SPCA Service Dog Receives Companion Animal Award

Charlottesville, Virginia—Cousteau, a Charlottesville SPCA dog turned service dog, has received the Companion Animal Award from the Virginia Federation of Humane Societies. The award was presented at their annual conference last Friday in Virginia Beach.

The Companion Animal Award was established to honor an adopted animal that has made a tremendous contribution within our lives. The Virginia Federation of Humane Societies honors those animals that exemplify the strength and value of the human-animal bond and that have served their community through saving or preserving human life.

Service Dogs of Virginia adopted Cousteau from the Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA and trained him to be a facility dog 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.

Service Dogs of Virginia is a 501(c)(3) organization based in Charlottesville. Their mission is to raise and train exceptional dogs and match them with individuals with disabilities to create greater independence.

The Charlottesville-Albemarle SPCA is a nonprofit animal welfare organization that provides a safe
environment for the lost, abandoned, and homeless animals of Charlottesville and Albemarle County and places them in good homes. We strive to set a standard of excellence and leadership in animal care, humane education, and progressive animal welfare programs.

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 Service Dogs of Virginia, visit their website at www.servicedogsva.org. For more information about the SPCA, visit their website at www.caspca.org. For more information about Virginia NeuroCare or the Defense and Veteran’s Brain Injury Center or visit their websites at www.vanc.org and www.DVBIC.org.

Photos from the awards luncheon are available at http://is.gd/b5EGj.

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