



BARKALERT

SPRING 2023



**PAWS ON THE GROUND IN TÜRKIYE:
SEVEN SDF-TRAINED TEAMS DEPLOY IN
AFTERMATH OF DEVASTATING EARTHQUAKE**

Kristi Bartlett & Ivan work alongside Turkish rescuers to search for survivors. Photo: Getty Images

CANINE RECRUITMENT

FROM ROCKY START TO ROCKING THE RUBBLE: MEET CANINE CANDIDATE NANCI!

Like many of our canine recruits, Nanci had a challenging start in life. Growing up, she bounced around through multiple homes due to her high energy and toy obsession until she ended up in the care of the Bollinger County Stray Project, a non-profit rescue in Bollinger County, Missouri, that helps place stray dogs in their forever homes.

Luckily for Nanci, the rescue director was an experienced dog trainer with knowledge of working dogs. She noticed that what made Nanci incompatible as a family pet might make her a successful working dog. She posted Nanci's bio on social media, noting Nanci's potential for search and rescue work, and our SDF Canine Recruitment team saw the posting and reached out to learn more. With instruction from our recruiters, the director ran Nanci through some preliminary screenings on video. Nanci had a blast during the video assessments (she loves to hunt!), and was accepted into our search program as a freshman recruit!

Upon arrival at the campus, Nanci took a little time to warm up, so trainers focused on her drive work, teaching her that barking equals a toy reward and play. Nanci then started searching in a building but quickly progressed to rubble, where she moved effortlessly across the pile. Once she transitioned to rubble, Nanci really came into her own. With her outstanding drive and intensity, she quickly moved on to more advanced elements and continued to excel as she progressed to increasingly complex searches. This little girl is truly "a rocket on the rubble!" according to her trainers.

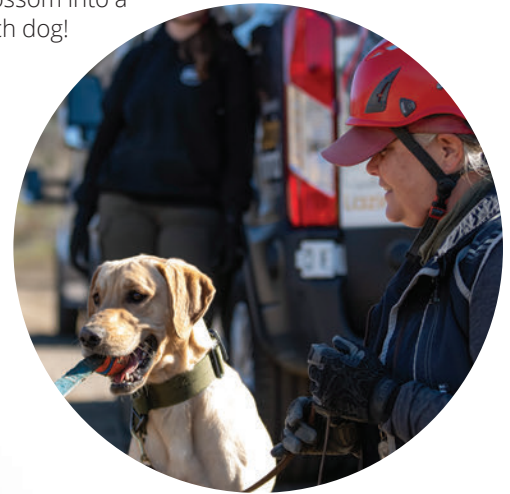
Nanci showed improvement in other areas as well. One of her challenges was the tendency to get frantic in her work, so she practiced focusing through toy play to learn to be more settled and thoughtful. She demonstrated her efforts were paying dividends at a recent off-site trip to a local park where, once she engaged in work with her handler, she was the most relaxed she'd ever been.



Now in the junior class, Nanci is working on multiple-victim searches on the rubble. Fast and intense, she thrives in each challenge. She also continues to get more thoughtful in her work, making her progress more efficient. She's even learning to slow down enough to enjoy cuddles!

We're all impressed with Nanci's quick mastery of the skills she's learned so far. It's thrilling to witness her growth, and we can't wait to see her blossom into a fully-fledged search dog!

Nanci is named in loving memory of Nanci Denney Bergin and sponsored through the generosity of M. Lawrence Lallande and Nicole Lallande.



HAVE A CANINE IN MIND WITH SEARCH POTENTIAL?

If you know a dog with these traits, get in touch!



