

December 2018

Volume 5: Edition 1



*All Paws  
On Deck*



## The Facilities with Puppy Programs:

SCI Albion

SCI Benner Township

SCI Cambridge Springs

SCI Camp Hill

SCI Chester

SCI Coal Township

SCI Dallas

SCI Fayette

SCI Forest

SCI Frackville

SCI Greene

SCI Houtzdale

SCI Huntingdon

SCI Laurel Highlands

SCI Mahanoy

SCI Mercer

SCI Muncy

SCI Pine Grove

SCI Retreat

SCI Rockview

SCI Smithfield

SCI Somerset

SCI Waymart

## Reentrant Reflects on HOPE Dog Program



*The following was written by a former SCI Camp Hill inmate who participated in the HOPE dog program—and was able to adopt the very dog he trained.*

I joined the HOPE dog program over three years ago, and Reggie came into the program a little over two and a half years ago. Reggie was from the ACCT Philly Shelter. He was picked up as a stray in a bad neighborhood of Philadelphia and had a lot of issues when he first got here. He was covered in scars and scabs and appeared to have been used as a bait dog or for something equally as bad. Through the course of time, I was able to build a bond with Reggie that is indescribable. As Reggie learned through his training, I learned from Reggie as well. To be able to see Reggie grow and overcome so many obstacles through training,



love, and the common bond we shared is great to see. To live in a prison cell with a dog isn't easy at times, but the end result was all worth it. I don't regret one moment of it. I will always have the everlasting memories of the time Reggie and I shared in prison.

When my release neared, I couldn't bear to think about leaving Reggie behind. I was sick to my stomach the day that I left Reggie behind, and I actually cried because he became a part of my heart. I always told the HOPE program that I was going to adopt Reggie once I was released and that dream came true this past week.

I was reunited with Reggie a recently. I'm so happy that I was able to adopt him and give him a forever home that he's so much deserved. To be with Reggie on a daily basis is a constant reminder to me of where we came from and how far we've come and to never go back. I cannot thank the HOPE program enough for giving me the opportunity to adopt Reggie and being able to see him be a dog outside of the prison walls. The HOPE program was the best program that I ever participated in while in prison. It taught me a whole new sense of responsibility and to put something other than myself first for once that being Reggie. As I write this, he is lying next to me on his back getting belly rubs with his paws in the air enjoying his life in his forever home.

The HOPE program has been such a positive experience in my life that I will never forget about. I'm truly grateful that I was able to be a part of HOPE at SCI Camp Hill. I would like to thank the HOPE volunteers and prison staff for allowing me to participate in this program. Thank you, Kaitlin, for giving me the opportunity to spend my life with Reggie. I can never thank you enough.

Sincerely,  
Phillip C.

## SCI Cambridge Springs

SCI Cambridge Springs is excited to announce that a new dog program is being implemented at the institution. CAMP (Canines Achieving Miracles in Prison) will be managed by CT2 Alicia Groover and UM Jamie Schneider, in an effort to join with the local community to help shelter dogs find new, permanent homes. SCI Cambridge Springs has teamed up with The ANNA Shelter (Association for Needy and Neglected Animals) based out of Erie, PA. The ANNA Shelter is a well-known, non-profit no kill animal shelter that houses dogs, cats, horses and other small animals that were either found stray or surrendered by their owners.

Ruth Thompson, founder and director of The ANNA Shelter, is ecstatic to begin the CAMP Program with SCI Cambridge Springs. Ruth reported that on average, The ANNA Shelter accommodates more than 50 dogs at one time, along with over 100 cats and other animals. With such a high capacity of animals, it is difficult for staff and volunteers to socialize with each dog that resides there and provide any training that they may need. During a tour of SCI Cambridge Springs, Ruth was able to meet and speak with several of the inmates who were involved in the Canine Partners for Life Program at the institution. She was overwhelmed with joy when she saw the homey environment that the canines will be in and the amount of socialization, training and care they will be receiving from the inmates.

Since 2005, SCI Cambridge Springs had been partnered with Canine Partners for Life training service dogs for individuals with disabilities. CPL was a volunteer opportunity for staff and inmates to be involved in. The new CAMP Program is expected to be a shorter, more intensive training program, which will require as much one-on-one training time with the dogs as possible. Because of this, the institution is opening up the program as a new job opportunity for inmates. SCI Cambridge Springs will be able to accommodate four canines at one time and they will undergo an eight-week basic obedience training program provided by The ANNA Shelter. Emily Danskin, behavior consults and modifications specialist at The ANNA Shelter, will be coming into the institution on a weekly basis to help train with the inmates. The goal is to train dogs with non-aggressive behavioral issues so that they are more adoptable to the local community.

Ruth Thompson explains, "Some of the dogs have been at the shelter for nine months or more. They are what we call our 'lifers.' They are great dogs and they deserve a loving home, but they need some basic obedience training."

Both SCI Cambridge Springs and The ANNA Shelter are working hard to get the CAMP Program up and running. The program is expected to launch at the beginning of 2019. Staff at SCI Cambridge Springs are eager to work with a local animal shelter and to be able to assist with the socialization and training of the canines. Staff members are also hoping to help our local Veterans. The ANNA Shelter is one of only three approved animal shelters in the United States that is associated with the National Pets for Vets Campaign. SCI Cambridge Springs demonstrates a high amount of Veteran support through COVER and through various donations and volunteer events that have been hosted by the institution. It is our hope to continue to help Veterans, as well as the local community, with Canines Achieving Miracles in Prison.

*Alicia Groover  
Clerk Typist II*

## SCI Huntingdon

The CPL dogs at SCI Huntingdon are ready for Christmas. As part of their training, the service dogs are exposed to different experiences and environments including wearing dog booties, work vests and an occasional holiday outfit. Able, CJ and Sawyer are three of the five dogs that have been getting some of their training at Huntingdon. To this point, the dogs come to Huntingdon as puppies and learn basic commands and skills working with inmate handlers and staff volunteers. After that, they move on to the next phase of the training process out of the institution. But while they are with us, we like to mix the training with some fun too. From the dogs at SCI Huntingdon, we wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!!

*Michelle Gross  
Corrections Counselor*



## SCI Benner Township

In early November, Florida passed Amendment 13, which will ban commercial greyhound racing. Since Florida is home to 11 of the 17 active dog tracks in the United States, by 2020, nearly 6,000 dogs will need new homes. Since SCI Benner Township's inception, we have worked closely with Nittany Greyhounds to help find ex-racers their forever homes, by helping learn to be pets, not paychecks. SCI Benner will continue to be advocates for these amazing animals through our program, A Dog's Tale from Jail, and continue to dedicate our resources to rehoming greyhounds.

In October, SCI Benner Township celebrated its five year anniversary of the dog program. We, at the institution, continue to see the benefits this program unveils, not only with our pups and their handlers, but also on the inmate population as a whole. Dogs have a great therapeutic power and one of the greatest gifts we can receive is the human to canine bond. Anyone who has ever shared their life with a dog knows they love unconditionally. This companionship has true physical, emotional and social benefits. Two canine handlers, Robert P. and Anthony Y. wanted to share how the dog program has improved their outlook on life.

