the fall weather

Autumn Greetings from SCI Greene! We are currently training three pups of varying ages. Jett and Lucee, our oldest pups, left Greene in October to continue learning new skills with CPL while Bingo recently completed her 12 month evaluation. We recently added two new cuties to our group. Cassidy, a beautiful yellow Lab pup and Kona a sweet black Lab pup!

An article from our trainer: Erica Seaver-Engle:

Little Bits of Good from SCI Greene and Canine Partners for Life

"Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put all together that overwhelm the world." – Bishop Desmond Tutu

We are constantly inspired by the "little bits of good" happening in the prison puppy/dog programs featured in this newsletter. We humbly add a few bits of good from SCI-Greene's partnership with Canine Partners for Life:

- In June 2016 we witnessed Suka, Amber and Zin graduate as full-service dogs and Amee graduate into the CPL breeding program. In addition, Goldie was adopted by a staff member, so handlers and staff get to see her now and then! All yellow Labrador retrievers, these girls were our team's first puppies-in-training ... and we couldn't be more proud.

- Bingo, a black Lab and Amee's daughter, has successfully completed her 12-month evaluation. We are looking forward to her next adventure!

- Our second class of puppies-in-training – Rene (yellow Lab/Golden), Dusty, Lucee and Jett (black Labs) have all made their journey to CPL's training facility for their second year of training. Happy tears have been shed knowing that they're on their way to making a difference for someone.

- Twelve inmate handlers participated in Pet First Aid training this fall, thanks to a grant from St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Uniontown, PA. We are grateful to Karen Sable of Pet Emergency Training, LLC for the high quality training we received!

- Several of our inmate handlers have donated art work for CPL outreach events and also to human partners of our service dogs. The impact of their time and talent is invaluable.

- We are grateful for the partnerships with SCI Somerset and SCI Laurel Highlands as a result of the CPL Prison Puppy Program. These partnerships allow puppies to have new experiences at different institutions and with different inmate handlers. In addition, prison staff & CPL Prison Liaisons support each other in providing quality training and care for our puppies.

Our "little bits of good" list could go on and on. The benefits of the puppy programs featured in this newsletter are overwhelming the world – be it the "world" of the prisoner, the cell block, the prison staff, or the human partner eventually paired with one of "our girls." Know that we at SCI-Greene encourage each of you in your work with service, shelter and therapy dogs – little bits of good adding up!

Tina Staley
Unit Manager



Artwork for CPL done by SCI Greene dog handler.

Good Day Everyone !!

Just wanted to say Hi and tell everyone that things are great since I have been released to my "forever" home. Always start your day off with a little prayer to show your appreciation for life just like I do.



Then make sure that you give your best effort to help out whenever and where ever you can to give back as part of your thanks to your people.

Take some time to smell the fresh air and all the growing things put out there for everyone to appreciate, all while making new friends that appreciate the same fine gifts of life.



Then make sure to peacefully protect your community and those that have taken the time to care for you and give you their support and Love .

After these few simple things, you too will be able to take some time for yourself and enjoy the sunshine warming your soul as you take in what the earth has freely given you.



Your Friend,
Niko (Previously Oscar for my friends from the past)



Pupcakes:
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup shredded carrots
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1 egg
- 1 cup flour
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 cup peanut butter

Frosting:
- Greek yogurt
- peanut butter
- mixed to desired consistency

Sprinkles and dog biscuits optional

SCI Forest



August 24th, 2016, marked the start of a new partnership and mission between PAWS (Pups are Worth Saving), Beaver County Humane Society, Paul Anthony of A&B Canine Training and Pups Providing Hope (Canine Service Provider). The PAWS program, as it stood, deviated from its original purpose of producing therapy dogs for PTSD Veterans. It became more of an opportunity for inmates to train problematic shelter dogs for staff/public adoption. While this was wonderful that the program was able to rescue so many shelter dogs, it was ideally not where we wanted to be as a program. The SCI Forest Inmate Handlers, and the PAWS team comprised of Y. Perrin, T. Bloom, J. Howard, COI Friedline and I unit CO Staff met regularly to

discuss the vision of the program as well as future goals. Collectively, it was decided that we wanted to train shelter dogs for a wide range of therapeutic purposes. With that in mind, a little elbow grease, a lot of staff effort and some policy revisions, we built the relationship with Pups Providing Hope.

Our program is TIER ONE on a THREE TIER level of training for shelter dogs and other dogs that would otherwise be euthanized or difficult to adopt. We would provide basic Canine Good Citizen (CGC), CGC-A obedience and several tricks utilizing Paul Anthony's training program. The dogs could go on to tier two with Paul Anthony, to become Forensic Interview Dogs, PTSD Dogs, Emotional Support Dogs, Autism Dogs, or any number of other therapeutic purposes.

ABOUT PUPS PROVIDING HOPE:

Pups Providing Hope promotes, encourages, and provides for the healing connection between dogs and people. They work closely with the Offices of Victim Advocate in several counties in our area.

Pups Providing Hope is a new non-profit 501c3 in Western Pennsylvania. Their intention is to provide area service agencies and the courts with access to highly skillful and trained dogs as well as handlers in order to bring emotional and physical comfort to those affected by violent crimes and traumatic events.

A major component of the program is introducing the dogs to all types of emotional and social circumstances to include but not limited to: children, cultures, anger, happiness, sadness, normal emotion, medical situations, elderly, etc. The prison environment is perfect for achieving these training standards that might otherwise prove to be difficult in a community training environment.

Our first round of six dogs is set to graduate Nov. 30th, 2016, with some great successes in the class. Dog "Bug" is set to be the very first dog to move on to tier two of being a Forensic Interview Dog. Bug's story didn't start out so well. She had issues with her initial training and she became aggressive with other dogs. She did not play well with others. Through the hard work of our inmate handlers and Paul Anthony of A&B Canine Training, she no longer has aggression issues and is often used to introduce and socialize other dogs in the program. She is extremely friendly now and will go on to more advanced training with Pups Providing Hope to become a Forensic Interview Dog. His trainer, Thomas M., states that he feels great that Bug will go on to help children. He further notes that when he came to prison, he had rough times of loneliness and depression. However, the dog program gave him a great sense of purpose. Knowing first-hand how the program helped him on an emotional level and to gain viable employment skills, makes him put that much more effort into the success of the new program knowing that it could help someone else in the future. Thomas M. is paroling in February 2017 to the Pittsburgh area and now has a viable employment contact for training dogs upon release.



(continued on next page)

SCI Forest cont.

