



*In this Sept. 27, 2016 photo, Clallam Bay Corrections Center inmate Charles Graves greets Sky, a Pyrenees/husky-mix, during a reunion in Clallam Bay, Wash. The dog was part of a program at the prison sponsored by the Sequim, Wash.-based Welfare for Animals Guild to rehabilitate problem dogs. (Brian Harmon/The Peninsula Daily News via AP)*

By PAUL GOTTLIEB - Associated Press - Sunday, October 9, 2016

CLALLAM BAY, Wash. (AP) - Prison inmates are teaching testy dogs civility at the Clallam Bay Corrections Center.

The dogs bounded into the visit room at the mixed-custody prison for a reunion with their inmate handlers.

It was the first reunion in the five years that the Sequim-based Welfare for Animals Guild has sponsored the dog-training program, which has given more than 200 canines a new leash on life, reported the Peninsula Daily News (<http://bit.ly/2dK4KVE>).

[http://www.washingtontimes.com/multimedia/image/ap\\_inmates\\_train\\_dogs.jpg](http://www.washingtontimes.com/multimedia/image/ap_inmates_train_dogs.jpg)

There may be no better place for bite-prone animals to receive the constant care they need to break out of their own prisons, say inmates, prison officials and WAG organizers.

It's the perfect setting for dogs that need care 24/7 to let go of their fear and anger, Guild President [Barbara Brabant](#) of Sequim said.

The animals stay for weeks or months in the program - however long it takes for them to become whole, she said.

The men who train the animals learn responsibility, acquire a skill they can use outside the prison walls and see their loving touch take hold, said Clallam Bay resident [Tanja Cain](#), prison offender program coordinator, and [Correctional Unit](#) Supervisor Michelle Klepps, who grew up in Clallam Bay and lives in Forks.

"This not only changes the dog, it changes the offenders in a positive way," Klepps said.

[Brabant](#) said the animals that lit up the visit room were among the 156 adult dogs and 73 puppies whose lives were turned around by the men who call the mixed-custody facility home.

The inmates, about a dozen among the 900 at Clallam Bay, have trained daily over weeks or months - however long it takes - until the dogs pass an American Kennel Club obedience test.

The AKC will not certify inmates as dog trainers, but WAG is putting together a course under which they would be certified under WAG's auspices upon leaving prison.

The animals sleep in the inmates' cells and get taken on regular walks in a special prison yard where men hardened by circumstances and their own bad decisions dutifully scoop up their animals' poop.

While in the training program, the dogs are tethered by leashes colored red for "don't touch the animal," yellow for "ask the handler first before petting" and green for "give the dog all the love you've got."

Participants at the reunion included a dozen inmates who earned participation in the program through good behavior.

About 50 people attended, including about 35 WAG board and group members, and dog owners.

They were on the verge of giving up on their animals before the dogs adopted the inmates as their constant companions.

The dogs, accompanied by their owners, included Sky the Great Pyrenees Husky, Connor the boxer-husky and Skeeter the Chihuahua.

[http://www.washingtontimes.com/multimedia/image/ap\\_inmates\\_train\\_dogs.jpg/](http://www.washingtontimes.com/multimedia/image/ap_inmates_train_dogs.jpg/)

Skeeter was trained by Seattle resident Douglas Gallagher, 56, serving life in prison as a three-strike offender.

After Gallagher, whose third offense was robbery, took in Skeeter, he watched the tiny pup go through two days of seizures before the dog lost its fear, Gallagher said in an interview before testimonials from inmates and dog owners.

“Watching this dog reminded me of how helpless my victims were,” said Gallagher, who has rehabilitated 19 animals.

Gallagher trained another animal who was afraid of that dog toy of all dog toys - a Frisbee.

“Being in a correctional facility is unlike anything in the world,” Gallagher said.

“This has helped a lot in dealing with people, dealing with staff.”

