

PUPPIES FOR PAROLE

2,000th ADOPTION NEWSLETTER

Fall 2013



Rescuing dogs from
a lifetime of pain...
Releasing people to
a lifetime of change.



Charlie
P4P Graduate



Missouri Department of Corrections

George A. Lombardi
Director

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PUPPIES FOR PAROLE

Missouri Department of Corrections
2729 Plaza Dr.
Jefferson City, MO. 65102

doc.mo.gov
facebook.com/MissouriPuppiesforParole

George A. Lombardi
Director

Cyndi Prudden
Puppies for Parole Program Coordinator

David Owen
Communications Director

Cover: Charlie
JCCC

Mission

Our Mission is to provide a safe, stable environment for dogs who have been abused or abandoned for the purpose of creating adoptable animals suitable for a variety of community purposes, while creating an atmosphere for offenders to engage in positive behaviors outside themselves.



Letter from the Director

Since its inception in 2010, the mission of the Puppies for Parole Program was to help prevent the euthanization of healthy animals, while working to make our institutions safer. The aim of this program was to allow for the growth of compassion within the prison population, give offenders the opportunity to give back to the community in an effort to repair the harm they caused and help them learn job skills that they can use upon their release. With this 2,000th adoption newsletter, I can say that the program has far exceeded those expectations.




As the program grew, we looked for ways to add training programs that allow dogs to assist individuals with handicaps, illnesses and special needs. In this edition, you will meet Sasha, a 2-year-old Doberman, who was adopted by our partner COMTREA to work at its comprehensive health facility, Bridle Ridge, as a service dog. This advanced training program gives offenders a chance to enhance their training skills, while preparing the dogs for their path to becoming a service dog. You also will read about Soldier, a dog who is providing comfort for those at a Veterans Home, and Toby, who has already been certified as a cadaver dog and is working on being certified as a FEMA human remains disaster dog. These dogs came into our program as 'unadoptable' dogs, but are now serving a purpose and enjoying their second chance on life.

Those are but a few of the profound success stories we have seen since we started this program, but none are more touching than when a dog overcomes adversity and becomes the perfect fit for its adopted family. In this newsletter, you will learn of three dogs who have not allowed their disabilities or injuries to slow them down. The success of these three dogs and the families who love them is an inspiration, and it proves that dogs with serious injuries or disabilities can find a forever home.

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. As always, I am grateful for those who have helped this program achieve its goals. Through this program, we have been able to give dogs a second chance, which has a positive effect on the offenders, our staff and our institutions throughout Missouri. We hope to continue our efforts in teaching offenders altruistic behavior, which can significantly reduce the chances that they will return to prison. We also look forward to reaching new milestones for the Puppies for Parole Program.

George A. Lombardi
Director
Missouri Department of Corrections



Special couple
finds perfect pet
match, donates
agility course to SECC

RUSTY

Originally a stray, Rusty has found a home in the hearts of his new owners and those he comes into contact with every day at work.

Mark and Dorrie Krueger adopted Rusty through the Puppies for Parole program at Southeast Correctional Center. Dorrie now takes Rusty, a 2-year-old pointer mix, to work with her daily. She is the managing director of strategic planning at the Build-A-Bear Workshop headquarters in St. Louis.

“He makes people smile, takes people for walks when they need a break, reminds everyone to take time and pet a dog during the course of a busy day,” Dorrie said of Rusty.

Dorrie is sure Rusty is a “people whisperer,” because he is so good with everyone around him. She tells this story about an interaction between Rusty and a young boy who was in the office:

“(The boy) was sitting on the floor when Rusty came in and Rusty immediately went to him. Without a word from me, he laid down belly up, in a totally submissive pose the second he encountered the boy. The boy sat there, almost frozen. Now I know that Rusty doesn’t have an aggressive bone in his body, but this was pretty submissive and docile, even for him. He usually runs right up to kids, in full tail wag, because he knows they are so much fun.

