PAWS ON THE GROUND: SEARCH TEAMS DEPLOY AROUND THE WORLD

It’s a Dog’s Life: See how our canine candidates spend their days in training

HAPPY TAILS: READ OUR LIFETIME CARE DOG STORIES OF SUCCESS
WEATHERING THE STORM

SDF TEAMS HEAD TO THE EAST COAST AHEAD OF HURRICANE DORIAN

On August 24, 2019, a large storm system began moving across the Atlantic, headed for the Caribbean. As it neared the Bahamas, it picked up speed and intensity, growing into Hurricane Dorian, a destructive Category 5 storm. Stalling over the Bahamas, Hurricane Dorian wreaked havoc on the island nation for two days before moving north toward the United States. In response to the hurricane, 12 SDF-trained search teams deployed to the East Coast.

Though Dorian devastated the Bahamas, it did not cause as much damage as anticipated in Florida or the Carolinas and moved quickly north past Nova Scotia. Thankfully, despite some flooding, no search dogs were needed on the East Coast to search for survivors amidst the debris. Separately, an American task force did help communities in the Bahamas affected by the storm.

We send our thanks to all the state and federal task forces from across the U.S. that deployed to the Eastern seaboard, ready to help where needed in the wake of this dangerous storm.

The SDF-trained search teams who deployed are:

**California Task Force 1**
Robert Goertzen & Bailey (Los Angeles Fire)

**California Task Force 3**
Tom Carney & Alle (South San Francisco Fire)
Garreth Miller & Vita (San Francisco Fire)

**California Task Force 7**
Brandon Andersen & Winnie (Sacramento Metro Fire)
Brandon Budd & Josie (City of Sacramento Fire)

**California Task Force 8**
Aide Barbat & Delta (San Diego Fire-Rescue)
Billy Walkenhorst & Victor (City of Santee Fire)

**Florida Task Force 1**
Marshia Hall & Lilah (Temple Terrace Fire)

**New York Task Force 2**
Brian Girard & Keila (New York State Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services Office of Fire Prevention and Control)
Adam Leckonby & Luka (New York State Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services Office of Fire Prevention and Control)
Brook Rowley & Echo (New York State Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Services Office of Fire Prevention and Control)

Our thoughts continue to be with those who were affected by this hurricane and those who answered the call to help. Your dedication to helping others and to serving your country inspire us all.

While we hope disasters like this never happen, we know highly-trained task forces that include canine teams are well-prepared and ready to assist where needed.
On Sunday, June 9, 2019, just after 2 p.m., a construction crane collapsed into an occupied apartment building in Dallas, Texas, amid a thunderstorm that produced strong winds and hail throughout the area. Three SDF-trained canine disaster search teams were called upon to search the building for anyone trapped in the rubble: Derek Chaky & Scout (Carrollton Fire), Robert Grant & Rocky (Plano Fire), and Patti Krafft & Billy (Dallas Fire-Rescue). After the crane was blown over in the high gusts, it damaged several apartments and caused a “pancake” collapse of the building—meaning each floor fell straight down to the one below it. The canine teams searched the first through fifth floors of the apartment building and the adjacent parking garage.

Patti Krafft, handler of Search Dog Billy, said: “Because of structural and safety concerns, only the canines were able to access and search the parking garage. The canines did a great job throughout their time at the incident. They accessed apartments and searched the portions of them that were still intact. The parking garage was tricky but Rocky got in there and searched as much as possible around the cars at the bottom of the structure, and Billy and Scout searched in and around vehicles in the upper portion of the collapse.”

Handler Derek Chaky reported that this incident was a little different for the teams, and they had to use their experience and skills to navigate some challenging search scenarios:

“Here in Dallas, we are fortunate to be able to do a lot of search training in abandoned buildings, to prepare for deployments like this one. But this was an experience made unique by the additional flooding of the lower level apartments, as well as the number of people’s pets left at home, which we were able to help bring to safety thanks to the assistance of the Dallas Police Department. We were on the scene within an hour of the call coming in, and Search Dogs Scout, Billy and Rocky did a great job searching the apartment building and parking garage for people trapped, all the while ignoring food and toys as they floated by. As usual, I am very proud of my canine partner’s performance!”

