



MEET AMERICA'S TOP DOGS!
SEVEN COURAGEOUS CANINES NAMED FINALISTS FOR
2017 'AMERICAN HUMANE HERO DOG AWARDS'

Public Voting Opens to Choose Year's Top American Hero Dog

Sponsored by The Lois Pope LIFE Foundation, National Campaign to Culminate in Red Carpet Awards Gala and Two-Hour Special On Hallmark Channel

WASHINGTON, D.C. – July 12, 2017 – America has spoken and following more than half a million votes cast by animal lovers across the country and a celebrity panel of dog lovers and experts, seven courageous canines have been named finalists in the 2017 “**American Humane Hero Dog Awards®**,” sponsored by the Lois Pope LIFE Foundation. These heroic canines each took top honors in their individual categories from a field of 188 initial nominees and now a combination of America’s voters and a panel of celebrity judges will determine which dog will take home top honors as the 2017 American Hero Dog. The public is invited to submit one vote per day through August 30 at www.herodogawards.org. The seven finalists will be flown to Los Angeles to take part in the star-studded Hero Dog Awards gala on September 16 at the Beverly Hilton, which will be broadcast as a two-hour special on Hallmark Channel this fall. The seven category winners for 2017 are:

- **LAW ENFORCEMENT/ARSON DOG Ice** from Olympia, WA
- **EMERGING HERO DOG Abigail** from Lehigh Acres, FL
- **GUIDE/HEARING DOG Pierce** from Palm Bay, FL
- **MILITARY DOG Adak** from St. Cloud, MN
- **SEARCH AND RESCUE DOG Luca** from Grand Prairie, TX
- **SERVICE DOG Atlas** from Dayton, OH
- **THERAPY DOG Aladdin** from Haddonfield, NJ

Each of the seven finalists will win \$2,500 for their designated charity partner and the winning 2017 American Hero Dog’s charity partner will receive an additional \$5,000 for a grand total of \$7,500. Each charity partner is dedicated to celebrating and strengthening the roles of dogs in our lives, and like American Humane, focuses on the importance of the human-animal bond.

Over the past seven years, millions of votes have been cast for more than a thousand dogs, all seeking the coveted title of American Hero Dog. The program reaches more than 1 billion people each year and draws the support and participation of top celebrity dog lovers from all over the world.

“The American Humane Hero Dog Awards celebrate the tremendously important roles dogs play in our lives,” said Dr. Robin Ganzert, American Humane president and CEO. “The American public and our special judging panel now have an extraordinarily tough task ahead of them in determining who our top dog will be because all are worthy winners.”

“It is an honor to support an effort to recognize the best of our ‘best friends,’” said philanthropist Lois Pope, who has been the awards’ presenting sponsor for six years. “From those who defend our country to those who help us heal, guide us, protect us, and help find the lost, every single contender exemplifies the courage and heroism we seek to spotlight in the Hero Dog Awards campaign. Through this national forum we have helped educate America about the lifesaving, life-affirming work of our nation’s canine heroes.”

Meet the Seven Remarkable Hero Dog Awards finalists

Law Enforcement/Arson Dogs category



Ice (Olympia, WA) – In the early hours of July 21, 2016, a team of officers from the U.S. Forest Service and deputies from the Trinity County Sheriff's Office were investigating an illegal marijuana garden on public lands within the Shasta-Trinity National Forest. Two suspects attempted to flee and Ice was deployed to capture one of the suspects. As Ice was apprehending the suspect, the suspect used a large knife to stab Ice twice in the chest as well as in the face and muzzle. Despite Ice's serious wounds, Ice continued to apprehend the suspect until the suspect was taken into custody. Ice's bravery likely saved the other officers from being stabbed or injured. Despite his trauma, Ice didn't let out a whine or whimper. Ice's handler and the team immediately bandaged and dressed his wounds. As the area was extremely rugged and remote, a California Highway Patrol helicopter was dispatched. Ice's handler and other team members then took turns carrying Ice approximately three-quarters of a mile over rough terrain and through dense vegetation to a suitable landing location. Ice was airlifted to VCA Asher Animal Hospital in Redding, CA and taken immediately into surgery where the doctors and staff were able to repair his wounds. Ice has since made a full recovery and has returned to duty. This wasn't Ice's first scrape, and though he is a tough-as-nails working dog, Ice also has an extraordinary ability to interact and socialize with people. Both of these amazing abilities make Ice a truly special dog and partner.