“The boy's mom quickly walked over and when she saw Rusty with her son, she said, 'It's OK, Ryan. When a dog does that, they are letting you know they won't hurt you. You can pet him.' The boy hesitantly reached over with one finger and timidly touched Rusty's belly. Then he quickly pulled away. With that opening, Rusty wormed over ever so gently and slowly still on his back in total prone position until his head was lying on Ryan's lap and their eyes locked. Then Ryan stroked Rusty's ear, and they both sat there very calmly. You could just see the tension leave Ryan.

“Ryan's mom then told me that Ryan had been bitten in the face pretty badly by a dog, and he is extremely afraid. She said it was like therapy happening in front of us the way Rusty just knew that something was different about Ryan ... I showed Ryan the signals and commands for sit and down and he felt really empowered when Rusty did exactly what he commanded.”

Rusty had been a great ambassador for the Puppies for Parole program. The Kruegers were so impressed with the training they saw the offenders demonstrate and grateful for their new family member that they generously donated \$500 to SECC's program.

“We were very excited to say the least,” said Rickie Rainey,

SECC P4P coordinator, “but most of all thankful for the generosity and kindness these two individuals had just showed.”

But the Kruegers wanted to do more to help the program. They asked Marilyn Neville, SECC's lead trainer, how they could help out. Neville suggested an agility course, and the Kruegers pulled together with some friends to purchase the \$6,000 agility course for SECC's program.

“My husband and I had been looking for just the right outlet to help in memorial for our dog, Milford, that we lost last fall and feel this will be perfect,” Dorrie said.

The agility course will be used to help train all the dogs at SECC.

Also through the Kruegers, Jeff and Teresa Kroll learned about the program and adopted a Shih Tzu mix named Sassy who was rescued from a hoarding situation. Both Sassy and Rusty were rescued by SECC's partnering shelter, Safe Harbor Animal Sanctuary.

“I am very proud that Missouri is an example for having such an innovative program that hits on so many levels,” Dorrie said. “It fills the hearts of families with wonderful, trained pets, it saves dogs that would otherwise have a very different fate, and it enables offenders to make a contribution that may repair the past and develop skills to help in their rehabilitation.”



P4P UPDATE

Program stars continue to shine

Three graduates serve others in their daily lives

Every dog that goes through the Puppies for Parole program is unique in its own way and special to the person who takes it home.

However, there are three dogs that deserve special recognition and we would like to highlight them in this issue of the newsletter. These three dogs have been featured in past issues, and we would like to update you on their progress. They are Sparky, Soldier and Toby.

Originally tossed aside because of his disability, Sparky, a brindle-coated Dachshund, was taken in by South Central Correctional Center's partnering shelter and enrolled into SCCC's P4P program. Because Sparky was deaf, the offenders at SCCC taught him sign language commands. Upon completion of the program, Sparky was adopted by the Missouri School for the Deaf (MSD). Sparky's touching story made international news headlines.

"Sparky is continuing to do fantastic work at the School for the Deaf," said Barbara Garrison, superintendent at MSD.

The students love Sparky, and he has free reign to go anywhere on the school's campus besides the cafeteria, she said. Some students earn the right to have Sparky stay in their dorm.

Garrison said Sparky really made a difference last year when the school opened its first preschool. She said it helped that the preschoolers could love and pet on Sparky during their transition from home to school.

Sparky



“Sparky is continuing to do fantastic work at the School for the Deaf,” said Barbara Garrison, superintendent at MSD.”

The golden Labrador Retriever mix, Soldier, was trained at Algoa Correctional Center specifically to go to the Missouri Veterans' Home in Mexico. Soldier has certainly made himself at home with the veterans. As a "house dog" at the veterans' home, he has free reign of the facility and visits with the elderly, sick and disabled daily. Staff of the veterans'

home say Soldier makes a real impact in the lives of their veterans.

Teresa Aimes, director of environmental services at the home, said Soldier can sense the veterans' moods. If they are not feeling well or close to the end, Aimes

explained, Soldier will jump into their bed and lie down to comfort them. He also encourages some veterans who were despondent to get outside and take him for walks.