Sadly, local authorities confirmed one fatality and several injuries related to the crane collapse. Though we take comfort in knowing our teams deployed quickly and searched the area efficiently, our thoughts are with the families of those affected by this incident. We also send our thanks to all the rescuers, two- and four-legged, for answering the call for help when others needed them most.

Baja California Task Force 3 Search Teams Luis Garcia & Maxim and Fidel Gomez & Rosie responded on March 25, 2019, to the report of a small landslide in Tijuana—a homeless person had reportedly been living in a makeshift dirt cave that collapsed after rain soaked the area.

The canine teams arrived and began searching within 20 minutes of the initial call, but neither dog indicated any live human scent beneath the mud. Sadly, after using equipment to move the mud, the body of the deceased man was found.

Though the outcome of this incident is not what anyone had hoped, we are grateful to the teams that responded to ensure no one was left behind.
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SEARCH TEAMS paired

After a lengthy interview and evaluation process, hours of difficult work, and a two-week Handler Course at our NTC, the highly anticipated moment of graduation arrives for both handler and canine! As our training team passes the leash of a new search dog to a handler for the first time, it marks the beginning of the lifelong bond between partners that will be essential as they serve their community for the duration of their career together. Please join us in congratulating the teams paired between October 2018 and July 2019!

Imelda Cordova and Diesel
Orange County Fire Authority
California Task Force 5
Sponsor: Linda Heizer Seaman and Karen B. Winnick

Mike Devine and Sonny
Los Angeles County Fire Department
California Task Force 2
Sponsor: Nanci Denney Bergin and The Joel and Dena Gambord Family

Luis Garcia and Montecito
Tijuana Fire
Baja California Task Force 3
Sponsor: Julie Croker
Named in honor of the rescuers who responded to the January 2018 mudslides

Fidel Gomez and Gemma
Tijuana Fire
Baja California Task Force 3
Sponsor: Carol George and Roger Stewart

Tyler Green and Mila
Orange County Fire Authority
California Task Force 5
Sponsor: The Joel and Dena Gambord Family

Ryan Greenup and Koda
Los Angeles County Fire Department
California Task Force 2
Sponsor: The Joel and Dena Gambord Family

Wade Haller and Dallas
Orange County Fire Authority
California Task Force 5
Sponsor: The Joel and Dena Gambord Family
Named in honor of the Dallas police officers who lost their lives on July 7, 2016

Mike Patterson and Kendri
Orange County Fire Authority
California Task Force 5
Sponsor: Pat Snyder and Anonymous Donor

Michael Bruce and Cooper
Orange County Fire Authority
California Task Force 5
Sponsor: The Joel and Dena Gambord Family
While two train cars that are part of our Train Wreck were miraculously unharmed during the fire, one car was destroyed and had to be carefully removed, leaving an empty footprint in its place. With veteran search teams and canine candidates in-training needing experience in industrial disaster scenarios, it was imperative that SDF find a replacement training prop as soon as possible.

Thanks to our friends at Fillmore & Western Railway, a new passenger compartment car was found in Salinas, California, and the logistically difficult journey down Interstate 5 began in Central California.

After hundreds of miles and a few tire blow-outs (eight tires, in fact), SDF received word that the 80 feet-long train car was about to begin its ascent up Wheeler Canyon Road. With great anticipation, the truck slowly rounded the bend in front of our gates and SDF welcomed our newest training prop to its permanent home.

Though our canines and staff safely evacuated before the flames reached our National Training Center, the devastating Thomas Fire in December 2017 destroyed several areas of our campus.