The remaining dogs in the program also have difficult backgrounds but are a great success in that they will find loving homes. One such miraculous story is that of Zara, our female Doberman.



Zara was born in Germany, shipped to the United States, and lacked any type of formal training. She began to show signs of aggression, became very untrusting of people, wouldn't interact with people and was overall difficult to handle. When she first arrived at the prison, she was unsure of everyone and did not function well in new places. She would melt down and be difficult to console. With the work of inmate handler David M. and Paul Anthony of A&B Canine Training, Zara was socialized with different people and places as well as socializing with other dogs. Now, Zara willingly approaches people, excitedly gives hugs, is less apprehensive about new environments and will even take time to show off her training skills such as hiding or waving good-bye. This dog has a lot of love to give. Zara may go on to be a PTSD dog or adopted to a very knowledgeable family that has an understanding of Dobermans and various behavior concerns. David M. states that the program is going in a more positive direction with more successes to come. He feels they have only begun to scratch the surface of the program potential. Being a participant in the program means that he can give back to something bigger than himself. He states that the dogs, are in a similar place as inmates where people have given up on them, and the program gives everyone a second chance. David M. further notes that it gives him more patience than he used to have and a sense of responsibility.

The remaining dogs will be going to loving homes that are professionally screened by Beaver County Humane Society. Thus far, the partnership has been a wonderful new beginning that has changed the environment in the most positive and productive ways. The dogs are frequenting more areas in the facility and touching the hearts of more people than they have in the past. It's all through the hard work of the inmate handlers, the staff, and the community partnerships.

Our second round of dogs under the new program started Nov. 30th, 2016. We hope that we can have even more success stories out of that class. Stay Tuned!

*Yvette Perrin
Unit Manager*

SCI Waymart



SCI Waymart began its dog program in October 2016. We currently have two dogs, Ralphie and Nova. Waymart is working with True Friends Animal Rescue of Montrose, Pa. Our dog program is called Furever Friends and the purpose of this program is to train dogs in basic commands which will make the dogs more adoptable. All the dogs in our program will be up for adoption.

When the program began and as stated above, we thought the sole purpose was to train dogs in basic commands to make them more adoptable. After having our first dog Ralphie here for a couple weeks, it was clear that we weren't just helping the dogs, but staff and inmates too! Wherever Ralphie walks around the institution, people light up when they see him. It is hard not to smile when you see this cute, lovable little dog who always wants to be petted. Ralphie now has regularly scheduled visits with inmates in our Personal Care Units, Forensic Treatment Centers, Intermediate Care Units, as well as general population housing units.

In November, Nova came to us. She is a great dog that also loves attention. Once acclimated to our environment, Nova will soon have regularly scheduled visits throughout the institution too.

SCI Waymart's dog program has been a huge success so far. Ralphie has already been scheduled for a home visit the weekend before Thanksgiving for possible adoption. If you would like to adopt one of our dogs, please contact True Friends, Montrose Pa.

*Bobbie Bassett
Unit Manager*



SCI Coal Township

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Rehabilitation is at forefront of SCI mission, chamber told

'FIDO' connects inmates to dogs

BY SARAH DESANTIS
THE NEWS-ITEM
sarah_d@newsitem.com

COAL TOWNSHIP — A dog is a man's best friend, even at SCI-Coal Township.

A group of inmates selected as handlers as part of the FIDO program showed off their furry friends Tuesday to members of the Brush Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce at a luncheon at the prison.

"This dog program is so impressive," said Corinne Betzko, director of the chamber, who was charmed by more than one dog during the luncheon.

The program places dogs from Shamokin-based Mommy and Me Rescue with inmates for a minimum of four weeks until a forever home is found.

Each of the eight dogs currently in the program are assigned to one inmate —

FIDO, Page 6



Trisha Kelley, left, assistant to the superintendent at SCI-Coal Township, and Corinne Betzko, executive director of the Brush Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce, show off Layla, a dog who permanently resides at SCI-Coal Township.

BY SARAH DESANTIS
THE NEWS-ITEM
sarah_d@newsitem.com

COAL TOWNSHIP — If it wasn't for the razor wire, the campus of SCI-Coal Township could easily be mistaken for a college.

When members of the Brush Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce visited the prison Tuesday for a tour, inmates were busy walking to classes in the educational building, tending to the grounds and jogging in the recreational yard.

"There's a lot that goes on here on a daily basis," said Acting Superintendent Tom McGinley.

Between 2,250 and 2,300 inmates live on the grounds, which are staffed by 575 employees. State inmates live in six

Prison, Page 6

FIDO

FROM PAGE 1

though the group often works together to take care of the dogs. The dog sleeps in the inmate's cell in a provided crate and is taken on walks, fed and taught basic obedience and commands by the inmate.

Melissa Rooney, a corrections counselor, said the inmates have to apply to be in the program. Officials review criteria, including the inmate's behavior in the prison, to determine the most suitable candidates to care for an animal.

The program is popular among the inmates, so new dogs have their pick of handlers.

"We let the dogs find them," said Carol Kalinowski, founder and president of Mommy and Me Rescue.

Rooney said dogs and handlers each have personalities, and the right pairs seem to just click when they meet.

"Some of them like smaller dogs, some like bigger dogs," she said. "There seems to be good matches between handlers and dogs."

As the chamber members

took turns petting the dogs, one of the inmate's dogs flopped on the ground at his feet. He said this was typical of her personality.

"She's a more laid back, lazy type," he said. "Very strong willed, too."

Acting superintendent Tom McGinley said the program has been a rousing success.

"It's been blessing for the facility," he said.

The prison made the move from a Pottsville-based rescue to Mommy and Me Rescue about a year ago in an effort to help local pets, McGinley said.

"We want to establish local roots," he said.

Kalinowski said the program has been a boon to her organization, which is in constant need of temporary homes for abandoned, abused or stray dogs. Mommy and Me Rescue is working to raise funds to construct a shelter to house dogs, which will greatly help the community, she said.

Trisha Kelley, assistant to the superintendent, said the prison would like to expand the pro-

gram to include more dogs. She said the prison has a special fenced-in yard area where handlers can take their dogs off their leashes, and the handlers are also allowed to "sign out" to the yard to walk their dogs.

FIDO is also popular among the staff. Kelley said many of the dogs that have been adopted have gone to employees.

Layla, who arrived at the prison at just 10 months old, became so beloved among the staff, SCI-Coal Township officially adopted her. She now lives permanently at the prison, though Kelley says she likes to take Layla out for an ice cream treat on occasion. The logo for the FIDO program, which was designed by an inmate, features Layla.