Soldier

“ If they are not feeling well or close to the end, Aimes explained, Soldier will jump into their bed and lie down to comfort them. ”

When Toby's trainer first saw the energetic Dutch Shepherd mix, she knew he would do great things. Toby was adopted by Lynn Ann Ballard, a canine handler with Missouri Task Force 1. Ballard's task force responds to disasters across the country. Since his adoption, Toby has been busy training to be a search and rescue dog.

"Toby is such a quick learner and very eager to please," Ballard said.

Recently, Toby passed his National Police Working Dog Certification in record time. There are six parts to the test: car searches, buried remains, a water search, a wide-area search, building search and rubble search. He passed each part of the test with no false alerts.

"Toby is now a certified cadaver dog that can be used by official agencies to find human remains," Ballard said.

But Ballard's goal for Toby extends beyond this. She is now gearing up to have Toby take a test to become a FEMA human remain disaster dog to respond to federal disasters across the country.

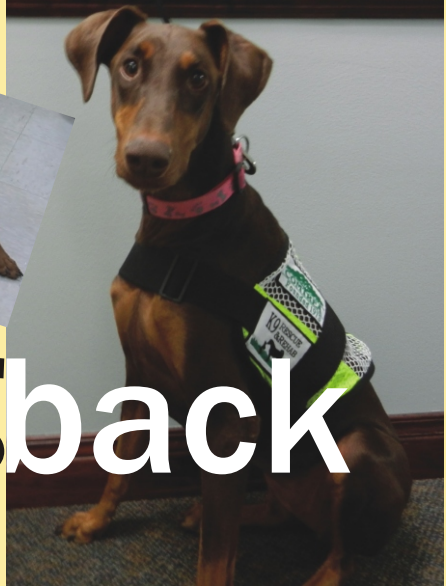
Ballard said Toby's handler at ACC was "very good at giving him his confidence and channeling his drive into something positive."

"I think Toby would not have been adopted if it had not been for this program," she said.

Toby



“Toby is now a certified cadaver dog that can be used by official agencies to find human remains.”



Giving back

Sasha helps COMTREA provide canine therapy

When Tony Sokolic first heard of the Puppies for Parole Program, he was impressed. Tony is the vice president of children and youth counseling and case management programs for COMTREA. In March 2013, the Puppies for Parole Program teamed up with COMTREA to train dogs for use in canine therapy. In his role as a therapist for COMTREA, Tony saw this partnership as a perfect opportunity to find a dog in the Puppies for Parole Program for him to use in his therapy sessions.

Now it was just a matter of deciding which type of dog he wanted. For that decision, he turned to his wife.

“Before I met my wife, she had a Doberman that she had trained for search and rescue,” he said. “When we put that dog

down 12 years ago, we never went back looking at Dobermans. ... The dog we wanted had to be a Doberman because my wife thinks highly of Dobermans.”

Tony and his wife looked on the Puppies for Parole adoption website for Dobermans and came across one at the Jefferson City Correctional Center (JCCC) named Sasha. The beautiful brown 2-year-old Doberman came to the Puppies for Parole Program when her owners decided she was too much for them to handle. Sasha was timid, shy and anti-social when she entered JCCC to begin her training.

“She bonded with her trainers almost immediately, but didn't do as well with the other offenders,” JCCC P4P Coordinator Cindy Wansing said.

“She was a work in progress right up until the time she left our program.”

Midway through her training, the handlers of Sasha became aware that she was going to be adopted by COMTREA to be used as a service dog. With that information in hand, the handlers doubled their efforts to expose Sasha to more things and more people. Sasha made great strides, but after Tony adopted Sasha, he had some concerns about her role as a service dog.

“Even though she was obedient and well trained, she still had some behaviors that concerned me,” he said. “At one point in time, it came across my mind if I would be able to move forward with her as a certified helper dog.”