We are thrilled that Search City is now completely rebuilt, with four buildings, three facades and a one-of-a-kind scent tubing system throughout the space. The variation of single and two-story buildings, along with the scent tubing system’s ability to pump live human scent into areas a human may not actually fit, gives trainers the chance to challenge visiting teams and ensure they’re ready for any of the disaster scenarios they may face in a real-world deployment.
This spring, we constructed a second, more challenging rubble pile in Industrial Park, adjacent to our Train Wreck and Collapsed Freeway props. This rubble pile provides more technical searches, with more than 40 potential hides for “victims” and also serves as a bridge between the training props around it, giving search teams a longer, more comprehensive area to train. This extended search time, with varying surfaces as well as indoor and outdoor areas in one space, mimics a real-life disaster much more closely and gives teams a more advanced search scenario in preparation for the rigors of deployment.

Despite the setback of the Thomas Fire rebuild, our National Training Center has been highly active: 27 SDF-trained search teams returned for “tune-up” trainings; five workshops were attended by teams from all over the country; and one full-scale international deployment simulation exercise was hosted on our 125-acre campus since October 2018. We also successfully hosted our very first state-level evaluation test and conducted two mock FEMA tests to help better prepare our teams for the critical milestone of certification.

**Handlers from California, Florida, Kentucky, Mexico, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Utah, and Virginia who participated with their canine partners in these workshops were:**

**November 2018:** Lee Culley, Laura Denison, Scott Hofstetter, Garreth Miller, Manny Sampang, Cynthia Sato, Madison Warner  
**February 2019:** Michael Bruce, Roxanne Bauman, Imelda Cordova, Laura Denison, Scott Hofstetter, Paul Januario, Eric Lieuwen, Adam MacKillop  
**April 2019:** Imelda Cordova, Lee Culley, Donovan George, Steve MacDonald, Andrew Pitcher, Mark Schroeder, Adrienne Seibel, Vincent Stoops, Madison Warner  
**May 2019:** Brandon Andersen, Jake Armendariz, Brandon Budd, Travis Calka*, Gary Durian, Josh Flores, Vinnie Fuccella, Fidel Gomez, Greg Gould, Marshia Hall, Jeff Ivy, Paul Januario, Jason Jasgur, Adam Leckonby, Eric Lieuwen, Julie Padelford-Jansen, Brook Rowley, Mike Toepfer, Jason Vasquez  
**June 2019:** Eve Benson-Core, Jennifer Brown, Brenda Hartfield, Kimberly Holley, Ginny Hull, Jason Jasgur, Kim Klockenteger, Christine Mazanitis, Melissa Newman, Amanda Scarpato  

*Observer
A DAY IN THE LIFE
OF A SEARCH DOG IN TRAINING

From the moment they wake up to the moment they settle in for the night, training for a search dog candidate’s life revolves around their health, fitness and favorite toys!

FIRST THINGS FIRST
A search dog candidate’s day begins much like any dog’s does—with a jovial romp in the play yards around the perimeter of the Canine Pavilion. By keeping our yards in close proximity to the kennels, search dogs in-training get more time to stretch their legs, answer nature’s call, and play with our canine care staff.

FUELING UP FOR TRAINING
While the dogs play in the yards, our team of canine care staff and volunteers prepare their meals in accordance with each canine athlete’s individualized nutrition plan. If food is used as a reward during training sessions or a dog seems to be burning more calories than before, our canine care staff adjusts their food to give them more or less accordingly.

SEARCH DOG TRAINING
The elements of a successful career as a search dog—the obedience, agility, direction and control, and all-important search training—are the foundation for every dog that graduates from our program. Knowing they may someday be called upon to save lives, every interaction our team has with each dog is considered a training opportunity to prepare them for the rest of their career.

HITTING THE GYM
To ensure our candidates are ready for the physical rigors of a job in disaster search—climbing over rubble and jumping up on obstacles—we now incorporate a full conditioning regimen for each dog in training. Customized to each candidate, our canine care team diligently helps these athletes focus on strengthening their bodies, increasing their endurance, and improving their balance on unstable surfaces through the use of our BARC (Balance and Athletic Rehabilitation Center).

