

# THE FOUR-PAWS BULLETIN-PVSP

New Life K9's Newsletter-Pleasant Valley State Prison/  
D-Facility

## "Happy Birthday Pup's!" *Delta, Koa and Nala*

By: Handler Keith Erickson

The year seems to have flown by like a *blur*. With these three individually unique personalities, *Delta*, *Koa* and thie baby sister *Nala*, our hearts and lives have been touched by their places in our everyday lives here at Pleasant Valley State Prison. Just singing "Happy Birthday" to them on their one year birthday feels bittersweet, considering they will have graduated the program this time next year. However, knowing that we all played a part in their growth is the sweet part that we can all celebrate each and every day that they are with the team. *Delta*, who is the biggest of the siblings, has the laid back personality of what his handler refers to as a "Cowboy's touch", and yet, this adorable creature doesn't let his bigness get in the way of being loving and gentle with both humans and other dogs just the same. Then, we have *Koa*, who is everything that his look displays, which is a kind and gentle being in all ways. When asking his handler about the year that he has had with *Koa* he will tell you that it has been a life changing experience that he will be affected by for the rest of his life. And finally we have the "baby sister" *Nala* who is best described as the girl with a *sassy attitude*. When we asked her handler Joey what makes *Nala* different from all the rest, it is clear that the grin on his face tells us that there *too* many things to even *try* counting.

(Continued on page 4)



*"Saving Lives through the Healing Power  
of the Human Canine-Bond"*

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**"Everyday 22 Veterans & First Responders  
commit suicide due to their suffering of PTSD  
(Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)"  
Help save a life by donating on line now:  
[NewLifeK9s.org/donate](http://NewLifeK9s.org/donate)  
For Recurring Donations**



# From the Four Paws Bulletin Team

*"Our thoughts and prayers are with each and every one of you!"*

We would first like to extend our *heartfelt prayers* to all those affected by the Corona Virus Pandemic that has done so much damage to our communities across the country, including other countries that too have lost so many precious lives. In a time of such peril we can only *hope* that people are *more* willing to come together and help each other, instead of turning a blind eye to their struggles. These are the times where we need one another more than *ever* before.

For those of you within the prison system, that same gesture applies; showing kindness and compassion to your neighbor is just as essential, you never know *who* is being directly affected by the loss of a family member on the outside due to this virus. We encourage you all to help each other in *any* small way that is possible rather than expect everyone to deal with things individually. We are stronger if we stand together. This may last longer than anticipated; however, in time we believe that by everyone's efforts to look out for one another, we are going to come out of this even stronger as a community than we were before this unforeseen pandemic. To all of our other teams at CMC & CTF, we hope that you too are hanging in there and working together through this trying time. You too are with us all in heart and thought.

From the team here at Pleasant Valley State Prison, we stand with you all in *solidarity*! Stay safe and stay compassionate towards one another! ☺

## Four Paws Bulletin Newsletter Team



John, Derek, Ernie, Ernesto, and Keith

***Be a part of something great! Be a weekend  
Puppy Raiser/Parent and help save a life.  
Everyday 22 Veterans & First Responders  
commit suicide after having lost their inner  
battle with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.  
By helping provide your time and love to one  
of our canines, you too are helping save a life  
before it is tragically lost.***