Sasha barked and growled at people when they would come into his office. She was a little bit anxious and a little protective. If Sasha was going to be a service dog and help COMTREA, Tony knew that she would have to go for more training to break some of those Doberman habits she was displaying. So for the second time in her life, Sasha entered the P4P Program, but this time it was different. She was now

beginning her advanced training at the Potosi Correctional Center (PCC). It was at PCC that Sasha became the dog that Tony, his family and COMTREA envisioned from the beginning.

“Since she finished her advanced training at Potosi, what a remarkable difference it was,” he said. “She’s more obedient. She doesn’t pull your arm off when you are walking her. ... They taught her the command ‘friend’ and the hope was to help put her at ease and for her to know that this was not a risk or harmful person. That made a difference.”

Sasha came home to her family once again in August and is now fulfilling her role as a service dog at COMTREA by helping Tony with in his therapy sessions.

“Right now, she will be hanging out with me during my therapy sessions,” he said. “She will be available for our clients—kids and families—to pet to help soothe them during the sessions. ... She’s wonderful at doing tricks so she can entertain them and help them feel more relaxed.”

Sasha is so popular at Tony’s office that his coworkers greet her first and then Tony second.

“She’s just another part of the team,” he said. “The staff really enjoys having her around. All of a sudden I’m no longer Tony, I’m Sasha’s owner.”



Getting a second chance at life

Mya survives close-range shotgun blast, enjoys her new forever home

Mya was found along the side of the road suffering from a gunshot wound to the left side of her head. The Siberian Husky mix was brought to The Animal Shelter of Texas County (TASTC) and an X-ray revealed that her head was full of birdshot. Mya underwent several surgeries while in the care of the Texas County Veterinary Clinic. Although Mya lost her left eye and the use of her left ear, the birdshot used in the shotgun blast only penetrated the soft tissue in her head and not her skull, which allowed her to survive.

Due to the horrific nature of the injuries and the number of

surgeries Mya had to undergo, there was an outpouring of support for her. Soon Mya's story was gaining the attention from print and broadcast media. TASTC began offering a \$500 reward for any information that would lead to an arrest and conviction of the person or people responsible for Mya's injuries. But before she could be adopted, she needed to recover and learn to trust people again. She found the perfect place to do that in the Healing Paws Program at SCCC, where offenders nursed her back to health.

"The offenders rallied around her," SCCC Warden Michael Bowersox said. "They thought that if this dog can have a

second chance at having a life maybe they can, too.”

Offenders who train dogs in the Puppies for Parole Program keep journals about the training as a way to help them work through issues that may arise.

These journals are given to the families who adopt the dogs to show how the dogs progressed through the program, and if handlers had any problems with the dogs, the adoptive families could use the journals to read how the behavior was corrected.

Generally, the journals always start off with a first impression that the handlers have about the dogs. One of Mya's handlers was unsure about training her because of her injuries.

“I had very mixed emotions when receiving Mya,” he wrote. “I knew I wanted to help her in any way possible, but we have had past experiences with abused dogs and their emotional scars usually run

much deeper than their physical ones. Those scars take more time to mend and sometimes never seem to.”

But eventually the handlers began to realize that Mya had a lot of love to give and was

determined to overcome everything that was done to her.

“It still amazes me, that despite her past abuse, Mya is so loving and accepts attention from anyone she meets,” another handler wrote.

While Mya was going through her training, there were a number of people who had followed her story in the media and had kept an eye on her through updates on the TASTC facebook page. Jenay Nelsen was one

of those people. She was looking to adopt another dog to add to her family, but was unsure if Mya was the dog she wanted to adopt.

But Jenay had fallen in love with Mya because of her strength to overcome her



“They (handlers) thought that if this dog can have a second chance at having a life, maybe they can too.”

—Michael Bowersox
Warden, SCCC

injuries. Mya was a reminder to Jenay and her husband Dennis, who are both disabled, that anyone, even dogs, can overcome a horrific injury or disability and still live a full and happy life.

“I had to do a little soul searching, because Mya was everything I did not want in a dog,” she said. “I thought I wanted only a puppy, a male puppy, with no physical problems and no dark hair because of the heat. But I couldn't help who I fell in love with.