"Working with the dogs definitely helps the time go by, in a positive way. It can be difficult to find activities where you feel like you are making a difference; but, I see the dog program as a way to give back to the community and that means a lot to me. Learning the skill set to help rescue dogs be successful in a home is very rewarding. Each dog has a specific set of needs and behaviors that has helped me really develop my skills as a trainer. I have learned new levels of patience, responsibility and maturity while working within the dog program, which I know will help me be a better person when I reenter society. I will never forget why I am here, but working with the dogs gives me a new sense of purpose. I love watching the dogs learn and grow, and knowing I had a hand in that is gratifying. You create such a bond with these dogs, which makes it hard when they go to their forever home; however, I feel good knowing that they are happy, in a loving home. Knowing I played a part in making that happen, makes it all worth it! I am so thankful to be a part of this program and look forward to helping as many dogs as I can!"

-Robert P.

"This program has taught me how to put others' needs before my own. Being able to be a part of this program has truly been a wonderful gift. I have developed such a sense of caring and empathy for others through this program and caring for these dogs. Many of these dogs have been neglected, rejected or forgotten about. They have had great struggles throughout their lives. Whether it be living at a shelter or being used on a race track, not knowing what it was like to be loved; yet, every dog that I have had the privilege of working with doesn't hold that against me. They love my companionship and trust that I will do what is best for them. These animals haven't given up despite all they have been through and their strength gives me hope that I can do the same. I have learned so much about myself while caring for these dogs and they have made me a better person. What an amazing feeling!"

-Anthony Y.

## **From Rescue Dog to Hero Dog**

Lilly, the border collie, came to the dog program here at SCI Frackville from Florida. For some unknown reason, nobody wanted her. She was a beautiful dog that was full of energy and with a nurturing personality. If you were to indicate any type of pain or sorrow, she would snuggle up to you and give you many kisses to make you feel better. Her intelligence was off the charts, that with her willingness to please, made her a joy to train.

Lilly was adopted on October 26, 2018, to a large family. After less than a month with them, her smarts and heart came through and made her a hero in my eyes. One day, one of the children of her new family was terribly sick in her bed. With the mother in another part of the home, Lilly suddenly began barking. The mother thought that Lilly needed to be left out for a bathroom break, but when she got to Lilly, she continued to bark and led the mother to the sick child who was unconscious on the floor. This allowed the mother to get her child the help she needed before anything worse could happen.

Lilly is a great example of why these programs are a good thing for more than just us inmates. If Lilly had not been brought to this program, she would have been put down and who knows what could have happened to her new family.

Sincerely,  
Lilly's handler, Tom H.



## SCI Muncy

As the holiday season approaches the CPL program at SCI Muncy would like to express its gratitude to a number of people and businesses that support the work of preparing service dogs. We could not do it without the following people:

First, our veterinary sponsors - Lewisburg Animal Care Hospital (Owner: Dr. Jennifer Hopkinson) and Loyalsock Animal Hospital (Owners: Dr. Thomas Knoebel and Dr. Jeremy Knoebel). The doctors/owners of these practices donate their time, expertise, supplies and more to help produce quality service dogs. Young puppies can have a number of health challenges in their early months so vet trips are a fairly regular occurrence for our staff. Having friendly and responsive veterinary staff is a great blessing to the program.



Marca 2017

Second, our staff volunteers. SCI Muncy staff volunteer to be trained in CPL's dog-handling protocols in order to be able to take the dogs to outside events for socialization as well as veterinary visits. Because the puppies' home in prison is a necessarily sheltered environment, there are many things that they are not exposed to. Therefore it is invaluable for staff volunteers to take the dogs out for a variety of socialization at a young age. Early socialization with children, vehicles, stores, restaurants, concerts, farms, etc. is imperative as service dogs may be asked to work in any or all of these environments once they are placed with a recipient in the community. Without staff volunteers the dogs would miss a significant portion of the socialization that helps them become good service dogs.

Finally, we are grateful for the presence of the dogs. Having dogs in a prison setting is challenging, to say the least, but their presence is a benefit to both the staff and inmates. The dogs are always a friendly face to see on a bad day. They work hard and play hard, but they do not take themselves seriously. There are many laughs at the antics of our dogs in play. Dogs brighten the prison experience for staff and inmates through their personalities. Also, staff and inmates alike see the dogs go from small puppies who fall over their own feet to adult dogs who are ready to go out and perform their job. This is a daily, tangible reminder that learning and improvement are processes, not events. Just as the dogs improve and learn every day, so can the people who live and work at SCI Muncy.

Happy Holidays from the SCI Muncy CPL program!

*Eli Stevens*  
*Unit Manager*

## SCI Albion



As a volunteer with the Canine Partners For Life prison puppy program for about 12 years, I was continually impressed by the dedication and devotion of the handlers when caring for their pups. They took great pride in the accomplishments of the dogs - especially when they heard about the partnerships formed when the pups graduated and were able to make a difference in the lives of their new partners. These amazing dogs become a lifeline for their partners, keeping them safe, giving them back some of their independence that was lost to a disability. But the pups' jobs didn't start there - they also made a huge difference in the lives of their prison handlers. Their furry presence, funny antics and generous love made the prison a different place and the responsibility of caring for them and teaching them the important skills that they would need helped the handlers become more caring and gave them a new purpose. Working as a volunteer with the handlers and the pups was a joy and a blessing to me and I appreciated the opportunity to know those men and to serve in that capacity. I wish the best for the handlers, the pups and the program.

*Ruth Prest*  
*Retired CPL Liaison*

# SCI Waymart

## **WELCOME TO WAYMART PUPPIES BRAND NEW PROGRAM- "PAWS FOR A CAUSE"**

Let's give a shout out to our newest "members of the SCI Waymart team." Three new German Shepherd puppies, pictured to the right have arrived and will start training to become "companions" to veterans and disabled children. Say hello to Kodiak, Jerry and Tracker, who arrived on November 2, 2018.

Kudos to Superintendent Ransom for making this happen and come together, along with support from Deputy Cirelli and Major Gibson.



Unit Manager Jody Smith is overseeing the Puppy Program, and others on the committee include Joe Karlavige, Karen Obelenus, Kathy Millard, Deb Solomon, Kris Quinn, Jamie Chiampi, and Amanda Taylor. Careful consideration was given, and New Hope Assistance Dogs, Inc. of Warren, Pa., was picked to partner with SCI Waymart. Pictured to the left are the staff who gave the new pups a warm welcome.

A brief overview session was held in the superintendent's conference room with staff from New Hope Assistance Dogs Inc.— including Tammy Rogers, president; Barb Ruhlman, head trainer; Veteran's Division and two service dog trainers. Both Barb and Tammy addressed some basic issues and answered questions. A trainer will come to the institution weekly to work with all inmate handlers. These three dogs will be trained to work with veterans. Future pups will be trained to work with disabled children. After the briefing, the group moved to the library group room so that the puppies could meet and greet their new inmate handlers. One dog at a time was brought into the room and picked their handlers. The puppies were then introduced to their new "living quarters" on G-2.



We are committed to the program and are hopeful that our shepherds will graduate with high honors after one year of extensive training with the primary and secondary inmate handlers, and provide companionship and love to three veterans who will be carefully matched to each dog.

A suggestion box was placed in the staff dining room for staff to write down a name for the new program. These names were reviewed by the committee and "Paws for a Cause," submitted by Ann Kovalchik, was chosen.