***For more information, please contact:  
Email: [newlife@newlifek9s.org](mailto:newlife@newlifek9s.org).***



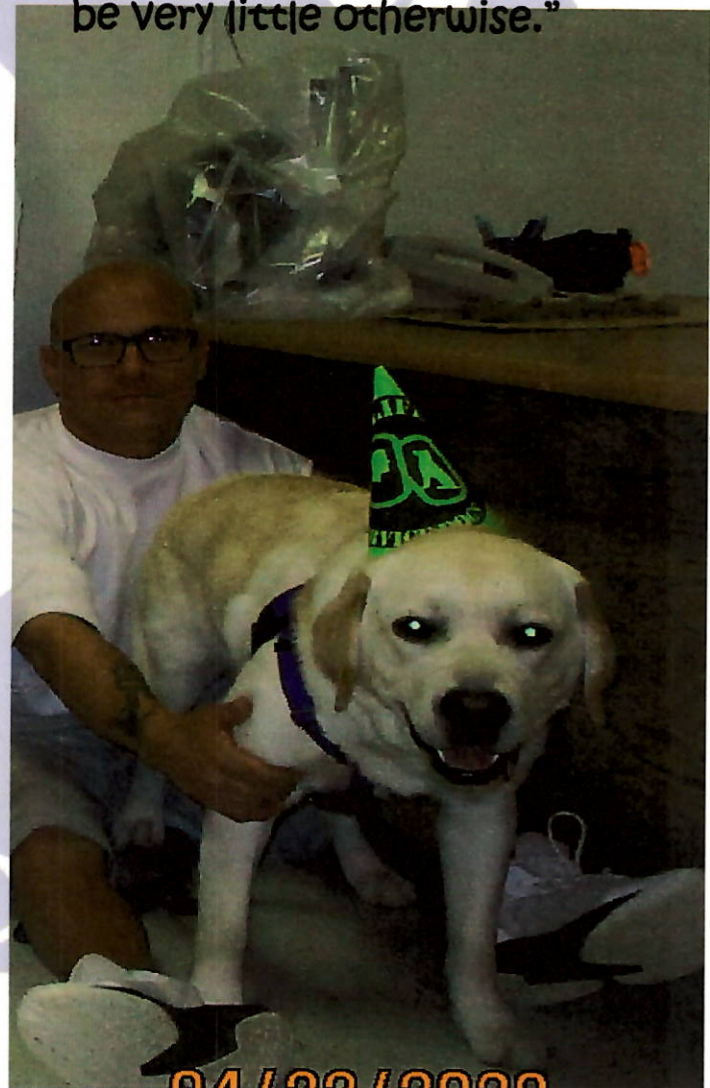
# Koa's Paw Prints

By: Handler John Demery

Koa's paw prints began in my life on September 4, 2019, and that day, that moment will *forever* leave a huge impression on my heart just as it has my life. Koa gives his love to me one paw at a time, and his paws have also been able to touch my soul in more ways than I think I can count. Although I know that the day will come when Koa's paws will leave my life, knowing that his paws will one day bring happiness, comfort and confidence to another Veteran or First Responder is what makes me feel a sense of comfort in all of this. *The truest thing* that I can say about Koa is that he has a thing about him, it's just *who* he is, and it's that he gives everyone *unconditional* love and solace that makes you feel *freedom* where there would be very little otherwise. I have never felt so free in my whole time that I have been in prison as I do with him. Anyone that receives him as a lifelong partner will forever be touched by his presence. And, needless to say, they too will understand what it means to be touched by Koa's paw prints in their life from that moment onward in their new journey together. 😊

*U.S Navy Veteran  
1996-2014  
Petty Officer First Class  
Demery, John R  
New Life K9 Handler  
Pleasant Valley State Prison*

"The truest thing that I can say about Koa, is that he has a thing about him, it is just *who* he is and it's that he gives everyone *unconditional* love and solace that makes you feel you have freedom where there would be very little otherwise."



## TEAM KOA



# ★BITS & PIECES★



WE LOVE OUR DOGS!!



Thank you Frankie for all the hard work that you put into making all the "Doggie Birthday Treats" for our team..... We appreciate you!!!



Handler Frankie Lozano putting his future Chef skills to work....



# ALL IT TOOK

**A POEM BY: HANDLER ERNESTO SANCHEZ**

*All it took was one gaze,  
And I could feel my mood change. All it took was one look,  
And my heart was hooked.  
All it took was one stare,  
And I realized that life was for once fair.  
All it took was one gaze to forget this  
hellish place and the pain that I had once bared.  
All that it took was one look,  
And I was instantly hooked on a new purpose of saving lives.*



*All that it took was one stare to finally realize that I could also get Finn there.*