“So what if she was a she and female urine ruins grass. All we have are weeds anyway. So what if she is older and not at the age where we can train her how we want her. She has been through the Healing Paws Program and that means she knows her basic skills and manners. So what if she isn't physically perfect, neither are we. So what if she is dark haired, it's not like they are outside all day.

“Besides, I had this urge to help her, to give her a happy, fun life. I had heard that many

people had applied to adopt her. I am so thankful they chose us. I am so honored they chose us.”

Today, Mya is happy. She's living a typical dog's life. She has the chance to frolic in a frog pond, the chance to chase squirrels on her family's land, the chance to steal a nap in reclining chair and the chance

to love and be loved. She has a second chance to do all these things because of the people who cared enough about her, and Mya's new family is very thankful for that.

“I just wish I could give you all a huge hug for all the wonderful things you have done for Mya,” Jenay said. “Yes, anyone could train her and teach her right.

Anyone could keep an eye on her as she recovered from her gunshot wounds. But it took caring, emotional people who were able to bring her to believe in herself and be able to express that love to others.”

You can keep up with Mya on her facebook page at facebook.com/mya.tastc



“I just wish I could give you all a huge hug for all the wonderful things you have done for Mya.”

—Jenay Nelsen

A STORY of HOPE

Hope is a little different than other dogs, but that makes her all the more special as her new owner found out. Hope is an Australian Sheppard who was born blind and deaf. She came from the K-9 Rescue & Rehab animal shelter in St. Louis before being trained by the inmates in the Puppies for Parole Program at Potosi Correctional Center. Even though Hope cannot see or hear, she has forever changed the lives of those she has met.


“In January 2013, I was allowed to adopt a dog from K-9 Rescue and Rehab. I want to thank Tim, Linda, Lisa and all the other caring people that make this organization possible. My dog has been trained at the Potosi Correctional Center. Whenever we go to Rural King to get doggie treats and toys, everyone comments on what a beautiful, well behaved dog I have. Everyone at the vet's office loves her. When I'm on vacation, we stop by work to say hello.

When I tell people that I didn't train her but that inmates at a maximum security prison did, their reply is, 'really?' I say hopefully it makes us look at people in a different way. For whatever reason the inmates do this, they give their time and love to a dog they will never see after it leaves a facility.

This program gave my dog a second chance at life. Actually, it saved her life. My dog, Hope, was born blind and deaf. I read in the handler's journal when he was approached about training a blind, deaf dog. He said, 'I thought she would be afraid and depressed—I was wrong—Hope is full of life.' Yes, she certainly is. Because of this program, she is not handicapped. She loves

walks, playing with other dogs, attempting to find the kitties by smell, her rope tugs, curling up on the couch and riding in the front seat of the truck. She is a normal dog. She just can't see or hear. Hope doesn't know any limitations. I didn't adopt her because I felt pity for her. I just want to give her a full life because her life was saved here. Hope is not a challenge or a burden. Adopting her was the best thing I have ever done.

I want to thank the Department of Corrections and the handlers for this program that has saved the lives of dogs that some people have deemed disposable and unadoptable. I can't imagine the lives the dogs had before coming here. A dog



finding love and compassion in a prison is kind of hard to understand, but I saw that when I read the handler's journal. Before adopting Hope, I asked my vet her opinion. 'Well, she's a 1-year-old Aussie, just be prepared for an active dog,' she said.

Hope always leads the way on walks. Buddy, my Pyrenees, and Sheila, my Border Collie, have become much more playful. Hope does not want to be treated as handicapped because she's not.

Hope has made me a better person, not perfect, but better. When I go by a prison, I look at it differently now. Lock'em up, okay, but don't throw away the key. I know the handlers wonder how the dogs are doing after they leave. Hope is doing great. She is full of life thanks to the people at K-9 Rescue and Rehab and Puppies for Parole. Because of this program, dogs are saved, and we all become more compassionate and caring.

