



# BARKALERT

FALL 2025



# THE LITTLE SHELTER WITH A BIG IMPACT

## HOW SARALAND ANIMAL SHELTER HELPS SDF SAVE LIVES

The Saraland Animal Shelter in Saraland, Alabama may be small, but it makes a big impact on its community. With only four staff members including Interim Shelter Supervisor Nadine Moseley, this small operation goes above and beyond to care for lost and abandoned pets. Although they have only 12 kennels, they often house 20 to 24 dogs at a time. Thanks to partnerships with local medical fosters and organizations like Best Friends, the shelter doesn't euthanize for space and even reached no-kill status in 2024. The staff also works hard to find homes for their animals by networking on their Facebook page, "Saraland Pets," and by placing animals with out-of-state rescues.

### A Shared Philosophy

A key part of the shelter's mission is finding the right fit for every animal, a philosophy that has made them a go-to partner for SDF. Rachel Leard, a recruiter for SDF, has worked with the Saraland shelter for years and says that the Saraland shelter really "gets it" when it comes to high-drive dogs. "They don't give up on bringing attention to potential working dogs," she said. This dedication has led two of their former residents, Gemma and Raine, to find their ideal careers.

### From Shelter Dogs to Rescuers

Gemma, a talented search dog, was an "accidental search dog," Leard explained. Gemma was scheduled for spay surgery at the clinic where Leard worked and needed a foster home post-procedure. Leard took her in and quickly discovered her incredible hunt drive. The shelter's dedicated staff helped make Gemma's journey to becoming a rescuer possible, and she now works with handler Fidel Gomez of Baja California Task Force 3 (BC-TF3). Together, they've responded to multiple missions, including missing person searches, structure collapses, and landslides.

Raine was abruptly left at the shelter's front gate by her owner, who described her as an "escape artist" and wanted nothing more to do with her. Despite the rough start, the shelter staff saw a sweet-tempered dog with a fantastic drive for toys and a love for people. Nadine Moseley saw how intently Raine played with a frisbee and reached out to Leard to evaluate her. While Raine ultimately didn't become a search dog because of her discomfort on the rubble, SDF found Raine an alternative job that she loves. Raine was placed with a wilderness handler, who she clicked with immediately, and is progressing enthusiastically through her training.

### A Testament to Dedication

The stories of Gemma and Raine are a testament to the dedication of the Saraland Animal Shelter staff. "The shelter is very invested in their animals," Leard said, "and they try their best to do their due diligence pairing adopters with pets that fit their life. They also work with dogs with behavioral challenges, treating each dog as an individual. Each dog is given their shot." It's this shared philosophy of giving every dog a chance to thrive that makes SDF's relationship with Saraland a valuable partnership, helping to save lives.

*Gemma is sponsored by Carol George and Roger Stewart.*



# TURNING INSTINCT INTO ACTION

## ZIGGY'S PATH TO SEARCH AND RESCUE

From stray dog to search dog, a remarkable transformation is often a story of second chances. For a spirited brindle bully mix named Ziggy, his journey from a Washington, D.C. animal shelter to the Search Dog Foundation proves that some dogs aren't just looking for a home; they're looking for a purpose.

Ziggy's life began like many shelter dogs. Adopted as a puppy from the Humane Rescue Alliance (HRA), he was later found as a stray, his family nowhere to be found. For a dog with tireless drive and an intense zest for life, kennel living took a heavy toll. Katie Sheerin, a Behavior & Training Specialist at HRA, describes his predicament: "Ziggy's energetic demeanor and zest for action made his life in the kennels difficult... he was hyper-fixated on certain objects such as toys or [waste] bags. This fixation...was obviously really affecting him psychologically."

### A Dog With a Purpose

But the same intense drive that made shelter life so challenging also opened the door to a new opportunity. A shelter staff member with a connection to Virginia Task Force 1 (VA-TF1) believed Ziggy might have the potential to be a search and rescue dog and reached out for help in evaluating him.