Mommy and Me Rescue will hold a fundraising event at the Atlas Legion Nov. 12, with all money raised going toward projects including the FIDO program. For more information on the nonprofit shelter or to see the available dogs, visit www.Facebook.com/MommyMeRescue.



Trisha Kelley, assistant to the superintendent at SCI-Coal Township, shows off a painting made by an inmate. The inmate had received no formal painting training until he arrived at the prison, she said.

SCI Coal Township cont.

SCI Coal Township recently partnered with a new rescue agency, Mommy & Me Rescue, Shamokin, PA. The partnership began this past summer. Shown are Baxter and Peggy, who completed their FIDOS training and maxed out in September! They are the first dogs to complete the FIDOS program with the new rescue, Mommy & Me Rescue. We wish them a very happy future!



Trisha Kelley
Superintendent's Assistant

SCI Chester



Addie and Harvey

In September 2016, SCI Chester became the ninth facility in the Department to partner with Canine Partners for Life. Unlike the other 8 institutions who are training puppies, SCI Chester will be training dogs for home companionship. Dogs that will be placed in the home companionship program will be about 15 to 18 months old, and will stay at SCI Chester anywhere from three to six months.

Home companion dogs usually serve as well-trained companions in the home environment for people with neurological or cognitive impairments or other health issues. Often they are placed with autistic children.

After almost a year of planning, Harvey and Addie arrived at SCI Chester on September 14th. They may look familiar, as Harvey was raised in SCI Cambridge Springs and Addie was raised in SCI Muncy.

The dogs are allowed go into almost any area of the institution with a trained staff or inmate handler. The blue bandana signifies when they are "working".

SCI Chester is truly invested in this program; not only have 12 inmates been trained to be dog handlers, there are also 20 staff trained, including an officer from each shift, a deputy, and the Superintendent.

The dogs are sponsored by Stoney Creek Veterinary Hospital.

In December, Addie will go to her forever home, and SCI Chester will get a new home companion dog to train, Roscoe.

If you would like to be kept up to date with information, please visit the "Paws at Chester" website, located on DOCNet under Institutions -> Chester -> Paws at Chester (located to the Right of the screen).



Harvey and Addie on the way to the Vet

Please contact Program Coordinators, Ms. Mandee Quinn and Ryanne Piorko for any questions.

Mandee Quinn
Administrative Officer

SCI Pine Grove

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 properly care for and train service dogs. UDS is a non-profit organization committed to helping people with disabilities lead more independent lives with the assistance of service dogs. UDS currently services over 30 counties throughout 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 program as it refers to the five elements that the project is designed to foster: 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! Following the completion of secondary training, the canines began the process of being paired for use with individuals with disabilities. The pairing process is very lengthy. UDS clients on the service dog waiting list attend "Meet the Dogs" sessions where they are introduced to three to four canines at one time. The clients have to determine which canines will be their perfect companion. This may take several attempts. Once a match is made the client and the canines are scheduled for team training with UDS staff. Team training lasts for approximately two weeks and includes book work and community work. The client and the canine go out and about in the community and also in the client's normal environment, including their home, workplace, church, grocery store, and other places the client normally frequents, so the canine can learn the client's daily life. The pair even have an overnight stay. If the experience is positive and the canine remains with the client they continue with additional training facilitated by UDS. This advanced training is geared toward helping the individual and their canine partner work towards passing the Public Access Test. The purpose of the Public Access Test is to provide a general standard of evaluation regarding the behaviors of trained service dogs that assist individuals with disabilities.

The SCI Pine Grove TAILS program is proud to announce that this past summer three of the four original TAILS canines (Somerset, Milton and Deora) have all passed their Public Access Tests and are now part of Certified Teams!



TAILS Graduate (First Round) Somerset during her graduation ceremony, pictured with Dan and Suzy Keller from Keller Brothers Ford, sponsors of the SCI Pine Grove TAILS program.

The second class of TAILS canines arrived at SCI Pine Grove in July 2015. They were very busy in the community during the last few months preparing for their lives as service dogs. The canines visited nursing homes, schools and libraries for presentations. They were also exposed to many new experiences, such as, physical therapy, preschools, festivals, restaurants, and shopping outings. The canines worked very hard during their training to ensure they followed the successful path of the original TAILS canines.

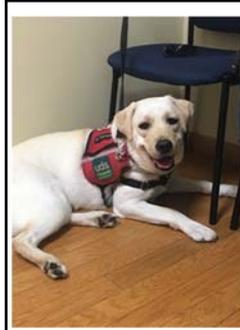
The TAILS canines returned to UDS on Oct. 19th, 2016, to continue on to their Secondary Training program. The canines will participate in their Secondary Training program at UDS for at least six months before the pairing process begins and they start working towards taking the Public Access Testing.

Tara Marhefka
Corrections Counselor II

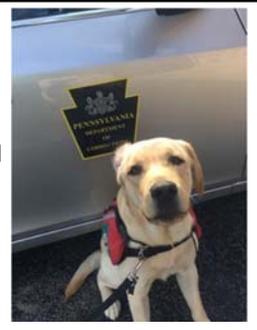
Dogs in the Community - SCI Pine Grove



TAILS Canine Lewes having lunch at Subs n Suds in Indiana, PA in June 2016.



TAILS Canine Avalon and Lewes in August 2016.



TAILS Canine Lewes participated in the SCI Pine Grove Graduation Inmate Ceremony in August 2016.



TAILS Canine Lewes at the IRMC Human Motion Center in Indiana, PA in September 2016.



The TAILS Canines Lewes and Avalon visited the IRMC Human Motion Center in Indiana, PA in September 2016.



TAILS Canine Lewes participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer's at Twin Lakes Park in Westmoreland County on September 17, 2016.



TAILS Canine Lewes attending the Scottdale Fall Festival in September 2016.



TAILS Canines Lewes & Emery visited a preschool in September with CCI Tammy Delosh and CCII Tara Marhefka as part of the TUMC Community Helpers Program.



TAILS Canines Avalon and Lewes with CCII Tara Marhefka at the Giant Center in Hershey, PA for the UDS Calendar Photo Shoot with the Hershey Bears in October 2016.

Tara Marhefka
Corrections Counselor II

Inmate Testimonial:

We are their voice...

