

K9 Graduates Include Fairhaven's First Police K9 Team

One of law enforcement's main goals is to get dangerous drugs off the streets.

Fairhaven and Bristol County as a whole got a lot closer to that goal on Friday with the graduation of two K9 teams that specialize in detecting even trace amounts of dangerous narcotics.

Fairhaven Police Department K9 Officer Jill Jodoin and her partner, Blue, joined BCSO K9 Officer Filipe DaSilva and Robika in graduating from the drug detection academy during a lively ceremony at the correctional complex on Faunce Corner Road. For the past 10 weeks, both teams have trained for about 400 hours on detecting fentanyl, heroin, cocaine, Oxycontin, suboxone, and other drugs.

Officers Jodoin and Blue are making history in Fairhaven as the town's first police K9 team.

"Ten weeks ago I met my partner Blue," Officer Jodoin said of the 9-month-old black lab who weighs around 54 pounds. "And now I can't imagine my life without him."

Officer Jodoin, a member of the Army National Guard, planned the town's K9 program with members of the BCSO K9 unit. She secured donors to help with the program and presented her vision and goals to the upper ranks of the department. She said she was met with incredible support from the FPD, including Capt. Michael Botelho and Chief Michael Myers.

Officer Jodoin thanked the local businesses and people in and around Fairhaven who donated to make the program a reality,

including Gary's Best Hot Dogs, Michael Panagakos, the Van Sloun Foundation, Liberty Utilities, Perry Jewelers, All Trust Credit Union, Christopher Medeiros of Tony's Auto and Southcoast Towing, Sandy McConnell of Southcoast Dog Training & Care, and Eric Brasil of Pet Supplies Plus.

"Everyone came together as a community for this program," Officer Jodoin said. "We're so fortunate for the overwhelming support."

Officer DaSilva, a Marine Corps. veteran who started at the BCSO in 2006, thanked his family during the graduation ceremony and said Robika will do an amazing job for the people of Bristol County.

"I was surprised he picked it up so quick," DaSilva said of Robika, a 3-year-old Belgian Malinois who weighs around 85 pounds. "It's been a great experience and we're ready to hit the ground running."

Bristol County Sgt. William Dillingham led the training program for Blue and Robika, coordinating the hides and progressions over the last few months and organizing the reporting requirements. Lt. Kenny Almeida, Capt. Paul Douglas and Supt. Steven Souza assisted over the 10 weeks.

"The Sheriff's Department, we couldn't do this without them," Chief Myers said. "What they do here is tremendous for the local communities."

"We're just proud we could play a role in this historic day for the Fairhaven Police Department," Sheriff Thomas M. Hodgson said. "These two K9 teams will have a massive effect on the public safety of Bristol County."