As a veterinarian and working dog handler, Jennifer Barnhard, a member of VA-TF1, was part of the team that first evaluated Ziggy. She recalls being struck by his natural confidence. "Even in a relaxed state, he was entirely at ease moving across debris," she says. "Perhaps the most naturally confident dog I have seen in that setting." Ziggy's ability to remain focused on his task, whether with a toy or with a new handler, made a powerful impression. "His on-off switch was equally impressive," Barnhard remembers. "Although he never wanted to relinquish the toy, he could settle calmly beside me and accept petting while holding it." That adaptability, combined with his enthusiasm and natural drive, marked him as an exceptional candidate for search and rescue work.

Jennifer personally recommended Ziggy to SDF, trusting we would recognize his exceptional qualities and see past breed labels. "[SDF understands] how to give dogs time to decompress, set appropriate boundaries, and teach adult dogs that may have never gotten a proper chance how actually to learn." For Jennifer, Ziggy embodies exactly what a working dog should be: "He is social with people, social with other dogs, safe to handle, and motivated most of all by playing tug with a human."

### Training a "Little Freight Train"

Ziggy was soon on his way to SDF's National Training Center, where, according to his trainers, he arrived like a "compact little freight train ready for action!" While his drive was off the charts, his manners needed work. Trainers focused on teaching him to bark for his toy instead of biting the lid of the barrel where it was hidden, and to learn to manage his boundless energy during training. "It's easy to see why stamina is not his strong suit," one trainer mused, "he gives 1,000% in every moment."

Despite these challenges, Ziggy has made impressive progress in his training, graduating from searching small barrel fields to searching contained and diffuse hides on rubble, and improving his ability to work through distractions. He also passed several skill proficiency tests, such as obedience and agility training, and his searches remain strong and efficient, whether on rubble or in a building.

### A Charismatic Ambassador

Through it all, Ziggy's lovable personality remains a constant, never failing to charm anyone he meets. Katie Sheerin remarked that when spending time with Ziggy, aside from being blown away by his potential, the VA-TF1 evaluators were "smitten with his goofy personality, big ears, and wiggly booty!" SDF Trainer Callie Heggeness describes him as the "sweetest little jetpack," who's "insane in the best way possible" but also "sweet and snuggly." SDF Trainer Hanna Irwin calls him a "little weasel" who will adorably nose your pocket for a toy, while SDF Trainer Chaise Laffoon simply says he's a "total goober" who "loves snuggles."

Ziggy's journey, made possible by a community of advocates and an environment that satisfies his needs, is a powerful testament to the value of giving shelter dogs a second chance. Concludes Jennifer Barnhard, "Ziggy is exactly the kind of dog who reminds us why these evaluations matter. With the right support, he has every quality to thrive as a partner, a lifesaver, and an ambassador for the potential in shelter dogs everywhere."

*Ziggy is sponsored by Lenny & Squiggy.*



See Ziggy in action and learn more about his journey by scanning this code with your phone's camera!



# LIFETIME CARE

## BRISEIS: AN EXTRAORDINARY JOURNEY FROM UNCERTAINTY TO PURPOSE

In Greek mythology, Briseis (pronounced Bri-Say-Is) was a princess captured during the Trojan War who subsequently faced a life of profound uncertainty. This name proved to be a fitting one for a beautiful German Shepherd whose own fate took a sudden, unpredictable turn when her owner passed away. In the wake of this tragedy, Briseis—the dog—seemed to be without a clear path forward. Fortunately, her journey set her on a path to a new life of purpose, made possible by the compassionate people who helped her along the way.

At first, Briseis was lovingly fostered by her former owner's parents in Reno, Nevada. As a retired couple coping with their grief, they found themselves overwhelmed by the task of caring for a vigorous, one-year-old German Shepherd. Determined to find Briseis a home better suited to a young dog's energy, they reached out to another family member who was a dog trainer, and she immediately recognized Briseis' potential as a working dog candidate. With guidance from SDF, Briseis was evaluated and approved to join the SDF pack. Thanks to two dedicated volunteer pilots, she boarded a flight to Santa Paula on New Year's Eve, ready to begin a new year and a new chapter.

On the SDF campus, Briseis proved to be a spitfire with a personality big enough for several dogs. Her trainers were captivated by her "fiery, spicy" spirit and intense focus. SDF Trainer Chaise Laffoon described her as "very attentive" to her humans, always looking for their direction, adding that Briseis "will stare into your soul, seemingly saying, 'show me what to do!'"