TRAIL HIKES
SDF Trainers and Canine Care Specialists recognize that not every minute of every day needs to be structured, but high-energy dogs need to spend their day active in some way. Utilizing nearly all of the 125 acres of our National Training Center, our dedicated staff can often be found walking or hiking with a pack of canines in-training on the many trails throughout our campus.

SOME GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED TLC
Like humans, elite canine athletes need some down time to process the day’s events, relax their minds and bodies, and get some love from their beloved human caretakers. While soothing music plays throughout our kennels, our trainers and canine care staff stop in regularly to offer belly rubs or enjoy a cuddle. Our canine candidates deserve every minute of their rest and relaxation.
The only thing as Belgian as chocolate and Trappist beer may be our new candidate, Waffles—a Belgian Malinois named after the famously sweet Belgian breakfast delicacy!

Waffles's boundless energy and constant need to be stimulated made him difficult to manage as a pet and is likely what landed him in the shelter. "Waffles came in to us as a stray picked up running loose on the streets of Ventura County, so we don’t have a lot of back-story on this young, talented boy," said Ventura County Animal Services Rescue Coordinator Jane Gorden. "Waffles was a high-energy pup who was eager to learn, and that required plenty of engagement from anyone who wanted to adopt him. He had an almost insatiable desire to ‘work his mind’ and learn new things. He was no mellow couch potato! He would need a home with an owner who was willing to put him to work doing agility, obedience, etc. and keep his mind moving forward on a daily basis. His toy/ball drive was there—but perhaps not developed to its full potential."

After being picked up by animal control, Waffles landed at Ventura County Animal Services’ (VCAS) Camarillo shelter where SDF volunteer Carol Wan first caught sight of him. "When I met Waffles at VCAS, my first thought was, ‘This dog is AMAZING!’" shared Carol. "My next thought was, ‘Call SDF!’ I was texting his picture before I even left the shelter. Waffles had been previously adopted out but was promptly returned to the shelter because he was clearly unsuitable for a ‘normal’ home."

Generally, Belgian Malinois are extremely driven, high-energy canines that are great for intense careers such as search and rescue, detection, or even police apprehension work. Malinois with the right temperament are just the dogs for SDF!

With laser-like focus on the toy and enough drive to carry him over any obstacle he faces, Waffles clearly needs an active lifestyle with an experienced handler, which is what he will get from SDF. When Waffles passed his final evaluation with SDF’s training team at the National Training Center, we knew he had found his home.

"Originally his energy and drive were unfocused and he showed a lot of frustration because of it—something we generally like to see a little of—but Waffles had more than his fair share," said SDF Trainer Emily Hodges. "With some extra effort to keep his mind busy, even with some fun and silly tricks, Waffles has learned how to channel his energy and stay calm and focused. But don’t be fooled! When it comes to searching, Waffles is a powerhouse! He gets the job done beautifully, he is very fast and he LOVES for you to let him know how proud you are of him. Not only is Waffles’s favorite thing a game of tug o’ war, but when he gets scratches on the top of his head, you’ll see him melt with happiness. And when he’s not on the rubble, you’ll find Waffles relaxing with his tongue hanging out the side of his mouth and a happy grin. Waffles has quickly found his way into our hearts. I try not to play favorites but Waffles has sure made it challenging for me."

We are so grateful to VCAS for seeing his potential and helping him find his purpose in life with SDF!
CURRENT CANDIDATES in training

**BAXTER**
RECRUITED FROM ALBUQUERQUE ANIMAL WELFARE IN ALBUQUERQUE, NM

Baxter was adopted to be a family pet, but his owners quickly realized that he had too much energy and played too rough to thrive in a home environment. Baxter ended up in the Albuquerque Animal Welfare Department and they reached out directly to give him a second chance as a search dog. Though he had to learn a few manners before diving into training, Baxter has thrived since being accepted into our program.

