



Forsyth County SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Sheriff Ron H. Freeman

THE FORSYTH COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE ANNOUNCES THERAPY DOG TRAINING PROGRAM

**For Immediate Release
November 17th, 2021**

In mid-2019, Sheriff Ron Freeman announced the implementation of the Pups with Purpose dog program at the Forsyth County Jail. The program gives carefully selected inmates an opportunity to give back to society by providing foster care and basic obedience training to homeless, unwanted dogs while enhancing their own social and vocational skills to help them better succeed once released from jail. The participating inmates are those in our Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) program who applied for the Pups with Purpose program and, once assessed, were accepted.

Pups with Purpose has dramatically impacted the recovery program, providing a purpose and sense of serving others to the participants. Thus far, 15 RSAT inmates have partaken in the program. Additionally, the program has successfully found adoptive families for 69 rescue dogs that otherwise may have been euthanized.

Without incredible partnerships, the program would not be possible. Dog trainer and owner of Fido's World, Scot Rucker, heads up the training provided in the program, donating his services to assist with training the dogs while educating the inmates and the deputies assigned to the program. The Forsyth County Animal Shelter provides the rescue dogs, their food, and medical care while they are in the program.

Earlier this year, Rose, a graduate of the Pups with Purpose program and Canine Good Citizen, was adopted by the Cobb County District Attorney's Office, where she will serve as a therapy dog for adult and child crime victims. Today, Sheriff Freeman is proud to announce that the Pups with Purpose program is officially extending to include Canine Good Citizen training. This additional training will provide more therapy dogs to other agencies, businesses, non-profits, and citizens. Therapy dog training has been a goal for the program since its inception. Recently, a litter of seven Labradoodle puppies was surrendered to the Forsyth County Animal Shelter, which posed an opportunity to move forward with the extension.

The puppies joined the first official Pups with Purpose therapy dog class when they were eight weeks old. They began working with the RSAT participants on basic obedience, general exposure, and house training. The Sheriff's Office sent out an announcement for applications to departments throughout the county, along with a thorough list of requirements that included both the handler and department's commitment to the 15+ week training requirements and the successful completion of the Canine Good Citizen's (CGC) assessment.

Various departments submitted applications, and an approval process began, including interviews and home/work visits. Selected applicants were assigned a puppy from the class that met their residential and work environment needs. On December 1st, the puppies will be released to their new handler to be fostered until completion of all required training. After graduation from the final CGC class, the puppies will be certified therapy dogs and will be officially adopted by their handler/department.

"Pups with Purpose is changing lives, both inside the jail and beyond its walls. I'm so very proud of the deputies, our partners, and the inmates who have done an incredible job training these pups to serve others. A huge thank you to Fido's World and owner Scot Rucker for his tireless volunteer efforts to help this program succeed," says Sheriff Ron Freeman.

(Continued)



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- Marley and Gable will serve at the Forsyth County Sheriff's Office
- Hank will serve at the Forsyth County Senior Services Center
- Merle will serve at the Forsyth Emergency Management/911 Center
- Colt will serve at Forsyth Central High School
- Ruger will serve at the Office of School Safety and Discipline
- Jack will serve at the Northeast Georgia Medical Center

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