My thanks and gratitude to Superintendent Link for trusting me with a member of her family, Cash. June 29, 2015 was the day that Cash was handed over to me by his last handler. The first couple of days I really had been second guessing my decision to the care of a dog and it just seemed like an overload of responsibility and to be honest Cash has been adopted by the superintendent and I really didn't want anything to happen to him. I had been hired and trained to work with Cash to eliminate the geese population here at Graterford Prison. What a new experience 'Wow' to watch him work was amazing to me. I had been doing everything with relating to his work as a good dog just as I had been trained to do. He responded day one to my commands and yes I was shocked because we had just become partners. Day after day we both looked forward to work (chasing geese). Watching him every day at his best made my responsibilities so much easier: baths, brushing and playtime. I came to enjoy doing all these things especially playtime. Cash is not a selfish dog he included me in his play and at the age of 63 he had a way to bring out the child in me. Over the months our partnership has grown way more than I had expected, he has a way of giving his unconditional love. Looking back I remember sending him to his kennel because of something he had done and boy I felt worse than he did. And since, I have never used his kennel as a punishment place, his kennel should be his safe place – somethings are learned as we go along. Cash is not just a great working dog he has become my buddy, my pal, my friend. He has been helpful in replacing some of my good traits that I had cashed in during my addiction to drugs – sense of responsibility, commitment, caring, companionship, relationship, friendship, trust and teamwork. He has done more for me than I could ever do for him. The crazy part about our relationship is that I do a lot of talking to him, past, present and future stuff. He's a good listener and even if I'm having one of the bad days his response to me has been always the same, a face full of licks (kisses) kind of lets me know that I can start that bad over anytime I choose. Hopefully in six months I will be paroled and I am not looking forward to turning Cash over to a new handler, but I know I have to. In the few months that Cash and I have together nothing will change but me. That unconditional love works both ways now. Parting with him will surely be hurtful but it's another life experience. The things that were taught to me I will pass on to the new handler, when the time comes. What makes parting somewhat easier is that I know that Cash will be changing another man's life the way he was done for me and many of thanks to the superintendent for allowing me this journey.

David G.

Day to day watching the consistent progress of the dogs is remarkable. I feel that this program teaches discipline, integrity, perseverance and selflessness. I have benefitted the most from program from the aspect of learning to put the needs of others before myself.

R.U.F.F. Program Handler

Over the last two years here at SCI Albion I have been a goose dog handler. My first memories of my initial year were not that pleasant. The goose population back then was out of control. There wasn't a place you could walk without stepping into goose droppings. One day, I ran into this awesome Blue Heeler named "Steele" walking with his handler and I wondered if I could do that job, since I had training a lot of experience with canines. Within a few short months of observing the program I began to see a change. The goose problem and their droppings, was fading away, with about half the problem solved. So great was the results of Steele's work that another Blue Heeler mix was added. With the additional dog there is now barely any problems with the geese and their droppings. It was around this time that I was moved to G Unit and finally got the chance to work in the program with my very own goose dog. Her name is "Sadie". Now we have three goose dogs here at SCI-Albion and the goose issues are nearly gone. The dogs and their handlers act as a team, working to keep the institution clean, safe and goose free. I highly encourage other facilities to do the same in they are experiencing similar problems. These dogs do their jobs and do it well!

SCI Albion

Along with all of the hard work of training, socializing and basic care, SCI Albion volunteer inmate and community handlers and puppies are also active in educating the community about Canine Partners for Life and service dogs in general. Volunteer community handlers and pups regularly host information tables at local events, provide presentations for local groups, attend local conferences to network with community agencies and volunteer with community organizations. Volunteer inmate handlers meet with community groups and tours, bring the puppies to the SNU and RTU to visit with other inmates and also recently met with a State Senator to educate him and his staff about CPL.

Our pups and volunteers have recently provided community education at some dog-friendly events including "Woofstock," a Woodstock-themed festival and fundraising event to benefit the NWPAs Humane Society, "Barktoberfest," a Halloween-themed fundraising event to benefit the NWPAs Humane Society and a "Doggie Ice Cream Social" hosted by the Albion Historical Society. Some people-friendly events our pups and volunteers have recently offered information tables at include the NWPAs Pride Festival and NWPAs Pride Picnic, both celebration and awareness-raising events for the NWPAs LGBT community and it's allies; and the SCI Albion Regional Symposium, an empowerment event for Region 3 DOC facilities.



Shepp teaches the staff at Kneib Dentistry about how to interact with a service dog.



Chadds hosting an information table at a "Doggie Ice Cream Social" in the Albion community.

Information tables at community events are staffed by at least one staff or community volunteer and at least one CPL puppy. Information tables feature CPL literature, an inmate-created scrapbook documenting the training progress of one of our puppies, a 20x30 poster of photos of SCI Albion's pups in the community and four 8x12 photo collages of various CPL pups in the community. We also offer a canister of people treats (candy) and a canister of puppy treats (milk bones) to encourage visitors. Some events require or request that we provide an activity. We often offer paw print art (art made by painting the paws of canine event attendees), and sometimes offer a dog trivia game. At the average community event, CPL puppies and volunteers get the chance to meet and talk with hundreds of people regarding CPL, the work being done by in-

mate handlers, and service dogs in general.

SCI Albion puppies and staff/community volunteers also give presentations to a variety of community groups. Volunteer/puppy teams have presented in the recent past to elementary school classrooms, college classrooms, Girl Scout troops and other community groups. Our pups have had the opportunity to participate in a children's reading program at a local library which encourages children to read for/with the puppies. Recently, SCI Albion staff and community volunteers collaborated to create a proposal for a presentation to be given at the Crime Victim Center of Erie's annual Crime Victims' Rights Conference in Spring 2017. The purpose of the presentation is to educate local community agencies and treatment providers about the roles working dogs can play in supporting individuals who have been victimized by crime.



Banks visits Edinboro University.

SCI Albion's inmate handlers are also active in educating community members about CPL and service dogs in general. Inmate handlers visit our Special Needs Unit and Residential Treatment Unit for "Puppy Time," in which they answer questions about the puppies and their training and provide their peers an opportunity to interact with the puppies. When community groups tour SCI Albion, inmate handlers often volunteer to meet with these groups to educate them about CPL and the role inmate volunteers can play in giving back to the community through this program. Recently, Senator Sean Wiley visited SCI Albion and specifically requested to meet with SCI Albion's inmate handlers and puppies. The handlers educated the Senator about their work, CPL and the role of service dogs in our community, and Senator Wiley expressed an interest in taking an active role in supporting the work of CPL by sponsoring a puppy and raising community awareness.

Miranda Galbreath
Unit Manager

SCI Benner Township



Cheerio relaxing after a training session.

