

Pedigree Awards to Honor Dogs

Online voting is now open for the fourth annual Pedigree Paws to Recognize awards for heroic dogs.

Pedigree Food for Dogs, together with Wal-Mart, is honoring five hardworking dogs through the fourth annual Pedigree Paws to Recognize program, a national tribute that acknowledges the exceptional contributions professionally-trained service dogs make in their communities.

To honor these dogs, Pedigree partners with national organizations, including the Delta Society, Guide Dogs for the Blind, National Association for Search and Rescue, U.S. Customs and Border Protection and the U.S. War Dogs Association, which helped identify the five astonishing canines competing for top honors.

Dog lovers nationwide can log onto the Pedigree website to view photos and biographies for each of the five canine nominees before voting for the one they feel is most deserving of the top Paws to Recognize honor.

Voting continues through July 14, at which time the service dog with the most votes will be named top dog and honored at a special awards ceremony in its hometown in September.

As an added incentive, if 100,000 votes are cast, \$25,000 will be donated to the American Humane Association. It's important that the contributions of these amazing canines are acknowledged and celebrated, which is what the Paws to Recognize program is all about, says Rob Liebowitz, a spokesman for Masterfoods USA, the makers of Pedigree Food for Dogs.

The five canines nominated for this year's Pedigree Paws to Recognize Award are:

Hero: This Labrador Retriever, adopted from a local humane society, is registered with the Delta Society Pet Partners. As part of the Paws Patrol, Hero makes regular visits to patients at hospitals, hospices, nursing homes and other health facilities.

Hero's loving and caring disposition is the inspiration for Project Hero, a program that provides young people living in a youth detention center the opportunity to care for, train and socialize homeless pets to make them better adoption candidates.

Quanto: This hard-working German Shepherd Dog serves the Cocke County (Tennessee) Sheriff's Department as a highly-trained search-and-rescue dog. Quanto specializes in two distinct search areas: detecting explosives and assisting in human search and rescue missions.

His finely tuned skills have enabled him to clear a 230,000-square-foot building after an explosive was discovered, while his loving temperament has helped comfort the many missing children and adults he has helped rescue.

Rocky: Rocky, a 4-year-old chocolate Labrador Retriever mix, was rescued by Lake Erie Labrador Retriever Rescue. Rocky is now protecting Americans by serving as an explosive detector dog at the Port of Los Angeles for U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

He has received specialized training to detect explosives in a wide variety of areas, including luggage, cargo holds, buildings, aircraft and sea vessels, as well as on humans. On an average day, Rocky screens between 5,000 to 7,000 international passengers, 15,000 pieces of luggage and thousands of pieces of cargo.

Xena: This former shelter dog, adopted by Guide Dogs for the Blind, successfully completed the rigorous training program and now serves her human partner by providing safe mobility, companionship and improved quality of life.



A 5-year-old German Shepherd, Xena lives on a farm and is up at dawn to head to the city with her partner, who runs a busy physical therapy practice.

Polo: This German Shepherd recently returned from a tour of duty in Kuwait, where he served as an explosive detection and patrol dog, searching vehicles, buildings, aircraft, barracks and open areas for dangerous and harmful explosive materials.

The humans that serve alongside Polo say that his powerful and vigilant appearance is a strong psychological deterrent to potential terrorists, but his playful and eager-to-please nature is his real gift, as it helps lift the spirits of U.S. soldiers far from home.

For additional information on the Pedigree Paws to Recognize program, visit Pedigree.com.

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