*"Together",*

*We can both change the world one step at a time.*



# Practice Your Bond

By: Handler Ernesto Sanchez

*An instructional guide to working with your canine*

As explained in volume 1, the bond based approach is a way of using social connection to influence and educate your dog in a way that they *choose* to cooperate with us. So, that in mind, give your dog the knowledge and skills they will need to make good decisions by helping him/her do the following practice exercise:

In this exercise you could demonstrate a behavior for your dog to mirror, however, keep in mind that you do not want to make it *complex* when starting off with your dog. Make it simple and step by step so that your dog has the time to process the information that you are providing him with. If your dog is high energy, it is suggested that you get another person to help you with lightly holding your dog during the first stages of the teachings. Also, keep in mind that every dog has a different personality that influences the way that they use their bodies when retrieving something or conducting various tasks. For example, some dogs will use their paw to retrieve a pill bottle from a cabinet, while other dogs are more comfortable using their mouths to pull the rope used to open the cabinet. In time, you will know your dog's strengths and be able to build on them as you go. Below is an exercise that we here at New Life K9's use with our dogs, and we hope that you too will find it easily applicable and enjoyable to the bond that you and your dog share.

1. Take a small bottle or container, stand it up on the floor in an erect position. Then, with your hand tip the bottle over gently while your dog is watching you. Be sure to keep your dog's attention by making this seemingly simple *task fun & exciting*.
2. Once you have knocked over the bottle with your dog watching, celebrate yourself by clapping and saying "Yeah me"! This will *translate* to your dog just how fulfilling it is to accomplish such a task.
3. After your self-celebration, stand the bottle back up and ask your dog, "Want to try?" With the dog's full attention on you, it is now time to allow *him* to try.
4. When you feel your dog is ready, ask him/her "Can you do like me?" while pointing at the bottle in front of him/her. Then, allow your dog to mirror what you have done what you did earlier with the bottle. (Again, your dog is either going to be most comfortable using their *paw* or *nose* to knock over the bottle, and both ways are a success).
5. After your dog has knocked over the bottle, it is just as important to celebrate his/her accomplishment, even if it is slightly *touching* but not *knocking* over the bottle. Remember, they are like children building their confidence and will need your encouragement all the way even through things as small as this.

We call this exercise here at NLK9's the "Do like Me", and once you get your dog started you will see just how easy and fun it is to do it with all sorts of things. Always keep in mind; *it is all about the baby steps!* ☺



*"We are on a mission to save lives"*



# From the Heart of A Dog Lover:

*How interacting with the dogs here at PVSP has changed the environment*

By: Ernie Serrano & Ernesto Sanchez

**M**aking our debut with the Four Paws Bulletin, this is our very first interview coming to you from the echoing walls & grassy knolls of Pleasant Valley State Prison.

There are many deserving men and women whom we could have interviewed and whom have been an integral part of our program and its success. However, the success of others is many times made possible by the silent forces helping and guiding them through uncertainties from lack of experience and sharing wisdom gained through empirical knowledge.

We believe our first selection captures this spirit in motion, and this is *why* we have collectively chosen one of our very own Facility "D" Licensed Vocational Nurse, Mrs. M. Stringer.

Mrs. Stringer, as we have mentioned, we believe the care and attentiveness you have demonstrated with the dogs speaks volumes as to your knowledge of and love for these little critters. This is why we are also very excited about your willingness to allow us to interview you. So, without further ado, can you please share your thoughts on the following questions we have for you?

## **Q1) How did you come to know about NLK9?**

*A1) I read about the program through our Institutional/Interdepartmental website, but could not volunteer because I have too many dogs of my own at home.*

## **Q2) What do you think about the New Life K-9 Service Dog Program on Facility "D" here at Pleasant Valley State Prison?**

*A2) I initially resisted the idea but once I saw the inmates change and interaction with staff I have been able to see it as a positive experience for everyone on the facility.*

## **Q3) How has the dogs being on the facility affected you and your co-workers?**

*A3) there are times when we are having a bad day; we just walk outside of our clinic, sit on the bench and watch the dogs playing. The sight of the dogs playing makes our day so much better.*

