

AUGUST 2023

VOLUME 7: EDITION 1

# All Paws on Deck: Featuring the DOC Prison Pups



*SCI Houtzdale pups, Percy & Arlo*





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## ***Introduction***

**In March of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, many of our adoption and therapy dog programs were put on hold. Since then, almost all of our facility's programs are back up and running with continued success!**

**The Department of Corrections is proud to feature our adoption and therapy dog programs throughout this newsletter. In total, 18 SCI's have a puppy program in place within their facility. This newsletter highlights 15 of the facility's programs.**

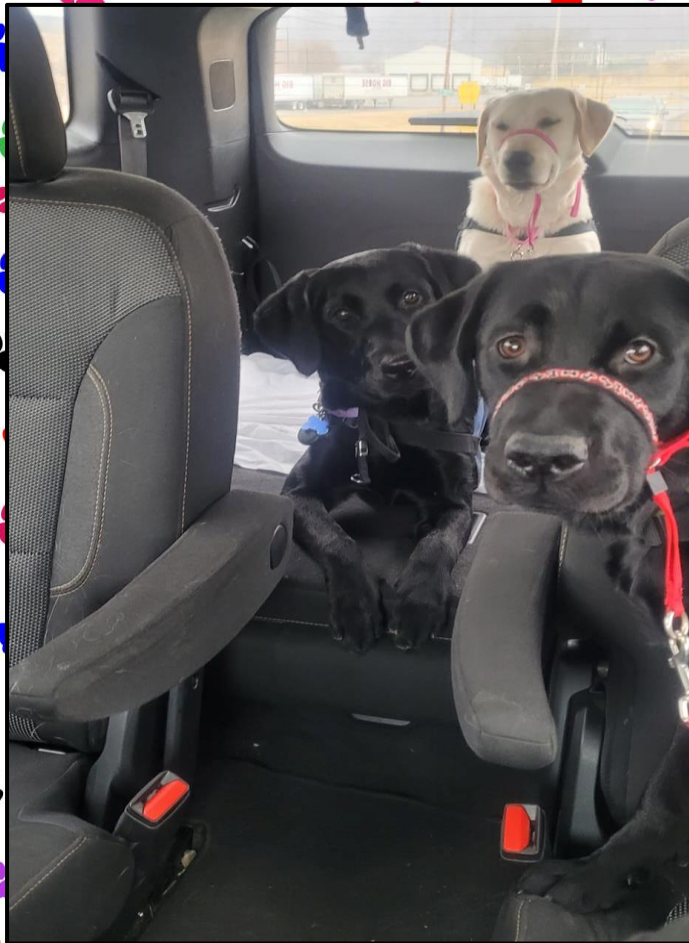
**We are so proud of our staff who maintain these programs, as well as the inmates who are trained as handlers and help to prepare the pups for adoption!**

**Enjoy the newest edition of "All Paws on Deck" since 2019!**



## SCI Benner Township

SCI Benner Township's dog program, **Canine Partners for Life (CPL)** began in the Spring of 2022. The program previous to this was put on hold due to COVID-19, but Benner Township is excited to finally have another dog program up and running! As of June 2023, they currently had five dogs in the program: three lab sisters (Angel, Sukie & Q), Esther the poodle, and their newest lab, Nelle. In addition, Benner Township has housed 11 total dogs under the CPL Program, including their five current pups in the program.



Front to back: Q, Sukie, Angel



Izzy at the Altoona Curve Game



## *Inmate Testimonial from SCI Benner*

“The dog program allows those of us who are serving long sentences to give something back to the outside world. We have all done something to take away from others but the dog program is how we can start to restore the community. We know that our work with the dogs will provide a real benefit to people who need it.

I hope that my work in the dog program at SCI Benner Township can make a difference even if it is just for one person. The dogs teach us what it feels like to love, to have compassion, and give us a sense of purpose again. Someone out there needs my dog that I am training. My purpose is to help a total stranger live a more independent life.

That is why I am so glad to be a part of the dog program. It gives us an opportunity to change. It has been unreal to me because we are actually changing lives and helping others. We train dogs for people with disabilities, people who are down in life, training dogs to make their lives better. I am honored to be a part of something special.”