- High energy
- Obsessive, intense toy drive, even in new locations
- Friendly with people and dogs
- Fearless, brave, and confident in any environment
- Approximately 1 – 2 years of age
- Golden Retrievers, Labrador Retrievers, Border Collies, Australian Shepherds, Belgian Malinois, German Shepherds, plus mixes of those dog breeds

SHELTER SPOTLIGHT

TOOELE CITY ANIMAL SHELTER

In early 2021, the property manager of an apartment complex in Tooele, UT, was doing a walk-through of a recently vacated apartment when he got a surprise. As he opened the door of the empty unit, a large brown dog greeted him, ecstatic to see someone after being left locked in the apartment alone when his owners moved out.

Despite his circumstances, the dog was very friendly, so he was taken to the Tooele City Animal Shelter and put up for public adoption. Once staff began interacting with the new arrival, they realized there was something special about this dog. In addition to his tremendous enthusiasm for toys, staff noticed “a spark in him and immense potential.” They reached out to our Canine Recruitment team, and their intuition was confirmed: this dog was most definitely search candidate material. Now an official search dog, Gordon is partnered with Louis Gudiel of Los Angeles County Fire, California Task Force 2.

Although we agree Gordon was lucky, it wasn't luck that allowed shelter staff to recognize the promise in an active young dog. It was the relationship they had established with SDF recruiters years before. In 2019, the shelter posted a yellow Lab who loved tennis balls as available to rescue organizations. While that dog did not meet the requirements necessary for a search candidate, Canine Recruitment Manager Sylvia Stoney took the opportunity to contact the shelter to explain the recruitment process. Says Lanae Lewis, Shelter Director, “She explained how SDF saves the lives of many of the most driven, and yet difficult to adopt out dogs that shelters are intaking every day. I was so impressed by this program, and love that it takes dogs that are so enthusiastic and driven to work that they are often labeled as ‘too wild’ or ‘too obnoxious’ by visitors and families that come to shelters looking to adopt.”

With their foundation of knowledge, SDF's Sylvia Stoney says that Tooele City Animal Shelter has proven “they can recognize a potential search dog not just by their toy drive but by their temperament and other characteristics” that make a dog successful in our program. In December 2021, the shelter contacted SDF about a dog named Ridge, picked up as a stray. He had been adopted twice but returned for the same reason: too much energy. Coupled with his exuberance was an uncanny ability to escape enclosures—he didn't let anything keep him down, literally or figuratively! Shelter staff realized his potential

and alerted SDF, that did a full evaluation of Ridge and submitted videos to SDF. Seeing Ridge in action rendered a quick decision from our training team after they picked up their jaws from the floor: “All videos were quite impressive. There's no question that he's approved!” Ridge graduated search training with flying colors and went to his new home with his first responder partner, Chris Cook of Virginia Task Force 2, in November 2022.

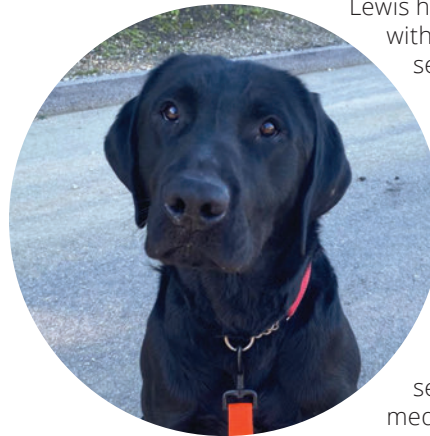
Although the Tooele City Animal Shelter is in a rural part of Utah and employs only one full-time staff member, this small organization continues to make a big impact on SDF's canine recruitment efforts. Shelter Director Lanae

Lewis has been instrumental in working with our recruiters to flag potential search candidates, most recently a black Lab named Rex, found by a police officer and lured into his patrol car with a dog toy, and a chocolate Lab named Lennie, who managed to evade capture by animal control officers for a week! Both dogs were approved based on preliminary screenings and will enter our search program as freshmen once medically cleared.

With rescue at the center of our mission, collaboration between shelters and our Canine Recruitment team is critical to our success. Forging and maintaining these partnerships is always top of mind for our team, who proactively reach out to shelters to raise awareness about SDF's programs, consult with them on prospective dogs, and coach them through evaluation protocols.