## **Q4) The New Life K-9 Program stated as a two (2) year commitment and we are a little over a year into this commitment, with this in mind what can you say to the New Life K-9 Service Dog's Organizations Personnel in regards to the positive feelings they have brought to Facility "D"?**

*A4) I would say to continue with the program, as it has been a good program for the guys and the dogs in more ways than many understand.*

## **Q5) On a lighter note, all the canines are cute dogs but just one for the books, which dog is your favorite?**

*A5) (Mrs. Stringer looks right outside of her window to indicate Finn) Finn because of his personality, "sad look", but very spoiled. Another favorite is Parker because of his personality and attentive look.*

## **Q6) Has your perspective towards prisoners changed? If so, how has it changed?**

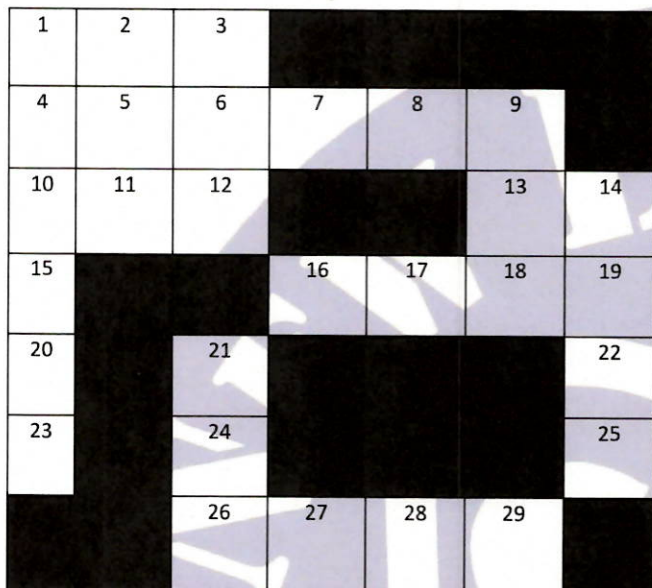
*A6) my views have not really changed, but I see you guys now as being able to show compassion with yourselves and the dogs just the same. You seem to be very committed and in tune with each other. 🎵*



# CROSSWORD-FUN

## DO YOU KNOW YOUR STUFF?

By: Handler Chad Thomas



### ACROSS

1. Dog's Nemeses
4. Bond Based Creator (*Hint: Woman*)
10. Butterfly \_\_\_\_\_
13. \_\_\_\_\_ Mice and Men
16. Kind of Stick
26. \_\_\_\_\_ is all you need

### DOWN

1. Type of Bond or Tooth?
2. \_\_\_\_\_ we there yet?
3. Alternative to Dynamite
9. *Perro?*
14. Dogs dig it
21. Laugh Out Loud

### Special Thanks:

*S. Fraunheim, Warden-Pleasant Valley Prison...  
D. Nelson-D, Captain-D-Facility.....  
Our dedicated Puppy Raisers.....  
New Life K9's Organization & Family.....  
PVSP Administration as a whole.....  
PVSP Population (For embracing the dogs).....*

### Special Recognition:

*Lieutenant Stiles, D-Facility/ NLK9 Liaison-For taking on the responsibilities of maintaining the success of the New Life K9's Program here on D-Facility. You have done so much for the team & our dogs.*

*Building Four, Floor Officers/2&3 Watch.....  
D-Facility Yard Officers/2&3 Watch.....*

*D-Gym Officer, Salazar for all your help on a day to day basis.....*

### Four Paws Team, PVSP:

*Keith Erickson-Editor in Chief  
Derek Romero-Editor  
John Demery-Editor  
Ernie Serrano-Chief Interview  
Ernesto Sanchez-Interview Executive*

### Contributing Writer's:

*Keith Erickson  
John Demery  
Ernie Serrano  
Chad Thomas  
Frankie Lozano*

**NEW LIFE K9'S  
P.O BOX 4412  
SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA. # 93403**

ANSWERS: ACROSS 1-CAT 4-ARNOLD 10-NET 13-OF 16-POGO 26-LOVE  
DOWN 1-CANINE 2-ARE 3-TNT 9-DOG 14-FOOD 21-LOL