

Frederick County K-9 Officers – A Partnership Between Man and Animal

By Suzanne Hladun

Many Frederick County residents may not know that The City of Frederick Police Department has an active K-9 unit. This unique partnership between officers and their dogs can play an integral role in keeping Frederick citizens safe. This group of officers and their dogs fills essential roles including searching for drugs or weapons, crowd control, tracking individuals and protecting their officer partners. The dogs have a close bond with their handlers, and even live with them on their down time.

So far this year, Frederick Police Department K-9 units have responded to 307 K-9 specific calls. While on the job, a police officer and his K-9 partner perform activities that most people associate with police officers. They go on patrol and respond to calls from the public. In addition to their usual activities, these officers also respond to calls that require their specially trained dogs. The officers and their dogs participate in area searches on burglary calls, article searches, dangerous substance searches, crowd control and tracking activities. They are also another line of defense for their human partners when the officers are in perilous situations. The dogs may also assist in apprehension of suspects when needed. Needless to say, the selection process for the dogs is very painstaking and the training program is intense. It's very important to select dogs with the right temperament that are intelligent and hard working. The dog's personality isn't enough, however. They go through a lot of training before they even go out on the job.

Because of the dogs' personalities and the large investment of time and training in each dog, when an officer needs to be away from home for an extended period of time, the dogs require special housing and care while away from their partners. Boarding the dogs in an ordinary kennel is not the best option. For the safety of both the dogs and the public, the best solution is to have them stay with another K-9 officer while their human partner is away from the job. To help house the dogs, the Police Department needs to invest in a portable kennel that doesn't fall under their current budget. The Frederick County Humane Society would like to support the Police Department in their time of need and is currently accepting donations to help defray the cost of the kennel.

Let's repay our K-9 officers and dogs for their dedication to the job and ongoing efforts to keep us safe. If you would like to help, please contact the Frederick County Humane Society at (301) 694-8300 or visit their website at www.fchs.org.