These dogs will be in various areas in the institution throughout the day and evening. Please remember not to pet the dogs when they are wearing their training vests.



We are looking forward to a very rewarding and purposeful endeavor here at SCI Waymart for all involved, the dogs, the inmates, the staff, and most of all the new owners.

*Kathy Millard  
Clerk Typist 2*

## **Inmate Testimonials**

"I feel very grateful to have this opportunity. It means so much that we are saving these dogs' lives as well as always being able to bring a smile to someone's face." - Dave M.

"The PAWS Program motivates me to take care of a living thing other than myself. It taught me patience, and to grow as a person. It has also allowed me to see what's in store for my future." - Keith N.

"The PAWS program helps me feel like I have a purpose and that is something I haven't felt in a long time, if ever." - Chester B.

# SCI Coal Township

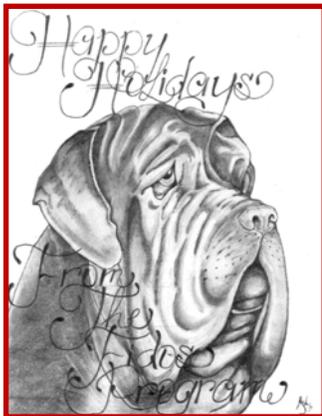
## **Sage, 5-year old Rottie, Returns to FIDOS at SCI Coal Township:**



In the December 2017 edition of All Paws on Deck, SCI Coal Township FIDOS first introduced Sage. Sage completed the FIDOS program in 2016. Sage's original owner beat her in the head so severely that it caused part of her head to cave in and destroyed the vision in her right eye. She had acid dumped on her and is missing some fur on her back. Thankfully, the court removed her from this owner's care and she was given a chance to be rehabilitated. Sage went through FIDOS and then found what was supposed to be her forever home.



In the All Paws on Deck, summer 2018 edition, we reported that Sage had received additional training and is now certified as a therapy dog. She visited schools and nursing homes and was doing very well. Until her adopter moved. Apparently Sage was escaping their yard. With heavy heart, her adopter decided she could no longer keep Sage for fear that she would be hurt or go missing if she got out and they were unable to find her. Sage returned to the Rescue and soon returned to Coal Township. We were, at that time, all heartbroken for Sage. But we know that returning to FIDOS was the best place for her to heal her broken heart and for her to be evaluated so that she could find the right forever home.



On November 1, 2018, Sage arrived back at SCI Coal Township. Immediately a staff member fell in love with her, at first sight - not even realizing that she had been in the FIDOS program before. They also had a Rottie at home who was in need of a companion. Almost immediately Sage was readopted into their family. Sage is very much loved by that family; and she and her new best friend, Panzer, are inseparable. They are soulmates, according to Sage's new family. Panzer and Sage are best friends and are exactly what they needed, each other!



Panzer and Sage wishing a very Merry Christmas to all!

Drawing submitted by SCI Coal Township FIDOS Handler

This is a copy of an 8x10 pencil drawing created by FIDOS Handler Jameson P. The creation is now laminated and hanging in the FIDOS Housing Unit. We think it's fantastic! Coal Township FIDOS Program wishes everyone a very happy holiday season!

*Trisha Kelley*  
Superintendent's Assistant

## **News from SCI Coal Township FIDOS, via Handler John C.**



At SCI Coal Township a lot of inmates and all trainers were doing a lot of praying for our jail dog, Layla. She was limping around and when the jail took her to the vet everybody was praying that it was not cancer and when the results came back it was arthritis in her elbow. It's been more than two months and Layla is doing great! She is running and playing around now. It seemed like everybody in the jail was praying for Layla, including staff and inmates. It goes to show how much man's best friend has an impact on our lives.



In other news, we have been getting a lot of collies and they have been coming up really scared. The collie I had was Rudy. He was six months old and he looked just like lassie. He was so scared when he got here. He was scared of all the sounds that come with jail. He was scared of people but for some reason he took to me. I saw that he really trusted me, so I started to take him to school with me and if he got scared he would run behind me or in-between my legs. But if I showed everything was fine and this person and that person are not going to hurt him, then he would come around and start going up to people and let them pet him. After about three weeks Rudy was going up to everybody and was playing with the other dogs. Rudy was very smart and every time I would walk him he would try and herd me this way or that way. He is a great dog. The dogs here at SCI Coal Township are doing great!



## SCI Frackville



SCI Frackville's DAWGS program receives rescued dogs through Brierwood Kennels and is fortunate to have constant support from the Kennel's owners who provide instruction, guidance and assistance on a regular basis. Since the program's inception on April 12, 2016, Frackville's DAWGS has trained approximately 125 rescued dogs, all of which found a forever home. Nearly all of our dogs came from less than ideal conditions, including those that were abandoned or abused. Currently, there are nine inmate dog handlers who help make this program possible through their dedication and care; and there have been 16 total handlers since the program started.

Three of SCI Frackville's rescued dogs are pictured to the left. Skeeter, Tigger and Karma were all adopted by Officer John Schmerfeld, the gate officer who assists the dog handlers during their twice-weekly outdoor instruction time with Brierwood staff.

One exciting highlight of SCI Frackville's DAWGS program is that, on December 3, Lisa and Mo Devlin (along with their dog, Bane) will be instructing a dog CPR class with the inmate dog handlers. The Devlins, who are from Luzerne County, conduct various CPR trainings to help educate owners on ways to potentially save their pets' lives through the use of CPR techniques. They have been volunteering for Brierwood Kennels' prison program for the past three years. Through the use of demo dogs, the handlers will be able to practice methods and to become educated in these life-saving techniques.

*Jennifer Pawling*  
Unit Manager



**PET FIRST AID & CPR  
SAVES LIVES**

## SCI Houtzdale

On July 25, 2018, the SCI Houtzdale R.U.F.F (Relying upon Furry Friends) Program welcomed two new canines, Henry and Kirby. A third puppy, Axel, was assigned to the program on October 3, 2018. The reception of all the dogs was met with happiness from staff and inmates alike; however, it also represented a new challenge for the program and its handlers. Since the inception of the R.U.F.F. Program, the handlers have taken their roles seriously, as they feel responsible for ensuring each canine is afforded the best opportunity. On October 3, 2018 Dante, Samson, Nico and Gideon returned to United Disability Services (UDS) for more intensive training. The dogs departing the facility was met with mixed feelings as many, including both staff and inmates, were sad to see them leave; however, all understand they each have a greater calling with end goal being certified as a service dog. To date, eight dogs have moved onto advanced training with six earning the title of being called a service dog.



Henry and Kirby



Axel

In addition to the inmate canine handlers, facility staff have continued to play an integral role in the overall success of the program. UDS continues to emphasize the importance of the canines visiting the community setting with the intent of exposing them to environments that include many new and exciting sights and sounds. Additionally the home visits also have a large impact of each dog's socialization skill set. The commands taught within the institution have continued to serve as the foundation for program volunteers to build upon when escorting them on home visits. The home visits have remained popular at the facility level with

many staff requesting permission to escort the respective dogs on home visits. It is common for all dogs to leave the facility each weekend for their respective home visits. Many of the program volunteers find great joy in taking the various dogs to new and exciting places, while others enjoy providing their family's with an opportunity to interact with a dog that is able to perform many functions that normal pets are not able to do.