*-Anthony, CPL Participant at SCI Benner Township*



Left to right: Izzy, Maisel, Indee, Missie



Pippa taking a little rest!



## SCI Camp Hill

SCI Camp Hill's **Hounds of Prison Education (H.O.P.E.)** program has been at SCI Camp Hill since 2005. The program was created by Central Pennsylvania Animal Alliance (CPAA). The dogs that are brought in have typically been abandoned, abused, or simply have nowhere else to go. In several circumstances this program is the last "HOPE" for some of the canines. Since its inception, over 500 dogs have been adopted through the program. As of June 2023, Camp Hill had six dogs in their program: Rocco, Chief, Hazel, Luke, Bella, and Jaida. They have eight inmate handlers and every Friday a trainer comes into the facility to work with the handlers and their dogs. The dogs are typically at Camp Hill until they are adopted which can range from a few weeks to a few months.



Luke



Bella



Chief



Rocco



Hazel



Jaida



## Success Stories from SCI Camp Hill

*“Russo was a dog who has been through a lot medically from heartworm and cancerous lumps that have been removed. He is now with a loving foster who took him to the beach.”*



*“I adopted Trevor exactly 5 years ago from the program. He was a feral dog that was picked up down in the Carolina’s. He was sent to be euthanized due to a lack of space available at the shelter he was in. He managed to hide underneath his bunk when they came to get him so they couldn’t find them. CPAA swooped in to save him and brought him into the program. It is apparent he was abused in the past and never knew what love really is. He initially was terrified to be touched by anyone and didn’t know how to play with toys. And through the program he was able to become more trustworthy and loving. He is now obsessed with his orange football and never lets it out of his sight, almost like his security blanket.”*



*“Brother and sister boxers Bailey and Dozer were an owner surrender that had to move and could not take them with them. HOPE was able to find a family that wanted to keep them together and adopted them both!”*





# SCI Cambridge Springs

Morty the Labradoodle is the first canine to complete the Paws in Prison Program. Morty successfully completed the program May of 2023.



Hudson the Golden Retriever: the newest addition to the program!



As of June 2023, Loki was about eight weeks into the program and had learned most of his basic commands. He will soon be graduating from the Paws in Prison and will be available for adoption.



The PAWS in Prison program at SCI Cambridge Springs began in January of 2023. The program operates through a partnership with Canine Partners Program Inc. The Canines are housed and trained at the facility to have the ability to be tested to become American Kennel Club Canine Good Citizens, with the intent to be adopted into a forever home. The Canine Good Citizen (CGC) program, established in 1989, is an American Kennel Club program to promote responsible dog ownership and to encourage the training of well-mannered dogs. A dog and handler team must take a short behavioral evaluation of less than half an hour; dogs who pass the evaluation earn the Canine Good Citizen certificate, which many people represent after the dog's name, abbreviating it as CGC; for example, "Fido, CGC." The evaluation consists of ten objectives. All items must be completed satisfactorily or the team fails.



# SCI Coal Township

The Fostering & Improving Dog Obedience & Survival (FIDOS) program at SCI Coal Township is a collaborative effort between Coal Township and Mommy & Me Rescue to teach basic obedience and socialization skills to canines to improve their chances at possible adoption. The dogs who enter the program may be owner surrenders, strays and puppy mill rescues. FIDOS also provides the inmate handlers a sense of responsibility, discipline, social awareness, as well as beneficial vocational and life skills. The FIDOS program is entering its 10th year, and has aided in the adoption of over 700 rescue dogs that may not have otherwise had a second chance.

