

# Update: USP Hazelton paws4people™ “Boot Camp”

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# NEWS & UPDATES

www.paws4prisons.org



By Jennifer K.  
Inmate  
paws4prisons™  
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**paws4prisons'**™ first two weeks as a part of SFF Hazelton were a huge success!

On day one of “Boot Camp,” the ladies became well acquainted with each of the seven puppies from West Virginia University: COLT, GENNY, NIKKI, CLARK, GUS, ELLIE, and BODIE. It was simply love at first

sight. Following the introductions, the ladies got right to work.

Throughout the two weeks of “Boot Camp,” there were many fun-filled moments and lots of hard work. The primary and alternate trainers were teamed up and required to work with each of the puppies. The Chief Trainers evaluated their relationships and determined whose personalities were compatible. During this time, the ladies were taught grooming and bonding techniques, on-leash play, basic dog care and various commands. There were also essays written, tests taken, lots of studying, and even special guests. The ladies were visited by Ms. Johnnie from the local animal shelter, Luci Loeffler, the Editor-in-Chief of **Paws-News™**, Diana Keesee, **paws4people™ foundation** Board Member, Jenny Brown from Bowser Beer, and three very special women: Trish Salgado and her two daughters, Tara and Kathryn. Tara is a recipient of a private placement **Hearts-N-paws™**

Assistance Dog named HUNTER. These visits were enlightening, yet very emotional, and the ladies are looking forward to more meetings with members and supporters of this Program.

By the end of the second week, everyone was anxiously waiting for the announcement of which four puppies would become permanent residents of SFF Hazelton and who they would be placed with. Congratulations to the following Primary Training Teams and their assigned dog:

- Melissa H. and Gemma M.; Dog: GENESIS, aka: GENNY
- Sandiea R. and Geterries M.; Dog: BODIE
- Shonna J. and Angelic A.; Dog: ELLIE
- Jacqueline C. and Tanya M.; Dog: NIKKITA, aka: NIKKI

We can't forget about the alternate trainers: Sharon S., Denise C., Dana M., and Melissa A., who have the pleasure of working with all four of the puppies on a daily basis. And last but not least, our Program Support Specialists; Linda S., Jennifer K. and Cheryl S.

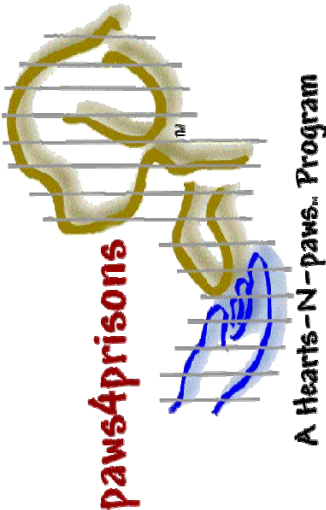
Many thanks to Terry and Kyria Henry, Lindsay Parenti, Heidi Livengood, Brittany King, and **paws4prisons™** for the best two weeks ever, and for permanently changing the lives of these 15 women!

## To me, the paws4prisons™ Program means:

*...dedication, heart, and new life. By training these assistance dogs, I am giving new life to a child or adult with a physical or emotional disability, enabling him/her to once again be a part of society and be involved, to live life happy.*

*Because of this program, I also have a more positive outlook on life. I have more self-esteem and self-confidence every day. Every time I teach a new command, I know I am helping to change or make a difference in another human life, and the feeling is indescribable. I have never felt so many emotions in all my life as I have while working in this program.*

*Inmate Tonya M.*



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USPH Warden  
Joe Driver  
with  
ADDIE & BODIE

The Secure Female Facility (SFF) - Hazelton is a 512-bed low security federal prison for women, located in Preston County, West Virginia. This new facility is making

great strides to balance safety and security with dynamic programs which allow the inmates to holistically heal past issues, learn effective strategies for living a vibrant law-abiding life, and successfully reintegrate into their communities to reduce recidivism factors. The staff recognizes and nurtures the potential of every individual, empowering them to make choices which will enhance the quality of their lives and those they touch. The facility provides a holistic approach to programming, allowing inmates varied opportunities to improve all aspects of their lives, while simultaneously creating an environment which is conducive to inmates giving back to the

community.

