



SERVICE DOGS OF VIRGINIA
creating independence through human-canine partnerships



A Core Program of the Defense & Veteran's Brain Injury Center



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA
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Contact: Susanne Kogut
703-623-9379
director@caspca.org

SPCA Service Dog Helps Area Veterans at Virginia NeuroCare!



Charlottesville, Virginia: Cousteau's story is incredible in so many ways – one is the way he brought three of our area's non-profit agencies together – resulting in a new life for one dog and help for a group of veterans. Cousteau's story begins at the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA where his owner brought in a litter of six-week old pups that he could not keep. Cousteau's future was in the hands of the SPCA, whose task was to care for him and find him a good home.

A representative from Service Dogs of Virginia came to the SPCA searching for a puppy that may possess the attributes of a service dog. Cousteau showed good potential and was admitted to the Service Dogs training program. Under the direction of Peggy Law, over the years Cousteau progressed and developed so well that he was ready to become a service to others.

Cousteau was placed to work at the community re-integration program at Virginia NeuroCare (VANC). Under the supervision of Occupational Therapist Kellie Doolittle, Cousteau has been a great addition to the therapy department at VANC and has benefited the soldiers in many ways. Cousteau does everything from teaching appropriate public interactions to bringing up the morale of soldiers when they are having a bad day. Cousteau has his own cognitive group therapy sessions that he leads, where he uses his own training to re-teach the clients higher level cognitive functions like sequencing, timing, and planning. Cousteau also likes to learn new tricks, and the soldiers have taught him how to salute and do an “army crawl”. Cousteau now has a life around so many loving people, and he returns that love as he is always around to greet staff and clients with vigor, a close lean, or a head snuggled in between your arms. On this day, as we remember the dedication of our veterans, we also celebrate the work of Cousteau and his service to our veterans.

The mission of the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA is to provide a safe and nurturing environment for the lost, abandoned, and homeless animals of the City of Charlottesville and the County of Albemarle and to increase the number of these animals being placed in appropriate, loving, and permanent homes through adoptions, foster care, and outreach, and to set a standard of excellence and leadership in shelter animal care, humane education, and progressive animal welfare programs.

Service Dogs of Virginia, Inc. raises, trains, and places dogs to assist people with disabilities. Highly trained dogs perform a wealth of tasks that allow greater personal freedom and independence. It is based in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Virginia NeuroCare is a non-profit Charlottesville based provider of brain injury services, and a partner of the Defense and Veteran’s Brain Injury Center (DVBIC). Virginia NeuroCare/DVBIC is a partner of Mentor ABI, which provides services to civilians with brain injuries.

For more information about the SPCA, call 434-973-5959 or visit the SPCA website at www.caspca.org. For more information about Service Dogs of Virginia, call 434-295-9503 or visit their website at www.servicedogsva.org. For more information about Virginia NeuroCare or the Defense and Veteran’s Brain Injury Center, call 434-985-5218 or visit their websites at www.vanc.org and www.DVBIC.org.

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