**CASSIE**
DONATED BY A PRIVATE OWNER IN CORNING, CA

Cassie's previous owners had high hopes for success in the world of field trial, a competition that measures a dog's hunting abilities. Unfortunately, Cassie was not a strong enough marker to continue as a competitor in this career, and her owner was faced with trying to find a new path for this lovable girl. Cassie's owner knew that this bundle of energy needed a full-time job to keep her satisfied, and happened to notice SDF's ad in a field trial publication. Sure enough, after reaching out, we agreed that Cassie had what it takes to enter training and begin a new career path as a search dog!

**HOPPER**
DONATED BY A PRIVATE DONOR IN SAN MARINO, CA
SPONSORED BY THE JOEL AND DENA GAMBORD FAMILY AND WESTLAKE WOMEN’S CLUB-CFWC

Hopper was once a family pet in New Mexico, but sadly, she was left in their backyard most of the time with minimal interaction and engagement. When the family decided to move, they also decided they did not want to take Hopper to their new home. The family privately listed this energetic pup for sale on a website where she was purchased by a dog trainer for contraband-detection and transported to San Marino, California to begin the process. Before long, it was clear Hopper was destined for a job with much more intensity and purpose, so her trainer, who was familiar with SDF’s mission and the type of dog needed for disaster search, reached out in hopes of finding the right career for this spirited dog. Hopper passed SDF’s evaluation with flying colors and soon entered our training program.

**HOSS**
RECRUITED BY TREVOR LAWRENCE FROM A PRIVATE DONOR IN PAYSON, UT
SPONSORED BY WALT AND FAITH KALBACK

This large and boisterous boy proved to be too much for his Payson, Utah, family to handle. They listed him in the local paper to find an appropriate home for this rambunctious pup, which caught the eye of SDF Recruiter Trevor Lawrence. He immediately reached out to the owners and noticed that, in addition to his energy and size, he had exactly what it takes to be a search dog candidate!

**LEXI**
RECRUITED BY SOUTH DAKOTA CANINE CENTER FROM HUMANE SOCIETY OF THE BLACK HILLS IN RAPID CITY, SD
SPONSORED BY ARC ASPICIO AND JILL BEE

A beautiful black Labrador with loving eyes and a fluffy tail, Lexi was picked up as a stray and landed in the Humane Society of the Black Hills shelter. With her boundless energy and obsession with tennis balls, shelter staff recognized her potential and contacted SDF recruiters at the South Dakota Canine Center. Recruiters agreed that Lexi had the right traits needed in a search dog candidate and she was soon on her way to California to begin training.
FANTOM
RECRUITED BY GREG STRICKLAND FROM A PRIVATE DONOR IN LINCOLNTON, GA

Geno’s owner had high hopes for championship titles in the world of field trial competition but this rambunctious and eager black Labrador was too excited while on the job! Geno could not hold back barking in excitement and his owner knew he was just too loud to do well in that discipline. Luckily, he reached out to SDF. Recruiter Greg Strickland evaluated Geno and coordinated his transportation to California to give him the chance to excel in a job he would love.

JAX
RECRUITED BY TREVOR LAWRENCE FROM HUMANE SOCIETY OF UTAH IN MURRAY, UT
SPONSORED BY LENNY & SQUIGGY

Jax was surrendered to the Humane Society of Utah by his original family due to his high energy level, which had deemed him “unmanageable.” This spunky pup was then adopted by a new family that also struggled with his overabundance of energy. So after just one week, Jax returned to the shelter where, thankfully, SDF recruiter Trevor Lawrence discovered him when searching for SDF canine recruits. Jax is a great fit for our program so far and has enjoyed every minute of training since day one.

KOALA
RECRUITED BY TREVOR LAWRENCE FROM A PRIVATE DONOR IN PLEASANT GROVE, UT
SPONSORED BY THE JOEL AND DEMA GAMBORD FAMILY

Koa was originally adopted as a puppy to be a household pet. Soon after bringing him home, however, his owner realized that this lovable, enthusiastic, energetic lab needed more attention than she could dedicate to him. She listed Koa in the local newspaper, thinking he deserved the best home possible. SDF Recruiter Trevor Lawrence answered the ad, knowing this smart boy could use a special job!