Emerging Hero Dogs category



Abigail (Lehigh Acres, FL) – Abigail is a gal that did not ask for the life she was forced to live. Abigail and her bonnets have changed the world. Abigail is a HERO because of the lesson she teaches about forgiveness and dog fighting. Abigail and her Bonnets have brought awareness to the importance of ending dog fighting. A 1-year-old pit mix, she was found as a stray in Miami FL. Brockton drove to Miami to bring her to LIFE Rescue. Upon her arrival and after further examinations we suspected she suffered from a life of dog fighting. She was anemic, she was infested with ticks, and scars covered her bloody head, neck, back legs, and half her face was missing. She smelled

so bad because of infections, and was covered in dried mud. One side of her face was missing and her skin had been ripped off right down to the ear drum. Abigail had only spent a day at the shelter before she was brought to the rescue's vet clinic. Her injuries were at least a week old and she almost lost her life. Abigail had weeks of hospitalization and daily bandage changes. How would she live a normal life? Would she need rehab? She had several major surgeries with extensive skin grafts. Day Two of her journey is when her "mission" began. TJ, her vet and her vet tech Destiny were changing her bandages. The way they held the gauze looked like a bow. Since then we called her bandages "her bonnets." People started sending bonnets from all over the world. Abigail is on Facebook at "Bonnets for Abigail" with over 12,000 followers who love her. Abigail didn't need therapy. Abigail is the therapy. She loves people and dogs. She has a mission to continue to teach forgiveness and end dog fighting.

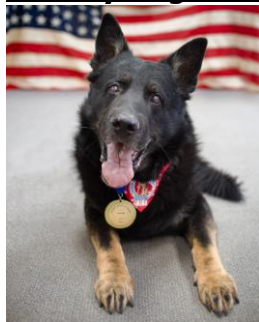
Guide/Hearing Dogs category



Pierce (Palm Bay, FL) – While serving with the U.S. Army 82nd Airborne Division during the first Gulf War (Operation Desert Storm), Don sustained an injury that eventually claimed his vision. In the more than two decades that followed, Don navigated through life with his white cane, along with the support of his wife, Peggy, and two children. As an experienced cane traveler who moved about the world quite well, Don had not seriously considered getting a guide dog until one day he now remembers as a turning point in his journey. Last

year, on a family vacation, Don and his son, Jordan, set out to explore historical monuments together. At the conclusion of the trip, Don asked Jordan to describe his favorite part of the tour to which the twelve-year-old responded, "Dad, I wasn't paying much attention...I wanted to make sure you didn't fall." Heartbroken at this admission, Don knew Jordan needed the freedom to be a kid and not a sighted guide. And the payoff in having his guide dog, "Pierce," has been even greater than relieving this burden from his son; Don is experiencing life with refreshed independence and freedom. His wife, Peggy, shares, "I have seen a new confidence in Don and I can't thank Fidelco enough for their part in it. Don's guide dog is a very loving companion and dedicated to his work. We have all fallen in love."

Military Dogs category



Adak (St. Cloud, MN) – Adak is a 13-year-old German Shepherd. His longevity and accomplishments as an explosive detection dog are unmatched. During his career he has provided support to dignitaries and celebrities, and at events across more than 10 states and three countries. He was a Contract Working Dog (CWD) for the U.S. State Department in Iraq and Afghanistan, the U.S. Army, Ft. McCoy and for a private business, Dogs for Defense Inc. (D4D). Adak's first assignment was in Iraq in 2006. Adak was assigned to support the U.S. embassy and dignitaries. Adak performed a sweep of the Baghdad Central Station prior to the arrival of a dignitary. While performing the sweep, Adak alerted to a vehicle in the area, canceling the event. On January 14, 2008, the Kabul Serena Hotel was

subjected to a complex terror attack. During the attack numerous guests were trapped in the hotel. Adak's was the first K-9 team to arrive, with terrorists still inside the hotel. Adak led a team of Americans who went room to room inside while terrorists were still active. Adak came across dismembered, deceased victims during his search and performed flawlessly. Over 20 people were evacuated, and a total of six people died, including one American. In 2009 Adak was conducting a sweep of the Ministry of Agriculture when he had an alert. The Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit arrived and identified the threat as a mortar shell. Working for D4D gave Adak constant opportunities to do unique detection work across the U.S. until he was 13. His transition from war to family member was incredible. Sadly, Adak recently passed away.