## Ranger's Story...



*"While up and running throughout the pandemic, FIDOS continued training and adopting puppies and dogs from all walks of life. Puppy mills, owner surrenders, strays, abandoned, abused or otherwise unwanted. One of our surrendered dogs, a 1.5-year-old German Shorthair Pointer named Ranger came in through no fault of his own. His owner had an accident and could no longer take care of him. Most dogs would have envied Ranger's home life, especially the hunting kind. Ranger lived at a campground. His owner fed and sheltered him at night but his days were spent gallivanting through the woods and mountains. Allowed to run free for the first year and a half of his life, Ranger went unfettered, unsupervised with no training or boundaries whatsoever. When he was picked up and brought to the Institution we were handed 68 pounds of muscle and sinew in a harness spinning, pulling, barking...literally doing flips, biting at the leash, sprinting from side to side all in an attempt to get free. Not only is he one of the strongest dogs we have trained, he is the most athletic. One of Ranger's best qualities is helping the new dogs build their confidence. Some of the dogs are very shut down when they arrive. Ranger does a great job helping them feel comfortable and teaching them how to be a dog. For the next few months, Ranger introduced himself to every corner of the prison. He is housed in a dorm and learned that the sound of the electric lock means a potential chance at freedom. Working with Ranger, we have seen a dog that has honed his hunting and predatory skills. Ranger enjoys chasing the birds in the compound, although they are too fast for him. Training with Ranger seems to be an ongoing process. His energy level is extremely high which seems to have hampered his chances at being adopted. Since he was doing so well here at Coal Township, Superintendent McGinley, Deputy Gibson, Deputy Mirarchi, Unit Manager Dunn, Ms. Kmetz and Ms. Pensyl worked with Mommy & Me Rescue to adopt Ranger as our mascot. Ranger's adoption was finalized on June 13, 2023. He is not only a great ambassador for the program, he is a great mentor for the many dogs and puppies that come through the FIDOS program. We should all be so lucky as to know a dog like Ranger."* —Staff from SCI Coal Township



## SCI Dallas



Chesty, Boston, Norris, Tigger



Gus

SCI Dallas's **Hounds for Heroes** Program began in 2016. Since its establishment, there have been approximately 34 dogs enter the program, including the six that are currently at the facility. The program partners with Guide Dog Foundation/America's VetDogs. Hounds for Heroes receives only Labrador retriever puppies from eight to 12 weeks old. Inmates at Dallas train them on a multitude of different tasks. They begin with the simple tasks such as potty training, sit, stay, etc. As they progress, they are trained to turn on lights and open doors. The pups will stay at SCI Dallas for approximately 15 to 18 months. After their training is completed they are sent to Long Island, New York for more extensive training. If they pass their final training they will be paired with a disabled veteran or be used as a service dog. A total of 22 dogs have graduated the program, two have become ATF dogs, and the remaining were removed due to medical problems.



## SCI Fayette

**The Developing Animals with Goals (D.A.W.G.)** program started at SCI Fayette in May 2017. The DAWG program is a minimum of six weeks and the inmate handlers teach the dogs basic obedience in order to make them more appealing to adopt. From May 2017 to March 2020 they had approximately 62 successful adoptions out of the program. When COVID-19 hit, the DAWG program was at a standstill until January of 2023 when they partnered with Animal Friends of Pittsburgh. On January 24, 2023 SCI Fayette finally heard the sound of paws again with the arrival of Paddy, the Husky! The program holds a maximum of six dogs, three from each shelter. The dogs live in a cell with two handlers. Some of the dogs they get in are “court holds” which means they are dogs that were taken from their owners based on some kind of mistreatment or neglect. The owners won’t surrender the dogs, so the shelter has to hold them until the court process is complete. Since these dogs cannot be adopted and the shelter is such a high stress environment, the dogs are placed at the prison to lower their stress and get them some much needed love. Paddy the Husky and Echo the puppy were Fayette’s first two court dogs. They both ended up being surrendered and adopted into loving homes. Since the return of the program in January 2023, the DAWG program has had a total of 12 dogs in the program. As of June 2023, they have already had six successful adoptions.

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“This program has so many positives that for everyone involved. It gives the shelter open kennels to take in more dogs and it gives dogs in a high stress environment a positive place to be while they are waiting for adoption. It also provides the dogs with positive tools to make them more adoptable. The handlers take a great amount of pride in working with these dogs. Staff at the prison are so happy to see the dogs walking around. It definitely is a stress reliever for them as well. It is the one program I’ve seen with no real down side to it.”

-Staff at SCI Fayette

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Fluffy with his FUREVER owner, Amanda



*Murals from SCI Fayette*



Murals throughout the blocks at SCI Fayette that inmates painted in memory of DAWG program graduates.