The Staff at the SFF are excited about collaborating with **paws4prisons™**. Warden Joe Driver is particularly pleased that the dogs will be trained to work with developmentally disabled children or become Service Dogs for disabled veterans returning from the war. Warden Driver commented, "This is a great opportunity for inmates to contribute to society, provide a program to learn valuable job skills, and enjoy the benefits of pet therapy. Most of our inmates are mothers. We want them to not only improve their parenting skills, but also be able to successfully provide for their families and to be positive role models for their children. The Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that 70% of children who have a parent in prison will also spend time in prison. We are providing our inmates with programs to help prepare them to be successful when they are released so they can break the cycle of crime."

Susan Folk, the Unit Manager and Administrator for the facility, could not be more pleased with the collaborative partnership which has formed

between **paws4prisons™** and the SFF stating, "Everyone involved has a common goal of helping the inmates to grow and improve their lives. A woman sentenced to this facility begins preparing for release on the first day of her confinement. We want to empower our inmates to make positive choices and learn skills which will help them to be successful when they go home. **paws4prisons™** understands the importance of establishing a multi-faceted program which will have maximum impact."

This dynamic partnership will provide many opportunities beyond the actual dog training. **paws4prisons™** is working closely with the counselors and education staff at the SFF to continually expand the possibilities for the program. Inmates will be able to learn a number of job skills, including public relations, marketing and web page design. There will also be numerous activities for volunteerism to help support the program through the **paws4prisons™** Program. This will be a tremendous opportunity for inmates to get involved in a worthwhile effort and increase their employment skills.



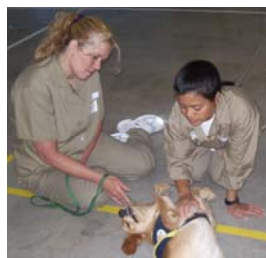
Inmates [Left to Right]: Melissa H., Gemma M., Linda S., Sharon S., Sandiea R., Geterries M., Jennifer K., Shonna J., Jacqueline C., Tonya M., Melissa A., Denise C., Angelic A., and Bonita P. Dogs [Left to Right]: BODIE, GUS, COLT, CLARK, ELLIE, NIKKI, and GENNY.

## Meet the SFF Hazelton **paws4prisons™** Participants and their **SlammerDogZ™**

### To me, the **paws4prisons™** Program means:

*...a whole new outlook on life. Because of my time spent on training I can finally be of help to someone with disabilities like Grace or Amanda. At the same time, I am learning so much about discipline and commitment. Not only am I being taught to train the dogs, the dogs themselves are teaching me about myself and areas I need to work on. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to be a part of these dogs' lives and the lives of those who will be taking them home.*

*Inmate Gemma M.*



## Update: USP Hazelton paws4people™ “Boot Camp”



**Inmate Primary Trainers:**

Shonna J. & Angelic A.

Dog: **ELLIE**



**Inmate Primary Trainers:**

Melissa H. & Gemma M.

Dog: **GENESIS [aka: GENNY]**



**Inmate Primary Trainers:**

Tonya M. & Jackie C.

Dog: **NIKKITA [aka: NIKKI]**



**Inmate Primary Trainers:**

Sandiea R. & Geterries M.

Dog: **BODIE**



*There are two primary inmate trainers per dog, and these trainers are responsible for two training sessions each day. The alternate inmate trainers work with all of the dogs in the program and do a third required training session per day with each dog.*

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**DON'T MISS OUT ON THE October ISSUE !!**

# MEET an INMATE: Sharon S.

paws4prisons™ Program Support Specialist

Go to: [www.paws4prisons.org/inmates.php](http://www.paws4prisons.org/inmates.php)

For more information about all of the inmates in the paws4prisons™ Program.



By Linda S.  
Inmate  
paws4prisons™  
Program Support Specialist

Sharon S. is a 46 year old Native American of the Shoshone-Bannock (Sho-Ban) Tribe. Her home is in Fort Hall, Idaho, which is close to Yellowstone National Park and Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

That area is

where the French fur trappers of Canada migrated in search of gold and furs. Recently, the U.S. Navy dedicated a new ship in honor of the Sho-Ban tribal member of historical note, Sacagawea, the USNS Sacagawea. The Golden Dollar coin was also dedicated in 2000 which also recognize this famous Shoshone native.

Sharon S. is a very talented Native American artist. She was taught her beading art by her grandmother in the traditional way. Sharon S. has her own style of dream catcher made of beads. Her design is unique to her only. She designs traditional native articles such as ceremonial dresses, medicine bags, dream catchers and Eagle feather fans. She also creates custom made jewelry items. Sharon S.'s family practices the Shoshone traditional arts and religion. Sharon S. will continue her grandmother's traditional values throughout the rest of her life.