Samson, Dante, Nico & Gideon

In addition to visiting program volunteer residences, R.U.F.F. Program canines have visited a local fall festival and attended the Hershey Bears Professional Hockey Organization Annual Photo Shoot. Looking forward, the program is slated to receive a new puppy on December 3, 2018. Cody, will join Auggie, Axel, Kirby and Henry as part of the S.C.I. Houtzdale R.U.F.F. Family.

*Craig Petulla*  
Unit Manager

My favorite memory is when an inmate was petting the dog and he told me "I haven't pet a dog in 25 years." Need I say more?  
- Inmate Handler

## SCI Greene

SCI Greene currently has three pups of varying ages. Fausta, Evie and Peppermint. Greta and Brooke recently completed their work here and have returned to CPL.

### RECENT EVENTS!!

Our Volunteer banquet/CPL graduation ceremony was held on October 25, 2018, at Greene. Greta and Brooke were recognized as our newest graduates and all handlers received a certificate.

In October, we bid farewell to Trainer Erica Seaver-Engel and welcomed Susan Fleming onboard as our new CPL trainer. Erica will stay on as a volunteer but has moved on to other opportunities. We appreciate her years of dedicated work with the puppies and inmates.

On October 2, 2018, Tina Staley and Kayla Shaner had the opportunity to take two pups to Brownsville Area Elementary School to talk about service dogs. The students were full of questions and after a brief presentation got the opportunity to interact with the pups.

Each week our volunteer Lisa Swartz takes a pup to Waynesburg Central Elementary school to read with second and fourth graders for the "Book Club" which is fashioned after an adult book club. Lisa reads individually with her second graders with the help of a pup.

**CPL Updates on our pups!** Jordan Kenneally and Sue Fleming had the pleasure of attending CPL graduation on November 18<sup>th</sup> while taking Brooke and Greta back to CPL. At graduation they were able to see Kona graduate and meet with Kona's person Gina. Congratulations Kona and Gina!

### **SCI GREENE CPL COMMITTEE**

Superintendent Robert Gilmore	Michael Smith - Committee Chairman
Tina Staley - Program Director	Lou Giachetti
Kayla Shaner- Program Administrator	Jamie Reader
Susan Fleming - CPL Trainer	
Marvin Cumberledge - Volunteer Coordinator	



Fausta



## SCI Forest



It's been two years since SCI Forest revamped its dog program and partnered with Paul Anthony of AB Canine. In that time there's been ups and downs, however, the partnership couldn't have been better for putting little Forest on the map. This go around, we were able to place several dogs in "working" capacities, and many more into loving homes of staff members.

**Stark:** Pictured with his new human. Stark (named after Tony Stark) was placed with Ms. Surrat, a local veteran. The efforts were coordinated by staff member M. Knapp and Paul Anthony. She will continue her training with Stark to fine tune him to her needs by going to AB Canine weekly. Everyone here loved Stark, affectionately known as Pablo, and he was a frequent honorary employee of R and D due to his exemplary behavior. Stark was from Butler County Humane Society and they graciously covered his adoption fee. Ms. Surrat, Knapp and Stark all went to the shelter to finalize the adoption. They noted how much of a different dog Stark was and gave the inmates credit for a job well done.

Ms. Surrat writes: Hi! This is Teresa, the veteran who was lucky to get this wonderful dog. Words can't express the gratitude I feel. I've had a huge hole in my heart and he's already started to mend it with his love. Happy Thanksgiving & God Bless. - Teresa Surratt, U.S. Army Veteran

Bonzai, a little dog named after the hyena from "Lion King," has gone on to work with a boy with autism from Beaver County. The two hit off instantly! This pairing will also work with Paul Anthony from AB Canine to further their training. Yes, Bonzai did look like a hyena.

Simba, a yellow lab, is going to work with a lady that has Multiple Sclerosis.

Flower, a small Pomeranian mix, is going to work with victimized children and at a women's shelter. If she does not go there, a staff member will be adopting her for his mother who is in need of a little dog.

Archer, a black lab puppy, is going to a loving family for a boy that has been significantly bullied. He has really bonded with the boy and has rounded out the family. He goes on two-mile walks daily and has assimilated well to his new humans.

*Yvette Perrin  
Unit Manager*

## SCI Rockview

Ruff, Ruff from SCI Rockview! We are happy to announce some new additions to our program! We are now partnered with One Dog at a Time Rescue, a non-profit organization based out of Lewistown, Pa. Our program currently consists of four canines ready and willing to learn, and we have already adopted two out! All dogs are brought in to learn basic training skills with the hopes of being adopted out to forever homes when they are ready! They are constantly learning with the help of their handlers and from spending time with staff who also reinforce their training! Any dog who comes into our institution is a blessing, watching them learn their new skills and put them to use as they become pawsome pets is rewarding to both staff and their handlers!



Mr. Rex, our pit-mix deaf dog! He is full of life and loves human interaction and toys! In the beginning of his life it was thought that he could not be trained because he is deaf. Since coming into the program he has learned sit, down, stand, touch, stay, and wait - ALL by hand signals! This cute fur boy struggles significantly with separation anxiety and does not like to be left alone. He gets bored very easily, so he needs to be well entertained! He loves other dogs and certainly loves companionship! Although deaf, he is intelligent and keeps everyone smiling with his adorable ears and face!



Mr. Gunner is our Weimaraner! He is our newest addition and is fitting right in! This boy came to us due to his family not having enough time for him. He is quickly learning his



commands and is making progress toward being a perfect fit for a family! He is energetic and loves to play with his fellow prison pups! He gets very excited when staff come see him! He is working on not jumping up when people come up to him and working on some separation anxiety!



Gunner also enjoys being goofy and keeping others smiling!



Mr. Jackson is our coonhound mix! This sweet, playful boy came in as a shock collar abuse case. He has only been with the program for a month but has been able to already learn sit, down, shake and off. His handler is actively work-



ing on teaching him not to pull when on his leash. This boy is strong and he knows it! He is a very sweet boy who loves the outdoors! Jackson also enjoys snuggling! His handlers say that he will make a guard dog for his family!



Miss Daisy is our golden lab mix! She came to us due to her family not having enough time for her. This sweet girl is bursting with energy! She absolutely loves being outdoors, swimming and



playing catch! This girl is very intelligent, and boy does she know it! She has progressed very well with her commands and knows all of them! She is working on being able to follow directions from others outside of just her handler. Her high energy keeps everyone on their toes as well as smiling! She often times like to roll over and demand belly rubs! Miss Daisy will make the perfect addition to a family in the future!



Miss Heidi, a Mastiff, was a rescue who was spending her days in a garage all alone. She is now **LOVING** life with her new family living on the beach in NJ!



Miss Bailey, a Border Collie mix, was surrendered to ODAAT. She has been adopted and is loving life with her family and specifically her human sister!



All of our canines go on many day outings with staff and some have even been on home visits! These outings help enhance their training and help prepare them for adoption! We extend a special **thank you** to our canine handlers who spend hours upon hours training and working with our dogs to get them ready for their forever homes!

