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Stanley Correctional Institution Hosts PAWS Program Open House

Inmates showcase what they have taught dogs that will be paired with people in need

STANLEY – Inmates from Stanley Correctional Institution (SCI) have partnered with the Can Do Canines organization to train service dogs to assist individuals with various medical conditions. On Wednesday, December 14th, SCI hosted an open house with Can Do Canines representatives, foster volunteers, SCI leaders, and inmates involved in the Can Do Canines program to showcase the skills the dogs have learned since they arrived at SCI in February.

Can Do Canines is a non-profit organization that trains dogs for individuals with hearing loss, mobility challenges, seizure disorders, Type I Diabetes, or childhood autism. During the training process, each dog is assigned to specific inmates as well as a dog sitter who watches the dog during weekends. The inmates teach the dogs basic commands and prepare the dogs for a community setting. Following training with inmates, each dog will be placed with a foster volunteer in a community setting for additional training until they are placed with an individual.

During the open house, inmates showed foster volunteers and Can Do Canines representatives what the dogs have learned. The dogs have also had a significant positive effect on institution climate.

DOC Secretary Jon Litscher said: "DOC's partnership with Can Do Canines brings significant positive benefits to both inmates and the community. Inmates have the opportunity to give back by training service dogs while also decreasing the cost of training for Can Do Canines. During the training process, inmates have the opportunity to bond with the dogs while learning skills they can use in the community."

By partnering with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, Can Do Canines is able to decrease the cost of training for service dogs, which allows them to train additional dogs. It costs approximately \$25,000 to train one service dog.

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