While Briseis showed great enthusiasm for her training and excelled at searching on flat ground, she displayed notable discomfort on rubble, a crucial skill for disaster search dogs. As a result, her path required a slight adjustment, and SDF set out to find a career that would excite her and fulfill her needs.

### A New Calling in the Wilderness

Just as Briseis was looking for a new career, Terri Moser, a wilderness handler from Colorado, was looking for a new partner. Having recently lost her own search dog, Terri was visiting Santa Monica and, through a friend, learned about SDF. While browsing a pet adoption website, she ran across Briseis' listing by SDF, and knew she had to meet this magnificent Shepherd girl.





Terri visited the SDF campus, spent some time getting to know Briseis, and after a second visit, committed to adopting her. Terri's husband drove out from Colorado with their other dog so the whole family could meet and finalize the adoption. Terri later returned to participate in one of our intensive handler training sessions,

where SDF Trainer Hanna Irwin observed that after only a few weeks, she could tell that Briseis was already "very bonded" with Terri. Terri took advantage of the opportunity to train with Briseis on SDF's campus, acquiring new skills and knowledge that she could apply to future wilderness missions.

Currently, Briseis is settling into her new home and thriving in her new life with the Moser family. They take her on frequent hikes and have discovered that she loves to swim, taking full advantage of the nearby lake.

Terri and Briseis also continue to train together, practicing small searches. While SDF initially trained Briseis to bark an alert when finding a victim, wilderness search teams often prefer a "recall/refind." In this method, the search dog finds the victim, returns to the handler, and then leads the handler back to the victim's location. Terri is working with Briseis to build her recall/refind so they can work effectively as a team to locate the missing, even in challenging conditions like low visibility or dense brush.

**Forging a New Path in Colorado**

Once certified, Briseis and Terri will be the first wilderness canine team in their county, a vital new resource for their Colorado community. Because there are no local canine teams to join for regular training, Terri has to be proactive, traveling to seminars and trainings to keep their skills sharp. They hope to become certified through Search and Rescue Dogs of the United States (SARDUS) and travel an hour from their home to train with this group once a month. Terri is committed to the road ahead and

confident in Briseis' potential, observing, "Briseis is a smart dog who wants to work."

Upon hearing the story of Briseis' former family and their exceptional efforts to find her the perfect home, Terri was moved to reach out. She now keeps them updated on Briseis' new life and her progress in her new career.

While they still grieve their profound loss, the family finds comfort and peace knowing that Briseis' journey—which began with a tragedy and an uncertain fate—led to a loving and purposeful life.



*Interested in adopting one of our Lifetime Care dogs? Scan to learn more!*



# BEYOND RESCUE

## THE VITAL ROLE OF HUMAN REMAINS DETECTION DOGS IN DISASTER SEARCH

From the scorched landscapes of Southern California to the flood-ravaged plains of Central Texas, recent events have underscored a crucial and often overlooked need in disaster response: Human Remains Detection (HRD) canine teams. These highly specialized teams perform a vital service: providing answers amidst chaos to desperate loved ones. While SDF's live-find program has been helping to save lives since 1996, in recent years, we have also focused on expanding our training of HRD canines, who are essential when the mission shifts from rescue to recovery.

Human Remains Detection is a demanding discipline that requires exceptional precision from both the canine and the handler. Training for this work is uniquely complex due to the wide range of human scent types, which vary depending on the environment and the time since death. These factors can make the dog's ability to discriminate between scents incredibly challenging, which is why it is critical to train search dogs specifically for this purpose.

### Real-World Impact

The need for properly trained HRD teams was on full display during deployments to two distinct incidents in recent months. When a series of catastrophic wildfires tore through Los Angeles County, SDF-trained HRD team Jon Munguia and Search Dog Clifford were among the first responders. Working alongside teammates, they provided a critical search capability that brought resolution to affected communities.

The team was called on again during destructive flooding in Central Texas. As the Guadalupe River left entire communities devastated, Jon Munguia and Clifford deployed once more, joined by their fellow HRD teammates Celina Serrano and Search Dog Prentiss. These two teams were part of a massive,

coordinated effort involving more than 30 canine teams from the U.S. and Mexico, who, for 18 grueling days, provided essential assistance in locating all those who were missing or trapped by debris.



