

# Freedom Tails

Stafford Creek Corrections Center – December 2013 Vol 5/No 13

## Last Freedom Tails Event of the Year



**GRADUATION**, obviously the last for the year, was held December 5<sup>th</sup>. 16 wonderful dogs completed the program, and all but two are headed to their new forever homes (please see below for 2 furry friends still needing adopters). The audience and staff attendance was a little low in count, but that's usual for this time of year. Many in the audience were introduced, including participating shelter representatives. Also introduced was Kelly Dietz, a representative for Nutri-Source Pet Foods working with the Dennis Company. After learning about our wonderful program, Ms. Dietz made the decision to donate all the food needed for the dogs! A BIG Thank you! Debby Valdez, one of our NB PAWS Adoption Coordinators, was talking to one of the handlers and passed on what many people miss...though the dogs are incarcerated for a short time at SCCC, it's the best thing that has happened to them in their life. And, little do the dogs know upon leaving, that life will only get better!! \*Thank you CC Jodie Wright for the photos!



*Nickles and DelRosario rave about Hailey's attributes and training to the audience.*



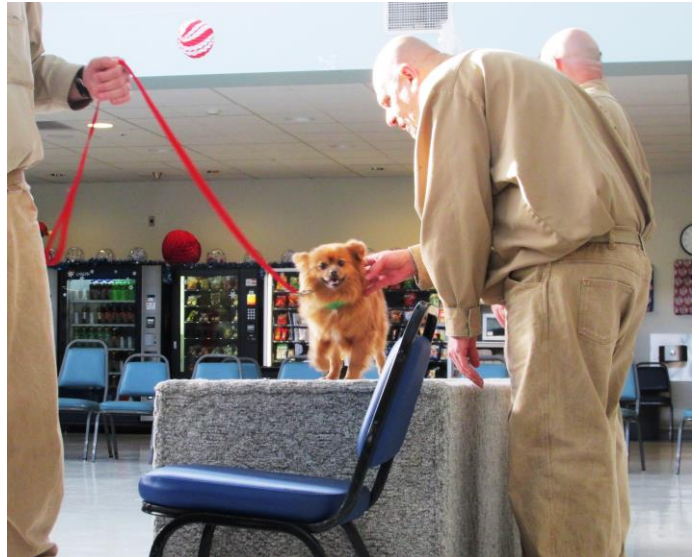
*Alexander shows off Diana who was not adopted at the time. She had an approved Meet/Greet on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and went home with her new loving family!!!!*



## Graduation Continues.....



*Little Buddy plays the lead dog –  
“Come on boys, keep up!”*



*Missy scales the chair, reaches the ramp, and smiles for  
the camera 😊*

*(R);Dogs and Handlers  
patiently wait their turn to  
show-off to the crowd*

*(Below): Bruce and the other  
dogs go through both a verbal  
and silent hand command  
routine exhibiting their learned  
skills*



### Tips for Hand Commands

- ~Lots of praise is essential.
- ~Verbal enforcement may be necessary from time to time, esp if your dog is excited.
- ~Use a lot of facial expressions – like raising your eyebrows expectantly.
- ~Be patient, and do not take disciplinary actions, keep practicing.
- ~Learning one at a time is the easiest, but once he/she gets the hang of it, the rest should come more quickly!



## *Two Dogs Left - These Kids Would Love to Come Home for the Holidays and Forever!*



**JAKE:** is a sleek and intelligent 3yr old Labrador-Pointer mix. This sweet boy gets along with kids, plays well with most other dogs, and is OK with cats – he is actually a little wary of them! Jake is an alpha dog, so if he is joining a dog home, an existing beta dog would be perfect. He is an escape artist (as he can climb chain link fences), will need a gentle but firm pack leader to continue with his training, adores being by your side, and would make the best jogging buddy in the world. (PAWS of GRAYS HARBOR)

**HAZEL:** is an adorable, loving 6 year old Chihuahua mix, and has years ahead of her. She is a bit shy upon meeting new people, but once she gets to know you, she is totally devoted. Due to circumstances out of her four paws, this sweet girl was given up by her family. Hazel can't wait to find that special person or family where she can again look forward to sitting on their lap and getting loves. She will make a wonderful devoted forever family member. (PAWS of GRAYS HARBOR)

