

## Sentencing Option: Be 'Safety Pup'

**An Ohio judge offers man who shot his dog a chance to educate kids about humane animal treatment.**

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An Ohio man convicted of shooting his Great Dane to stop it from barking has been given the option of dressing like a dog and visiting schools to reduce his jail sentence.

During the Dec. 14 sentencing of Robert M. Clark of Painesville, Ohio, Municipal Court Judge Michael A. Cicconetti sentenced Clark to an overall maximum penalty of 180 days in jail, with 150 of those suspended.

Cicconetti is forcing Clark to serve at least 10 of the remaining 30 days in jail, beginning Feb. 17. But the judge said he'd suspend the remainder of the sentence if Clark visits every elementary school in Painesville, Ohio, dressed in a costume as Safety Pup, a mascot designed to promote animal safety.

Safety Pup goes to schools as part of a program operated by the Painesville City Police Department.

"This case was very disturbing for all of our workers that attempted to save the dog. We're thrilled Mr. Clark was sentenced to jail time, and the possibility that he can bring awareness to children about animal treatment is appreciative as well," Candace Hertzell, executive director of the Lake County Humane Society said in a statement.

Also as part of Clark's sentence, he cannot possess any weapons, nor own, handle or control any animals. He also must pay restitution to his family for the dog who had to be euthanized.

According to court officials, Clark's attorney is appealing the sentence; however, if it is upheld, it is unclear when Clark would visit the schools.

Clark was arrested after Bill, the family's Great Dane, was found injured on July 3, 2006. Clark pleaded no contest in November 2006 to first-degree misdemeanor animal cruelty.