*Sheena Druckemiller  
Psychological Services Specialist*

## SCI Laurel Highlands

Canine Partners for Life (CPL) was founded in 1989. For 29 years, it has been dedicated to training service dogs, home companion dogs, residential companion dogs, and courthouse companion dogs to assist individuals who have a wide range of physical, neurological, and cognitive disabilities. SCI Laurel Highlands participates in CPL's Prison Puppy Program which entails teaching the puppies their basic commands in an effort to prepare them for their future training at the CPL kennel. The puppies undergo training for more than two years before they are paired with a recipient. It is a positive program implement-



Happy 1st Birthday Vida!



Elsa & Sunny are off to "college!"  
good Luck Girls!

ed into the prison system and SCI Laurel Highlands is beyond grateful for the opportunity to help others in need. We have five pups, two of which have left us for "college." Elsa, who is now at the CPL kennel honing her skills, is a lovable and sweet pup whom we miss dearly. We hope nothing but the best for her future! Sunny is our other pup who has also left us to participate in her next phase of training. We miss her as well and all of her puppy kisses. Good luck, Sunny and Elsa, we are rooting for you! Ms. Vida is 12 months old and has passed her 12-month evaluation with flying colors. She is such a happy pup and is always so excited to meet new people. Wren, nine months old, has also passed her most recent evaluation and is progressing advantageously as the days go on. She is so lovable and will not allow you to walk by without saying hello! We were recently able to add another addition to the LAU family, Mr. Stark! We have not had the honor to raise a male yet, so this is a wonderful opportunity for us. Mr. Stark is five months old and is such a handsome boy.



Little Laurel



Laurel at  
Barktoberfest!

SCI Laurel Highlands took part in a fundraising activity for Canine Partners for Life, "Dogs Day Off." The reward for raising the most money was the honor of naming a CPL puppy. We are proud to say that the staff, families and friends of SCI Laurel Highlands did indeed raise the most money during this campaign. Not only were we able to name a pup, but we are actually raising her as well. Our last pup, seven months old, is Ms. Laurel, named after our institution. Laurel is so special to us, as are all of our pups we are able to raise for this wonderful program. Laurel is so smart and ahead of the game. She sure loves her belly rubs!

A special thank you to all staff volunteers and community volunteers for helping our pups get out of the institution and experience different environments. You all have a big hand in the success of this program.

*Brianna Fox  
Corrections Counselor I*



Happy Halloween from the LAU girls!  
Wren, Laurel, Elsa, Sunny, & Vida

## Inmate Testimonials

"While incarcerated we often think about the future and what we could do to be helpful at that time. However, why wait when you could be productive today? PAWS is a great way to help a person in need, give back, and grow individually. It teaches me how to help someone today so that when tomorrow comes, I can look back at yesterday and be proud of what I am doing today." - Jared M.

"When I look at the dogs in the program, I see myself when I came to prison, weary, rough and in need of rehabilitation. As I reside in a cage, so do the dogs we train. Just like my K9 friend, I am eager to get another chance beyond the cages. So I take pride in this program that I am providing that opportunity for the dogs so they don't end up in the pen again. It's a joy to experience personal accomplishment."  
-Mark S.

## Dog Things



BALLS

BARKING

BEGGING

BIRDS

CAR RIDES

CATS

JUMPING

PETTING

PLAYING

RUNNING

SCRATCHING

SHOES

SNUGGLING

SOCKS

SQUIRRELS

TREATS

WAGGING

WALKS

## SCI Dallas



Sarg

So many great things have been happening over the last six months with SCI Dallas' Hounds for Heroes program. This canine program affiliated with America's Vet Dogs continues to grow immensely. Since the last newsletter, many exciting things have happened with the pups in training!

On June 23, 2018, two of our first dogs, Sarg and Colonel (English Black Labrador Retrievers) officially graduated from the America's Vet Dogs program, were successfully placed with veterans, and are currently living on the West Coast. Sarg was paired with a Navy veteran and Colonel was paired with an Army veteran.



Colonel



Splash

On August 25, 2018, Splash graduated formal training and was placed with an Air Force veteran on the East Coast.

Communication is open with the veterans and they frequently give updates to their former Weekend Puppy Raisers. Through the emails and letters, it is amazing to see what a difference these formally trained certified assistance dogs make in the lives of their forever humans, and in turn, the thankfulness each veteran has for the inmates who trained the dogs and the Weekend Puppy Raisers who have socialized the pups in a variety of different environments and subjected them to different stimuli.



Chuckie

Quinn, an English Black Labrador, decided to have a career change after finishing his training at SCI Dallas. He is currently working with MSA Security, which is America's largest cargo screening canine provider as an explosive detecting canine with top-secret clearance. MSA Security is where our nation's best defenders are trained. With an uncompromised commitment to comprehensive best-in-class training of canines and handlers, MSA delivers an unrivaled and nationally certified Windsor Team that keeps millions of people safe across the globe.



Papi

You can find MSA Windsor Teams working everywhere sniffing out potential threats from both stationary and mobile explosive odors in professional sports stadiums, airports, amphitheaters, cargo facilities, loading docks, and more. Another one of the SCI Dallas pups, Golden/Yellow Lab cross, Liz, just entered MSA training and will hopefully one day possess the same credentials as Quinn.

Since June, some of the other pups have been keeping busy gaining their knowledge of commands taught to them by the Inmate Handlers and have been busy socializing on the weekends with their Weekend Puppy Raisers. Golden/Yellow Lab cross, Nahoa, as well as English Yellow Labradors, Papi and Chuckie, have been making great strides with their training at Dallas and we are hoping they will follow in the steps of

Sarg and Colonel. All three recently celebrated their 1<sup>st</sup> birthdays! Two more pups that are approximately nine months of age are Licorice, an English Black Labrador, and Francis, an English Yellow Labrador. SCI Dallas will have the pups until they reach the age of 15-17 months and will eventually move on to their formalized training in Smithtown, NY.



Nahoa



On September 8, 2018, The Guide Dog Foundation/America's Vet Dogs received a \$6,000 check from the University of Scranton's Department of Occupational Therapy. Money was raised for their annual puppy scholarship with the proceeds from their annual "Spring Fling" dance. Staff and Weekend Puppy Raisers attended the official check presentation at the University of Scranton's campus. University of Scranton hopes that the \$6,000, which is the amount needed to sponsor a pup, will be given to SCI Dallas to train into a productive assistance dog.

On September 9, 2018, some of our SCI Dallas pups attended the Sargent Jan Argonish Memorial motorcycle ride in Scranton, Pa. and was presented with a check for America's Vet Dogs in the amount of \$12,000! Army Sergeant Jan Michael Argonish, a Soldier from the Pennsylvania National Guard, was killed on August 27, 2007 during an ambush in Afghanistan. He was 26 years old and a 10-year veteran of the PA Guard with two previous activations to his credit, serving on Active Duty during Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Iraqi Freedom. To honor Jan's life, his comrades, friends and family have established the "Sergeant Jan Argonish Ride," a non-profit organization that plans, organizes and runs an annual motorcycle benefit ride in Northern Lackawanna County. The event combines many of the activities Jan enjoyed most in life while raising money in support of several noble causes that Jan would have endorsed.



Licorice

## SCI Dallas cont.

Some of our newest additions are Golden Retriever/Black Labrador crosses who are brother and sister, Jackson and Jennifer; and Pax, who is an English Yellow Labrador Retriever. Here at Dallas we have cuteness overload! The inmate handlers of the newest pups wanted to share some of the personalities of the new pups and sharing how they feel being an Inmate Handler.