MOLLY
RECRUITED BY TREVOR LAWRENCE FROM MURRAY ANIMAL SHELTER IN MURRAY, UT
SPONSORED BY TRACY & RASCAL

Found as a stray wandering the streets of Salt Lake City, Molly caught the eye of shelter staff when they noticed her strong desire to play with her prized ball! Luckily, as soon as shelter staff recognized her high toy drive, they knew she would enjoy a job in search and rescue and contacted SDF recruiter Trevor Lawrence to evaluate this yellow Lab. She exhibited good hunting skills and great footing on the rubble during her evaluation and was easily accepted by SDF trainers as a search dog candidate upon her arrival in California!
Seidi, recruited by South Dakota Canine Center from Cheyenne Animal Shelter in Cheyenne, WY

Seidi had been with a family since she was a puppy, but as she grew she became “too much dog” for them to handle. They decided to surrender her to a local shelter in Cheyenne, Wyoming. From there, she was re-homed with a disabled person and it quickly became clear that it was not a good fit due to Seidi’s energy. SDF recruiters with the South Dakota Canine Center immediately noticed Seidi’s insatiable desire as they bounced a tennis ball while walking past her kennel run. The rest is history as she easily passed SDF’s evaluation and began her search dog training.

Topa, recruited by South Dakota Canine Center from Western Hills Humane Society in Spearfish, SD

Topa had been locked in a car for nearly eight hours by the time concerned citizens noticed and called the police to rescue this Border Collie mix. When the owner was discovered in a nearby bar, he was arrested for animal neglect and additional outstanding legal issues, forcing him to surrender ownership of Topa to the local shelter. Soon after she arrived at the Western Hills Humane Society, Topa was discovered by longtime SDF recruiters at the South Dakota Canine Center. They quickly evaluated her and determined she was a great fit for our program!

Waffles, recruited from Ventura County Animal Services in Camarillo, CA

Waffles is a very young Belgian Malinois who was found wandering the streets in nearby Ventura, California. When his owner couldn’t be located, he was taken to the closest shelter, where he was discovered by Carol Wan, who happens to volunteer at both the shelter and at SDF. She took notice of his strong desire to play with toys and immediately reached out to SDF to evaluate Waffles for a job in search and rescue. He easily passed and began his training!

Skellie, recruited by South Dakota Canine Center from Sioux Falls Area Humane Society in Sioux Falls, SD

Skellie, a bouncy yellow Lab full of energy, was associated with a court case that required animal control to seize him from his previous owners. While this meant he was rescued from that situation, it also sadly meant that Skellie spent many months in a kennel without an outlet for his seemingly endless energy. When his court case was resolved, he became available through the Sioux Falls Area Humane Society and was brought to SDF’s National Training Center to become a search dog.

Storm, recruited from a private donor in Elkhart, IN

Storm, a beautiful red Golden Retriever, came to SDF from the Indiana K9 Learning Center. He had already shown promise as a working dog and was nearly placed with a detection agency when the center’s owner recognized that Storm could thrive as a disaster search dog instead due to his high levels of energy and desire to work for his toy. Having visited our National Training Center to learn more about our life-saving mission years ago, his previous owner knew that Storm would be well cared for and could achieve his true potential with SDF!
JOIN THE Search Circle!

As a valued member of our SDF family, we hope you take great pride in knowing that YOU make our life-saving mission “paw-sible.” We are proud to offer the opportunity to turn your philanthropic investment into an annual contribution that furthers SDF’s goals in a profound and meaningful way.

Join the Search Circle today to help us continue our work of transforming rescued dogs into rescuers and giving our nation the disaster response network it needs...and deserves.

**SEARCH TEAM BOOSTER CLUB**
$5,000

By joining the Search Team Booster Club, your funds help SDF provide the critical training and support our teams need to be at the highest level of deployment readiness, including trainings at our National Training Center, trainer visits to the field, and specialized workshops and educational programs.