William Friedrichs, 33, of Olympia, is serving 28 years for armed robbery, he said in an interview.

For him, the dog-training program is a path to a plateau he invoked more than once: redemption.

“I feel that through this program, I am being able to top the scales by doing so much more good,” Friedrichs said

“I’m finally creating positive stuff instead of just negative, destructive things.”

“It’s helped with my ability to communicate with others, and I’ve become more compassionate,” Friedrichs said.

“There are not a lot of jobs in here that have that.

“This is a very rewarding job in that sense.”

Most other prison jobs pay 30 cents to 42 cents an hour except for textiles-related correctional industries, where uniforms are made and inmates can earn up to \$1.70 an hour.

Inmates in the dog-training program are paid 42 cents an hour, but the wages are capped at \$55 a month for taking care of the dogs 24 hours a day.

Connor was an aggressive dog that Friedrichs said he identified with and who [Brabant](#) said “was totally not adoptable.”

It took Friedrichs three to four months to train the 85-pound animal.

“Not a bad dog, just an aggressive dog,” Friedrichs said.

“He didn’t want to fight, but it turned into a fight because he didn’t have a better way.

“I spent a lot of time to socially interact, and now he lives a full and happy life.”

Inmates can receive photos of the dogs they’ve trained after they have been returned to their owners.

Friedrichs has since seen photos of Connor playing on a beach, chasing birds, but the pictures inmates receive lack people for safety reasons, [Brabant](#) said.

Inmates don’t know where the dogs live, either.

That doesn’t faze Friedrichs, who is proud when he sees dogs he has trained living happy lives.

“You think, ‘Yeah, I did that,’” he said.

During testimonials, Friedrichs sat next to Connor’s owner, Kathy Schock of Sequim.

After Friedrichs’ tutelage, Connor “was a totally different dog,” Schock told the group.

“That’s all because of this guy here.”

Inmate Charles Graves, who trained Sky, has been in the program longer than any other inmate.

The dogs have been abandoned “just like a lot of other people,” he told the gathering.

“The dogs have taught me how to rediscover bonding again.

“I spend more time with these dogs than any person I have in my life.”

Graves recalled having a leashed dog at his side while talking to a friend over a prison phone.

Graves had to tell the dog to stop annoying him.

His friend asked who he was talking to.

“He said, ‘You got a dog? They let you have dogs in prison?’

“He said, ‘What kind of prison you in?’”

Inmate Alan Nord told the group that watching inmates and dogs interact has a positive effect on those observing their give-and-take.

“To see the dudes in this prison that are killers and whatever, they have a puppy, you see the tension in the day room drop dramatically,” he said.

Other state prisons also have dog-training programs, [Brabant](#) said, adding that Clallam Bay’s is more rigorous than others.

[Cain](#) said WAG volunteers visit every week, conduct training sessions and talk to the handlers.

Prison Superintendent Ronald Haynes said the program has a transformative impact on Clallam Bay’s inmates.

“It kind of takes them away from the prison life and gives them a purpose,” he said.

At the end of the presentation, WAG members, inmates and dog owners were urged to mingle - with a reminder that the setting for all this good cheer was a prison.

“No hugging, just handshakes,” [Brabant](#) told the gathering.

After the event the inmates, dressed in neat khaki pants and white T-shirts, returned to their daily lives while visitors waited for the locked visit-room door to open so they could collect keys and wallets secured in the waiting area near the entrance door.

The walkway outside led to an exit gate, past stacked, tubular bales of razor wire several feet away and a closer row of small signs that warned any inmates who could read the signs that if they strayed, lethal force awaited them.

[Brabant](#) said WAG and Center Valley Animal Rescue in Quilcene are starting a training program for cats that need to be socialized that’s modeled after the one for dogs.

She said three felines are already being leash- and clicker-trained at Clallam Bay by inmates in the [prison's restrictive closed-custody unit](#).

“There’s cat guys out there,” [Brabant](#) joked.

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