–Hello Everyone,

My name is Pax (aka Wiggle-Butt)! I came to Dallas in September and I am now four months old. Many SCI Dallas employees have seen me around walking, playing fetch, or just laying around in the grass. Even though it doesn't always look like I'm doing much, I am working, I promise! Could a face like mine lie? I love to say "hello" to everyone I meet, but only when I am not wearing my yellow cape that indicates I am working.

– submitted by primary handler, Joseph E.



–Hello! My name is Jennifer and I'm a future assistance guide dog. I was born on July 12, 2018, so that makes me four months of age. I love my two-legged humans. These guys teach me a lot of things that I didn't realize I could learn at such a young age. I have the skills of a big dog. If you want to see me at work showing off my skills, I will be walking around SCI Dallas with my handlers.

– submitted by primary handler, Antonio J. and secondary handler, Anthony B.

–Ruff! Hi there, my name is Jackson. I am a Black Lab/Golden Retriever cross. I am all black with a golden smile. I love to sleep, eat, play and learn new things with my handlers. We go on adventures every day. I love to go to class where I can show everyone what I have been learning. I am going to school to be a service dog. I have an important mission in life. One day I hope to help a disabled veteran live a better life. Like the veteran who served our country, I will serve him/her to the best of my abilities. For now, I just want to continue to go to school and play with my sister, Jennifer, and all the other dogs in the program. I usually then like to eat some food and take a nap. When I wake up I'll play with my squeaky toy and learn something new. When Friday comes, school is out and I get to go on adventures with my Weekend Puppy Raisers in the community. I strut my stuff with my yellow cape all over Northeast Pa.

-submitted by primary handler, David M.

*Molly K. DeSarro*  
*Corrections School Principal*

## SCI Chester



In the spirit of the season, some of the WAGs at Chester handlers wanted to write about what WAGs at Chester means to them.

I have been in the dog program at SCI Chester for approximately one year. From my experience and observations, I have learned the WAGs Program is a true blessing in disguise. I say disguise because some of the most beautiful things in the program go unnoticed. I've come to learn that caring for these recused animals has been rebuilding something in all of us that we have lost or forgotten since we have been in prison - attributes that seemed to be cut off or lacking in our previous lifestyles as addicts and criminals. Attributes including sympathy, empathy, patience, kindness and love, are all elements which make our spirits flourish and grow. Each dog that passes through is a certain piece in our journey, helping to finding the true, better version of ourselves. So, in the spirit of the season, I applaud WAGs and the staff at SCI Chester for allowing me to participate in this program and look forward to training more dogs! – Dennis (Currently training Reba)

WAGs has been such a meaningful program to me. I have had approximately 15 dogs since 4/26/2018. I am amazed sometimes with the dogs we get, one great dog after another, and it is sad knowing that they were discarded like trash. My current dog, Rico, is a one year old German Shepherd mix who is a fast learner and treat-motivated. Before Rico, I had a pit-mix puppy named Lucky who was able to pass his Canine Good Citizenship test after only being here one week. We are almost at 300 dogs trained in 19 months, which is a huge accomplishment. While we love the dogs, what is not often talked about is how much these dogs have helped us through some hard days. We are forever grateful to be given this opportunity and think having dogs in the best program in the DOC! – Joe

Please contact Program Coordinators Mandee Quinn and Wanda Manson-Johnson with any questions.

*Mandee Quinn*  
*Superintendent's Assistant*



## SCI Somerset

Recently, SCI Somerset's Canine Connection had the distinct pleasure of hosting Canine Partners for Life (CPL) recipient of Denver, a CPL dog that was trained at SCI Somerset. Denver spent about eight months at SCI Somerset before returning to CPL for his final segment of training. Denver and his recipient Kaggie, graduated in October 2017. This was the first time that Canine Connection has had an opportunity to welcome a service dog recipient into the institution to speak with the inmate and staff handlers, and it was definitely well worth the wait! This opportunity allowed those involved in Canine Connection to see for themselves the value of the energies that we put into training the dogs placed into our care.



Kaggie, Denver's recipient, is a young woman who suffers from Narcolepsy, with Cataplexy, which has greatly compromised her ability to live a "normal" life. After a long road searching for ways to achieve a more normal lifestyle, and several years waiting to be matched with a service dog, Kaggie and Denver were "partnered" and trained by CPL to work together. Denver alerts Kaggie prior to her having an episode so that she is able to get to a safe area before the event occurs. Additionally, Denver provides Kaggie with physical support when she has periods of extreme weakness, assists her in ambulation, and loves to retrieve items for her in an effort for her to exert less energy when necessary. It was amazing to see the bond

that they have developed, and Denver's extreme attentiveness to her, even when surrounded by other dogs and people that he remembered from his past.

During the visit, Kaggie explained the ways that having Denver has changed her life, and in many situations, allowed her to regain her independence. With Denver by her side, she has been able to resume college courses and was even able to spend six months in an internship at Disney. How amazing is that!?! Denver has also allowed Kaggie to be able to reduce the amount of some of her medications that was necessary for her to combat her disability. Kaggie's mother was also able to join us for the visit and shared the relief that she has felt since Denver has come into Kaggie's life; and reports that she believes that Kaggie has had less episodes since being partnered with him. Kaggie also allowed an opportunity for those present to ask questions regarding any curiosities they may have, what commands have been the most useful to her and Denver's partnership, and suggestions on ways to improve training for future recipients.

This was an emotional day for many involved, inmates and staff alike. Many of the inmate handlers expressed that this was the best experience that they have had while incarcerated. To be able to see the fruits of their labors, and put into perspective how drastically their efforts were able to change someone's life, really solidified the reason why they chose to join this amazing program. We as staff agree!!!



*Michelle Houser*  
Corrections Classification Programs Manager



## Inmate Testimonials

"The PAWS program taught me that no matter what, we all have at our disposal a second chance. Regardless of what you did, where you are from, no matter what circumstances, we all have the means to redeem ourselves. We just need a little help and guidance." - David E.

"I love the fact that we are taking something someone threw away and turning them into obedient, useful dogs as well as saving their lives. It gives me great pleasure inside and makes me feel better that I am giving back to society instead of taking from it." - Paul D.

"In the beginning I used to be so proud of saving a dog's life. However, as time went on, I realized that it was so much bigger than that. I started to see that these animals were actually teaching me to be more patient, compassionate, unselfish, and caring. I'm honored to be a part of this and blessed that the dogs also saved me." - Christopher M.

## SCI Mahanoy



SCI Mahanoy PUP (Puppies Unleashing Progress)  
The SCI Mahanoy PUP Program is currently at 10 puppies and 20 Canine Handlers. This increase occurred right before the 11-day statewide lockdown which presented a whole host of unforeseen issues, but was also an opportunity to see the teamwork of SCI Mahanoy staff in action!



During lockdowns, staff are expected to perform the everyday duties that are required to keep the institution running efficiently, such as preparing and delivering meals. But unlike other lockdowns, the handlers initially were not permitted to take the dogs out for exercise or bathroom breaks. We put out an "all-call" for staff to help out by taking the dogs for brief periods of time and the response was overwhelming! Volunteers, uniformed and non-uniformed, came through in typical Mahanoy fashion and gave the dogs the attention they deserve. Corrections Officers came down and helped the G block team in the early morning hours when the need was greatest; and throughout the day, other departments helped by taking the dogs for visits to their respective areas.