### Preparing for Future Disasters

The rapid response of these teams to two very different disasters—a fast-moving wildfire and a powerful flood—highlights why SDF is investing in advanced HRD training to ensure our teams are ready. We're not only enhancing the skills of current teams, but also pairing newly trained HRD dogs with first responders to build a stronger, more responsive network.

These specially trained teams fulfill a need in disaster response that is as much about compassion as it is about skill, bringing closure to families in the most difficult moments by helping loved ones who didn't survive and offering families a path toward healing. By incorporating HRD training into our disaster

training program, we ensure that SDF teams can effectively serve communities throughout every phase of a disaster, from the first moments of rescue to the final stages of recovery.

SDF currently has four HRD teams: Nick Bartel & Six, Jon Munguia & Clifford, Ed Ruiz & Harper, and Mandy Tisdale & Paul, who have deployed to 13 disasters and counting.

*Six is sponsored by The Joel & Dena Gambord Family.*

*Harper is sponsored by Nanci Denney Bergin and an Anonymous donor.*

*Paul is named in honor of Paul Jolly of Petco Love.*



# NEW SEARCH TEAMS PAIRED

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR NEWEST TEAMS, PAIRED BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE 30, 2025, WHO HAVE WORKED TIRELESSLY TO DEVELOP THE SKILLS AND TEAMWORK NEEDED TO FORM SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS. DURING THEIR CAREERS TOGETHER, THEY WILL CONTINUE TO DEDICATE THEMSELVES TO ADVANCING THEIR TRAINING AND STRENGTHENING THEIR BONDS TO BE READY TO PROVIDE VITAL SUPPORT TO COMMUNITIES WHEN CALLED UPON.



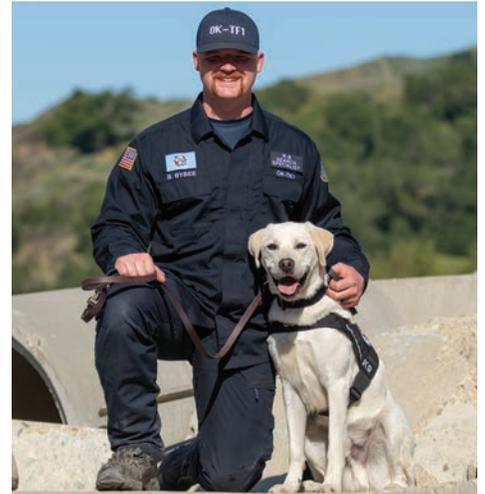
**AUSTIN ADDINGTON & RAYA**

Tulsa Fire  
Oklahoma Task Force 1  
Recruited from a previous home  
Transported by Four-Legged Kids Bus  
Sponsored by Arc Aspicio, The William and Joanne Miller Charitable Trust, The Flag & Flower Initiative by Ruth and William Bloom's Family Foundation



**CORY BALDOVIN & WEBBER**

Los Angeles County Fire  
California Task Force 2  
Recruited from a previous home  
Transported by Four-Legged Kids Bus  
Sponsored by Carol George and Roger Stewart, Walt and Faith Kalback, Rosanne Crane



**BROCK BYBEE & CAM**

Tulsa Fire  
Oklahoma Task Force 1  
Recruited from Delaware Valley  
Golden Retriever Rescue  
Transported by Four-Legged Kids Bus  
Sponsored by Jill Bee and Loren Glasser, Alice and David Lewin



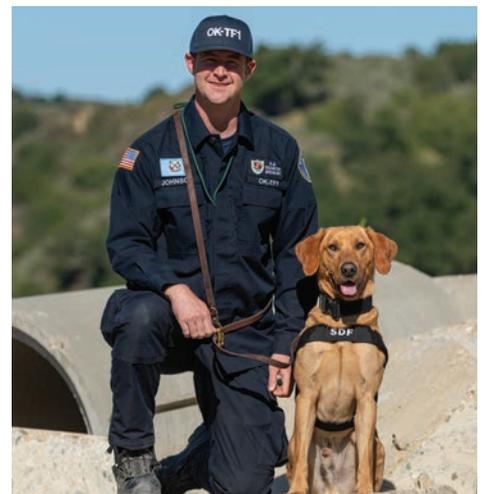
**JUSTIN ENSOR & BATMAN**

Sacramento Metro Fire  
California Task Force 7  
Recruited from Thrive Animal Rescue  
Sponsored by The William and Joanne Miller Charitable Trust, The Sandra Trinka Revocable Trust represented by Theresa McConville



