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James M. Biernat Jr., Chief Judge
16th Judicial Circuit Court,
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News



For Immediate Release

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Juvenile Court Youth and Shelter Dogs Working Together

Macomb County Circuit Court will celebrate with court involved youth and Macomb County Animal Control shelter dogs at the [Teacher's Pet graduation ceremony](#) to be held on Thursday, February 11, 2016 at 4:30pm at Washington Elementary School, 196 N Rose Street, Mount Clemens, Michigan.

Teacher's Pet is an intervention program that pairs at risk youth with hard-to-adopt shelter dogs. The program is a multi-week educational series in positive, reward-based training and behavior modification in an effort to make the dogs more adoptable.

"Shelter life is stressful on dogs. They require physical and mental stimulation as a part of their enrichment process and partnering with Teacher's Pet helps us to do that with some of our harder-to-adopt dogs," said Jeff Randazzo, Chief Animal Control Officer and Director of Macomb County Animal Control. "We notice a big difference in demeanor of the dogs in the program. They sleep better, they bark less, and are less anxious while they are in the program, which increases their chances of being adopted. We value the partnership we have with Teacher's Pet and are thankful for the hard work on the parts of the staff and youth in the program."

The dogs are not the only ones who benefit. Youth involved in the program are able to experience empathy, gain patience, and improve coping skills. They also learn about responsible pet ownership and humane treatment of animals.

According to JP, who is a program graduate, "I learned that I am just like the dogs. I'm from a tough background and I really don't trust people, but I'm getting better at it. I really do love the dogs and love to see them become a better dog, just like I am becoming a better person."

"This valuable partnership between the Court and the Macomb County Animal Shelter through the Teacher's Pet program provides a great opportunity for court involved youth to give back to their community," said Chief Judge James Biernat, Jr.

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