We also received an update on one of our "graduates" who was a special case (aren't they all?) and near and dear to many of Mahanoy staff...



She very much does not fit in the cat bed!

Molly came to us so thin, so frail and so scared, yet so affectionate and yet so trusting of our staff and her handlers. It was their caring and attention that led to the discovery of broken teeth that must have caused so much constant pain, not to mention interfering with her ability to eat. She was fixed up and now we have not only the "before and after" pictures, but also a "look at her now!" picture!



And finally, a picture of the newest arrivals and our current batch of pups! Nothing is better than a cartful of puppies!!

Christina Griffin  
Unit Manager

## SCI Pine Grove

There have been a lot of changes here at Pine Grove. Our last round of dogs left in June 2008. It has been pretty lonely here without our four-legged friends. Here is a short update on our last round of dogs:



- \* North has been paired with a young boy and is learning his new role.
- \* Kato has been placed with a young lady who needs balance assistance and so he is learning to wear a special harness.
- \* Polar is working in a therapist's office helping comfort clients.
- \* Packer is still working to find his perfect fit.

Right now, we are working to partner with a new dog program. We are recruiting both staff members and inmates. We are hoping to have this new program up and running by the end of this year.

Another exciting thing that occurred is that we had six inmate handlers complete a 120-hours course that encompassed four components.

1. Canine Wellness/Dog training in correctional facilities
2. Training different types of service dogs
3. Animal rescue rehabilitation and shelters
4. Communication skills and working with the public

This is a partner program with IUP; therefore, it requires a lot of work. Reading, writing and discussion occur on a weekly basis. These handlers chose to participate in this program, since it is not a requirement. This program gives them a more employable skill that they can use in the community. They participated in Pine Grove's graduation ceremony on November 14, 2018, and received a certificate for Canine Care and Training. We are planning to offer this program to our new group of handlers so that they have the same opportunity.

Tammy Delosh  
Corrections Counselor II

Christina Smith  
DATSII

## SCI Retreat

SCI Retreat awards the Luzerne County S.P.C.A at this years 2018 Regional Symposium which was also hosted by SCI Retreat



"The SPCA of Luzerne County is always happy to partner with other facilities that can benefit the animals in our care. We have been partnered with SCI Retreat for a little over a year and are grateful for the opportunities it gives our dogs and the training benefits that increase their adoptability. This program has given the shelter additional space to house more animals and aid us in our mission of helping our community through the service to animals. We have sent 23 dogs to the training program down at SCI Retreat. Twenty-one of these dogs have found placement after they graduated from the program; two dogs are currently in the program. We have a great involvement with the staff at SCI Retreat as well as the inmates that service our dogs. We hope to continue this partnership in the future. It has been a huge success for our shelter and SCI Retreat".

*Todd Hevner*  
Executive Director L.S.P.C.A

These three pups were the most recent to find forever homes, adopted by SCI Retreat Staff!!



*Todd Kolbicka*  
Corrections Activities Manager



## Pumpkin & Peanut Butter Dog treats

Prep Time 10 mins

Cook Time 30 mins

Total Time 40 mins

### Ingredients

- 1 cup oats (old fashioned, 1-minute oats, or instant) , plus more if needed- see instructions
- 1/3 cup pumpkin puree (not pumpkin pie filling)
- 1/4 cup natural peanut butter

### Instructions

- Begin by adding the oats to a food processor; Grind them until you reach a fine powder.
- Now add the pumpkin and peanut butter.
- Blend to combine until you make a sticky dough.
- Roll the dough out on a lightly floured surface. I used brown rice flour but you can use wheat flour. You could alternatively set aside some of the ground oats to use for this as well.
- Use a small cookie cutter, (like a small bone shaped cutter), but any shape will do, or just use a knife to cut small squares.
- Lay them on a parchment paper lined baking sheet, bake until dry, and firm. About 20 to 30 minutes.
- Once cool, store them in an airtight container at room temperature for your furry friends to enjoy!

## SCI Fayette

Twenty-eight successful adoptions in 18 months! The D.A.W.G. program thinks that is something to celebrate! In doing so, we decided to catch up with a couple of our graduates and see what their new families have to say.



"It's been one year since we decided to become furever parents to this guy! Hunter adjusted to our family and fur siblings and we couldn't be more proud. He is lovable and continues to learn new commands and tricks, and sometimes recruiting his little sister to jump in on his shenanigans. They are definitely partners in crime, whether it is stealing socks or teaching her how to give those sad eyes while watching you eat, hoping that you just might drop a crumb. I was skeptical about adopting, but thanks to The Dawg Program at SCI Fayette along with Hunter's handlers he was more than ready to take on our family. I truly believe that The Dawg Program has done just as much for Hunter's handlers as it did for him. Caring for him, teaching him and showing him love. They were very proud to see him take his last walk towards the gates, excited for his second chance, while waiting for their own. I encourage anyone looking for a furever pet to consider adopting through The Dawg Program at SCI Fayette."

**October 2017**



*Carrie Holman  
Cosmetology Instructor*



**November 2018**



"When the SCI Fayette Pup Program started earlier this year, my family and I were in the middle of trying to find a second dog for our small family. I was a little wary of the program at first; the Pup Program was new to our institution; therefore, I did not know too many people that had adopted dogs from the program and I did not know how well the inmates could be trained to be considered a "handler."

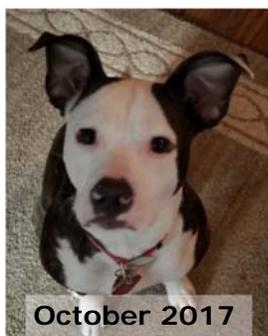
How quickly my perception of the SCI Fayette Pup Program has changed...

On one Friday morning in May, Mrs. Palmer called me at work and told me I just had to meet this new puppy her program just brought in. Abby instantly stole my heart. I did not even ask my wife's permission before I sent in the adoption paperwork.

The first thing that struck me about Abby was how disciplined she was already. Even though she was only in the Pup Program a few days, her inmate handler already had her sitting, laying down and rolling over. For only being eight months old, this little girl was so well behaved. She walked well on a leash, was great off of the leash and responded very positively to her name and commands.

For anyone who is second-guessing the Prison Pup Program, I urge you to try it, for it is easily one of the best decisions my family and I ever did. Abby is a blessing to us. The inmate handlers treated her well, she was healthy and happy when she was finally able to come home with me, after her training was complete. The head of the SCI Fayette Pup Program, Mrs. Palmer was a great help. She knew my personality and matched Abby and I perfectly."