**LOUIS GUDIEL & JOEY**

Los Angeles County Fire  
California Task Force 2  
Recruited from a previous home  
Transported by Angel Flight West  
Sponsored by Tracy and Rascal



**NATHAN JOHNSON & DINO**

Oklahoma City Fire  
Oklahoma Task Force 1  
Donated by Robin Greubel



**JUSTIN QUARISA & RUFFLES**

Cosumnes Fire  
California Task Force 7  
Recruited from All Kind Animal Initiative & Bitter Root  
Humane Association  
Transported by Four-Legged Kids Bus  
Sponsored by Julie Croker



**KEATON ROGERS & BUBBA**

Oklahoma City Fire  
Oklahoma Task Force 1  
Donated by Bryon Hahn and  
South Dakota Canine Center  
Transported by Coble's Cross Country Pet Transport  
Sponsored by Bubba's Anonymous  
Sponsor Cheerleaders



**DUSHONE ROMAN & TOBY**

Los Angeles County Fire  
California Task Force 2  
Recruited from a previous home  
Transported by Angel Flight West  
Sponsored by Linda Heizer Seaman, Paul W. Kurzeka,  
J & H Engineering General Contractors, Inc.



# CERTIFICATIONS

EVERY THREE YEARS, EACH TEAM MUST PASS AN EVALUATION TO REMAIN ACTIVE WITH THEIR TASK FORCE. THESE ASSESSMENTS TEST THEIR MASTERY OF ESSENTIAL SKILLS AND THEIR ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH THEIR PARTNERS. WE ARE INCREDIBLY PROUD OF THESE TEAMS FOR THEIR DEDICATION TO THEIR TRAINING, THEIR DEVOTION TO THEIR CANINE PARTNERS, AND THEIR DEEP COMMITMENT TO PROTECTING THEIR COMMUNITIES.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THESE TEAMS ON THEIR RECENT CERTIFICATIONS!



**CHAD ARBERG & CORY**

Re-certification: April 2025  
San Diego Fire-Rescue  
California Task Force 8  
Recruited from One Albuquerque Animal Welfare  
Named in Memory of Cory Iverson



**IVAN ARREDONDO & GIZMO**

Certification: February 2025  
San Diego Fire-Rescue  
California Task Force 8  
Recruited from Homeward Bound Golden Retriever  
Rescue & Sanctuary  
Transported by Angel Flight West  
Sponsored by Farmers Insurance, Anonymous



**TRACY DARLING & ROKA**

Certification: January 2025  
California Regional Task Force 7  
Recruited from a previous home  
Transported by Angel Flight West  
Sponsored by Stephen and Kathleen Davis



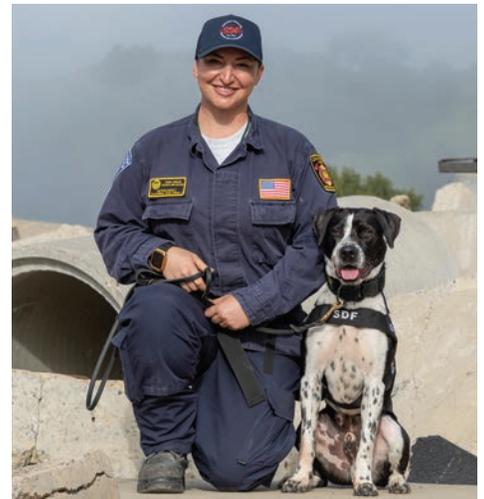
**ARBY FIELDS & GRETA**

Certification: February 2025  
Los Angeles County Fire  
California Task Force 2  
Recruited from Humane Society of Truckee-Tahoe  
Transported by Angel Flight West  
Sponsored by Jeff Moscarel and Valerie Tesauo, The  
Sandra Trinkka Trust represented by Theresa McConville