## *SCI Fayette's Very Own Saint "Paddy"*



"THIS ST. PADDY'S DAY, WE WANTED TO BRING YOU THE STORY OF OUR OWN PADDY, A ONE-YEAR OLD HUSKY WHO WAS SEIZED BY PITTSBURGH POLICE AS PART OF AN ANIMAL CRUELTY INVESTIGATION. WHILE THE WHEELS OF JUSTICE TURNED IN PADDY'S CASE, SHE WAS BROUGHT TO HUMANE ANIMAL RESCUE OF PITTSBURGH TO BE KEPT SAFE. AS ANYONE WHO HAS MET A YOUNG HUSKY CAN ATTEST, PADDY IS A VERY ENERGETIC AND SMART GIRL, AND SHE WAS IN NEED OF LOTS OF TRAINING, PLAYTIME, AND EXERCISE IN ORDER TO HAVE A SUCCESSFUL FUTURE. WE DIDN'T KNOW HOW LONG PADDY WAS GOING TO NEED TO STAY WITH US, BUT KNEW SHE WAS GOING TO NEED LOTS OF ATTENTION IN ORDER TO FLOURISH. THIS MADE PADDY A PERFECT CANDIDATE FOR A PROGRAM CALLED DEVELOPING ANIMALS WITH GOALS (D.A.W.G.). AT THE END OF HER TRAINING PROGRAM, SHE WILL KNOW BASIC COMMANDS LIKE SIT, DOWN, AND STAY, AS WELL AS GOOD LEASH MANNERS. THE D.A.W.G. PROGRAM NOT ONLY SERVES THE VULNERABLE PRISON POPULATION, BUT MAKES SURE THAT ANIMALS WITH UNCERTAIN FUTURES LIKE PADDY WILL BE INDIVIDUALLY LOVED AND WORKED WITH SO THAT THEY CAN SHINE AS ADOPTABLE PETS."

*-STAFF AT SCI FAYETTE*

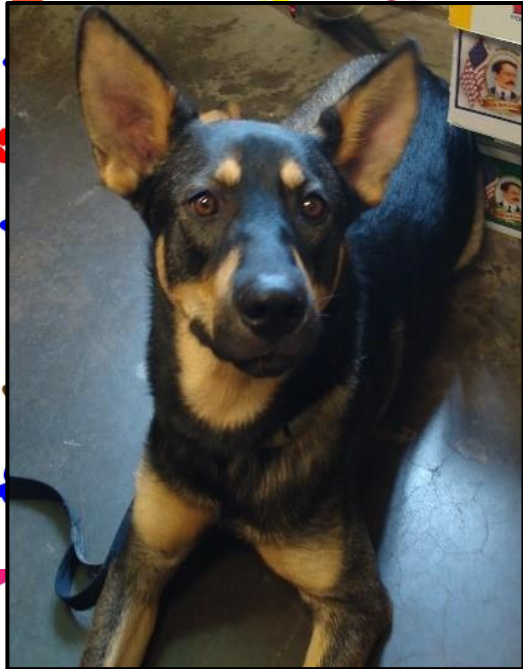


## SCI Frackville

As of August 2023, SCI Frackville currently has six dogs in the **DAWGS** program.

Max (pictured on the left) is a fan favorite! He has been with the facility for three months now and he was just adopted by one of their own staff members! He will be on his way to his *furever* home mid-August.

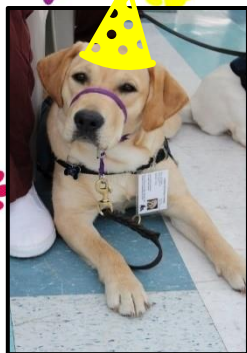
SCI Frackville's puppy program recently held an animal CPR class during training hours. Instructors Steve and Amy taught the inmates how to properly administer CPR and perform the Heimlich maneuver on a dog with the use of a dummy. Each inmate took turns applying the techniques learned in the class.