For more info and application, email [debalaldeb@gmail.com](mailto:debalaldeb@gmail.com)

~Please put "**Freedom Tails**" in the subject line~

<http://www.northbeachpaws.org/paws16.htm>

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TO SEE ALL BACK ISSUES OF THE FREEDOM TAILS NEWSLETTERS:

[http://wsldocs.sos.wa.gov/library/docs/DOC/FreedomTails/FreedomTails\\_home.aspx](http://wsldocs.sos.wa.gov/library/docs/DOC/FreedomTails/FreedomTails_home.aspx)







## Washington Prisoners Take Dogs Scheduled for Death and Train Them for Forever Homes - Written by: Karen Diehm, Freedom Tails Editor/Photographer



Left: Inmates work with their rescue dogs at Stafford Creek Corrections Center.

Since human's interactions with our canine friends have shown to reduce stress and depression, Stafford Creek Corrections Center (SCCC), located in Aberdeen, Washington, implemented the Freedom Tails program in 2009. Freedom Tails, working in conjunction with **North Beach PAWS** brings in shelter dogs that might otherwise be euthanized and gives them a second chance at life. SCCC was the *first* men's facility in the State of Washington to start a dog program, and due to its positive outcomes has led other men's facilities in the state to do the same thing.

Freedom Tails started in one living unit with 8 dogs, 16 offender-handlers, and a walker. It proved to be such a great success that it has grown to two units, 16 dogs, 32 offender-handlers, and 3-4 walkers. The dogs come to the facility and live with the offender-handlers in their cells for 10 weeks. Each dog is set up with a Primary and Secondary handler – that way, if the Primary handler has work or programming scheduled, the Secondary handler can take care of their furry cellmate. And, if both are busy, the walker for the unit will take care of the dog. The walkers get the best deal, as they get to interact with each dog in the unit!

The dogs first learn basic obedience, potty training (especially the puppies), and socialization. They are then taught both verbal commands and silent hand-signal commands. Some go even further, learning tricks and specialized commands. The dogs are then made available for adoption to the general public. Freedom Tails has also brought in special-needs dogs on occasion. These dogs have a home, but their people are in need –a woman with MS who needed her dog to open doors, retrieve her medicine bag, or help her up if she fell; a woman bound to a wheel chair needing assistance; and a person with a nine-



month-old German Shepherd (at that time 104lbs!) who would, after Freedom Tails training, go on to earn his International Therapy dog certification.

Offenders in the program are screened and interviewed before being allowed to participate, and the waiting list is long. They can have no history of domestic violence, child abuse, or animal abuse and have to be infraction-free. (Basically, that means they have not gotten into trouble while in prison). The handlers are not paid to be in the program, as participation is entirely on a volunteer basis, nor does Freedom Tails receive any funding from the Department of Corrections. All monies come from adoption fees, donations, and sales of leather goods made by the offenders, which are available to the public.

The graduation ceremony now routinely has tissue boxes available for the adopters and visitors attending, as it can be very moving. The handlers tell stories of how their dogs have grown and blossomed, many in tears themselves, while the audience may be laughing and crying at the same time. All the dogs are about to start yet another journey in their life—most have just gotten used to another “new” home—and now will make another move. Little do they know it will be the best of a new beginning to a forever loving home and life!



The program produces trained, adoptable dogs for the general public. Some dogs in the program, such as “Hopper” (above R), even learn tricks.

With the upcoming graduation December 5<sup>th</sup> – if all 16 graduates are adopted – Freedom Tails will have found new, forever homes for over 225 dogs! The Freedom Tails program is a trifecta. The trainers discover the true meaning of responsibility and caring—some, for the first time in their lives; a loving family gains a new forever family member; and most important, a wonderful dog is saved from being euthanized. Win, Win, Win! <http://www.orvis.com/news/dogs/washington-prisoners-take-dogs-scheduled-for-death-and-train-them-for-forever-homes/>