**SEARCH TEAM SCHOLARSHIP**
$10,000

The Search Team Scholarship Fund helps provide newly-formed teams with the preparation needed to be deployment ready, from the two-week Handler Course all the way through certification. Your gift to the Scholarship Fund comes with Search Team Updates throughout the year and special recognition at our Search Team Graduations and events.

**KENNEL SPONSORSHIP**
$15,000

Your sponsorship of an SDF Kennel helps to fund our canine recruitment and training efforts as we prepare the next generation of rescued dogs to become search dogs. As a member of this special program, you will receive canine recruitment updates, as well as monthly updates on the Canine Class of 2020 and the specific candidate staying in your sponsored kennel. Additionally, a recognition plaque will be hung on your kennel all year long with the option of including a special message!

**CANDIDATE SPONSORSHIP**
$20,000

By sponsoring a candidate in training, your generous gift will help provide the funding needed to complete a dog’s journey from rescued to rescuer. Candidate Sponsors form a unique bond with one of our search dogs in training and receive monthly updates on their candidate, personalized communications during their candidate’s Handler Course, and special recognition at Graduation. Additionally, Candidate Sponsors receive special communications when their canine and handler certify!

**CANDIDATE SPONSORSHIP**
$10,000

As a sponsor of the Canine Class of 2020, your funds will be used for the recruitment of our candidate class, as well as their stay at the NTC while they train and enjoy lots of TLC and top-of-the-line healthcare. Canine Class Sponsors receive monthly updates on the canine candidates in training so you can follow along as they progress towards becoming search dogs to serve the nation!

**KENNEL SPONSORSHIP**
$5,000

Your gift to the Canine Recruitment Booster Club helps provide the funding needed to recruit rescued dogs and give them a new “leash on life” as search dogs.

To join the Search Circle, contact Director of Development, Rhett Mauck at (805) 229-0075 or Rhett@SearchDogFoundation.org.
LIFETIME CARE PROGRAM

NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS, WE PROMISE THAT ONCE RESCUED, NO DOG IN OUR PROGRAM WILL EVER NEED TO BE RESCUED AGAIN. WHETHER DEEMED UNADOPTABLE OR TOO MUCH TO HANDLE, MANY OF THE DOGS THAT WE RECRUIT HAVE BEEN LEFT WITH NOTHING BUT UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE. AT SDF, WE WILL NEVER GIVE UP ON THEM. WE WILL NEVER ALLOW THEM TO REENTER THE SHELTER SYSTEM. WE PROMISE TO FIND ANY DOG THAT DOES NOT COMPLETE OUR PROGRAM A NEW CAREER OR A LOVING HOME. EVERY DOG THAT ENTERS OUR PROGRAM WILL BE SUCCESSFUL, NO MATTER WHAT.

SKYLAR: HOME SWEET HOME

While her first year and a half before being picked up as a stray by Jackson County Animal Care & Control in Medford, Oregon, are a mystery, this shepherd mix showed dedication and desire to be a working dog during her time in the shelter. Skylar was evaluated and transported to the National Training Center by recruiter Kirsten Fulk in March 2018, where she was accepted into SDF’s training program.

Skylar trained extensively for seven months, at which point she was ready and eager to be partnered with a first responder-handler during our Fall 2018 Handler Course. However, before she could graduate, our canine care team noticed Skylar had a slight limp while walking on the treadmill. This led to x-rays that revealed Skylar has elbow arthritis. Due to this unforeseen physical limitation, it was decided that disaster search would put too much stress on her already weakened elbow and would not be the right job for her.

Officially off-the-job, Skylar transitioned to a life of leisure—enjoying physical conditioning and fun hikes around the NTC, patiently awaiting her new home.

Skylar soon found her new family with longtime supporter of SDF and dog-enthusiast Laura Rockenberger! The two met and within an instant formed the bond of a lifetime.

“Skylar is an incredible, high-energy, curious dog that can’t get enough out of life!” Laura shared with SDF after several happy months together in Arizona.