# SCI Greene

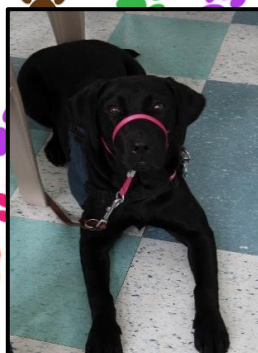
The **Canine Partner's for Life** Program was established at SCI Greene in 2014. The puppies live with and are cared for by the inmate handlers. They are taught basic obedience skills in accordance with CPL's guidelines. They attend bi-monthly training with CPL staff and community volunteers. The volunteers regularly socialize the pups within the community where they gain valuable socialization skills. The pups visit the local businesses, nursing facilities, take field trips, hold demonstrations, and provide loving support to the students and faculty during their visits to the schools. Between 12 – 16 months of age the canines return to CPL's campus, in Cochranville PA, to begin advanced service dog training. At approximately 20 months of age, the canines are partnered with a recipient. This partnership enables the individual to live a more independent life. In some circumstances a canine may be deemed unsuitable and is released from service dog training. Volunteers are then given an opportunity to adopt the canine. As of June 2023, 42 canines have been raised and trained at SCI Greene. A few of these canines have already retired from Full Service work and are living their best life in retirement.



**Lightning**



**Becky**



**Gaby**



**Callie**



**Acee**

Lightning celebrated her 1<sup>st</sup> birthday on June 16th. Happy Birthday to this sweet girl!

Did you know? Chewie and Georgia were named by the famous Kelly Ripa and Ryan Seacrest!!



Acee was named by Greene's inmate organization, the Activities Committee of Enrichment.



## SCI Houtzdale

SCI Houtzdale began their puppy program, **Relying Upon Furry Friends (RUFF)** between 2015-2016. Houtzdale is partnered with United Disabilities Services in Lancaster to assist with training potential service, facility, companion, or therapy dogs. The first set of puppies: Renner, Brodey, Abel, and Murray arrived when they were approximately eight weeks old and remained at Houtzdale until they were about a year and a half. These first four puppies are still talked about among inmates and staff alike and hold a very special place in all of their hearts. Since then, the RUFF program has had 69 dogs enter the program to be trained at Houtzdale. Although not all of them were successful, they have all gone on to be amazing pets for families. As of June 2023, there were 10 service dogs in training at SCI Houtzdale (nine Labrador Retrievers and one VERY energetic Goldendoodle). In addition, there are 21 inmate handlers who are working hard to train them in hopes they will be able to assist a person, school, family, etc. in need.



### **Kirby's Story...**

*"One of our former dogs, Kirby, was placed at Clearfield County at the Children's Advocacy center. To say he is perfect for that job is an understatement. He had the calmest demeanor of any dog I have ever met. The wonderful thing about him being placed so close to Clearfield County is that Kirby gets to visit on occasion. The most memorable visit with Kirby was his first after returning to Clearfield County. We had arranged for him to see his former handlers first and they had no clue; it was a surprise. When I arrived with Kirby, they were ecstatic, and I know there were tears shed but they would never admit it. He remembered exactly where he was and immediately started doing the zoomies on the housing unit like he had when he left there." --Staff at SCI Houtzdale*