Upon learning that SDF intentionally seeks out high-drive, hard-to-place dogs, Lanae Lewis was delighted to have another option for this at-risk population. “I am so excited to continue working with SDF and actively watch for candidates within our shelter dog population. These dogs have a special gift that they have not yet learned to channel in positive ways. SDF helps them use their talents in positive and life-saving ways!”

Our SDF recruiters bring a wealth of expertise in canine training and behavior to their jobs, but their ability to connect with people like Lanae through a shared passion for rescue is what inspires the relationships that ultimately save lives, both human and canine. **Gordon is sponsored by Julie Croker.**



Photos left to right: Gordon & Louis Gudiel training on rubble at SDF's National Training Center, Rex, Lennie with an SDF trainer

LIFETIME CARE

FINDING THE RIGHT JOB FOR EVERY DOG



When we recruit canine candidates for our search program, we look for attributes that can indicate disaster search might be their ideal career path. But not every dog who demonstrates an aptitude for search work ends up loving it. Like humans, dogs have the ability to do many things, but that doesn't mean they're passionate about all of them.

That's why, if through the course of their training, one of our search candidates makes it clear disaster search isn't for them, we respect their choice. Through our Lifetime Care program, we promise each dog we recruit the chance at the life that makes them happiest. If that's in a pet home, we look for a family who will meet their physical and emotional needs. If it's a new job, we look carefully at the dog's individual preferences to help them find a fulfilling career in line with their passions.

Why might a working dog not want to pursue disaster search as a career? One of the most common reasons is an aversion to the rubble, which we classify as "tactile concerns." When a dog transitions from searching flat ground to searching a rubble pile, they might not like the feel of the unstable or uneven surfaces under their feet.

Such was the case with search candidate Lady, whose abundant, untapped energy inspired her to turn her owner's living room furniture into a room full of chew toys. After an SDF recruiter discovered her working dog potential, Lady began training at SDF but soon made it clear that a job traversing rubble wasn't for her. Through our network of contacts, we found Lady a job that suits her much better—although she disliked navigating debris, she loves dashing through the snow, and now spends her days on the ski slopes of Utah as a member of the Powder Mountain avalanche rescue team.

Other common issues that can trigger a career change for search candidates are "environmental sensitivity" and "lack of focus." Both relate to the dog's level of commitment to the search scenario, whether they're distracted by small animals or sounds in the search area, or not motivated enough by the search game to stick with it.

Former search candidate Ryan's hyper-awareness of his environment prevented him from moving on with the search program, so our Lifetime Care coordinator found him a spot with First Responder Canine, which trains dogs to become assistant companions to first responders who have incurred life-changing injuries while serving in their jobs. Service dog work turned out to be a winner for Ryan, and he's currently loving his life as a canine companion providing support to a former police officer with PTSD.

As we gain more insight into how dogs think and feel, we can be better advocates when seeking a placement that suits their needs. At the same time, fields that utilize canine expertise are expanding. Dogs can be trained to find just about anything. Human survivors in rubble and snow—sure—but they can also detect bedbugs, endangered and invasive species of plants and animals, electronics components, imminent seizures, diabetes, cancer, and in just the last few years, COVID.

That's why we've evolved our programs to broaden the opportunities for our canine candidates. When we evaluate high-drive shelter dogs, it's with an eye toward training them for search knowing we can find meaningful work they like better if this career path doesn't work out. By doing our utmost to grant each dog in our SDF family their choice of a satisfying job, our Lifetime Care program ensures they have the best chance at the happy life they deserve.





SNIFFING OUT DISASTERS BEFORE THEY HAPPEN: MAX FINDS HIS PERFECT CAREER IN EXPLOSIVES DETECTION

Max was found as a stray in Weber County, UT, and placed with Weber County Animal Services, where he was adopted and returned due to his high energy. His adopters shared that he was a very nice dog during the brief time Max was with them—he got along great with their kids and their other dog, but they just could not handle his energy level. They were hoping for a mellow, family dog.

