



**AMERICAN
KENNEL CLUB™**

**Everyday Dogs That Make An Extraordinary Difference
FACT SHEET: AKC Awards for Canine Excellence (ACE)**

- The AKC Awards for Canine Excellence honor dogs that have made significant contributions to the lives of their owners and others in their communities, and pay tribute to the extraordinary canine-human bond.
- First presented in 2000, the awards honor dogs in each of five categories: Exemplary Companion Dog, Law Enforcement, Search and Rescue, Service and Therapy. One winner and several honorable mentions are chosen in each category every year.
- Twenty-three different breeds – from all seven AKC groups – have been selected as award winners. Over 1,000 dogs have been nominated since the inception of the program; approximately 200 dogs are nominated annually.
- Each year, the five winners receive a cash award and an engraved sterling-silver collar medallion at a presentation ceremony during the AKC/Eukanuba National Championship in Long Beach, California. Local presentations are also held for each recipient at an AKC dog show near their hometown.
- To learn more or nominate a dog, visit <http://www.akc.org/news/ace/>

2008 AKC Award for Canine Excellence honorees:

Service Dog: “Cary” owned by Sara Elizabeth Solomon of Nashville, TN

- Assists owner with quadriplegic cerebral palsy in daily activities and challenges such as opening doors, picking up dropped items, helping with light switches and carrying her lunch box
- With “Cary’s” help, Lizzy has become a role model in her community by serving on a panel for disability awareness training and working with community organizations, including the Frist Art Center and the Country Music Hall of Fame

Therapy Dog: “Zadok” owned by Julie Burk of Damascus, OR

- Visits hospitals, children’s healthcare facilities and prison inmates
- Consoled students after tragic Virginia Tech and Northern Illinois University school shootings, providing the unconditional love and safety that allowed the traumatized students to express their pain
- Visited a summer camp for children whose parents were serving in Iraq and Afghanistan

Law Enforcement: “Lex” owned by Jerome and Rachel Lee of Quitman, MS

- Served in Iraq with young Marine Corporal Dustin Jerome Lee, searching for roadside bombs
- Attempted to remain with Cpl. Lee when he was tragically killed in a mortar attack
- Awarded a Commemorative Purple Heart

- Now living with the Lee family, visits VA hospitals and retirement homes to offer solace to the veterans who have so honorably served their country

Exemplary Companion Dog: “Annie” owned by Donna Rock of Lacombe, LA

- Assists owner Donna, who was born without arms, with everyday activities
- Won both an Obedience Championship (OTCH) and Agility Championship (MACH)
- After losing their home and place of work due to Hurricane Katrina, Annie helped Donna navigate the subways, escalators and large crowds of people in their temporary home of Washington D.C.

Search and Rescue Dog: “Taffy” owned by Lt. Douglas Williams of Laguna Niguel, CA

- Helps find lost children and Alzheimer’s patients who wander off and criminals on the run
- Has worked on over 115 documented cases for the police, providing credible information that helped solve crimes and has had 12 walk-up finds of lost persons or criminals to her credit

Selection of past honorees:

Service Dog: “Holly” owned by Shanna Wilkinson of Magna, UT

- Predicts Shanna’s daily seizures, helping her owner get to a safe place before the seizure occurs. This has helped Shanna regain her independence and ability to go into public without worry of seizure-related injury.
- Earned titles in Agility, Herding, Obedience and Rally
- Visits classrooms to educate others about service dogs and to teach children how to care for dogs

Service Dog: “Faith” owned by Leana Beasley of Richland, WA

- Called 911 and barked into the phone when owner began having grand mal seizures due to a toxic reaction to medication
- Rolled owner into recovery position and unlocked the door when police arrived at the house

Service Dog: “Roselle” owned by Michael Hingson, of Novato, CA

- Escorted blind owner from the 78th floor of World Trade Center Tower One on 9/11

Law Enforcement: Baton Rouge Police Department K9 Division (Ace, Bandit, Buster, Jake, Philos, Relic, Rosco, Rowdy, Stone, Zain)

- Responded to 3,740 calls, recovered 47 stolen vehicles and made 318 arrests when the population of Baton Rouge doubled after Hurricane Katrina
- Worked extended shifts with no days off to stem the spike of auto thefts, robberies, gangs and drug dealers

Search and Rescue Dog: “Ranger” owned by Captain Kerry W. Foster of Shreveport, LA

- Began work as a search and rescue dog for the Shreveport Fire Department in 2001
- Conducts approximately 40 search operations each year in Louisiana and parts of Texas and Arkansas
- Served in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, searching 2,800 collapsed homes between March and July 2006

- Performed demonstrations for White House dignitaries and FEMA officials

Search and Rescue: “Topper” owned by Pat Grant, DVM of Marina, CA

- Worked as an Urban Search & Rescue Dog at the site of the Oklahoma City bombing and on Sept. 11th at the World Trade Center
- Certified as a wilderness-search dog and has participated in many local manhunts and missing-persons rescues

Exemplary Companion Dog: “Bullet” owned by Pam & Troy Sica, of Bellport, New York

- Alerted his owners by barking and running wildly that their baby was in distress. This allowed his owners time to begin CPR and call the paramedics, and saved the baby’s life.

Therapy Dog: “Noodle” owned by Stacia Bjarnason, Ph.D., of Durham, CT

- Works as a Therapy dog at the Northwest Village School, where many students deal with social-emotional or behavioral challenges that impede their ability to learn

Therapy Dog: “Penni” owned by Florence Scarinci of Franklin Square, NY

- Comforts others at nursing homes, hospitals and schools
- Gives educational demonstrations at schools, colleges and senior centers about responsible dog ownership

Companion Dog: “Rumor” owned by Francisco Sanguino and Steph Anderson of South Sioux City, NE

- Though neglected by previous owners, Rumor bonded with foster child Francisco
- Participated in Junior Showmanship, Conformation, Obedience, Agility, Rally and Therapy work with Francisco

To read about other dogs honored with an AKC Award for Canine Excellence, please visit <http://www.akc.org/news/ace/index.cfm>