Skylar is doing well in her new home and even gets to go to the office some days with Laura. The two enjoy many hikes together and are looking forward to many more adventures to come!

Oka came to SDF as a ten-month-old border collie mix with a stunning appearance—one green and one blue eye and a fluffy coat. His family, located in Salt Lake City, Utah, could not manage his energy and love for toys. Instead of taking him to a shelter, where they feared he would not find a home, they placed a local ad for him in hopes of finding a good family to take care of this lovable ball of energy. Recruiter Trevor Lawrence saw the ad and immediately contacted the owners about finding him the right place—none other than SDF!

Oka was evaluated and passed easily—his toy-drive was amazing! He soon entered SDF’s program and progressed nicely in his search. Throughout his time in training, he was always eager to learn new skills and loved working for his reward.

However, SDF trainers soon noticed that Oka became nervous about sudden loud sounds and had some footing issues that he was unable to overcome, even with plenty of support and encouragement.

Given his difficulties with this area of training, and his environmental sensitivities, SDF trainers decided that canine disaster search work was not the best fit. We knew that Oka loves to play and use his nose—that drive, coupled with his love for engaging with people, made him an excellent candidate for other single-purpose detection work.

Oka was successfully career changed to Bed Bug Detection with trainer Nicole Reusser of Rock Solid K9 in Irvine, California, and has begun training alongside other working teams to learn the ropes. These insects are tiny, yet Oka is training to detect even one little bed bug! He still has a stellar work ethic and dedicated toy drive, making him a wonderful employee in his new career.

Though he will not be a search dog, we found a job that fits his skills and desire, allowing him to be successful, confident and happy!

OKA: BUG DETECTOR

ARE YOU READY?

Help us find our Lifetime Care dogs their “fur-ever” homes! Dogs that aren’t cut out to be search dogs often times love a home where they can enjoy lots of time with an active family. Even though these dogs don’t want to be search dogs after all, we are always looking for someone who can give these capable canines the life they deserve with the right dedication and training!

Could you be best friends with one of our LTC Dogs?

Find out how to apply at searchdogfoundation.org/ltc-home.
ALADAR: ON THE SCENT, IN THE WILD

With his strength and size, it is easy to see Aladar coming. However, his unique smile, with a bit of an under-bite, is what really stole our hearts.

This bouncy chocolate Lab began his life tethered to a pole in his previous owner’s backyard, without access to food or water. Thankfully, animal control officers were able to remove him from that life of neglect and he ended up in Murray Animal Shelter in Salt Lake City, Utah, where SDF Recruiter Trevor Lawrence recognized the traits of a search dog.

Though Aladar ultimately decided disaster search on rubble was not for him, our friends at University of Washington Conservation Canines (CK9) immediately saw his potential and arranged to meet this rambunctious boy. After showing off his search skills, he officially became part of the CK9 pack!

The search skills Aladar learned at the National Training Center will be tremendously valuable as he works with wildlife biologists in his new career. Now, Aladar will be using his nose to help track endangered wolf pack migrations through the Cascade Mountains, allowing biologists to learn more about wolf behavior, like eating and mating habits.

CORVIN: A NEW SHERIFF IN TOWN

Corvin was surrendered to the Santa Ynez Valley Humane Society in Buellton, California, by his family who had to relocate to an apartment that did not allow large dogs.

This beautiful German Shepherd loves his toy and the humane society staff immediately called SDF to evaluate Corvin as a potential search dog. Corvin performed well and entered SDF’s training program, but after several months working with trainers to build his confidence on the rubble pile, it became clear that his discomfort with uneven footing meant that Corvin would not be successful as a disaster search dog.

SDF’s training team then set out to find Corvin a different career since he still had incredible work ethic and drive. He soon found his calling in law enforcement, and Corvin joined the San Luis Obispo County Sheriff’s Office in March 2019 as an apprehension and explosives detection canine.
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TO LEVEL A FOUR STORY BUILDING
TO SNIFF OUT A SURVIVOR
TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

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