## Where are the Houtzdale Pups Today?

**8** have gone on to be service dogs for individuals with disabilities.

**2** have become ambassadors for the UDS Service Dog Program.

**12** have become facility dogs in schools, advocacy centers, and even at SCI Houtzdale.

**20** have been adopted to loving homes.

**1** has become an autism support dog.

**26** are still in early or intermediate training.



Leory



Calvin



Josh

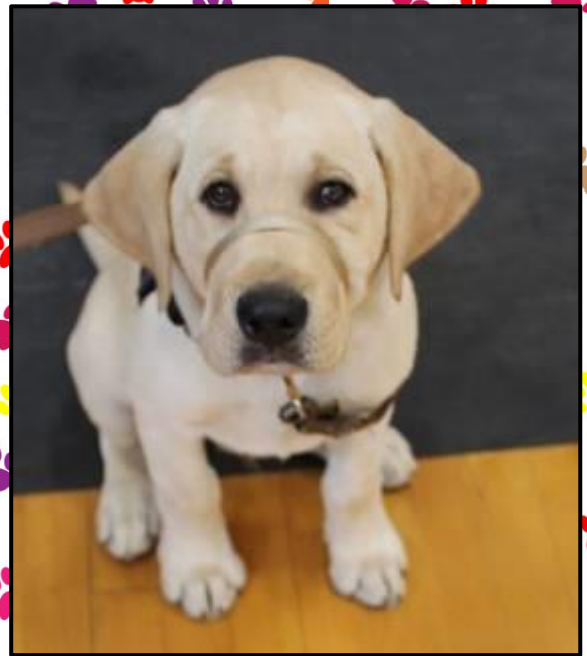


## SCI Laurel Highlands

The **Canine Partners 4 Life (CPL)** program at SCI Laurel Highlands was established in 2015. As of June 2023, they had seven pups and 19 inmate handlers in the program. All of the pups reside on the same housing unit in dormitories that have kennels. Over the last few years, they have expanded to two dormitory rooms and a dedicated play and training room and hope to soon expand to a third dorm. Pups have ranged in age from 12 weeks up to 15 months before they head off to their specialized training at the CPL Headquarters. The program has proved to be very successful, as the handlers have produced many successful full-service dogs that have been paired with a recipient. There have also been a number of dogs released as home companions or even bomb sniffing dogs. Staff and community volunteers assist in socializing as well as training the pups by taking them on outings such as vet checkups, camping, dinner, movies festivals, hockey games, shopping trips, and more!



Briley



Pogo



## Happy Happenings at SCI Laurel Highlands



SCI Laurel Highlands recently had the privilege of having recipients return with their service pup to visit the institution.



Training “refresher sessions” were held by canine handlers for Laurel Highlands staff and community volunteers. The “refresher” consisted of nine separate stations where pups brushed up on different skills and commands.



Grizz



Minzi

Graduation Ceremonies!  
Congrats to Grizz and Minzi!



## SCI Mahanoy

The **Puppies Unleashing Progress (P.U.P.)** program at SCI Mahanoy began in July of 2016. In the first year of the program's inception, the institution had rescued over 70 puppies. The program can have up to eight dogs at a given time. Inmate handlers receive training on a weekly basis. They also have to be certified in pet CPR to be a handler. The goal of the program is to rescue, train, and help more dogs find their *furever* homes.



Molly



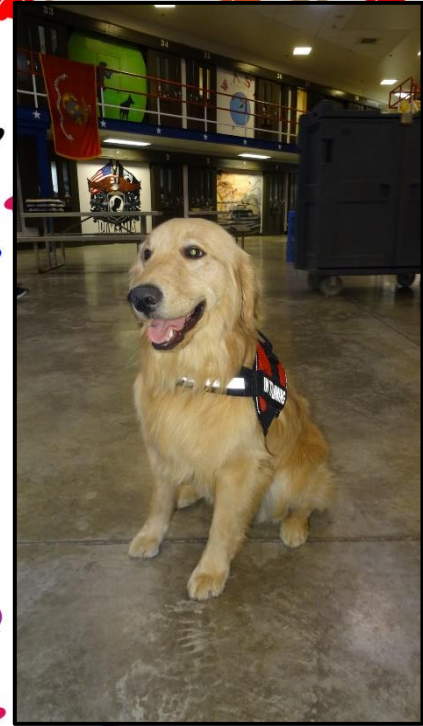
Sprite



# SCI Mercer



SCI Mercer's current puppy program began in January of 2023. Mercer partners with **New Hope Assistance Dogs Inc.**, which is located in Warren, PA. As of June 2023, they had four dogs: Bolt, Gracie, Ruby, and Ruf. Typically, they employ two inmate handlers per dog and as of June they had eight total handlers.





## SCI Pine Grove

Since 2018, SCI Pine Grove has partnered with New Hope Assistance Dogs, Inc., to run **Train, Assist, Inspire, Loyal, Serve (TAILS)**. More than 50 dogs have been trained through the program, which prepares pups to be assistance dogs for individuals with disabilities.

One thing the TAILS pups are known for — especially among DOC social media followers — is dressing up for holiday photo shoots! The TAILS handlers design and create backdrops and costumes for the pups to celebrate major holidays — as well as some of the smaller ones.





