

THURMONT POLICE DEPARTMENT

GENERAL ORDER	Date Issued: 2/20/2024	Effective Date: 2/20/2024	Order No: Chapter 30.4
Authority: Chief of Police D.G. Armstrong		Manual Page No:	
Subject: Wags for Hope- Thurmont Police Department Partnership		Replaces Page No:	
Accreditation Standard: Chapter	Distribution: ALL	Amends:	Number of Pages: 5
Related Documents:		Rescinds:	

This Directive is for internal use only, and other than as contraindicated here this Directive does not create or enlarge this Department's, governmental entity's, any of this Department's officers, and/or any other entities' civil, criminal, and/or other accountability in any way. This Directive is not to be construed as the creation of a standard of safety or care in any sense, with respect to any complaint, demand for settlement, or any other form of grievance, litigation, and/or other action. Deviations from this Directive, if substantiated, can only form the basis for intra-Departmental administrative action(s) (including discipline and/or termination).

I. PURPOSE:

To describe the Department’s working relationship with Wags for Hope and give guidelines to both the members of the Department and members of Wags for Hope to adhere to while participating in this program.

II. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Thurmont Police Department to establish close ties with the community in the development of joint programs for crime prevention. Our goal is to foster an environment where community involvement is emphasized in the pursuit of a mutually enriching relationship with all the benefits thus derived from the collaboration between community members. The Thurmont Police Department will commit human and material resources to develop the WAGS program with community involvement thus contributing to the quality of life in Thurmont.

III. DEFINITIONS:

WAGS FOR HOPE: Wags for Hope is a non-profit organization that provides volunteers’ pets to bring joy to the lives of others. They visit Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Facilities, Hospitals, and Hospice. In addition, they supply local libraries and schools with certified R.E.A.D. teams, who are using their animals as a conduit to help improve the literacy skills of the children in our community. They aspire to be a “one stop shopping” organization supplying animal visitations for therapy purposes needed in Frederick, MD and the surrounding areas.

THERAPY DOG: Therapy dogs accompany their owners to various facilities where they are invited to provide comfort and support to people in need, such as hospitals, nursing homes, schools, hospices, libraries, and socialization skills. They undergo training and evaluations to ensure they handle different environments and interact positively with people of all ages and backgrounds. They are comfortable with being touched and remain calm in potentially stressful situations. Therapy dogs provide emotional support, comfort, and companionship, helping to reduce anxiety and loneliness, and improve overall well-being.

Therapy dog handler: A therapy dog handler is the trainer who accompanies the therapy dog during visits to various facilities. The handler is responsible for ensuring the dog behaves appropriately, follows commands, and interacts positively with the individuals they are visiting. They often facilitate interactions between the dog and those they are providing therapy to, while also ensuring the safety and well-being of both the dog and people they are visiting.

TPD Community Liaison: The member of the Thurmont Police Department, designated by the Deputy Chief of Police, to facilitate this program and relay information between TPD and Wags for Hope.

IV. OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this partnership agreement are to: Place well-trained, certified, and insured Wags for Hope therapy dog teams in programs and in circumstances that provide comfort and reduce stress through the power of the canine-human relationship.

Collaborative Goal #1: The Thurmont Police Department is dedicated to serving the community within the corporate limits of the Town of Thurmont. Through this collaborative agreement with Wags for Hope, we will increase positive presence and stress-reductive interaction with all the people we serve.

Collaborative Goal #2: The Thurmont Police Department's vision states, "We are responsible and accountable to each other as well as the public we serve. We believe in the concept of continuous improvement in all our endeavors, always striving to be the best we can be."

Collaborative Goal #3: Strengthen connections with the public that we serve. Through this innovative partnership, we communicate that the well-being of the citizens of Thurmont is of utmost importance and therapy dog teams will be mobilized to create connections and bring comfort in times of hardship or crisis.

V. PROCEDURE:

The Thurmont Police will enter into a limited partnership with Wags for Hope. The partnership declaration will be reviewed on an annual basis. The partnership may be dissolved by the TPD or by Wags for Hope at any time with or without cause by either party.

A. Responsibilities:

1. TPD Community Liaison

- a. Will maintain a working relationship with Wags for Hope, assuring they maintain their current quality standards for both Dogs and Handlers.
- b. Will track all activities in which Wags for Hope and TPD are jointly involved in; to include dates, activities, number of personnel and dogs involved.
- c. Will share this information with the Deputy Chief of Police on a quarterly basis for review.
- d. Will immediately report any incidents, injuries, or adverse contact between the dogs and the community to the Deputy Chief of Police.
- e. Will take requests from the community for participation in this program, or requests from Wags for Hope to do community involvement on behalf of this agreement, to the Deputy Chief of Police for approval.

2. Deputy Chief of Police

- a. Will oversee the implementation of the program.
- b. Will annually review and update TPD's MOU with Wages for Hope
- c. Will work with the TPD Community Liaison in the planning of community events that involve TPD and Wages for Hope working under this agreement.
- d. Will have the final decision, based on the needs of the Department, as to which events the TPD will participate in.
- e. Will receive quarterly reports from the Community Liaison and will track and compile an annual report to be shared with the TPD Office Manager for inclusion in the TPD Annual Community Policing Report.

3. Wags for Hope volunteers will provide:
 - a. Therapy dog team visits during community outreach events and activities, including but not limited to, National Night Out and other community events whereby the Thurmont Police Department is present with the due purpose of community engagement.
 - b. Stress relief visits for officers and staff of the Thurmont Police Department.
 - c. Support for community members and families who may benefit from specialized therapy dog visits at the discretion and invitation of the Thurmont Police Department.
 - d. Crisis visits, that are conducted one therapy dog team at a time or within small groups. These visits will vary due to the nature, scope, and time of the event. The need will be communicated to Wags for Hope facility coordinators and co-presidents through the designated TPD Community Liaison.
 - e. A Certificate of Insurance showing that Wags for Hope therapy dog teams are an insured entity.

4. The Thurmont Police Department will provide:
 - a. Any paperwork necessary to ensure that the agreement is carried out in the best interest of both parties in such a way that the collaboration is mutually beneficial.
 - b. Wags for Hope contact information and ensure visit requests are handled through the TPD Community Liaison.
 - c. Opportunities for therapy dog teams to attend events, examples of such events would be National Night Out, Frederick County Public Schools, Frederick County Public Libraries, Frederick County Health Department events, Hospitals, and Nursing/Assisted living facilities (public and private).
 - d. Under the direction and supervision of command staff, a member of the Thurmont Police Department, who is a therapy dog handler, may utilize any one of their therapy dogs, to contribute to the positive work environment and also represent the collaborative work between Wags for Hope and the Thurmont Police Department during the work day so long as the presence of a therapy dog is deemed to contribute to the vision, mission and work outcomes of the department.

ATTACHMENTS:

DOCUMENT DATES:

Amended Date:

Review Date:

Review Date:

Review Date:

Rescinds:

Order Written By: Lt. J.L. Morales

Order Edited and Approved By: Chief D.G. Armstrong

Accreditation Standards Included in this Order

CHAPTER