



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

NEWS RELEASE

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**NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS WELCOMES
NEW COMFORT DOG**

Concord, NH – The New Hampshire Department of Corrections announces the arrival of their new comfort dog, Zoey. Zoey is the second dog in the department’s comfort dog program. The department’s other comfort dog, Riley, works out of the Northern New Hampshire Correctional Facility with his handler, Lieutenant Michael Wedge.

Zoey is a young lab mix rescue dog, who was found tied up outside of a Winn-Dixie grocery store, emaciated. She is now a graduate of the Brevard County Sheriff’s Office Paws and Stripes College in Florida. The SEA/SEIU Local 1984 generously donated funds for the Department of Corrections’ Administrator of Recruitment and Onboarding, Tina Thurber, to attend a certified comfort dog handling program in Florida. This program taught Administrator Thurber how to partner with Zoey, and both successfully completed the program last week. Zoey and Administrator Thurber will soon be a nationally registered, certified therapy dog team.

The Department of Corrections’ comfort dog program is part of several department led initiatives aimed at employee wellness. Zoey will make regular visits to each of the Department of Corrections’ facilities to visit with staff, aid in critical incident debriefings, and attend community outreach events.

“We are thrilled to welcome Zoey to our team,” said New Hampshire Department of Corrections Commissioner Helen Hanks. “Our corrections professionals working inside the prison walls are in a high stress environment every day. Riley showed us the value that comfort dogs bring to our team at our northern correctional facility. Having a comfort dog now available for staff in our southern facilities is an important tool to assist with stress management and anxiety experienced on the job.”

“Paws and Stripes gave Zoey a second chance, and it is this same second chance mission that drove me to pursue a career in corrections eighteen years ago,” said Administrator Thurber. “I am honored to have been trusted as Zoey’s handler and look forward to seeing the amazing work she will do with our team!”

The Brevard County Sheriff’s Office Paws and Stripes College is an AKC recognized therapy dog organization based in Titusville, Florida. The Paws and Stripes program began in 2006 as a basic

dog obedience program to help save the lives of dogs in the Brevard County Animal Shelter. The program has since advanced into the Paws and Stripes College and offers the basic tenants of the original program, while including a more advanced training program for select canine graduates to serve as Law Enforcement and Multidiscipline Crimes Against Persons Therapy Dogs.



Courtesy Photo
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