Luckily, an SDF recruiter saw Max and recognized his potential as a search candidate. Max stood staring from his kennel with a tennis ball in his mouth as if to say, "Hey, I hear you're looking for a high drive Lab!"

Once in our search program, Max's hunt and focus were good when working indoors, but he struggled to maintain his concentration and intensity off-leash outdoors. The training team spent time working with him to improve his focus, but it soon became apparent that disaster search was not his calling. Max's love of hunting and excellent work ethic on-leash made his pathway plan clear: Max would thrive as a single-purpose detection dog for law enforcement.

Max entered our Lifetime Care Program, and we contacted Sceturion K9, one of our local career change partners that trains dogs for careers in detection. On the day we dropped him off, Max immediately went to 'work.' He ran right into the empty house and scoped out the whole place. Of course, he didn't find anything, but that's when the head trainer knew he would be

perfect for their program. Max was soon partnered with his new handler, and together they certified in explosives detection as part of the University of California at Irvine Police Department.



We always look forward to the updates from Max's partner, and as with all our Lifetime Care dogs, we'll continue to stay in touch to ensure Max has everything he needs to remain happy, healthy, and fulfilled.

Are you an adventure-seeker in search of a sidekick, or an active household looking to add an energetic family member? Are you a working dog handler or trainer looking for your next high-drive, talented partner?

If so, your perfect companion might be one of our Lifetime Care dogs!

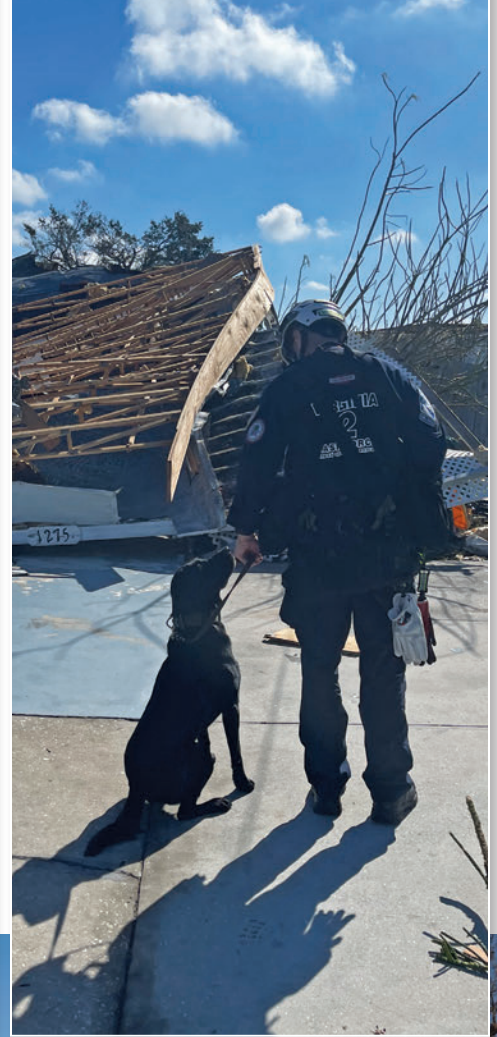


DEPLOYMENT HIGHLIGHT

HURRICANE IAN

In September 2022, Tropical Storm Ian made its way past Cuba, through central Florida, and up the East Coast of the United States over a period of a week, growing into a high-end Category 4 hurricane with 150 mph winds, just seven miles per hour shy of a Category 5. Hurricane Ian made landfall on the western Florida coastline on September 28, creeping slowly over land and wreaking havoc as it moved. After weakening in the Atlantic, it continued up the Eastern seaboard, pelting communities with rain and leaving devastating flooding in its wake.