Sharon S. transferred to SFF Hazelton from Dublin, California where she

worked in the construction field, but she specialized in plumbing. She has a special fondness for cement work. While at Dublin, Sharon S. studied and completed a correspondence program to become a Building Inspector. Her current position at SFF Hazelton is "Floor Specialist" for the Education Department. The Education Department has some of the shiniest floors on the compound! She takes great pride in her work and it shows.

Since coming to SFF Hazelton, Sharon S. has kept very busy. She worked first in plumbing, but transferred to education because she felt the need to further her own education. Although Sharon S. has her G.E.D., she has been brushing up on her math skills because she felt the need to. With help of staff members who provide her with study sheets, Sharon S. is refreshing her knowledge in math.

Sharon S. has been very busy working with the Religious Services Department in creating and adding input into the Native American Religion Program. She has suggested supplies and ceremonial necessities that benefit the Native American Religion. She helped in the development of the sacred area and sweat lodge that has been built on the grounds of the SFF Hazelton compound. As an elder, she guided the Native inmates on the proper and traditional way to build the now completed sweat lodge.

When asked how she feels about the paws4prisons™ program, Sharon S.

summed up the experience in her own words as follows:

"My feelings have been suppressed for 13 years while I have been incarcerated. I have had trust issues with people. I became discouraged with people. Animals love you and no matter what, they won't betray you. A part of me comes out while I am working with the dogs that nobody ever sees. I enjoy the animals' company more than most humans. Dogs don't really talk but they have their own special way of communicating. Their reactions are based on feelings towards you. I enjoy the fact that I am able to teach them. I feel a sense of accomplishment because it takes patience and persistence for them to learn properly. It makes me feel good that I am able to contribute and give back to people in need of these dogs. I feel privileged to be included in the paws4prisons™ Program."

Sharon S. with NIKKI



*"I am now putting something positive into society instead of the negative I used to participate in."*





By Jennifer K.  
Inmate  
paws4prisons™  
Program Support Specialist

On Friday, June 29, 2007, the ladies of SFF Hazelton's **paws4prisons™** Program were given their Block One Proficiency Test: A-four-part test which included a written assignment, an oral presentation, a multiple choice exam, and a command set test consisting of the 29 commands that were during the first six weeks of training.

The written essay was assigned on Friday, June 22nd. Each lady received a different topic which they had seven days to complete. The paper was graded on content, accuracy, neatness, grammar and punctuation. The ladies were also given a set of seven questions, in which to be prepared to answer in front of a panel of three judges. They were asked two of those questions the day of the test and were scored on the content and originality of their answers, the feeling, emotion, believability of their answers, and their poise and confidence exhibited during their presentation. The multiple choice exam consisted of 20 questions based on previous academic lectures. The command set test was a hands-on practical test which graded the progress of both the trainers and the dogs.



Results were released on July 6, 2007, and the following ladies received awards for their achievements:

**Oral Presentation:** Gemma M. and Angelic A. tied for 1st Place,  
Sharon S. - 3rd Place

**Academic Achievement:** Linda S. - 1st Place, Jennifer K. - 2nd Place,  
Sandiea R. - 3rd Place

**Best Handler:** Angelic A. - 1st Place, Sandiea R. - 2nd Place,  
Gemma M. - 3rd Place

**Top Academic Award - Boot Camp 2007:** Jennifer K.



## A Key to SUCCESS After Prison

**paws4prisons™** is a Training Program at USP Hazelton providing inmates the opportunity to learn and experience the K-9 / Human bond, based on unconditional love and acceptance, and, to gain valuable post-prison marketable job skills, obtain professional certifications such as dog trainer, kennel master, etc., self-discipline, a work-ethic and on-the-job experience. This is all aimed at increasing the inmates chances for succeeding upon their release from prison. Other similar programs have realized remarkable reductions in recidivism rates.

This Program produces very highly and specifically trained Service and Educational Assistance dogs to support the needs of the disabled community.

**paws4people, Inc.**  
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[www.paws4people.org](http://www.paws4people.org)  
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### To me, the **paws4prisons™** Program means:

*...a chance to realize my goal of working with animals. I feel that I am finally a part of something big and worthwhile, providing Service Dogs to those who need them, and possibly saving the lives of some dogs in the process. I am amazed at how much of a difference these dogs can make in peoples' lives.*

*Inmate Melissa A.*