In their own words

“ Thank you for allowing me to speak about how much your handlers have meant to Hope, whose life was saved and forever changed. We choose to see either the bad in the world or the good in the world. Thanks to Hope, I choose to see the good. ”



BEAR

Finding a hero for the family

Bear is another Puppies for Parole dog that hasn't let his disability slow him down on enjoying life. The 3-year-old Great Pyrenees mix came to the Puppies for Parole program at South Central Correctional Center. He was underweight suffering from a massive injury to his left shoulder and leg when he was found by the Texas County animal shelter. His injury to his shoulder and leg would eventually result in the loss of both, but that didn't dampen his spirits, as Bear's zeal for life caught the eye of one of our employees.

"I am a retired Marine Corps Master Sergeant who works at a maximum security prison in the state of Missouri. I have seen many things in my life from magnificent to mind numbing. In the course of

my present duties as a corrections officer, I observed one of the dogs in the Healing Paws program. His name was Bear. It was late November 2012 and Bear had just come in to the prison to be cared for by the inmates while he was recovering from surgery. He was found wandering and taken to the shelter terribly underweight with a massive shoulder injury. The vet could not save his left shoulder and leg. The shelter just could not believe he was surviving the injury and was so passive. When he came to the prison, the inmates worked with Bear 24/7 so he could come back and make someone a good companion. What intrigued me about Bear was his will to not only survive but to thrive again.

He reminded me about the times when I was in the Marines and

everything was looking pretty dim, but our perseverance and the will to just achieve, regardless of the odds, helped us through.

Although Bear was recovering from such a horrendous injury, he still was a calm mellow dog. He gained about 12 pounds in about a month and was healed to the point where adoption was possible right before Christmas 2012. Many of the officers and staff were interested in giving Bear a home. I was the lucky one to get the chance to bring him to

my home. Having a good feeling of his disposition, I brought Bear home before my wife even had a chance to meet him. It was pretty much love at first sight. My wife is suffering from early-onset Parkinson's, and like Bear and myself, she does not let it slow her down. Bear has been with us for nine months now. He is twice the weight he was when he was rescued. He plays and interacts like he never had any bad things happen to him.

Bear is my hero. I don't consider him a lucky dog because he has us to care for him. We are the lucky ones to have him reminding us every day that life doesn't always go as you would want. You can let it hold you down or you can rise above it."

In their own words

“When he came to the prison, the inmates worked with Bear 24/7 so he could come back and make someone a good companion.”

—Department of Corrections employee at SCCC



From the handler's perspective

Jack changes trainer's outlook



"I have learned a lot from this program and from our canine companions. From basic training to advanced training, I've learned how to properly assess the behaviors of dogs and how to build a behavior modification program to correct unwanted behavior. I've learned basic grooming, as well as soothing touches to calm our canine friends. I've learned how to work with fearful and traumatized dogs for rehabilitation and how to properly socialize canines for interaction with people and other canines. The magnitude of knowledge and information the Homeward Bound Project contains is vast and every day I work with dogs is a learning experience. ...

I came to prison because of who I once was. I could go on and on telling you of my past sins. Though there aren't enough hours in the day to do such, I'll be brief. I was a selfish, self-centered, egotistical fool. I wanted what I wanted and I would go to any length to get it. I destroyed relationships and was verbally and emotionally abusive. I was on a path of self destruction.

It took coming to prison, hitting my rock bottom to realize I needed to change. My ways weren't working. I had to do some in-depth soul searching. I had to make amends.

It was on this new path that I was taking where God found me and I found myself. When I turned my life over to Christ, I had new challenges and experiences in my life. He has helped me to restore broken relationships and build new ones. His blessings have been abundant.

The Puppies for Parole Homeward Bound Project is one of them. It has had a large impact on my life. I've been able to see myself for who I am. I've become more responsible, made wiser decisions and learned what it takes to have integrity. Most importantly, this program has played a factor in teaching me that the world doesn't revolve around me and it's not always about me. Life is about selfless acts toward others and what you can contribute to creation itself. I've learned to love and be compassionate. I'm learning what it takes to be a leader by leading by example and taking the initiative.

