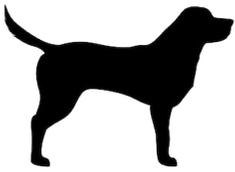

Hooktown Holidays / CAC Facility Dog Project for the Warren County Children's Advocacy Center



This is a joint project of the Warren County Children's Advocacy Center, and Hooktown Holidays. Formally launched in February 2020, the goal is to raise \$11,000 to establish a Facility Dog program at the Warren County CAC.

What is a Facility Dog?

- A professionally trained assistance dog who works alongside a professional in a service capacity to assist other people.
- Should be graduated from a dog school accredited by Assistance Dogs International (ADI) and is partnered with a working professional handler who receives extensive training with the dog chosen for them by the canine school.
- A facility dog is *not* a therapy dog. Therapy dogs are trained primarily to provide emotional support for short periods of time, in specific instances (i.e. a hospital or nursing home settings). A facility dog is trained to specifically support a variety of individuals over longer durations of time, and in more intense settings.

Source: Courthouse Dogs Foundation, 2015

"A facility dog is not a service dog, as it does not assist a person with a disability, nor does it have public access, but it is a dog with a special purpose. At a child advocacy center, a facility dog supports the process of interviewing a child victim and documenting any evidence of child abuse. The presence of a quiet, gentle, specially trained dog offers a source of comfort to a child while she or he is sharing a very traumatic experience with a perfect stranger. During this stressful, emotional interview a facility dog enables the child to focus on something other than the details of their abuse" (Maryland Children's Alliance Inc.).



Research and Support for Facility Canine Programs:

"A growing body of scientific literature on the psychological and physiologic consequences of children witnessing and experiencing violence, as well as appearing in court, has supported modifications of courtroom procedures. To decrease the stress experienced by children appearing in courts, various accommodations were developed, ranging from allowing children to hold comforting objects to being accompanied by a support person while testifying. Recently, specially trained facility dogs have been allowed to offer comfort for witnesses" (Pantell, 2017).

"The Association of Prosecuting Attorneys (APA) is a national association dedicated to supporting and enhancing prosecutors in their efforts to create safer communities. APA supports the use of facility dogs as a model practice for providing quiet companionship to vulnerable individuals during the investigation and prosecution of crimes and other stressful legal proceedings" (Assoc. of Prosecuting Attorneys, 2018).

"In order for children to engage in effective social communication, they must feel safe. This is especially true of child trauma victims . . . One promising development in increased sensitivity to the trauma needs of vulnerable witnesses in the legal system is the use of courthouse facility dogs to provide calm and comfort to vulnerable child witnesses when testifying. One of the great advantages of the use of these dogs is that it provides comfort and assists a child witness to remain calm so that they can cognitively process and respond to the questions by the attorneys but it also does not interfere with the Sixth Amendment rights that ensure that the accused as the right to confront face-to-face their accuser" (Crenshaw et al., 2019).





About the Warren County Children’s Advocacy Center:

The Warren County Children's Advocacy Center is a standalone, incorporated 501(c)(3) non-profit agency committed to providing a safe and supportive environment that is dedicated to serving child victims of abuse and their families. Professionals from multiple disciplines within the community coordinate investigations, interventions, prosecutions, and provide specialized treatment while reducing trauma and promoting healing. At the Warren County CAC, children find a safe, child-centered space to tell their stories and begin to reclaim their childhood.



To learn more about the Warren County CAC, contact: **Melissa McLean, Executive Director & Forensic Interviewer**
Email: director@warrencac.org | Phone: (814) 313-1004 | www.warrencac.org



About Hooktown Holidays:



Hooktown Holidays is a community organization created in 2013 to serve the needs of the less fortunate in Warren County. In 2014 Hooktown Holidays incorporated and created a board of directors. A qualified 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization which supports those in need in our community through several local service organizations. The recipient

organizations are chosen based on their ability to meet and fulfill the goals of the Hooktown Holidays mission statement: “Our mission is to provide nutritious food, warm clothing, and other necessities of life to children, families and other individual in need in our community.”

To learn more about Hooktown Holidays Inc., contact: **Terry Pearson, Founder**
Phone: (814) 688-9979 | www.hooktownholidays.org | www.facebook.com/HooktownHolidays



Donations to the “Hooktown Holidays / CAC Project” can be made at any Northwest Bank location, or through Hooktown Holidays, Inc. at P.O. Box 1751, Warren, PA 16365. Checks should be made payable to “Hooktown Holidays / CAC Project” and all donations should reference the same. Or donate online at www.hooktownholidays.org and www.facebook.com/HooktownHolidays

References and Further Reading:

Assistance Dogs International. (2015). *Facility Dogs – Training Standards*. Retrieved from <http://www.assistedogsinternational.org/standards/assistance-dogs/standards-for-dogs/training-standards-for-facility-dogs/>.

Association of Prosecuting Attorneys. (2018). *Courthouse Facility Dog Resolution of the Association of Prosecuting Attorneys*. Retrieved from <https://ncjtc-static.fvtc.edu/resources/RS00006671.pdf>.

Courthouse Dogs Foundation & Western Regional Children’s Advocacy Center. (2014.) *Facility Dogs at Children’s Advocacy Centers and In Legal Proceedings – Best Practices*. Retrieved from <http://www.srcac.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/facility-dog-best-practices.pdf>.

Crenshaw, D. A., Stella, L., O’Neill-Stephens, E. & Walsen, C. (2019) *Developmentally and Trauma-Sensitive Courtrooms*, *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, 59(6), 779-795, DOI: [10.1177/0022167816641854](https://doi.org/10.1177/0022167816641854).

Krause-Parello, C. A., Thames, M., Ray C. M. & Kolassa, J. (2018) *Examining the Effects of a Service-Trained Facility Dog on Stress in Children Undergoing Forensic Interview for Allegations of Child Sexual Abuse*, *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 27:3, 305-320, DOI: [10.1080/10538712.2018.1443303](https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2018.1443303)

Maryland Children’s Alliance, Inc. *Facility Dogs: An Innovation in Victim/Witness Support*. Retrieved from <https://www.marylandchildrensalliance.org/child-advocacy-centers/facility-dogs/>

Pantell, Robert H. American Pediatrics Committee on Psychosocial Aspects of Child and Family Health. (2017). *The Child Witness in the Courtroom*. *Pediatrics* February 2017, e20164008; Retrieved from <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2016-4008>.