



CITY OF KEARNEY **PRESS RELEASE** ***For Immediate Release***

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Kearney Police Volunteer Therapy/Peer Support Dog Program

The Kearney Police Department is excited to announce the addition of a new program which will benefit members of the Kearney Police Department, Buffalo County Sheriff's Office and other areas of the community in need of a furry friend. The department recently welcomed the newest member of the team, "Luna" the therapy dog.

The Volunteer Canine Program was modeled after a similar program in California, where a volunteer therapy dog and handler are available to spend time at the Law Enforcement Center with staff to help reduce stress, offer emotional support, and connect police officers and deputies with a support service to deal with the stress and unpredictability of the job.

"Luna" a one-and-a-half-year-old Labrador Retriever, and her owner/handler Nani Pollard are a fully certified therapy dog team after participating in extensive training and certification through Healing Heart Therapy Dogs, Inc. of Crete Nebraska. All costs associated with the training, certification, and care were provided by the volunteer. Pollard is employed by the Buffalo County Sheriff's Office as a 911 Dispatcher and volunteers her off-duty time to the program.

"During a time of great stress in all of our daily lives and the additional emotional stress a police officer can experience, the availability of this resource is a great opportunity for our officers and staff to relax, lower stress and anxiety, and find comfort. Simply petting Luna has brought smiles to the faces of our officers, she has been a great addition to the team. We appreciate Nani volunteering her time for the program." – Chief Bryan D. Waugh

Research shows that interaction with a therapy dog reduces blood pressure, lowers stress, stimulates memory, and reduces anxiety.

Check out our web site at www.cityofkearney.org.

We are sending this News Release as a service to the news media and citizens of Kearney.

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