SCI Benner Township celebrated A Dog's Tale from Jail's 2nd Anniversary on August 18th with a party to honor the handlers and dog trainer, Pam Graci, as well as show appreciation to the Administration, unit staff and inmates, the shelters that provide our dogs and Metzger's Animal Hospital who provides care for the dogs when needed. We currently have 11 handlers and up to 5 dogs at one time. Our dogs come from Rondout Kennels in New York, colleagues of Ms. Graci, who send us a number of their dogs that come from the deep South; these dogs are generally a variety of mixes and sizes with such diverse, fun and challenging personalities. Locally we have Nittany Greyhounds rescue that provides us with these wonderful and quirky dogs, most often right from the race track. We are very proud

to be able to claim that all of the greyhounds who leave us can sit and are also able to navigate stairs – two very hard-to-accomplish tasks for greyhounds.

A number of our handlers have been with us from the start, while we have added a few new over the past several months. During our celebration, the handlers were able to share their thoughts and feelings on what the program and the dogs, have done for them during this time. All began by thanking our trainer, the shelters, Metzger's, and the staff that help with the program. Handler Stacy commented that "if you love and train the dogs, they give you love back." Andy praised his fellow handlers as well "I have seen all of us handlers grow this year as we get more in tune with our dogs and realize more and more that Ms. Graci here actually knows what she is talking about. I know at first I had my doubts about some of her tactics, but they do work, I'll be the first to admit." Ms. Graci is a positive rewards-based trainer in which plenty of treating and patience are involved. This was a foreign concept for many of our trainers and staff, where old fashioned "correcting" behavior was the norm. There have many times over the past two years in which many of us, staff included, have scratched our head and had to say "hmmmm" when Ms. Graci proved us wrong.



2nd Anniversary Cake

The handlers all have expressed how much the program has changed them for the better as well. Anthony said that "the dog program has given me a wonderful opportunity to explore new and uncharted territories within myself and the dogs that I work with. I have learned how to be more responsible, loving, caring and patient...people's attitudes and personalities can be changed, molded and formed just like the dogs that we work with. In rehabilitating the dog- I'm also rehabilitating myself." Travis started with thanking the dogs that have been in the program as "their journey has played a big part in mine. These dogs teach us a lot while we work with them. Change does not come right away, but if you always put your work in, the best that you can do, you will always get the best possible outcome." Bob sees the similarities with the dogs in the program and himself as an inmate stating that "we are pretty similar to some of the dogs that come through this program in that they may not

have had the easiest lives and could be a little bit misunderstood or made mistakes, but underneath all of that is a great dog that, with a little time and effort, can learn the skills that they need to live a happy life with a loving family to care for them." Michael's comments had the crowd trying to hold back tears as he relived how he came to prison this time, pretty much broken and so much wanting this to be different than his previous incarcerations. He was given that chance when he was selected for the program. "I wanted to change the way I have been thinking and living for over 40 years. Here I am doing something I never thought I would be doing in prison. I'm loving and caring for these dogs seven days a week and the feeling is so rewarding having these dogs also love and care for me the same. Today I feel like I am somebody instead of just another inmate who is gonna fail. I will not fail."

While there are many differing opinions, both in the prisons and in society, regarding the benefit of having canine programs, when you have the chance to work and be around them, you truly see why the DOC has chosen to make these a part of the PA DOC. It is so very rewarding to be a part of a program in which you see so much positive change within the inmates who participate, the inmates who share a housing unit with the dogs and the human compassion and excitement that would not be seen without these adorable creatures sharing our lives inside these walls.

*Billie Rupert
Unit Manager*



Greyhound Miss Chili tells us how much she enjoyed her stay with us!



UM Rupert presents Metzger's Animal Hospital with a Certificate of Appreciation



Pam Graci, Program Dog Trainer receiving Certificate of Appreciation

SCI Huntingdon

SCI Huntingdon had its first pup complete the training program for Canine Partners for Life and moved on to the CPL kennels to complete his training. Draco was with us for seven short months. In that time, he steadily progressed, getting better every day. He came here very cautious and nervous. He is now very outgoing. As you can see in the picture below, when he wasn't ready to hear you he ignored you. He is a very intelligent dog.

Good Luck Draco!!!



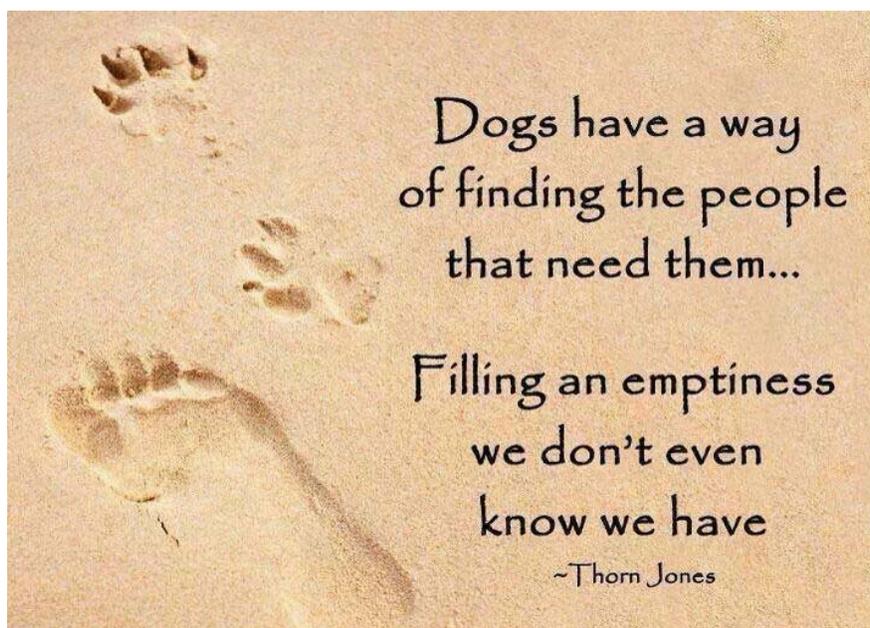
Comments from Draco's handlers: "Draco is the strongest willed dog I've ever met". "He will do well in the future." "Training him made me realize how life-changing a service dog can be to someone in need."

Draco left Huntingdon on 11/8, and the Institution received Denali. Denali is a three month old black lab. Denali has quickly adapted to his new home and is doing very well. He is extremely smart and already knows a number of commands.

In seven months the program at Huntingdon has grown considerably. The dogs are regulars in the RTU and the rest of the Institution. We now have 15 trained inmate handlers, with multiple volunteers waiting for openings.