Three SDF-trained search teams responded to Hurricane Ian in advance and in the aftermath of the storm. The ferocity of this weather event served as a stark reminder of the importance of deployment readiness for America's first responders. By consistently training and preparing for any disaster, our canine search teams are always ready to respond to communities in need.



Harper and Manion are sponsored by Nanci Denney Bergin and an anonymous donor.

Harper was recruited from the Humane Society of the Black Hills.

Jax was recruited from the Humane Society of Utah and is sponsored by Lenny & Squiggy.

Manion was donated by Warrior Canine Connection.



NEW SEARCH TEAMS PAIRED

WE ARE PROUD TO CELEBRATE THESE NEW TEAMS PAIRED BETWEEN JULY AND DECEMBER 2022, WHO HAVE TRAINED TIRELESSLY TOGETHER TO ACQUIRE THE SKILLS NECESSARY TO BECOME ONE SEAMLESS, LIFESAVING UNIT. DURING THEIR CAREERS AS PARTNERS, THEY WILL CONTINUE TO WORK HARD TO REMAIN ACTIVE AND DEPLOYABLE WITH THEIR TASK FORCES, RESPONDING TO INCIDENTS WHENEVER AND WHEREVER THEY OCCUR.



MIKE HARCOS & BUCK

Sacramento Fire
California Task Force 7
Donated by Liz Paape
Sponsors: The Joel and Dena Gambord Family
Named by Wilma Melville



JEREMY DEMOTT & CHIRP

Chesapeake Fire
Virginia Task Force 2
Recruited from Rescue Ranch Inc.
Sponsors: Doris and Howard Busloff



PATRICK EASTON & LINUS

Sacramento Fire
California Task Force 7
Recruited from Domesti-PUPS
Sponsors: Nanci Denney Bergin and Anonymous



BRANDY OUTLAW & PLUTO

Chesapeake Fire
Virginia Task Force 2
Recruited by Trevor Lawrence
Sponsor: Nahikian Family Foundation and Anonymous



CHRIS COOK & RIDGE

City of Suffolk Fire
Virginia Task Force 2
Recruited from Tooele City Animal Shelter
Recruited by Trevor Lawrence
Sponsors: David and Barbara Barnhart



DEREK MOREE & ROMA

Los Angeles County Fire
California Task Force 2
Recruited from Southern California Cat Adoption Tails
Sponsor: Meg Kasdan

CERTIFICATIONS

TEAMS MUST PASS AN EVALUATION EVERY THREE YEARS TO REMAIN ACTIVE AND DEPLOYABLE WITH THEIR TASK FORCES. WE CONGRATULATE THESE TEAMS ON THEIR RECENT CERTIFICATIONS AND THANK THEM FOR THEIR ONGOING COMMITMENT TO THEIR TRAINING, THEIR DEPARTMENTS, AND THE SAFETY OF THE COMMUNITIES THEY SERVE.



LAUREN CANNING & BARNEY

Certification: November 2022
San Francisco Fire
California Task Force 3
Recruited from Retrieving Freedom, Inc.
Sponsor: David and Barbara Barnhart



PAUL JANUARIO & BEAR

Re-certification: November 2022
Sacramento Metro Fire
California Task Force 7
Donated by Sharon McIntyre
Sponsors: The Joel and Dena Gambord Family



JOSH DAVIS & BOSCO

Certification: November 2022
San Francisco Fire
California Task Force 3
Recruited from Dogs for Better Lives
Recruited by Kirsten Fulk
Sponsors: The Joel and Dena Gambord Family



ROXANNE BAUMAN & COLE

Re-certification: November 2022
Layton Fire
Utah Task Force 1
Recruited from El Dorado County Animal Services
Recruited by Penny Woodruff
Named by: Carol Marengo



JULIE PADEFORD-JANSEN & REBEL

Certification: November 2022
California Task Force 4
Sponsors: The Joel and Dena Gambord Family



ERIC DARLING & STEVEN

Certification: November 2022
California Regional Task Force 7
Recruited from Kaiser K9, Inc.
Sponsor: Pat Snyder

RETIREMENTS

THE DEDICATION OF THESE TEAMS MADE OUR COMMUNITIES SAFER PLACES TO LIVE, AND WE THANK THEM FOR THEIR SERVICE TO OUR COUNTRY.