Don't get me wrong. This changed hasn't been easy. It's had its obstacles. I'm still dealing with my stubbornness. I believe Mrs. Bring saw it in me and that's why she gave me Jack, the Great Pyrenees. They're known for their stubbornness and independence. I saw a lot of me in him and that has humbled me.

As Cesar Millan would say:

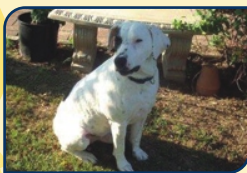
"You don't always get the dog you want. You get the dog you need."

—Northeast Correctional Center offender
in the Homeward Bound Project

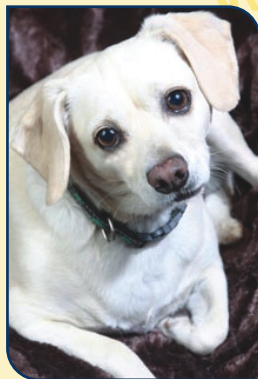
Recent Adoptions



Amber



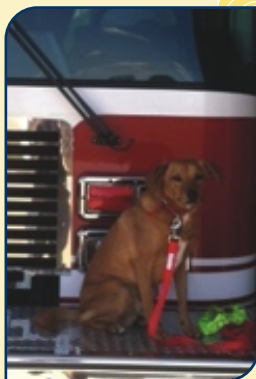
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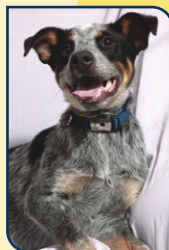
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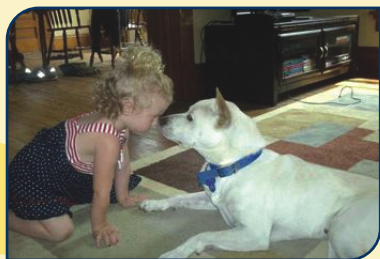
Bunny



Bowie



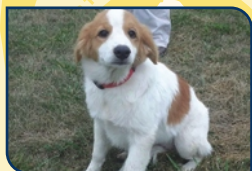
Murphy



Cass



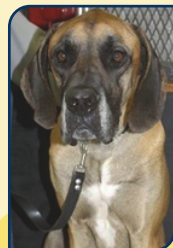
Rascal



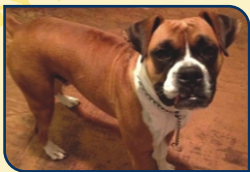
Dawn



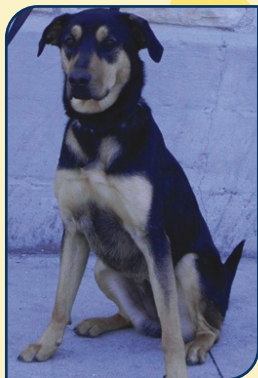
Arlo



Jethro



Joker



Little Girl



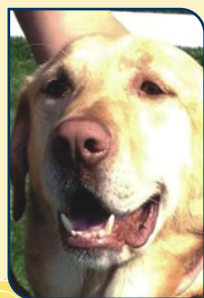
Tiger



Cyrus



Diesel

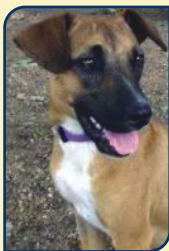


Marley

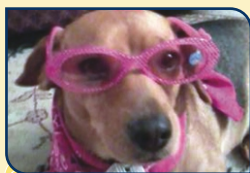


Drake

P4P Photo Gallery



Mr. Stubbs



Tina



Kiley



PUPPIES FOR PAROLE

For more information about the
Puppies for Parole Program
or to view dogs available for adoption,
please visit doc.mo.gov and click on the
Puppies for Parole tab.

You can also find us on facebook at
facebook.com/MissouriPuppiesforParole



Missouri Department of Corrections

December 2013