*Michael Swartz
Unit Manager*



SCI Mercer

The CARE Program has an almost 100% adoption rate for all of the dogs that have graduated since the inception of the program. The following two dogs are still in need of homes. If you are interested, please feel free to contact Lisa Graves, Program Coordinator, at SCI Mercer (lgraves@pa.gov) or Strayhaven Animal Shelter at strayhavenanimalshelter@yahoo.com or 724-588-6161. Shelton graduated on November 15th and, unfortunately, returned to the shelter because he did not have an approved home plan. Charlie completed one round of training but is staying for another round to polish up on a few things. He should graduate in mid-January. At this time, he does not have an approved home plan, either. The following information was written by the dogs' handlers.



Charlie

Hello everyone, my name is Charlie, I am a hound mix of about two years old. I love humans! I go wild for attention and affection, when I don't get it from you I let you know with a bark. I love having fun and exploring the wonderful scents of the land. I play great with my fellow dogs. I'm a master at the "tug" game, and I'm fast like a deer. I learned a lot of cool stuff since coming here to the CARE program: heel, sit stays, down stays, leash walking (although I've yet to master that one), crate, paw, show my belly, wait, eat, Shhhhh! (when I bark too

much), break when playtime is over. I got all these on verbal cues, and my handlers are very proud of me, as well will you be. I want and need a forever home, I'll be happy and so will you. I'm a nice boy who's well behaved. I don't mess in the house, I listen well and I'm very loyal. All the things I think you'll want out of me. Oh yeah, I'm good looking too!

-- Chuck

Shelton

Hello everyone. My name is Shelton. I'm a three-year-old Treeing Walker Coonhound. I'm very friendly and offer unlimited companionship. I love being rubbed down and getting showered with attention. I do get lonely when you leave me and will sometimes vocally express my feelings, but my favorite part of my day is when you return home to me. I've been learning new tricks which include sit and stay, lay down, paw, and roll over. I'm very smart and have high energy. My only missing piece of my happy ending is you, my family, and my home. At the very least, thank you for listening and hopefully I'll meet you soon.

-- Shelton



Lisa Graves
Unit Manager



On Wednesday, November 30th, Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal, Director Tracy Smith, Chief Ross Miller, Executive Staff Assistant Robert Hammond, and Activities Coordinator Dan Lorditch met with Matthew Kerr, reentrant who is the sole owner of Matt's Mutts University. He has been featured on celebrity dog trainer Cesar Millan's website, UK Daily Mail and other newspapers worldwide. He credits his success to his training program while involved in the dog program at SCI Mercer. He gained his passion for training animals while at SCI Mercer and carried those skills with him when he left the institution to become a successful businessman.

Through working with dogs, Mr. Kerr has built a respectable reputation in his community as well as engaging in charitable work for the animal community in his area. He has been in business for roughly four years and his business continues to grow and gain more customers and followers. He currently subcontracts with the Federal Bureau of Prisons to work with their dog programs. He hopes to be a good example to the success and meaningfulness of having the dog programs within the prison system and that it can be useful if participants apply themselves by putting in the necessary work.

New, But Old Beginnings

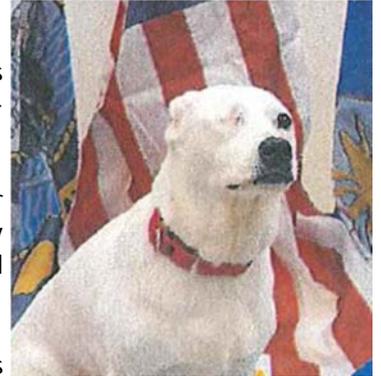
This is the story of one-eyed Lily. Lily came to the CARE Program from a broken home where she sadly had to be placed aside as a priority, which is not so uncommon in our world of pets and family and how they fit together.

In the beginning days here, Lily did something interestingly heartbreaking. She would sit in the middle of the room where she resided with her handlers and stare at the door. As days passed and Lily habituated to her new surroundings, this began to fade and eventually did extinguish.

Lily learned, trained and played with the best of her counterparts, despite her disability. Being a descendant of the Jack Russell lineage, Lily was very smart and never missed a beat. She was an avid mole hunter in the yard field and probably caught about six or eight of them during her efforts.

Lily excelled through her program of conditioning and obedience and was very much loved by all who met her, people and dogs alike.

Lily graduated and, as is the situation with all our subject dogs here at the CARE program when their program concludes, they seem to instinctively understand this and sense the change coming. As for Lily, this couldn't have been more apparent. During her last week here, Lily began to expose that behavior of sitting and staring at the door once again. She knew something was about to change. But little did she know (or a lot did she know), it was eventually going to be a familiar change.



Lily returned to the Strayhaven Animal Shelter, waited and waited...waited some more...no takers. Lily never caught anyone's attention. Eventually, Lily was fostered by one of the original founders of the CARE Program and her family. She was well received and loved; she fit in nicely to the situation, which turned out to only be temporary. One day, the phone call came in from Lily's original family. To Lily's surprise and excitement, her family came to take her back home. After reconciling their differences, they came back for her.

Did they tell Lily they'd be back for her? Or did she just know? Whatever the case, Lily knew something and that's what she was waiting for in the beginning days and in the end when she kept her "eye" on that door.

It's a wonderful, unique and true tale of sweet Lily, with her sass and energy, her wisdom and instinct, her love of life and her family. We essentially acted as fosters for Lily and along the way, she learned so much and taught us more. We are forever grateful for our time here with Lily and we know that she is happy and safe where she belongs. It solidifies our continuing mission in the CARE Program. We are gracious and humbled to be a part of something so meaningful and selfless.

-- CARE Program handlers/trainers



SCI Cambridge Springs

Hi, I'm Grayson. I'm a one year old, outgoing, lovable, black lab. I arrived here at SCI Cambridge Springs on Jan. 20th, 2016. I wasn't sure how I would feel moving to a new room with new handlers, but my roommates all love me and treat me great. It's awesome. I love them and want to make them happy. I know they love me too, cause they take great care of me. I like my new room also because I get to see all the other dogs walking by.

Since I have been here, I have gone on a month long vacation to Myrtle Beach. I LOVED IT!!! I loved the ocean, taking long walks on the beach, leaving my paw prints in the sand (it felt so good on my paws). On July 4th I watched fireworks and went to a concert. I had tons of fun, but I missed my handlers and couldn't wait to get home to see them. I was so happy to be home, but to my surprise I found out they had their own guest over, ACE. Hawkeye's brother had been sleeping in my bed. I didn't appreciate that too much, or the smell he left behind.

