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**FIVE PLYMOUTH COUNTY COMFORT DOGS COMPLETE FRIENDLY
FIND/TRACKING TRAINING**

BROCKTON – Five K9 members of the Plymouth County Comfort Dogs Program have completed training to assist their police departments in locating vulnerable, at-risk individuals who have wandered off and are missing, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy J. Cruz has announced.

On August 1, participating dogs successfully completed six weeks of Friendly Find training with Charlie Young at Professional Canine Services in Middleborough.

Friendly Find training is specialized, compassionate training for dogs tracking vulnerable, at-risk individuals who may be lost or wandering as a result of various cognitive conditions.

“Every life is precious, and every moment counts, especially when searching for a vulnerable person that has gone missing,” DA Cruz said. “With this training completed, these comfort dogs now have a reliable method to quickly locate missing individuals and assist to prevent potentially dangerous situations and reduce the strain on local law enforcement resources. The Friendly Find/Tracking training provides invaluable peace of mind to families, caregivers, and communities.”

Members of the Plymouth County Comfort Dogs Program who completed training are:

- Plympton Police Officer Cam Broderick and K9 Aggie
- Pembroke Police Officer MaryBeth Simmons and K9 Sasha
- Scituate Police Officer Taylor Billings and K9 Blue
- Wareham Police Officer Karl Baptiste and K9 Lexi
- Whitman Police Sgt. Kevin Harrington and K9 Nola

The training allows for dogs to use their exceptional scent detection abilities in a gentle, non-intimidating manner to help find people with autism spectrum disorders,

seniors experiencing dementia or Alzheimer's disease, individuals with developmental disabilities, or anyone at risk of becoming disoriented or lost. The dogs are specifically trained for compassionate tracking, not for apprehending suspects or aggressive pursuits.

Pembroke Police Chief Richard G. MacDonald said, “We’re proud to announce that Sasha and Officer Simmons have recently completed the Friendly Find K9 tracking program. Unlike criminal tracking programs, Friendly Find focuses solely on non-criminal, emergency situations where locating a person quickly can be critical to their safety and well-being. In these moments, time is of the essence, and Sasha provides our department – and neighboring agencies – with an incredibly valuable resource. With the growing likelihood of missing person incidents, Sasha’s unique capabilities will greatly enhance our ability to respond rapidly and effectively during these emergencies. We thank Officer Simmons and Sasha for their commitment to protecting the most vulnerable members of our community.”

Whitman Police Chief Timothy Hanlon said, “As the Chief of the Whitman Police Department, as well as the Control Chief for SEMLEC Search and Rescue, I realize the benefits of having Nola specially trained in Friendly Find. In addition to being a complete success as our Comfort Canine team, Sgt. Kevin Harrington and Nola now have the ability to track and locate persons who go missing. Sgt. Harrington and Nola have been a great addition to the department during community events, or when a crisis occurs and compassion is necessary to begin the healing process. The Friendly Find training unlocked additional capabilities that Nola always had but weren’t developed. I appreciate the vision District Attorney Cruz followed by providing grants and training to make the Comfort Dogs program successful in Whitman and across Plymouth County.”

Scituate Police Chief Mark Thompson said, “The Scituate Police Department is incredibly grateful to have Officer Billings and K9 Blue participate in the Friendly Find training. Having this capability immediately available within our community is tremendously beneficial – especially as we continue to see an increase in cases involving lost or missing individuals among our vulnerable populations. The consistency of the training – both in methods and procedures – ensures that they can seamlessly integrate with other local and regional K9 teams, ultimately providing a higher level of service to our community and the region. Being able to respond quickly, effectively, and compassionately is a top priority, and this training and program directly support and fulfill that mission.”

Plympton Police Chief Matthew Ahl said, “Officer Cameron Broderick and K-9 Aggie were chosen for the six-week comprehension safe search training provided by DA Cruz’s trainers and funding source. This safe search training for K-9 Aggie and Officer Broderick will be an invaluable asset to our community and a resource to surrounding communities. Aggie’s certification in safe search adds an important layer of utility to her role as a comfort dog. Safe search training means she is conditioned to calmly and methodically search public spaces in a non-threatening, people-friendly manner. Unlike a traditional patrol or narcotics K9, Aggie’s training is designed to reassure rather than intimidate — allowing her to assist in searches for missing persons, sweep areas during

safety checks, scan areas for personal items, or support drills and real incidents where a non-intrusive search presence is appropriate. This makes her uniquely suited for environments such as schools, public events, or emergency calls where an individual has wandered off and a comfort dog's calming influence is needed but an added layer of security is also available. By combining her therapeutic skill set with her ability to safely and reliably assist in searches, Aggie bridges the gap between emotional support and practical safety operations, reinforcing trust while quietly boosting preparedness. Thank you again to DA Cruz for your continued support to the Plympton Police Department and our Law Enforcement partners."

Wareham Police Chief Walter W. Correia, Jr. said, "Juvenile Detective Karl Baptiste and his partner K9 Lexi represent the very best of community-centered policing in Wareham. Since joining our department as part of the Plymouth County Comfort Dog Program, Lexi has become an invaluable asset, providing emotional support and stress relief to our students in Wareham Public Schools, offering comfort to our officers during challenging times, and creating meaningful connections with citizens at community events. Now, with Detective Baptiste and Lexi's recent completion of the specialized 'Friendly Find' tracking training sponsored by District Attorney Tim Cruz, our program has reached an even higher level of service to the Wareham community."