



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### **Youth Foundation to Launch Canine Training Program Aimed at Youthful Offenders**

Dallas, TX, August 19, 2009 — The Youth Village Foundation announces its Partnership with Canine Dimensions, a dog training company to launch a unique program to serve young men at the Youth Village and the Medlock Treatment Center. The program pairs juveniles that have been involved in the juvenile court system with experienced dog trainers to learn the basics of dog handling, management and training. The program is similar to a successful program that was discontinued in 2005 due to a loss of funding. The program is P.R.E.P., which stands for Patience, Responsibility, Empathy and Partnership, all describing the behaviors and skills developed through participation in this program.

“The key to the success of the program will be for the young men to understand that they are responsible for their dog. That dogs don’t understand excuses, they just look for leadership from those who are training them,” said Irais Faura, President of Canine Dimensions. The program will consist of three, one-week modules for eight participants. Each team of two students is assigned a dog in need of basic obedience training and learns how to shape the dog’s behavior by means of a non-violent, positive reinforcement approach to training. Local area shelters such as Paws in the City, Operation Kindness and Dallas Animal Shelter will provide all dogs. The dogs graduating from the program will be ready for adoption.

Jerry Silhan, Executive Director of the Youth Village Foundation, explains, “the program helps these boys develop important life skills like anger management, impulse control and self-discipline. This helps them become more consistent in their responses, more reasonable in their expectations, and inclined to creative problem solving rather than acting out of frustration in response to negative influences. It also helps students to identify with ‘their’ dog because of unfortunate shared life experiences such as abuse or neglect and to develop empathy and form healthy attachments. It is a second chance for both the young men and for the dogs.” The program is designed to teach practical skills that could lead to a career in canine management, grooming, veterinary sciences, or assistant trainers. This program is being made possible by grants from The Rees Jones Foundation, The Stemmons Foundation, The Moody Foundation and by many individual donors.

The Youth Village Foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established to provide social, educational and vocational opportunities for young men residing at the Dallas County Youth Village and Medlock Youth Treatment Center.

For more information on the project, or how you can support the Youth Village Foundation, contact Jerry Silhan at [jsilhan@youthvillagefoundation.org](mailto:jsilhan@youthvillagefoundation.org)