Search and Rescue Dogs category



Luca (Grand Prairie, TX) – On March 15, 2016, Fort Worth Police were dispatched to a missing endangered male. Two elderly men visited a large salvage yard when one suddenly realized that his elderly friend with Alzheimer's was missing. After a brief search, he realized he needed help and called police. Many officers responded due to the age/medical condition of the missing man. After an extensive search, Sgt. Medrano asked Officer Brock if Luca would be of any help. Luca is Officer Brock's retired Search-and-Rescue (SAR) German Shepherd, who was 10 years old at the time of this call. Luca excelled in area, water, avalanche and forest/desert searches. Officer Brock believed Luca excelled in this and it meant a helicopter ride, which Luca loved. Officer Brock picked Luca up from his home and Luca fell

back into his training and used his SAR skills to search for the missing man. Luca alerted at an opening of brush at the Trinity River, which led to a very steep hill followed by a steep drop-off. Due to terrain, a PD helicopter responded and immediately observed the lost man in the river, stuck in waist-high mud on the opposite bank of the river where Luca alerted. Officers shed their gear, swam across the river, rescued the man and brought him to safety. Had Luca not tracked the man's trail and located him, the man would have drowned in the river, which still had very cold, high, fast-paced water or succumbed to the temperature. Luca's love and dedication to SAR shows the resilience of older dogs and how training doesn't go away just because they retire.

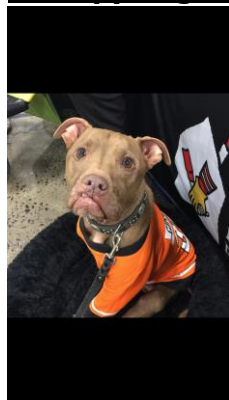
Service Dogs category



Atlas the Wonder Dog (Dayton, OH) – After coming home from Iraq, struggling with PTSD and dealing with the effects of a TBI from a roadside bomb, I was virtually lost, locked in my own personal prison. I began getting treatment while still Active Duty, which consisted of talk therapy and a single prescription. After getting out of the Marines, I continued treatment with the VA system, and nearly a decade later, the “treatment” consisted of more than eight different prescriptions totaling more than 33 pills a day....my life felt very sad, hazy, and hopeless.....I was lost. Until I found Atlas. Atlas is not only my service dog but my lifesaver. Atlas is a grounding and solid presence when flashbacks,

hypervigilance, and the lingering effects of war begin again to creep up my spine. Atlas has been trained to sense these changes in me and then acts to redirect my attention and focus during these overwhelming instances. Whether it is to nudge my hand if I am getting anxious, wake me up in the throes of a nightmare or just stand behind me so I know someone has my back. With his presence, I am able to take an active, positive role in my children’s lives. Atlas has not only completely changed my life, but as the “face” of, and inspiration behind the creation of The Battle Buddy Foundation, he is also a beacon of hope for so many others struggling to cope. A regal reminder that there is hope, that there IS a way to find yourself again after combat and trauma, and that your pains and struggles have value.

Therapy Dogs category



Aladdin (Haddonfield, NJ) – Aladdin was found severely emaciated in 2013. Both of his back legs and tail had been broken. He was missing 12 teeth and had open wounds. I foster emaciated dogs and he came to me. From the moment I met him, his little tail never stopped wagging, despite his horrific condition. Aladdin had a rough recovery but he overcame the obstacles put before him. He greeted every person with a lot of hope and despite the abuse he suffered he trusted enough to learn that no one would hurt him again. Within the year he was a certified therapy dog bringing love to everyone he meets. Aladdin is a Ronald McDonald House Ambassador dog, his favorite duty! He visits schools doing a humane education, anti-bullying program. He is a trained crisis response dog and spent a week in Orlando last year after the shooting doing therapy visits and fundraising for the Victims Fund. He works with the Philadelphia Police fundraising for the Fallen

Officers Fund and attending the events they do with special needs children. He is an ambassador dog for Tito’s Vodka for Dog People Campaign and together they have raised over 300,000 for rescues and shelters all over. He also works with veterans and PACT for Animals. Most importantly he is a model/ambassador for Show Your Soft Side, a nationwide animal abuse campaign and he is the spokesdog for the rescue I work with, Lilo’s Promise. Lilo’s takes in medical needs dogs like Aladdin. Heroes come in all shapes & sizes, Aladdin has taught me that each time I watch him work.

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