

Tuesday, November 27, 2012

STARS

The mission of Stetson University's partnership with New Horizons Service Dogs (NHSD) is to provide service dogs to people with disabilities, raise community awareness about service dogs, and to engage the Stetson community in a project that directly affects the Florida communities. In Volusia County alone, 26.6% of households live with at least one person with a disability (U.S. Census Community Survey, 2009). Our ultimate goal is to provide assistance in the raising of these service dogs to provide security, independence, and empowerment to disabled citizens. This partnership was originally established when a staff member began raising one of the service dogs on campus. The Stetson community wholeheartedly accepted and integrated the dog raising program onto campus.

The partnership at Stetson includes a puppy raising program, where students apply to raise a service dog over the course of two years. Puppy Raising begins with the fostering of an eight week old puppy with mandatory weekly obedience classes on Stetson's campus, public exposure, and lots of socialization. There are currently twenty Stetson members that are raising puppies on campus and in the DeLand community. Once the service dogs are fully trained for the client's individual needs Stetson hosts NHSD Advanced Training. In the past year, 450 Stetson students have volunteered 3,000 hours of service, and have helped place 46 dogs with individuals with disabilities.

The program is organized principally through the Center for Community Engagement.

Participating students Number: 450

Service hours: 3000

Participating faculty/staff Number: 20

Service hours: 1000

Estimated Number of Individuals Served People with Disabilities: 46

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "J. Anthony Abbott", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

J. Anthony Abbott, Ph.D.

Chair, Geography and Environmental Science