**SHAWN HALL & MANION**

Re-certification: April 2025  
Virginia Task Force 2  
Recruited from Warrior Canine Connection  
Transported by Puppies In Flight  
Sponsored by Nanci Denney Bergin, Anonymous Donor  
Named in Memory of 1<sup>st</sup> LT Travis Manion, USMC



**JACY HERNANDEZ & MASON**

Certification: February 2025  
Los Angeles City Fire  
California Task Force 1  
Recruited from Aberdeen Area Humane Society  
and South Dakota Canine Center  
Transported by Angel Flight West,  
Four-Legged Kids Bus, Pilots N Paws  
Sponsored by Jill Bee and Loren Glasser



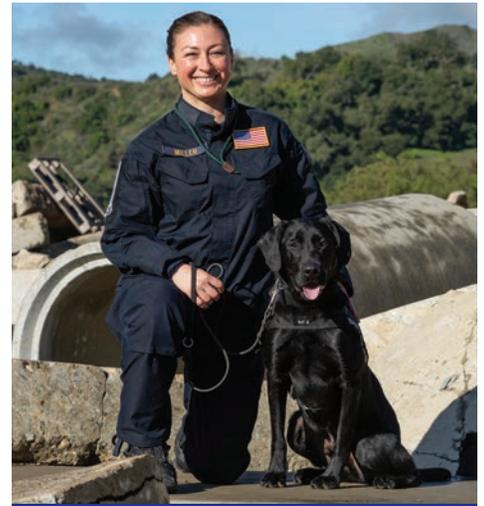
**JASON JASGUR & RUFFY**

Re-certification: February 2025  
Los Angeles City Fire  
California Task Force 1  
Recruited from a previous home  
Sponsored by Pat Snyder



**TRINITY MAURER & GOLDIE**

Certification: April 2025  
Virginia Task Force 2  
Recruited from a previous home  
Transported by Four-Legged Kids Bus  
Sponsored by Julie Croker



**ALEXIS MILLER & HAWTHORNE**

Certification: February 2025  
Los Angeles County Fire  
California Task Force 2  
Donated by Kaiser K9, Inc.  
Sponsored by Pat Snyder



**GARRETH MILLER & REVA**

Re-certification: February 2025  
San Francisco Fire  
California Task Force 3  
Recruited from Outreach Pawsabilities, Inc.  
Sponsored by Beth and Greg Apke,  
Jill Bee and Loren Glasser  
Named in Memory of Reva Ferguson



**JULIE PADEFORD & RICOCHET**

Re-certification: February 2025  
California Task Force 4



**KRISTINE PRIEBE & EMMETT**

Certification: February 2025  
Los Angeles City Fire  
California Task Force 1  
Recruited from Southern Oregon Humane Society  
Transported by Angel Flight West  
Sponsored by M. Lawrence Lallande and  
Nicole Lallande, Marnie, John, and Jesse Cahill,  
Anonymous



# CERTIFICATIONS



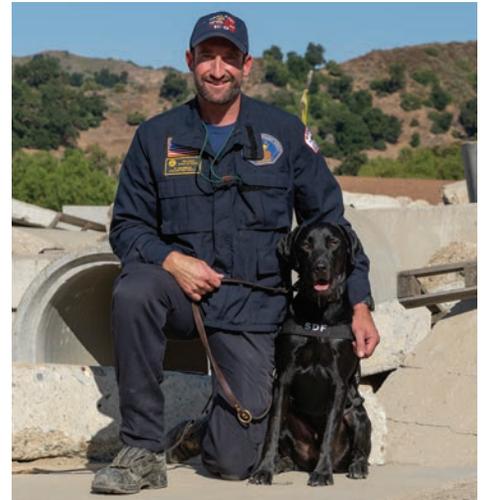
**PAUL SANDIGO & CASSIE**

Re-certification: February 2025  
San Francisco Fire  
California Task Force 3  
Recruited from a previous home



**DANIEL THOMAS & CHESTER**

Re-certification: April 2025  
Chula Vista Fire  
California Task Force 8  
Recruited from Burbank Animal Shelter  
Sponsored by Julie Croker



