

Bristol County Sheriff's Office K9 Bob to get body armor

Bristol County Sheriff's Office K9 Bob will receive a bullet and stab protective vest thanks to a charitable donation from non-profit organization Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. K9 Bob's vest is sponsored by Panagakos Development, located in New Bedford, MA, and will be embroidered with the sentiment "This gift of protection provided by Panagakos Development". Delivery is expected within eight to ten weeks.

Bob is a 2-year-old German Shepherd who recently completed 16 weeks of training in tracking, obedience, agility, searches, team work and more. But Lt. Paul Douglas of the Bristol County Sheriff's Office, who supervised Bob's training, said one of the biggest lessons of the 16-week training program is bonding with his handler, Deputy Joao Santos.

"They're an all-around good team," Lt. Douglas said of Santos and Bob. "They're both great assets to this organization."

"We're so grateful to our generous friends at Panagakos Development and Vested Interest in K9s," said Jonathan Darling, public information officer for the Bristol County Sheriff's Office. "These K9 are just as important and as valuable as any human being we have, so we're thrilled that they're going to have the same protection as their handlers."

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. is a 501c (3) charity located in East Taunton, MA whose mission is to provide bullet and stab protective vests and other assistance to dogs of law enforcement and related agencies throughout the United States. The non-profit was established in 2009 to assist law enforcement agencies with this potentially lifesaving body armor for their four-legged K9 officers. Since its inception,

Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. provided over 1,800 protective vests, in 49 states, through private and corporate donations, at a cost of over \$1.6 million. All vests are custom made in the USA by Armor Express in Central Lake, MI.

The program is open to dogs actively employed in the U.S. with law enforcement or related agencies who are certified and at least 20 months of age. New K9 graduates, as well as K9s with expired vests, are eligible to participate.

The donation to provide one protective vest for a law enforcement K9 is \$1,050.00. Each vest has a value between \$1,795 – \$2,234 and a five-year warranty, and an average weight of 4-5 lbs. There are an estimated 30,000 law enforcement K9s throughout the United States. For more information or to learn about volunteer opportunities, please call 508-824-6978. Vested Interest in K9s, Inc. provides information, lists events, and accepts tax-deductible donations of any denomination at www.vik9s.org or mailed to P.O. Box 9 East Taunton, MA 02718