AS THEY EMBARK ON THE NEXT CHAPTER OF THEIR LIVES, WE WISH THEM WELL AS THEY SETTLE INTO THEIR GOLDEN YEARS AT HOME WITH THEIR HANDLERS AND FAMILIES.



JOSH FLORES & CAJUN

Years of Service: 2016 – 2022

Los Angeles County Fire
California Task Force 2
Donated by Elise Lalor



GREG GOULD & DAX

Years of Service: 2012 – 2022

NYS DHSES Office of Fire Prevention & Control
New York Task Force 2
Pup Raiser: Christina Guz
Recruited from Guide Dogs of America
Recruited by Heidi Miller
Sponsor: Planet Dog Foundation



Dax training on ladder with handler, Greg Gould

RAINBOW BRIDGE

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO EACH OF THESE REMARKABLE CANINES WHO TOUCHED SO MANY LIVES DURING THEIR YEARS OF SERVICE.

THEIR LEGACIES WILL BE HONORED ON OUR CANINE MEMORIAL WALL, AND THEIR SPIRITS WILL LIVE ON IN OUR HEARTS.



CHIEF

March 24, 2008 – November 30, 2022

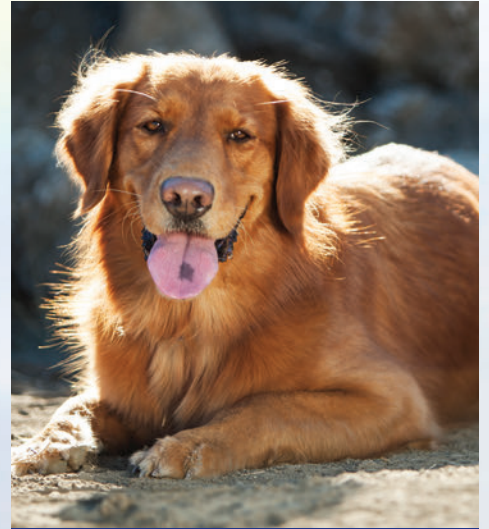
Handler: Andrew Pitcher
Nebraska Task Force 1
Recruited from Roice Hurst Humane Society
Named in memory of Chief Michael McGroarty
Sponsors: Lynn and Glenn Cardoso



HALEY

May 30, 2009 – December 2, 2022

Handler: Linda D'Orsi
Chula Vista Fire
California Task Force 8
Donated by Nancy King
Sponsors: Janet and Greg Van Huisen



KARI

March 23, 2009 – October 28, 2022

Handler: Chris Bergquist
Sacramento Fire
California Task Force 7
Donated by Bill Gordon
Recruited by Heidi Miller



REX

April 16, 2008 – August 30, 2022

Handler: Wade Haller
Long Beach Fire
California Task Force 5
Donated by Barbara Ornbaum
Recruited by Penny Woodruff



SONIC

September 19, 2007 – October 4, 2022

Handler: Laurel Pitman
Dallas Fire-Rescue
Texas Task Force 2
Recruited from The Animal Foundation
Sponsors: Janet and Greg Van Huisen, Jill Bee,
Colleen Murray, DVM



TAYLOR

September 26, 2010 – August 26, 2022

Handler: Trevor Lawrence
Unified Fire Authority | Utah Task Force 1
Recruited from Aberdeen Area Humane Society
Recruited by South Dakota Canine Center
Sponsors: Arc Aspicio, Berakah Foundation
Named in memory of Taylor Steele



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**Thank you for being
*Part of the Search!***