*Mark Gustashaw  
Corrections Officer I*



**October 2017**



## SCI Mercer

Hello people, my name is Brinny! I am a three-year-old white and black brindle mix, and I am a hurricane survivor. I survived the devastating hurricane, Florence, that ripped through North Carolina in September of this year. Currituck Animal Services took me in after my family surrendered me on August 17, 2018. I don't know why my family took me there but this might be the reason I am still alive!! Pennsylvania Great Dane Rescue and All Paws Matter saved me two hours before the hurricane hit!! The impact of the hurricane was enormous and left a lot of people and their pets in hardship, sad to say...Once out of harm's way I traveled up north across many states to Mercer County where I was given a great chance to start a new beginning. I was so excited!! When I first got to Mercer County I had to live at the Mercer County Grange, a few miles from where I am now, for a quarantine period with the other dogs that were rescued alongside me, since we had to leave North Carolina so fast... Who knew I would be living a few miles from there, at SCI Mercer. After our time at the Grange, I was handed over to a shelter called Strayhaven. They take in homeless dogs like myself to love and care for. Strayhaven helps us dogs get new opportunities to prove to families that we may be the missing piece to their family puzzle. Thanks to Strayhaven and a fantastic program called C.A.R.E. at SCI Mercer, we get trained to be the best dogs that we can be and a second chance to show everyone we can become a great family member. You should see what I have learned and what I can do. Each day I show my trainers what I know and try to please them. It is so fun to learn especially when food is involved, people call them treats --- I love those things no matter what they are called!!! I can't wait to show my new family what I can do!!! Now, here is what my trainers have to say about me:



As trainers, we have the privilege to see how happy Brinny is now that she's away from harm. She is very funny and alert to everything around her; like she knows when it is time to go outside. She watches us put on our jackets and then she starts jumping up and down, never on us, so happy to be with people who will take care of her and take her outside with them. Brinny doesn't really play with toys yet, but she will play with her family. She has this unorthodox style of play that is really funny ...it's hard to describe... you just have to see it. Brinny has her own way of fitting in with a family, whenever we are laying down, she will sit in front of the bed after she tries to lay with you and it's like she is watching out for you. Brinny loves to go everywhere with her family, but when she can't go she will wait by the door or go in her crate. She loves her crate, too. We watch her make up her bed the way she likes it...she fixes her pillow the way she likes to and after she's done she looks at us, as if to say this is the way I like my bed. She is so funny! Brinny also has this part of the day when she goes in her crate to think to herself... she just sits there looking into her own world then she comes out ready to play! We've learned a lot from Brinny on how smart she is. She shows us how she can walk on two legs and dance. Brinny knows how to hug and how to read your arm motions. She gives you eye contact and when you have treats she will sit pretty for you. Brinny will do all the basic commands for you, like sit, stay, down, wait, stay and get away from that. When you put your arm a certain way she will give you her paw and she looks so funny doing it. Brinny makes us laugh every day!! When she lays with us she will claim her spot on the bed and she will wait for you to go to sleep, then get up and get a bite to eat before she goes to bed, because she likes to eat after everyone is asleep. She might wake you because she chews her food very loudly, but after all it is hard food. The only problem you might have is not being able to stop loving Brinny.



Boo is a three-year-old male pit mix. He weighs about 50 pounds and has a beautiful gray and white coat. Last August, Boo was found as a stray roaming the street of Mahoning County in Ohio. After almost being hit by a car, a kind lady allowed him to hop in her car and took him to the Mahoning County Dog Pound. Once there, it was discovered Boo was heartworm positive.

Treatment consisted of two painful spinal injections followed by 30 days of crate rest. The Pound found a foster family to help him get through that time. He spent a total of seven weeks being cared for by his foster family.

Shortly after being neutered, Boo became the first Mahoning County Dog Pound resident to enter the C.A.R.E. program at SCI Mercer where he would learn basic obedience and skills to help prepare him for a permanent home. Initially, Boo was timid and reluctant to be handled. It didn't take long for his confidence to grow. He began to trust people, demonstrate that he is a quick learner, and became a favorite of many people at the institution.

Boo has learned several tricks including: rollover, bow, spin, sit pretty, wipe your paws and touch. His former name was Boston, so he learned his new name too!! He has learned which behaviors are inappropriate like jumping up and pulling on the leash. His basic commands like sit, down, stand stay and come are strong as well.

Boo is crate trained, plays great with other dogs, and loves affection from people. He is an awesome dog and needs a permanent home. His future owners will have a happy, cuddly dog and not have to worry about him being destructive or high-maintenance. Boo has had a difficult life. The long scar on his neck from an embedded collar is proof that he went through some hard times. Yet, with help from several kind people along the way, Boo has rebounded big time. Now he is ready and waiting for his forever home. He'll bring them as much joy as he has brought all he come across since he was rescued.

*Marcia Combine  
Unit Manager*

## SCI Smithfield

The dog program at Smithfield is going very well. Our handlers are doing great progressing the dogs through the program.

Sawyer made his return to SCI Smithfield for a month-long visit. He was welcomed back with open arms and many treats. His handler was very excited to get to work with and spend time with him again. The volunteers and handlers did not think they would get to see him again when he left for the breeding program. Sawyer has the perfect temperament for the program. He has exceeded in every aspect of his training. His progression while in the community as a breeder went well. He came back into the program at Smithfield and did not miss a beat. His handlers stated, "He is the perfect dog for the program."



Ronnie arrived at Smithfield in February with a lot of anxiety and medical concerns. He was so anxious he would not walk on the grass. He has come a long way in the past nine months. He is less anxious, no longer afraid to walk on the grass and very well behaved considering how he was when he first arrived. He is in the process of becoming a companion dog. Ronnie loves attention and loves to play fetch. Ronnie, like most Labs, loves treats. He is always willing to please his handler or other staff volunteers because he knows he will receive a treat. His handler stated, "I have come very attached to Ronnie in the short amount of time he has been here at Smithfield. Ronnie has adapted well to living inside the prison especially since he started in a community home."

Carbon arrived at Smithfield in July 2018. He is progressing through the program well. Carbon loves to play with the older dogs and holds his own being the youngest pup. His handlers stated, "Carbon is a fast learner. He is a favorite since he is still the baby at Smithfield. Carbon has a lot to learn and a lot to explore." Staff volunteers say they love taking him home for temporary home passes. Carbon gets along with their cats, dogs and farm animals. He is a very loving pup with a lot of potential.

Hunts came to Smithfield December 2017 as an eight week-old pup. He is now 13 months old and has been progressing very well through the program. He is a loveable and very calm dog. His handlers have said he is the best dog and everyone's favorite. Hunts left Smithfield November 7<sup>th</sup> and was placed at Huntingdon for a few weeks. He is expected back December 5<sup>th</sup>. His handlers are excited to get him back.



When asked what the program means to the handlers, they stated, "The dogs allow us to take responsibility for someone else instead of just ourselves. The program allows us to develop patience, anger management, and the ability to deal with every day issues. It allows us to grow with the pups. The dogs provide a positive outlook in a negative place." "The program allows me to give back to the community when I may never see the community again. A piece of us leaves with the dog, knowing we had something to do with the dogs training, to go out into the community to help someone in need. It gives us a satisfactory reward knowing the dog is helping someone in need." "The program has so many benefits and is so rewarding. The programming is positive in so many ways. The dogs provide stress relief, companionship, and comfort during stressful days."

*Jeffrey Runk*  
*Acting Unit Manager*



If you would like to start your own dog program at your facility contact:  
Janet Kelley (janekelley@pa.gov).

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

Further information on the DOC's dog training programs can be found on the DOC's website at [www.cor.pa.gov](http://www.cor.pa.gov)—there is a link in the left column on the front page. This and previous issues of this newsletter can be viewed on the DOC's website under About Us—Newsroom—Newsletters.