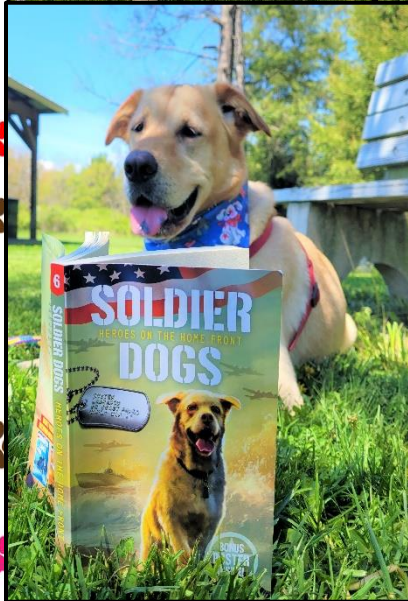
# SCI Rockview

SCI Rockview's puppy program is known as **Underdogs Prison Program**. The program was started by Tia Torres of Villalobos Rescue Center (Pitbull's and Parolees). Rockview was the first institution to adopt their program. The goals of the program are to give the inmate handlers a sense of purpose and to find good homes for the dogs. The trainer "Danielle" makes weekly training visits to the facility. As of June 2023, they had five pups and 10 inmate handlers currently in the program, as well as five successful adoptions. They rely heavily on staff volunteers to assist with the program for things such as vet appointments and socializing the dogs.

Sweet Cakes



Inferno



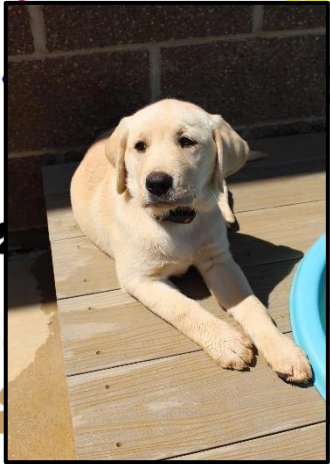
TJ



Ramses



# SCI Somerset



SCI Somerset's **Canine Connection** dog program works very closely with Canine Partners for Life (CPL). Canine Connection has been established since 2015. Somerset's goal through the program is to create a service dog connection that will change a person's life forever. Throughout the years they have had the opportunity to train over 100 different dogs of various breeds, some of which have become full service dogs, and CPL Demo dogs. Some of the dogs, both males and females have been used as breeders. They have been able to care for mothers and fathers, their litters, and even the grandpuppies! They also have the privilege of whelping the new litters and caring for the mom dog. The whelping program consists of behavior science, confidence building, walking, exposures, and impulse control. The puppies start their journey with Canine Connection at eight weeks old and are trained daily by their handlers.

As of July 2023, the following dogs were in training at SCI Somerset:

- Barney – Lab/Golden Mix (12 months old)
- Charles – Poodle (9 months old)
- George – Lab/Terrier Mix (12 months old)
- Hazel – Golden Retriever (3 months old)
- OAK – Poodle (7 months old)
- Olivander – Lab/Golden Mix (12 months old)
- Shannon – Lab (3 months old)
- Simon—Lab (3 months old)



## SCI Waymart

**Paws for a Cause** is the service dog training program at SCI Waymart. They receive their pups through New Hope Assistance Dogs. They typically train four dogs at a time, with two handlers assigned to each one. Waymart also has a service dog trainer from the community that comes in weekly to work with the handlers on what obedience and task training behaviors need to be accomplished. Handler work daily, nearly 24/7, with the dogs in the program to ensure they are successful and ready to move on to the next phase of training. These dogs will move on to become all types of service dogs. They will work with those who are deaf, veterans with PTSD, and children with autism to name a few. Some of Waymart's most recent graduates from the program went on to be service dogs in a Philadelphia court house for children who have been a victim of child abuse and are involved in court proceedings. The dogs are there to provide feelings of safety and comfort for those children. Waymart has also had dogs from the program go on to be drug detection dogs and work in search and rescue. As of June 2023, Waymart was training four male Australian Shepherds who were being task trained the inmate handlers to be hearing detection dogs for deaf children and adults. Once they graduate from the program in a few months, they will be receiving four new puppies in their place! Staff at SCI Waymart very supportive of the program and often give the dogs weekend trips home with them to expose them to other situations they might not have while in the facility.



**Tanner (left) at a staff member's home waiting for some treats!**



**From (L to R): Tri, Blue, Tanner, Luke**