School Aids Injured K9 Officers

Not many patients are transported to the veterinary hospital by ambulance. As a matter of fact, none ever had before. So it was odd to see a German shepherd arrive in one last spring. With several police officers in tow, it was clear something was unique about this dog. Hit by a car while attempting to apprehend a suspect during his job with the City of Woodland Police Department (WPD), K9 Officer Peydro was in critical condition when he was rushed into the emergency room. About a dozen members of the WPD anxiously sat in the waiting room.

Luckily for Peydro, he was in the hands of some of the best emergency veterinarians and neurosurgeons available. Equally fortunate for him, the school had recently established the Faithful Partner Fund (FPF) to assist with the medical costs of treating K9 officers, as well as search and rescue dogs, injured in the line of duty. In critical instances like Peydro’s, medical expenses can escalate into the tens of thousands. The majority of those medical costs are often borne by the K9 officer’s handler and/or from contributions by the officer’s unit. The school is trying to ease that burden on police departments with the fund.

Thanks to many donors, including a lead gift from the Edward E. Hills Fund, the FPF has grown in the year and a half since its inception. With promotional and awareness programs such as the Labor Day Races and Faithful Partner Ceremony, the community is recognizing the vital role that K9 law enforcement officers and search and rescue dogs play in society.

The hospital has sponsored the Golden Valley Harriers’ annual run in Davis’ Central Park the past two years. With proceeds going to the fund, the Labor Day Races have incorporated a Doggy Dash 5K into its lineup to help raise awareness. Several local K9 units join the festivities in the park and entertain the crowd with demonstrations of the dogs’ skills.

The Faithful Partner Ceremony, routinely held on the campus, attracts dozens of K9 units from throughout the state. The memorial ceremony honors fallen K9 officers and spotlights the increasing demand for these animals to receive the highest level of veterinary care, especially in emergency situations.

Peydro continues to recover from his injuries that included damage to his teeth and jaws, as well as extensive damage to his vertebrae which required a 4-hour surgery to place pins in his lower back to stabilize his spine. Thanks to the dedicated neurology team, he was able to walk out of the hospital after only nine days.

“I’m thrilled that UC Davis was able to save my partner. It means so much to me and my family that he is still with us.”

– Officer Juan Barrera
City of Woodland Police Department