I just celebrated my birthday with Hawkeye (his was 11 days earlier), I cannot believe I am a year old already. We had a Spooktacular bash and it was awesome. Hawkeye and I had lil CoDa and Flick join us and invited all the handlers. There was pinata with treats inside of a shark, and boy did I hate it!!! Why would my handlers think I would like to look like I'm being eaten by a shark?!? I even got a present. I got a big, juicy bone and other treats and my handlers even gave gift bags to my friends to take home. I guess you think that I'm having lots of fun here, but it is not all fun and games. I have to work a lot. I average eight to ten hour days working. Matter of fact I have to go to work right now!

Smell you later,
Grayson

Hi! I'm Hawkeye a.k.a. "Smarshy" as my fans at SCI Cambridge Springs call me because of my light color. I'm coming to the end of my time at Cambridge Springs and I'm going to be leaving my family but I am ready for a new adventure. I hear the next journey is challenging but I think I can handle it! They didn't dress me up as Superman on Halloween for nothing! My handlers said they dressed me as Superman because I am super smart, super cute and super at playing ball! So I guess the costume really fit my personality. Well I have to go, I have got a lot of packing to do. I don't leave for a couple more months but I don't like putting things off until the last minute. Bye-bye.



Hello, my name is CoDa and I was torn away from my brothers and sisters. Then, not even a week later I ended up at a place with sparkly fences all around it. I got carried in by a lady and greeted by a lot of strangers. We walked for what seemed like forever to get to the building that I now live in. I met both of my handlers for the first time and I knew they loved me as soon as they laid eyes on me! I was scooped up and taken to my room, you won't believe how many toys I have! It is just crazy. I live in a room with my two handlers. I'm not the only dog who lives here. There are three others – Flick, I play with him often he is close to my age, Hawkeye, could really care less about me as long as he play's with his ball and Grayson, he is very big. I put up a big fuss when I play. I may be little but I have a BIG bark.

I got to go to my first party for Hawkeye and Grayson. They turned one year old and we had a Halloween party. My handler said it would be fun, I didn't know what to expect. My handler's dressed me up like a shark. I got my picture taken. Then me and Flick, my buddy, walked down the hallways and everyone said how cute I was. Yep, I was cute!

I had to go back to the party. There was a pinata for us. We all tried to get stuff but once things started to fall out I found a kibble in every prize, yummy! We had cake and ice cream, all puppy approved! When I left the party I got a bag of treats...Yum, Yum, Yum! I went back to my room and went to sleep. Man, I can't wait for another one of these things they call a party!

SCI Cambridge Springs cont.



What's up. This is your boy Flick hollering at you from SCI Cambridge Springs. In case you missed it the first time, Flick is my name and living to learn is my game. Not long ago, I was "BIG man on campus" among my siblings and now I am a future service dog in training. This is going to be very interesting. The bigger boys are named Hawkeye and Grayson. Boy, are they huge and it seemed like they appeared out of no where in the hallway where I live.

Everyone is calling me cute, lil' fur-ball and handsome. I do like when the nice people stroke my fur and tickle behind my ears because it makes me laugh. If you notice my tail just wigglin' and waggin' in every direction, chances are I am laughing! I especially like when I respond to my given name and set my bumper down. This behavior makes my handlers very pleased and I get rewarded with a pretty smile and a tasty treat. Oh yeah!

Legs are everywhere around this campus. One of the lessons that I had to quickly learn is not to pee inside the play pen! The set of strange legs scurrying towards me got my attention, but it was the shriek following that stopped me in my tacks. "F-L-I-C-K!!!!" "Wrong, Wrong, Wrong!" I was frozen like a big buck in the headlights. The voice did not belong to my handler and eventually my own legs scrambled me to the far corner of the play pen. Barkus and Hawkeye greeted me first, then Harvey and Grayson joined in on a "sniff-fest" It was like being in the land of the giants and they were using their legs to play with me and roll me around in the grass like a ball. Wow! There goes my tail again, as I was wondering why not one of these big guys gave me a heads up about the #1 rule at the playground. After playtime, we made our way back up the porch steps to our room for a cozy nap. I APPROACH the door, hear a click, get bumper down and receive a smile and a treat. Now I know the best lessons are learned through trial and error.

Fast forward a few months. On October 30th, we had a party for Grayson and Hawkeye who turned one. We got all dressed up in costumes, I was the Hamburglar. We had a parade down the hallways and had a photo session in the upstairs dayroom. After that, we had cake, ice cream and a big pinata that was filled with all sorts of things to play with. We had a blast.

Before I sign off, you need to know that I am no longer the baby. Yep, we got a new addition named CoDa and he is trying to take over my spot. His nickname is "TTT-The Tiny Terrorist". He is off the chain, but I love playing with him. After a rumble and tumble with him, I have to take a nap. He wears me out, but he is definitely someone I can call buddy, friend, pal.

Well, this is Flick, also known as "Z" signing off. Catch you later alligator!!!

Jamie Rodriguez
Unit Manager

SCI Graterford

Meet Sophia!

SCI-Graterford adopted Sophia Loren (that was her actual name, we call her Sophie) from New Spirit 4 Aussie Rescue, the same rescue that we adopted Cocoa from! She is going to be chasing geese in the near future and has already started some basic training. Sophia is a Kentucky girl who is settling in at the 'Ford! She really likes the other dogs and loves her handler. Sophia is laid back and lets the other girls be bossy. We are very happy to have her and the plan is for her and Cocoa to work as a pair in the many yards at Graterford chasing anything that flies-from geese to pigeons!



Sylvia Pallott
Unit Manager

SCI Rockview



In March 2016 SCI Rockview welcomed four new residents into our level 2 housing unit. Eight inmates—long-term and lifers - were tasked with caring and training Natalia, Bruce, Steve and Tony. Some were skeptical of the program at first, but most staff and offenders quickly took a liking to the new residents and saw the positive impact these dogs quickly had on their handlers as well as the population as a whole.



SCI Rockview has partnered with New Leash on Life USA to rescue dogs from kill shelters and train them with hopes of providing them as service dogs to veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Each dog has two handlers who train and care for the dogs on a continuous basis. The dogs have become a regular part of the routine throughout the institution, making rounds on the walks and in the yard as well as areas such as Medical, RTU and the SRTU. They have also made several appearances in public outside the confines of SCI Rockview with staff volunteers who have taken the dogs on overnight home visits as well as charity and fundraising events such as Bark for Life, Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser night, Boot Scootin' Riders 4-H Fundraising Event and the Veterans Appreciation Lunch at Texas Roadhouse.