**STEVE THOMPSON & TEX**

Certification: February 2025  
Vallejo Fire  
California Task Force 4  
Recruited from South Utah Valley Animal Shelter  
Transported by Angel Flight West  
Sponsored by Beth and Greg Apke,  
Jill Bee and Loren Glasser



**MANDY TISDALE & PAUL**

Re-certification: January 2025  
California Regional Task Force 7  
Recruited from Charleston Animal Society  
Named in honor of Paul Jolly of the Petco Foundation



**BILLY WALKENHORST & VICTOR**

Re-certification: February 2025  
Santee Fire  
California Task Force 8  
Recruited from Haven Humane Society  
Sponsored by Pat Snyder



# RETIREMENTS

AS THEY CONCLUDE THEIR DISTINGUISHED CAREERS, WE OFFER OUR HEARTFELT THANKS TO THESE INCREDIBLE TEAMS WHOSE DEDICATION AND SERVICE HAVE MADE A LASTING IMPACT. WE WISH THEM A HAPPY AND FULFILLING RETIREMENT, FILLED WITH JOY, RELAXATION, AND CHERISHED MOMENTS WITH THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS.



**FLYER**

**Years of Service: 2018-2025**

Handler: Laura Denison  
Nebraska Task Force 1  
Recruited from Haven Humane Society  
Sponsored by The Joel and Dena Gambord Family



**HOPPER**

**Years of Service: 2019-2025**

Handler: Linda D'Orsi  
Chula Vista Fire  
California Task Force 8  
Sponsored by Westlake Women's Club - CFWC,  
The Joel and Dena Gambord Family



**JAX**

**Years of Service: 2020-2025**

Handler: Karen Meadows  
Virginia Task Force 2  
Recruited from Humane Society of Utah  
Sponsored by Lenny & Squiggy



**JOSIE**

**Years of Service: 2015-2025**

Handler: Brandon Budd  
Sacramento Fire  
California Task Force 7  
Recruited from Lassen County Animal Shelter  
Sponsored by Susan Kemper and Cam Warren

# RAINBOW BRIDGE

OUR CANINE PARTNERS MAY ONLY BE WITH US FOR A SEASON, BUT THE IMPRINT THEY LEAVE ON OUR HEARTS LASTS A LIFETIME. WE ARE PROUD TO HONOR THESE EXTRAORDINARY DOGS ON OUR CANINE MEMORIAL WALL AS A TRIBUTE TO THEIR YEARS OF DEDICATED SERVICE, THE INDELIBLE MARK THEY LEFT ON COUNTLESS LIVES, AND THE PROFOUND LOVE THEY BROUGHT INTO OUR WORLD.



**DECKER**

**December 6, 2010 – July 31, 2025**

Handler: Brent Brainard  
San Diego Fire-Rescue  
California Task Force 8  
Recruited from Sioux Falls Area Humane Society  
Recruited by South Dakota Canine Center  
Sponsored by Janet Eaton



**EVA**

**February 18, 2012 – January 19, 2025**

Handler: Manny Sampang  
Los Angeles County Fire  
California Task Force 2  
Donated by Heather Smith  
Sponsored by Otilia and Emma Diaz



**GENO**

**March 13, 2017 - June 16, 2025**

Handler: Sean Quigley  
Los Angeles County Fire  
California Task Force 2





**MERLIN**

**March 27, 2013 - February 5, 2025**

Handler: Frankie Grant  
Unified Fire Authority  
Utah Task Force 1

Recruited from Golden Gate Labrador Retriever Rescue  
Sponsored by Carol Marengo, Pat Snyder



**ROCKY**

**November 18, 2010 - January 16, 2025**

Handler: Robert Grant  
Plano Fire-Rescue  
Texas Task Forces 1 & 2

Donated by the May Family  
Sponsored by Kathi and Steve Levine



**TANNER**

**December 27, 2010 - February 13, 2025**

Handler: Maddie Warner  
Weber Fire District  
Utah Task Force 1

Recruited from Golden Gate Labrador Retriever Rescue  
Named in Honor of Steven Tanner Burhoe, Jr.





6800 Wheeler Canyon Road  
Santa Paula | CA 93060  
888.459.4376  
[www.searchdogfoundation.org](http://www.searchdogfoundation.org)



**Thank you  
for being *Part of the Search!***