One of the highlights so far in the relatively new endeavor was on August 31st when SCI Rockview had its first "graduate" from the program. Natalia, a labradoodle, moved on to the second phase of her training process. As of the date of this article, Natalia is currently in her last phase of training with a family in Pa. She is completing her public access training and will have her hips assessed this spring to ensure she is fit for light mobility service. If she passes all tests she will be going into team training next summer with her matched partner. She has been matched with a disabled gentleman pending assessment. She has been doing fabulously and she is expected to excel in all areas.



On October 17th the newest member of the SCI Rockview dog program arrived. Wilson is a three month old black golden doodle. He has made a smooth transition to prison life thus far and in is progressing very quickly in his training.

*Howard Hoover
Unit Manager*



SCI Camp Hill



Katy's HOPE Handler writes about his experience with his first HOPE Dog:

It goes without saying that being incarcerated is a very lonely existence. While you are surrounded by hordes of people every day, time spent with true friends and family is very limited. For those of us fortunate enough to participate in the HOPE program, the companionship of our canine friends is priceless.

Upon joining HOPE, Katy was the first dog I was assigned to. A beautiful shepherd mix, she was initially very apprehensive about my presence. She spent the first few days ignoring my existence, constantly pacing and hiding in her crate. But as time went by we began to grow closer and closer. Katy dropped her guard and began to display her true personality as a sweet and playful puppy.

During her seven-month stay, Katy made tremendous strides in the technical aspect of her training. However, the biggest change occurred in the way she interacted with humans. Where at first she was skittish and evasive, now she fully welcomes constant love and attention from her many admirers.

The mission of the HOPE program is to "provide the dogs with basic obedience training, socialization, behavior modification, and one-on-one attention." All that is understood prior to joining. What I did not expect was the effect that Katy would have on my life. She became my closest friend and confidant. In an environment where that does not normally exist, you learn to appreciate it even more than normal. Seeing Katy leave was tough, but knowing that she now has a loving family that adores her makes it that much easier.

Katy's impact on her new family:

The summer of 2016 was a tough one for our family. We learned on July 1 that my dad had cancer. He was in Arizona receiving treatment, so I hopped on a plane on July 7 to see him. The morning of July 8, my husband called me in tears. Our 13-year-old rescue cattle dog's time had come to say goodbye. My husband and two daughters (ages 11 and 9 at the time) connected with me via FaceTime as we said goodbye to our doggie. Two weeks later, we were saying goodbye to my dad. It was an incredibly sad time for all of us.

It didn't take long for us to hop on the computer and start searching area rescue sites for the next member of our family. Katy's picture grabbed our eyes, and her story grabbed our hearts.

Katy joined us on August 28. She has a crate, but it was only a matter of days before we started testing her ability to have the run of the house when we weren't home. She's AWESOME. She occasionally steals a stuffed animal from my daughter's room, but other than that, she doesn't chew on a single thing. The crate is there if she wants it, but it's pretty safe to say she owns the house now.

Katy LOVES being out in the yard hunting rabbits and squirrels and whatever else comes her way! She enjoys long walks around the neighborhood and playing with her basket of toys. Snuggling is a must and we continue to build on what she learned through the HOPE program. Katy had very little fur when she joined us. Her fur was shaved off to treat an underlying skin condition and months had gone by without significant growth. A couple of months later, she's super soft and fuzzy!

We continue to work with Katy on feeling comfortable with guests in our home. She's still a little anxious and wants only to protect us. She is highly motivated by food, so we always have a steady supply of treats on hand! Katy is the best and we are so glad she came into our family. It might seem like we rescued Katy, but the truth is – Katy rescued US.

WWW.HOPEdogs.org

*Scott Whalen
Unit Manager*

SCI Muncy

As with many children the puppies at SCI Muncy have birthday “parties” to celebrate their first year of life. However, unlike children’s parties, these events are primarily a training opportunity for the staff, handlers, and dogs in the Canine Partners for Life program. Recently, Addie and Senga were the guests of honor at a birthday party/training event.

SCI Muncy CPL handlers generally are visited by a CPL approved trainer every two weeks for formal training. These trainings monitor the progress of the individual dogs, test new skills and allow the handlers and trainers to discuss specific concerns or tasks. The training scheduled for early September also fell the week of Addie and Senga’s first birthdays, so the training for the afternoon included some party-themed tasks which also taught skills needed for service dogs. This is a short list of some of the events and their purpose:

Retrieving a Ball from a Pool Full of Plastic Bottles: Service dogs are often asked to walk on uneven or unusual surfaces. Therefore, service dog training often focuses on teaching the dog to walk on items that may be unstable, loud, or otherwise different than a regular floor. This training exercise forces the dog to walk into the ball pit (pool with plastic bottles), which is unstable and noisy. The handlers also train this skill by exposing the dogs to wheelchair lifts, grate-style stairs, and narrow staircases.



Opening Presents: Service dogs often perform tasks which their recipient is unable to complete. An example of a task could be retrieving an item from a table or opening a box and retrieving an item. This exercise taught both skills to the dogs and taught them to be gentle while completing these tasks. The “go pay” command instructs the dog to place their front paws on a table and give or retrieve an item. It is primarily used when a recipient is paying for an item in a store. The dogs deliver the cash or credit card to the cashier, retrieve the goods, and then also return the card or change to their recipient.



Photo Booth: The “down, stay” or “sit, stay” command instructs the dog to lie or sit while the handler drops the leash and moves away from the dog. Dogs are expected to master this skill by the time of their one-year evaluation. This command would be used by a recipient to have their service dog remain in place without having to physically restrain the dog.

These were just a few of the activities that the dogs performed while also enjoying a birthday party. Training can become mundane for both handlers and dogs so having a training which is different in form and setting is a good way to test the dogs’ abilities and also incorporate different training strategies. As with all the activities in the dog program it is a good mix of both hard work and enjoyment.

*Elias Stevens
Unit Manager*



The Facilities with Puppy Programs:

SCI Albion

SCI Huntingdon

SCI Benner Township

SCI Laurel Highlands

SCI Camp Hill

SCI Mahanoy

SCI Cambridge Springs

SCI Mercer

SCI Chester

SCI Muncy

SCI Coal Township

SCI Pine Grove

SCI Dallas

SCI Retreat

SCI Forest

SCI Rockview

SCI Frackville

SCI Smithfield

SCI Graterford

SCI Somerset

SCI Greene

SCI Waymart

SCI Houtzdale

*SCI Fayette and SCI Pittsburgh
coming soon!!!*



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

Further information on the State Puppy Programs can be found on the BTS website under the tab "Puppy Programs." If you would like to read previous editions of "All Paws on Deck" please visit the BTS website and click on the "All Paws on Deck" tab under "Puppy Program."